



## Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner

### Use of Force Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019



#### 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
- Michelle Booth HMICFRS Inspection Officer by telephone - MB

#### Apologies

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that MB 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, it was noted that following the recent recruitment exercise some new panel members would be joining at the next meeting; training by the Force for new panel members would be included as part of the next meeting. MU confirmed that he had written a letter of response to the Home Secretary regarding the use of stop and bite guards in police custody. A generic communication would be issued to provide feedback to the Force from the panel that in their view, in all the cases reviewed at the last meeting the application of use of force was reasonable and proportionate. As agreed, a summary report based on the NPCC return had been made available to panel members.

##### Performance Report

The Panel considered the performance report on Dorset Police Use of Force for the period April to December 2018.

It was noted that there was an increase in the number of use of force incidents recorded although this could be linked to improved recording. The three main contributory factors were alcohol, drugs and mental health. Spit and Bite Guard (SBG) usage remained low as these had been rolled out in Dorset relatively recently in December 2018. Assault allegations recorded against officers in the April to September 2018 period had fallen to 6% of complaints, in line with most similar size forces and below the national average of 9%. There had been an increase in the number of officers threatened by the subject with a bladed or pointed object. Taser usage had increased but this was largely due to the number of officers who are Taser equipped; the majority of uses did not result in Taser fire. The significant fall in the "Not Stated" category was noted under Location. It was agreed this is a helpful indication that the quality of recording is improving.

### Dip Sampling of Cases

The panel considered a selection of four cases based on the themes of use of force on individuals aged 10 and under and on those aged 65 and over.

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

- Case 1 was a concern for welfare of a 7 year old. He had been staying with his grandparents for the past four weeks and police were called as the child's behaviour was out of control. When the police arrived he was violent towards them and an officer had to run after him when he tried to run off. The boy continued to display violent behaviour, kicking out and punching officers who tried to approach to him. Officers exercised the minimum force needed to physically restrain him and calm him down and Social Services were notified.
- Case 2 concerned a call made to police from a member of the public who had seen two individuals getting out of a vehicle on heathland. Both individuals had guns and there was concern that they were possibly poaching. The officer therefore approached and drew his Taser and red dotted them. After questioning, it was confirmed that the two individuals had permission from the landowner but were advised to notify police with regard to the shooting log and supply an official permission letter.
- In Case 3 police were called to an incident at a retail premises involving an elderly individual who had collapsed in the store. Staff called an ambulance and when it arrived the individual became aggressive, kicking, hitting and attempting to bite the paramedic. Police arrived and the individual became abusive, shouting, swearing and kicking an officer. The individual was arrested for public order offences and for assault and taken to custody. It was later confirmed that the individual was suffering from dementia and the relevant information was shared with the GP and other relevant authorities.
- Case 4 was a concern for welfare where police were called as an elderly individual was found banging on neighbours' doors in the early hours of the morning in a distressed state. The individual threatened police and was detained under S136 Mental Health Act. In Custody it transpired that the individual had not taken their medication and was suffering from depression and anxiety.

In all cases the panel agreed that the behaviour of officers was reasonable and appropriate.

The panel agreed in this case it would have been preferable to have a mental health specialist respond. It was agreed to include reference in the annual report to the Panel's concern that in certain cases the police had responded to incidents involving vulnerable people suffering from mental health problems as other agencies were unable to do so.

Revised Terms of Reference were provided for the panel.

Comment was made on the proposed draft Panel Annual report which be submitted to the next meeting.

An update was given on the plans of Devon and Cornwall (D&C) OPCC to broaden their Use of Force scrutiny panel's remit to scrutinise other areas of police work.

The Panel agreed that the theme for the cases to be considered at the next meeting should be use of force involving SBGs and use of force in hospital settings.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, 12 June 2019.