

**Northamptonshire Police**  
**USE OF POWERS SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**23-06-2022**

Chief Inspector Pete Basham and Chief Inspector James Willis were delighted to welcome six members of the public to the inaugural meeting; a test event had been held in November 2021 to consider Stop & Search, but in the interim, the Panel's remit had been extended to include Use of Force too.

The Panel viewed a presentation compiled by the Force's Learning & Development Department which provided an overview of the standards expected of officers when exercising their powers of Stop & Search and Use of Force, and also detailed the legislation from which these powers are derived. The Panel was then shown four randomly selected video clips, recorded by officers using their body-worn video cameras, of two Stop & Search interactions, and two examples of Use of Force. (For future meetings, the video clips will be selected by the Panel's Chair.)

CI Basham stressed the importance of the Panel's feedback – via the forms provided rather than through discussion – in shaping the Force's use of these policing powers; he explained that whilst officers received annual refresher training on Use of Force, he was looking for a more "qualitative" response to the interactions shown. He also asked the Panel to put forward names of potential recruits, noting that he was particularly interested in assembling a diverse range of Panel members, including community leaders and influencers, young people, people from those communities who were disproportionately subject to Stop & Search, and people with lived experience of policing powers.

### Stop & Search

CASE 1: A vehicle and its driver is searched under s23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 – recent intelligence suggested that the vehicle was being used for drug dealing. No drugs were found. The Panel scored the officer at 91%:

- *The subject was treated well and wasn't made to feel like a criminal*
- *Use gloves to search for safety*

CASE 2: Officers witness a youth rolling something; he runs away upon seeing them. As they return to their vehicle, the officers see the same youth discarding an object. The youth was detained and searched under s23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; no drugs were found, and the youth ran away. The Panel scored the officer at 93%:

- *A single officer should have talked to the subject and asked all the questions*
- *The officer was lenient with the subject because of his age; good job for not manhandling the subject but one of the officers should have kept an eye on him – could have sat him down in the car*

- *Officer sounded very "shouty"; I think he could have used a different tone of voice – the boy was 15 and three officers would have been intimidating*
- *Should be more polite and less suspicious of the suspect – innocent until proven guilty; seemed to be a lack of empathy from the officer*

### Use of Force

CASE 3: A fight is captured on town centre CCTV; door staff report that a suspect for an assault has fled from the scene, and provide a description. Officers locate the suspect hiding in a car park. The suspect is arrested and handcuffed, handcuffing being the most common Use of Force recorded. The Panel scored the handcuffing officer at 69% indicating that some remedial intervention is warranted; Chief Inspector Willis has provided feedback to the officer and his supervisor:

- *Subject: "Why are you arresting me?" Officer: "I just told you". I think he should have repeated the reason.*
- *Officer should have stayed calm*

CASE 4: Report of a male banging on the front door, trying to get into a house. Upon arrival, male reports that he has left some personal items inside and simply wants to get them back. He is arrested on the basis of the householder's allegation, placed in handcuffs, and escorted to the police vehicle. The male is volatile, he protests his innocence volubly, and at one point, throws himself to the ground and has to be lifted back onto his feet by the arresting officers. The Panel scored the handcuffing officer at 86%:

- *The officers were dealing with a complete idiot, and they handled the situation well and calmly*
- *The officers were very tolerant of the offensive language of the subject*
- *The process of getting the subject into the car can be improved upon [The suspect was manoeuvred between two closely parked cars instead of reversing the police vehicle into a space to make access easier.]*

### General Feedback

- The Panel asked to see video footage recorded by the officers accompanying the searching/handcuffing officer, if it exists
- The Panel commented that the audio quality of some of the footage was poor