

**Northamptonshire Police**  
**USE OF POWERS SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**09-03-2023**

After January's record turn out, Pete Basham and Titus Ajay (Co-chairs) were slightly disappointed that the snowy weather prevented some members of the community from attending this meeting. However, they were very pleased to welcome three young people, whose attendance was facilitated by the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. For the benefit of the newcomers, CI Basham reminded everyone of the requirement to absent themselves immediately, should they spot anyone they knew on the video clips. He stressed that he was seeking feedback on the style and tone of the interactions, and that feedback would influence officer training.

**ACTION: Any Panel member interested in observing officer training on Stop & Search to contact [kim.billingham@northants.police.uk](mailto:kim.billingham@northants.police.uk).**

CI Basham advised the Panel that the subject of Case 4 from January's meeting had raised a formal complaint about the arresting officer. The matter was, therefore, in the hands of the Force's Professional Standards Department and would be reviewed for misconduct. It was, therefore, inappropriate for him to feedback the Panel's views in the circumstances, but he had asked to be updated on the outcome of the complaint.

The Panel was shown video clips of six incidents recorded by officers using their body-worn video cameras, three Stop & Search interactions, and three examples of Use of Force. The video clips were randomly selected by the Panel's Community Co-chair from incidents occurring in January 2023.

### Stop & Search

CASE 1: A report was received about a group of youths, armed with a machete and a large zombie knife, threatening a victim. An area search in the vicinity of the report resulted in a group of five young men being stopped and searched for weapons. The officer conducting the search reviewed by the Panel found no items. The Panel scored the officer at 84%:

- *There was a good interaction between the officer and the subject*
- *Gloves were not worn*
- *I feel the situation was handled very well*
- *Approach the situation slightly calmer*
- *Approach the young person less aggressively; maybe explain situation before approaching physically*
- *Felt the officer was polite and used appropriate language for age group that he was dealing with*
- *No gloves worn*

CASE 2: Officers respond to a report of a group of ten males dressed all in black and wearing balaclavas standing outside an address known to be linked to drugs. The males run from the officers, and attempt to escape by garden hopping. The interaction viewed by the

Panel showed one of the group being searched for stolen property and articles for use in committing theft; nothing is found. The Panel scored the officer at 89%:

- *Officers went out of their way to make arrest smooth; they were friendly but not over-familiar*
- *Officer had no gloves while searching*
- *Officer should have worn gloves – health & safety*
- *The officer took charge of the situation by cuffing the subject, after they initially ran away*
- *Should he have released before all info of others being chased had been completed? Difficult to re-handcuff if new info came through the radio*
- *Handled well*
- *Officer dealt with the man really well and appropriately; remained calm throughout the search*
- *Officer was very polite and approached the situation very well*
- *Officer was polite which kept the situation calm – polite and respectful, gave clear instructions*
- *Should not have made a joke out of the subject's clothing – "ready for a run" – as wearing a tracksuit*
- *No gloves during search*
- *Too quick putting handcuffs on – subject looked surprised*

CASE 3: A male was reported to be handling stolen goods. His vehicle was stopped and the three females inside all admit to having been with the male, who is no longer in the vehicle. All of the females were searched; no stolen goods were found. The Panel scored the officer at 88%:

- *The officers should have spaced out the three females so that there was less talking between them*
- *The officer stopped to put on gloves – good!*
- *The officer engaged well with the subject which reassured her*
- *The subject was female and was searched by a female officer*
- *I would separate the females to reduce the chatter*
- *Extremely polite and respectful*
- *Officer was calm and polite – nice manner*

### Use of Force

CASE 4: A male was alleged to have damaged his partner's phone whilst extremely intoxicated. Upon arrival, he was anti-police, verbally abusive and aggressive. He made repeated threats to assault police officers and refused them entry into the house to speak to the person reporting the damage. He was arrested at the front door, but refused to leave; the officer drew his Taser to help negotiate with the subject. (It was clarified to the Panel that simply drawing a Taser is classed as a use of force, regardless of whether or not it is aimed at a subject.). The subject was eventually persuaded to leave the house, whereupon he was handcuffed and escorted to the waiting police vehicle; throughout, he threatened to

harm the officers who arrested him or laid hands on him. The Panel scored the officer at 81%:

- *Officers patiently waited for the opportunity to safely arrest*
- *The use of taser probably enabled the officers to effect the arrest; the subject seemingly complied when he saw the taser*
- *Not sure why officer was holding taser? Attitude of camera officer was great – other officer seemed more confrontational*
- *Why so many officers?*
- *From the video the man didn't seem a serious threat from the start, so officer may not have needed the taser*
- *Very patient officers*
- *Officers were clear and respectful, and very, very patient!*

CASE 5: Reports were received of a heavily intoxicated female having assaulted a member of the Safer Nights Out van staff (street pastor) by hitting them in the face. The female was being restrained by door staff on the floor. Female was aggressive on arrest and tried to walk away. She was further arrested for assaulting a police officer whilst being searched. The Panel scored the officer at 81%:

- *Concerns on the positioning of the subject in van – she would have injured herself once the van was moving*
- *As the subject was likely to be under the influence of alcohol, she could have been taken to the van quicker*
- *The officers should not have attempted to get the subject's ID from her bra – it could open the officer up to allegations around sexuality*
- *I don't think the officer should have touched her chest area as she was drunk*
- *Being more patient with her before she was aggressive may have helped as she was drunk*
- *Softer approach in terms of tone and language may have been better – reassurance maybe? (Although we didn't see/understand the full history)*
- *Should have given more time to answer and process questions as clearly drunk – lots of questions over and over could make subject frustrated*

CASE 6: Officers responded to a report from a female that her partner has entered her address, started destroying her property, thrown items at her causing swelling to her lip, and then threatened to kill both her and himself with a knife. After an hour long negotiation with officers, the Subject was arrested through an open window and eventually came to the front door. He refused to co-operate with a person search so was taken to the ground and placed in a ground pin; he protested that he could not breathe because officers were kneeling on his chest. Despite his active resistance, the subject was handcuffed and escorted to the police van. The Panel scored the officer at 71%:

- *The officer did a good job by not getting provoked by the Subject's verbal and active resistance*
- *Possibly slow the interaction – I appreciate tactic already may have been used prior to the struggle*

- *Shouldn't have put his knee on his chest, and it didn't need that many officers to handle him*
- *Force was inappropriate – could have been handled better*
- *Use of force wasn't necessary – detaining him in a calmer manner could've diffused the situation. Assuming there was something in his pocket so quickly led to possible harm to the subject*
- *Officers were polite to start with*
- *Force used too soon*
- *Officers should have continued to calmly talk to subject when on the ground – felt officers were talking to each other rather than suspect when on floor*
- *Initially, officer was calm and requested to search the suspect – even when suspect was verbally abusive officer remained calm*
- *More communication needed with subject rather than just talking amongst selves*

**KB**  
**10-03-2023**