



Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner

Use of Force Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 28th November 2018



Attendees

- Martyn Underhill Police and Crime Commissioner – MU
- Paul Cashmore Member of the Public – PC
- Steve Plant Member of the Public – SP
- Stan Sadler Dorset Healthcare - SS
- Tom Smith Scrutiny Manager, OPCC – TS
- Conrad Astley Comms and Engagement Officer, Dorset OPCC - CA
- Supt Tracey Baker Dorset Police - TB
- PC Rich Shirley Alliance Resourcing & Development, Personal Safety Unit – RS
- CI Stewart Dipple Police Chief Inspector, Alliance Operational Support Command, Operational Support - SD
- Supt Pete Windle Professional Standards Department, Dorset Police - PW
- Emma Knipe Senior Performance Analyst, Corporate Development, Dorset Police - EK
- Steve Gittins HMICFRS Inspection Officer by telephone - SG

Apologies

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that SG was attending as observer.

Summary of Meeting

Matters Arising

The minutes and public facing summary from the previous meeting were agreed.

In terms of actions from the previous meeting, reference was made to the planned action to recruit more panel members.

Performance Report

The Panel members considered a report on the Dorset Police Use of Force statistics for the period April 2018 to October 2018.

Comment was made on the number of fields in the report categorised as "Other". It was confirmed that there is not necessarily a direct correlation between the number of incidents and the number of use of force forms completed by officers, as some incidents will be attended by multiple officers each of whom may complete a form.

Force was used predominantly against 18 to 34 year olds and the next highest group was 35 to 49 year olds. 24 incidents related to Force used on 65 year olds and over.

It was noted that Dorset Force currently comply with the requirement to file the Home Office Annual Data Return. However in common with a number of other forces, the Force does not currently complete the NPCC quarterly return as they are not able to cross reference information relating to Taser incidents as these are currently separately recorded. A summary report based on the NPCC return would be made available to panel members for the next meeting.

Complaints

The panel received a report on the number and types of complaints against Dorset Police in relation to use of force. All complaints had been reviewed by the PSD and no concerns had been highlighted as a result. All complaints are monitored against individuals, locations and teams. Additionally a report is submitted to the quarterly Standards and Ethics Board which is chaired by the PCC and the Chief Constable and considers any complaint e.g. regarding unlawful arrest or incivility.

HMICFRS Letter re Spit Guards

Panel members noted the letter to the Home Secretary dated 28 September 2018 from Peter Clarke, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and Wendy Williams, HMICFRS with their views on the use of spit guards in police custody.

The PCC confirmed that he planned to write a letter of response which would be shared with the Panel in due course.

Spit and Bite Guards

A presentation was given to the Panel on Spit and Bite Guards (SBGs) to explain how they would be deployed and the associated training prior to roll out by Dorset Police. There has been a 500% increase in spit and bite incidents in Dorset. Before using SBGs, officers will receive detailed personal safety training.

The panel noted that the introduction of SBGs had been made possible through the first batch of SBGs being funded by the PCC from his welfare fund.

As at April 2018, out of 43 Forces, 34 use SBGs. The plan is for Dorset Police to introduce SBGs in December 2018. Currently Devon & Cornwall and other forces are investigating implementation.

Dip Sampling of Cases

The panel considered a selection of 4 cases based on the theme selected at the last panel meeting of use of force on women.

The panel was given a brief summary of each of the cases as follows:

- Case 1 concerned a female outside a café and an altercation which had resulted in the driver of a vehicle being punched and the subject being escorted to Custody. A search was conducted when female was in Custody. Due to her argumentative and uncooperative behaviour, force was used in order to escort her to the cell and complete the search.

- Case 2 concerned a racially aggravated Public Order offence. The subject to was taken to Custody and continued to verbally abuse officers so had to be arm restrained and escorted to a cell.
- Case 3 concerned a mental health case where the subject was suicidal and at risk of self harm. The subject in this case was restrained and detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act and handcuffs were applied.
- Case 4 related to a suspect who was stopped driving a vehicle and tested positive for cannabis. The subject was arrested under the RTA and taken to custody. Suspect is RUI.

Following discussion, the panel agreed in all cases there was reasonable and appropriate use of force.

The Panel discussed their wish to provide positive feedback to the officers concerned.

Information Sharing with Devon and Cornwall

The Panel noted the new approach to scrutiny by Devon & Cornwall (D&C) OPCC following an independent review of their work by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. A further update would be given at the next meeting.

Selection of Theme for Next Meeting

The Panel agreed that the theme for the cases to be considered at the next meeting should be use of force on over 65 year olds and under 10 year olds.

Date of Next Meeting

This was confirmed for 12 February 2019.