

Force continues to be used on 80% of men and is predominantly recorded against White British individuals. The current disproportionality rate is 13:1(Black/Black British to White individuals). Improved recording of ethnicity is being encouraged and has resulted in a large reduction of unknown ethnicities being recorded.

Force is most frequently used in the street or highway, followed by the custody block, dwellings and open ground. The Panel noted the increased number of use of force incidents in hospitals.

The three main impact factors have been consistent throughout the year, ie alcohol, drugs and size/gender/build.

The most common reasons recorded for officers using force were to protect themselves or protect others from harm.

The increase in firearms usage is due to improved compliance in recording the information, rather than an actual increase in usage. The reduction in Taser usage and the increase in use of spit and bite guards was taken into account.

Dip Sampling of Use of Force Cases

The Panel reviewed six cases where use of force had been used which involved individuals with a disability in possession of bladed weapons. The Panel concluded that the use of force was appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances of each case.

Theme for Dip Sampling at Next Meeting

The Panel requested samples relating to size/gender/build and that the thematic review should involve individuals recorded as having physical/mental health issues.

Taser Uplift

The Panel was advised that a bid had been submitted for funding for additional Tasers to be purchased, to enable more officers to be trained and armed with them. It was pointed out that the funding would be for purchase of the Taser only, and not the holster or training on its use.

It was drawn to the Panel's attention that the vast majority of the public is supportive of officers being armed with Taser. The Panel was of the view that the very presence of a Taser appears to have a deterrent effect and is a good thing if there is a reduction in the use of force.

The Panel was informed that, although more officers have access to Taser, this is not leading to an increase in allegations of excessive use of force.

Date of next meeting

Date of the next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, 19th May 2020 at 10.00am.