



Use of Force Scrutiny Panel Meeting
25th July 2024, 10am – 1pm
Joint Emergency Services Academy, Stevenage
Minutes

Attendees

Chris Cowdrey (Chair)	CC	Penny Buckman	PB
John Gillett	JG	Asha Vesudevan	AV
Linda Martin	LM	Paulette Reed	PR
Andrew Hatton	AH	Tara Bullworthy	TB
Martin Jackson	MJ	Lesley McArthur	LMc
Daren Power	PD	Zoe Wright	ZW
Valerie Shrimplin	VS	Godfrey Minsky	GM
Jeffrey Burke	JB	Ann Hunter	AH
Lorraine Edwards	LE	Dennis Elam	DE
C/Insp Ricky Bartlett	Herts Constabulary		RB
Sgt Adrian Pikett	Herts Constabulary		AP
PC Andrew Kerr	Herts Constabulary		AK
James Coady	OPCC		JC
Phoebe Allsopp	OPCC		PA
Catherine Boon	OPCC		CB
Sue McNeill (Minutes)	OPCC		SMc

1	Welcome and introductions
1.1	The Chair (CC) opened the meeting and welcomed the panel, officers and observers. Apologies were noted from Ch Supt Dean Patient, Supt Owen Pyle, Insp Clare Cray, Nicole Moran, Daniel Bryk, Andrew Taylor, Phil Diamond, Megan Holland, Mohammad Islam Ruman, Russell Dyke, Elaine Dyke, Eddie McCarroll, Anne Griffiths and Marian Mendez Da Costa.
1.2	CC advised that the data subgroup had identified Use of Force incidents in which Acute Behavioural Disturbance (ABD) is cited as an Impact Factor as a relevant topic for review.

1.2.1	<p>ABD is an umbrella term for a spectrum of behaviours or conditions (rather than a formal diagnosis), with multiple potential causes and commonly associated conditions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extremely aggressive/violent behaviour • excessive strength/continued struggle despite restraint • insensitive to pain - including the effects of PAVA or Taser • acute psychosis with fear of impending doom • constant physical activity without fatigue • hot to touch/profusely sweating/inappropriate state of undress • hyperthermia • tachypnoea (abnormally rapid breathing) • tachycardia (abnormally rapid heart rate)
1.2.2	<p>Cases of ABD are considered time-critical medical emergencies and individuals suffering from ABD are highly vulnerable to sudden death from cardiac arrest, during or shortly after a strenuous struggle. Officers must therefore be familiar with the spectrum of conditions that commonly denote ABD and the associated heightened risk of using force/restraint in these circumstances. A guide was circulated to the panel prior to the meeting (pack item 1.)</p>
1.2.3	<p>ZW asked how ABD incidents were identified and flagged. AP advised that the TuServ system allowed for impact factors to be added to the report. RB added that officers at the scene would make an assessment at the time of the incident and treat as a medical emergency.</p>
2	Minutes, actions and matters arising from the last meeting
2.1	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed (item 2.) The action tracker was updated (item 3) and Constabulary feedback provided (no serious concerns flagged at the previous meeting.)</p>
2.2	<p>CC reminded that, at the last meeting, the BWV footage of an incident involving Taser did not give a clear picture of the individual's direction of travel and whether he was moving towards other officers or members of the public. Panel members were therefore in disagreement as to whether the use of Taser was justified and proportionate. The Constabulary sourced additional footage from a different officer. This was reviewed by the whole panel who agreed that, had this footage been available at the last meeting, this engagement would have been graded Green 1.</p>

3	Chair and OPCC Updates
3.1	<p>CC updated the panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Commissioner: Alongside the Chairs of the Stop and Search and Body Worn Video Panels, he met with Jonathan Ash-Edwards. The PCC is reviewing future meeting dates with a view to attending and meeting panel volunteers. • BCH Joint Protective Services: an event held at Monks Wood Police Training Centre on Saturday 6th July. All panel members were invited to attend. A worthwhile event, CC encouraged members to attend if a similar event is held in the future.
3.2	<p>JC updated the panel on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Report has been finalised and due to be presented at the Police and Crime Panel meeting on 25th July. Recommendations for panel development in the coming year will be presented in due course. • The Mock Panel was held on 5th June at West Herts College. Developed initially with a focus on written stop and search records, in future BWV footage will also be included. The OPCC is currently working with other colleges and the university to deliver further sessions. • The draft Communications and Engagement Strategy will be shared with all panel members in due course. • Wider OPCC activity: the monthly Holding to Account meetings (Commissioner and Chief Constable) are now live streamed. The meeting dates have been published on the OPCC website. 95 members of the public viewed the first meeting, a recording of which can be found here.
4	Use of Force Dip Sampling Feedback
4.1	<p>CC 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.</p>
4.2	<p>Item 1: Handcuffs - The panel could not see any evidence that this was ABD and expressed concern that the box for ABD was ticked without explanation. Restraint was dealt with well. Green 1</p>
4.3	<p>Item 2: Ground Restraint - Calm situation which was not escalated by the officers. Detainee was resisting going to the ambulance which justified the force. Green 1</p>

4.4	Item 3: other / improvised - situation handled sensitively. Good communication and teamwork with paramedics. Green 1
4.5	Item 4: limb restraint – Some panel members felt that not enough tactical communication was evident from the footage viewed. The statement was not clear for timescales and escalation. However, the panel was split in its decision: those grading Green 2 disagreed with the above comment. Overall graded Amber
4.6	Item 5: limb restraint & spit guard – officer used a reassuring, calming voice. Spit guard re-arranged. The panel questioned hand placement, but BWV was reviewed and all agreed the position was acceptable. Green 1
4.7	Item 6: PAVA - Calm focused approach. Once handcuffed, other officers retreated so only the officer dealing remained in the corridor. A well-written statement showing the decision-making process, moving from baton to PAVA. Green 1
4.8	Item 7: Ground restraint - Very well handled. Calm and clear communication. Decision-making and communications between officers clear. Panel Recommended specific recognition for the officer involved. Green 1
4.9	Item 8: limb restraint – situation well-handled in a confined space. Did well to keep communication going throughout the engagement. Green 1
4.10	Item 9: handcuffs - Efficient process. Green 1
4.11	Item 10: limb restraint - Action by custody sergeant pushing the detainee appeared excessive and may have escalated the incident. Limb/ground restraint applied appropriately. Green 2
4.12	Item 11: taser (red-dotting) - Good example of taser deployment (without firing). Some attempts for engagement. ABD apparent meaning individual was unlikely to respond positively. Green 1
4.13	Item 12: Spit guard - Comprehensive statement supporting the footage viewed. Fast and effective deployment of spit guard. Green 1
4.14	Item 13: ground restraint - Excellent response. Good calm communication, well controlled situation, constant reassessment of circumstances. Well done to all involved. Green 1
4.15	General comments: There was significant discussion regarding the use of spit guards. AK provided the panel with the kit to examine.

4.15.1	<p>The panel expressed some concern that cases may be flagged as ABD but not justified. Only one incident was referenced as ABD in the statement, others only identified by flag on TuServ system. If ABD is highlighted as an impact factor, this should be justified. OST agreed to feedback this concern. AP reminded that several officers are likely to attend incidents where the detainee is exhibiting ABD; all will complete a report citing the impact factor, potentially skewing data figures. JG stated that as a very broad description, as recorded at 1.2.1, there was a danger that most incidents could be flagged as ABD. JB added that regardless of how the detainee presents, the ABD flag should only be used if it is relevant to the engagement and the force used.</p> <p>Action: OST to advise officers that the use of ABD as an impact factor should be justified in the statement.</p>
4.15.2	<p>CC commented that, whilst previously it had been suggested that only relevant sections of statements should be read to the panel, on some occasions the extracts did not provide sufficient context and the group reverted to reading the whole statement. He added that finding the balance in this respect would come with practice.</p>
5	Any Other Business
5.1	<p>AK stated that the meeting had been interesting, particularly in terms of learning what the panel looked for in the statements.</p>
5.2	<p>No other items raised. CC closed the meeting.</p>
6	<p>Date and venue of the next meeting: Friday 27th September 2024, 10.00-13.00; Dacorum Council Offices, The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1DN</p>