



**Use of Force Scrutiny Panel Meeting**  
**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 10am – 1pm**  
**Hertsmere Borough Council Offices**  
**Minutes**

**Attendees**

Chris Cowdrey (Chair)	CC	Paulette Reed	PR
Andrew Taylor	AT	Godfrey Minsky	GM
Jeffrey Burke	JB	Anne Griffiths	AG
Andrew Hatton	AH	Valerie Shrimplin	VS
Russell Dyke	RD	Eddie McCarroll	EMc
Asha Vesudevan	AV	John Gillett	JG
Dennis Elam	DE	Nicole Moran	NM
Megan Holland	MH	Daren Power	DP
Nicola Hunt	NH	Sarah Simons	SS
		Nick Rowlands	NR

Sgt Adrian Pikett	Herts Constabulary	AP
James Coady	OPCC	JC
Catherine Boon	OPCC	CB
Keeley Smyley	OPCC	KS
Sue McNeill (Minutes)	OPCC	SMc

**Also present:**

PC Kris Butcher	Herts Constabulary	KB
Kim Manton	Herts Constabulary	
Amy Martin	University of Hertfordshire	
Emily Lee	University of Hertfordshire	

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
1.1	The Chair (CC) opened the meeting and welcomed the panel, officers and observers, particularly new panel members Nicola Hunt & Nick Rowlands, and Amy Martin & Emily Lee, both students at the University of Hertfordshire. He thanked Hertsmere Borough Council for hosting the meeting.

1.2	Apologies were noted from Ch Supt Dean Patient, Supt Owen Pyle, Ch Insp Ricky Bartlett, Insp Clare Cray, Elaine Dyke, Zoe Wright, Lorriane Edwards, Tara Bullworthy, Lesley MacArthur, Phil Diamond, Martin Jackson, Linda Martin and Mohammad Islam Ruman.
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes, actions and matters arising from the last meeting</b>
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed (pack item 1) and the action tracker was updated (item 2).
2.2	CC highlighted that the scheduling of agenda items had been altered. The scrutiny would be conducted at the start of the meeting and all other business discussed post-feedback. This would allow operational officers to be released back to duty considerably earlier than previously.
<b>5</b>	<b>Use of Force Dip Sampling Feedback – Female Detainees</b>
5.1	CC advised that the Data Subgroup had determined the theme: force used against females. He reminded that officers were present for operational guidance only. The panel decision should be made prior to asking for advice. The scrutiny took place between 11.00am-12.45pm.
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Group A</b>
5.2.1	<b>Item 1: Unarmed Tactics / Handcuffs</b> The force used was proportionate. Members had mixed views regarding placing the detainee into the van whilst handcuffed. Could there have been a different, better way to lift the individual, although the panel acknowledged that the female was not compliant. <b>Green 1</b>
5.2.2	<b>Item 2: Taser (drawn) / Handcuffs</b> A very well-written report. Officers dealt with the detainee and handled the situation very well. The panel felt this was an exemplary example. <b>Green 1</b>
5.2.3	<b>Item 3: Taser (red dotted)</b> The panel noted that the officer called the detainee "absolute idiot" after she was already in handcuffs. They felt that this was an unnecessary comment, which could have escalated the situation further. <b>Green 2</b>
5.2.4	<b>Item 4: Unarmed Tactics (Custody)</b> Officers remained calm and polite and the situation was well handled. The report was well written and reflected the video footage reviewed. The panel noticed that de-escalation appeared most successful when only one person was speaking. <b>Green 1</b>

5.2.5	<p><b>Item 5: Unarmed Tactics / Spit Guard / Handcuffs</b></p> <p>The panel noted that the report provided additional context for why certain actions (e.g. use of spit hood) were taken, which helped the grading decision. A well-written report. <b>Green 1</b></p>
5.2.6	<p><b>Item 6: Ground Restraint / PAVA / Limb Restraints / Handcuffs</b></p> <p>The force used was justified. A well-written report provided. Officers handled a difficult situation very well. <b>Green 1</b></p>
5.2.7	<p><b>Item 7: Handcuffs</b></p> <p>The statement provided was incredibly detailed and reflected the video footage. The situation was well handled. <b>Green 1</b></p>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Group B</b>
5.3.1	<p><b>Item 6: Limb and Ground Restraints / Spit Guard / Handcuffs (Custody)</b></p> <p>Two uses of force observed: holding of the arm was proportionate. The use of ground restraint was justified. A comprehensive narrative/risk assessment was conducted. The officers were calm; it was a patient interaction despite provocation. The officers displayed good communication, restraint and respect. Well done. <b>Green 1</b></p>
5.3.2	<p><b>Item 7: Unarmed Tactics / PAVA (drawn)</b></p> <p>The threat alone of PAVA was reasonable, proportionate and effective. <b>Green 1</b></p>
5.3.3	<p><b>Item 8: Handcuffs</b></p> <p>The situation was difficult and force was necessary to prevent further harm, but possible note to officer regarding improved communication with female. <b>Green 2</b></p>
5.3.4	<p><b>Item 9: Taser (drawn)</b></p> <p>Taser drawn but not used. The officer remained calm, polite creating a positive engagement and decision-making. Very effective use of force and good practice. <b>Green 1</b></p>
5.3.5	<p><b>Item 10: Handcuffs</b></p> <p>Minimal force used, calm interaction. Officers explored options for detainee with triage car. <b>Green 1</b></p>
5.4	<p><b>General comments:</b> KB, as custody staff, advised the panel that a record of the incident is noted on the detainee’s custody record. Officer statements may cover the force used, but the custody record will provide additional context relating to the incident. AT added that Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) also record details, which include the detainee’s view of incidents. CC agreed both document types could be beneficial.</p>

	<b>Action: OPCC to liaise with Custody Suite managers to determine a system of accessing redacted custody records and/or ICV notes.</b>
5.5	Both groups were surprised that 11 of the 12 cases reviewed related to mental health issues, including threats to commit suicide which can be distressing for officers to tackle. Several cases were recommended for commendations. EMc asked if mental health / attempted suicide is recorded in the data. AP suggested this is recorded as an ‘impact factor’ for self-harm. AT suggested a review of the data relating to mental health may highlight if issues are gender-based.
<b>6</b>	<b>OPCC &amp; Constabulary Updates</b>
6.1	<p><b>OPCC update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mock Panels</b> – three more sessions have been delivered to West Herts College, University of Hertfordshire and Hitchin Girls School with a further booked at West Herts College on 8th May. Approaching 250 students will have engaged in the process.</li> <li>- <b>Recruitment Fair (Uni of Herts)</b> – OPCC team spoke to over 100 students, several of whom have expressed interest in attending mock panels and observing standard meetings.</li> <li>- <b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> – two new panel members currently sit on the Race Inclusion Board (RIB). Additionally, the RIB Young People’s Forum reviews stop &amp; search records, with feedback provided to both the Constabulary and the Stop &amp; Search Panel.</li> <li>- <b>Police &amp; Crime Plan</b> – now published on OPCC website and can be accessed via <a href="#">Police &amp; Crime Plan: Fighting Crime, Making Hertfordshire Safer</a></li> </ul>
6.2	<p><b>Constabulary Update:</b> AP reminded that all panel members have been invited to make recommendations relating to officer training content.</p> <p>Suggestions that a ‘mock panel’ such as delivered to young people could be beneficial to provide an insight, alternatively hold a standard panel meeting during officer training sessions. Exemplary footage has previously been identified as ideal for training purposes.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: the email was re-circulated on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (now closed.)</i></p>
<b>7</b>	<b>Complaint Resolution Team (CRT) Update</b>
7.1	KS shared a data presentation on screen (item 3) relating to Oct 24 – Mar 25. Complaints relating to injury and racist remarks are referred to Professional Standards Department (PSD), along with any cases involving the deployment of PAVA as it is considered a firearm. In

	respect of taser, if only 'red-dotted', CRT can attempt service recovery. If fired, the matter is referred to PSD. Examples of cases referred provided.
7.2	Overall, whilst complaints generally have increased, those involving force have decreased by 41% and none involved use of taser or baton. Of the complaints received, none were upheld although complaint details are retained to assist with identifying trends and individual learning need.
<b>8</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
8.1	DE made a request, as Chair of the Constabulary's 163 Scrutiny Panel, that any panel members interested in joining should contact the OPCC in the first instance. The meetings are held quarterly in the evenings.
8.2	SMc reminded the panel that all outstanding Data Collection forms are due by 31 <sup>st</sup> March.
8.3	CC thanked both Amy and Emily for attending and actively taking part in the meeting.
8.3	No other items raised. CC closed the meeting.
<b>9</b>	<b>Date of next meeting: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025, 10am, University of Hertfordshire.</b>