

**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**

**Annual Summary from Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel Sessions 2020/21**

During 2020/21, due the pandemic the LSP met for three of the four planned sessions with an interim scrutiny exercise undertaken by the OPCC in the first instance. The exercises identified a few areas of continued challenge as well as improvement, which are consistent with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspections and Gwent Police’s own internal reviews. These shaped the recommendations that were put forward in the LSP reports.

For stop and search, key observations included the following:

* Data quality continued to show general improvements, although some minor areas for improvement remain. The internal Coercive Powers Quality Improvement Group now provides a focus on resolving remaining and emerging issues and we will continue to review progress during 2021/22.
* Most of the grounds reviewed were believed to be reasonable; however, scrutiny exercises identified a need for records to provide more detail linking individuals with the reasons for the stop, and greater clarity over cannabis searches. Gwent Police has recognised these issues and is implementing officer training and a programme of internal messaging to support improvements linked to these recommendations.
* Drugs remained the highest purpose for stop and search activity, reflecting national trends. This continues to be a priority area for scrutiny linked to grounds and outcomes for individuals.
* Individuals identifying with Asian ethnicities consistently experienced the highest rate of stop and searches for drugs across ethnic minority groupings. LSP recommendations have been consistently provided to Gwent Police on demonstrating an understanding for the reasons behind this. This scrutiny now takes place at the Coercive Powers Scrutiny Board. We will continue to support and challenge Gwent Police in continuing to develop their understanding and providing transparency around the reasons for disparity.
* Individuals identifying with Black ethnic groups experienced the highest arrest rate for drugs across ethnic minority groupings. Gwent Police is now monitoring this as part of the performance report provided to the Coercive Powers Scrutiny Board. The Board will continue to focus on understanding the drivers behind drug stops, particularly where the outcome is recorded as ‘No Further Action’.
* Observations of body worn video were largely positive, and several examples of excellent engagement with subjects were noted. Positive feedback has been provided in such cases. Where any issues or concerns were identified, Gwent Police has taken steps to review, understand and address the causes.

For use of force, key observations included the following:

* Form submission rates were consistent with the previous year due to a continued focus on effective incident recording and entry. This continues to be a positive outcome and one that we will continue to monitor in future scrutiny exercises.
* Some improvements relating to the accuracy of information and the number of forms provided by officers attending an incident remain, including ensuring all officers that use force on an individual during an incident submit a form to record their actions. This is monitored by the Coercive Powers Scrutiny Board with any actions for improvement coordinated through the Quality Improvement Group.
* Use of Section 136 of the Mental Health Act remains low, with people only taken to custody where they would endanger others if they were taken to hospital. This is a positive outcome that we will continue to monitor across the relevant governance groups.
* Individuals identifying with Asian ethnic groups experienced the highest use of force across all ethnic minority groupings. This reflects stop and search interactions in Gwent and is being monitored accordingly.
* For subjects aged under 18, those identifying as from Asian groups experienced the highest use of force compared to other ages groups and minority ethnicities. This is consistent with the other data for the period and remains under scrutiny through the Coercive Powers Scrutiny Board and the LSP.
* Observations of body worn video were very positive, with officers seen to experience some very challenging, and some cases dangerous, situations. Positive feedback has been provided in such cases with opportunities for learning also identified and fed back.

In the early part of 2021/22, the OPCC concluded an audit of the recommendations from the LSP sessions. The results showed that Gwent Police has made good progress in meeting almost all the recommendations provided in previous reports. Those that remain are linked to data quality and have been picked up by the Coercive Powers Quality Improvement Group to be routinely monitored by the Coercive Powers Scrutiny Board.