

OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel Stop and Search Exercise – October 2019

The Panel convened on the 26th October 2019 to examine Gwent Police stop and search activity undertaken during the six-month period 1st April to 30th September 2019. 1408 records were available for the exercise, of which 191 related to individuals that had self-identified as having a black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) background. All BAME records were examined across the Panel and 147 of the remaining records were randomly dip sampled by members. This provided a 24% sample size congruent with previous exercises.

Members were provide with an update on Gwent Police's activities since the last scrutiny exercise, and given opportunity to raise any observations relating to the report from April 2019. We discussed members' concerns regarding stop-search complaints and the continued need to improve public awareness of their rights to make a complaint.

Data Overview

We discussed the data report for stops encounters for the six-month period and agreed that this was largely as anticipated. Stop-search activity showed a 45.3% increase compared to the last scrutiny period. Two spikes were recorded in January and March 2019. Members were advised that the January increase corresponded with inputs on use of stop and search given to the probationer intakes that had achieved independent patrol that month, whilst the March spike related to Operation Sceptre II.

Panel members were encouraged to see officers increased use of body worn video (BWV) due to all personal use equipment having been issued and the positive messaging that have been sent out as a result of Scrutiny Panel feedback. We noted that usage was more prevalent for the East local policing area (LPA) than the West and agreed that Gwent Police should continue to encourage and support officers in the appropriate use of BWV equipment.

We also noted that around 64.5% of those stopped and searched were aged 25 or under, with around 36.1% of persons in this age category responsible for crimes during the same time period. Members were updated on the partnership work in place to support young people involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB), organised crime group (OCG) activity and more general offending.

In terms of repeat stops of individuals during the scrutiny period:

- East LPA – 82 individuals were stopped on more than one occasion. 11 of these were linked to a mapped OCG
- West LPA – 18 individuals were stopped on more than one occasion.

None were linked to a mapped OCG.

Across the whole Gwent area, the most common times for stops was between 23:00 and 01:00hrs. This timeframe accounts for approximately 19% of the total. Saturday, Sunday and Monday showed the highest activity with 278, 297 and 235 encounters recorded respectively.

Dip Sample of Records

1365 stop and search records were available for the exercise. All BAME encounters were examined along with 147 of the remainder, selected at randomly for the dip sample.

Table 1.1 provides analysis of the 341 records dip sampled and Table 1.2 shows the overall figures for the 1365 records for the scrutiny period.

Table 1.1 – Analysis of 341 records (dip sample)					
Category		#	#	%	%
		White	BAME	White	BAME
Gender	Male	130	188	38.1	55.1
	Female	15	2	4.4	0.6
	Other 'I' (Indeterminate)	0	1	0	0.3
	Unknown 'U'	2	2	0.6	0.6
Self-Defined Ethnicity	Asian Indian	0	5	0	1.5
	Asian Pakistani	0	39	0	11.4
	Asian Bangladeshi	0	9	0	2.6
	Other Asian Background	0	41	0	12.0
	Black Caribbean	0	19	0	5.6
	Black African	0	20	0	5.9
	Other Black Background	0	14	0	4.1
	White/Black Caribbean	0	16	0	4.7
	White/Black African	0	2	0	0.6
	White/Asian	0	5	0	1.5
	Other Mixed Background	0	14	0	4.1
	Officer Called Away	16	0	4.7	0
	Any Other Ethnic Background	0	10	0	2.9
	White British	121	0	35.5	0
	White Other Background	9	0	2.6	0
	Not Stated		1		0.3
Age	Under 17	16	39	4.7	11.4
	18 to 25	65	79	19.0	23.1
	26 to 35	27	57	7.0	16.7
	36 to 45	23	10	6.7	2.9
	46 to 55	8	4	2.3	1.2
	56 to 65	1	0	0.3	0
	Not stated	0	4	0	1.2
Purpose	Articles for Use in Theft	7	3	2.0	0.9

	Articles to Cause Damage	2	2	0.6	0.6
	Bladed Article	26	16	7.6	4.7
	Criminal Damage	2	0	0.6	0
	Drugs	78	151	22.9	44.3
	Firearms	1	0	0.3	0
	Fireworks	1	0	0.3	0
	Going Equipped	8	4	2.3	1.2
	Not recorded	1	0	0.3	0
	Offensive Weapons	10	10	2.9	2.9
	Stolen Property	10	2	2.9	0.6
	Threat or Harm	1	6	0.3	1.8
Outcome	Arrested	31	15	9.0	4.4
	Caution (Simple or Conditional)	2	2	0.6	0.6
	Community Resolution	2	0	0.6	0
	Drug Warning	14	9	4.1	1.2
	No Further Action (NFA)	72	133	21.1	39.0
	No Outcome	9	28	2.6	8.2
	Penalty Notice for Disorder	3	3	0.9	0.9
	Police Discretionary Resolution	5	0	1.5	0
	Summonsed	1	1	0.3	0.3
	Voluntary Attendance	8	3	2.3	0.9

Table 1.2 – Analysis of 1365 records (total for the scrutiny period)

Category		#	#	%	%
		White	BAME	White	BAME
Gender	Male	1045	188	76.6	13.8
	Female	117	3	8.6	0.2
	Other 'I' (Indeterminate)	0	1	0	<0.1
	Unknown 'U'	9	2	0.6	0.1
Self-Defined Ethnicity	Asian Indian	0	5	0	0.3
	Asian Pakistani	0	39	0	2.8
	Asian Bangladeshi	0	9	0	0.6
	Other Asian Background	0	41	0	3.0
	Black Caribbean	0	19	0	1.4
	Black African	0	20	0	1.5
	Other Black Background	0	14	0	1.0
	White/Black Caribbean	0	16	0	1.2
	White/Black African	0	2	0	0.1
	White/Asian	0	5	0	0.4
	Other Mixed Background	0	14	0	1.0
	Officer Called Away - unknown	145		10.6	
	Any Other Ethnic Background	0	10	0	0.7
	White British	959	0	70.2	0
	White Irish	6	0	0.4	0
Other White Background	34	0	2.5	0	
Not Stated – unknown	27		2.0		
Age	Under 17	232	39	17.0	2.8
	18 to 25	499	79	36.5	5.8
	26 to 35	216	57	15.8	4.2
	36 to 45	113	10	8.3	0.7
	46 to 55	51	4	3.7	0.3
	56 to 65	13	0	0.9	0
	Not stated	47	4	3.4	0.3

Purpose	Articles for Use in Theft	40	3	2.9	0.2
	Articles to Cause Damage	10	2	0.7	0.1
	Bladed Article	110	16	7.3	1.2
	Criminal Damage	4	0	0.3	0
	Drugs	794	151	58.2	11.1
	Evidence of Offences Under the Act	7	0	0.5	0
	Firearms	11	0	0.8	0
	Fireworks	5	0	0.4	0
	Going Equipped	40	4	2.9	0.3
	Intoxicating Liquor	2	0	0.1	0
	No Purpose Recorded	4	0	0.3	0
	Offensive Weapons	47	10	3.4	0.7
	Other	8	0	0.6	0
	Seizure of Alcohol or Tobacco	5	0	0.4	0
	Stolen Property	62	2	4.5	0.1
	Suspect Crime/Disorder/ASB	2	0	0.1	0
	Threat or Harm	18	6	1.3	0.4
	Traffic Violation	1	0	<0.1	0
	Warrant Bail Check	1	0	<0.1	0
Outcome	Arrested	129	15	9.4	1.1
	Caution (Simple or Conditional)	10	2	0.7	0.1
	Community Resolution	5	0	0.4	0
	Drug Warning	71	9	5.2	0.6
	Item Seized	1	0	<0.1	0
	No Further Action (NFA)	760	133	55.7	9.7
	No Outcome	124	28	9.1	2.0
	Penalty Notice for Disorder	15	3	1.1	0.2
	Police Discretionary Resolution	10	0	0.7	0
	Summoned	7	1	0.5	<0.1
	Voluntary Attendance	39	3	2.8	0.2

Data Quality

Poor data quality provides one of the biggest risks for stop and search. The BAME and dip sampled records showed a continued improvement since the last exercise with a further reduction in missing information due to mandating fields within the electronic form. However, in common with previous exercises, several records were found to be duplicate entries; while some of these would relate to the technical issues experienced during Operation Sceptre II, it is unknown how many duplicate entries are present within the overall data set.

Gwent Police should continue to focus on improving data quality to ensure that the causes of any discrepancies or ambiguities are understood and, where possible, addressed to provide greater accuracy.

Grounds

All of the 341 records examined had completed grounds fields. However, three records showed the following information where grounds should have been entered:

- The time and date of the encounter with no other information
- 'JOG' (jacket, outer clothes, gloves)
- 'Test' - this record also provides other information across the fields which has been counted in the data analysis.

For 45.5% of BAME and 37.8% of the dip-sampled records, members believed the stated grounds to be reasonable with the remainder queried due to either ambiguous or limited details. Member observations for these records included:

- Intelligence-based stop-search but more details needed to understand why the subject was suspected of the particular activity/offence at that time
- Smell of cannabis used with limited or no additional justifying information
- More detail regarding stops where drug paraphernalia has been found but the circumstances are ambiguous
- Grounds not stating that the subject matched the description of a person of interest
- Grounds not making sense in the way they are written.

In most cases, however, there was a general improvement in the way grounds had been written. Panel members commented on a number of records that had comprehensive and thorough grounds including some that provided detail against each requirement of the 'GOWISELY'¹ process. Furthermore, some excellent examples of grounds were identified and have been provided to Gwent Police's operational lead for feedback to the appropriate officers.

Gwent Police should ensure that supervisor record checks are regularly carried out and include the quality of grounds to improve the standard of entries. Where grounds are found not to be satisfactory, supervisors should ensure that feedback and guidance is provided to those officers to encourage improvement. In addition, manual entries created by the CMU should be consistent with the original data submission from officers.

Ethnicity

All self-defined ethnicity (SDE) fields for both the BAME and the dip-sampled records were completed. As previously stated, it had been recommended that this field should be mandated to ensure that officers either entered the

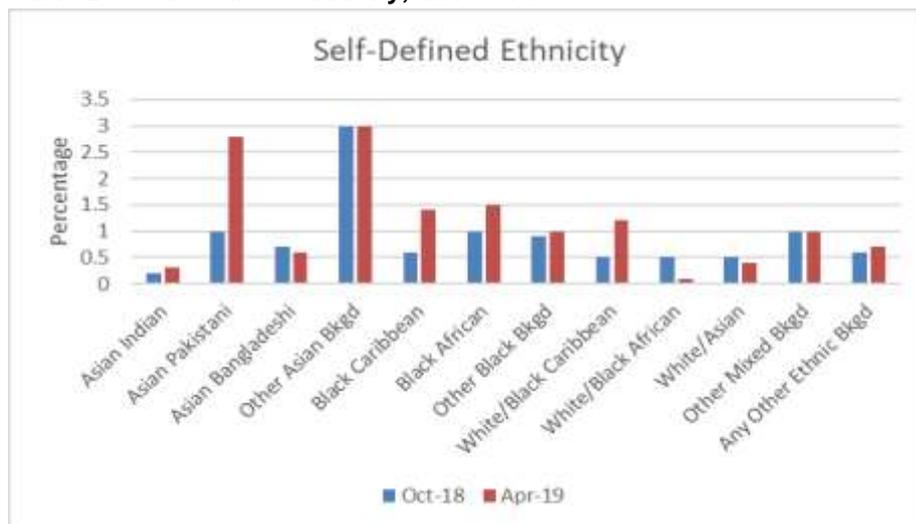
¹ GOWISELY – **G**rounds; **O**bject; **W**arrant card; **I**ntity; **S**tation; **E**ntitlement of the search record; **L**egal power; **Y**ou are being detained for the purposes of a search. As long as this process is undertaken the order of delivery is not important.

subject's SDE or indicated that this information had not been provided at the time of completion.

Of the records dip sampled, 35.5% of subjects identified as 'White British', with 2.6% identifying as 'White Other Background'. 4.7% of records stated 'Officer Called Away', a small increase on the previous dip sample, and 0.3% did not state any ethnicity (e.g. the subject declined to self-identify), a reduction of over half as compared to the previous exercise.

In considering the entire record set, 73.1%% of individuals identified as white, a slight increase on the previous exercise. For the BAME encounters, increases were seen across over half of the ethnicities with Asian Pakistani followed by White/Black Caribbean showing the greatest rises. The greatest decrease was seen in the White/Black African category. 'Officer Called Away' accounts for 10.6% of the ethnicity records, an increase of just over 2% compared to the previous exercise. Table 2 provides a comparison of the total SDE data across BAME categories for the October 2018 and April 2019 exercises.

Table 2 – Self-defined ethnicity, all records



The majority of BAME activity was recorded in the Stow Hill, Pillgwenlly and Victoria wards. In each instance, the greater number of searches were performed on Asian people. This may relate to the size of the BAME populations in these areas, as well as providing the locations of many places of worship and other community spaces.

Gwent Police should regularly remind officers of the importance of recording a subject's SDE to minimise the absence of ethnicity information, which provides data inaccuracy and impacts on the race disproportionality ration (RDR). Where this field shows 'Officer Called Away', Gwent Police needs to be confident, as far as possible, that this is an accurate reflection of operational demand and not being completed in error.

Gender

55.1% of BAME records and 38.1% of the dip sample identified subjects as male, with the proportions similar to those of the previous exercise. 0.6% and 4.4% respectively were identified as female. Whilst there was a slight decrease for BAME females, there was a 50% increase for the white dip sample compared to the previous exercise.

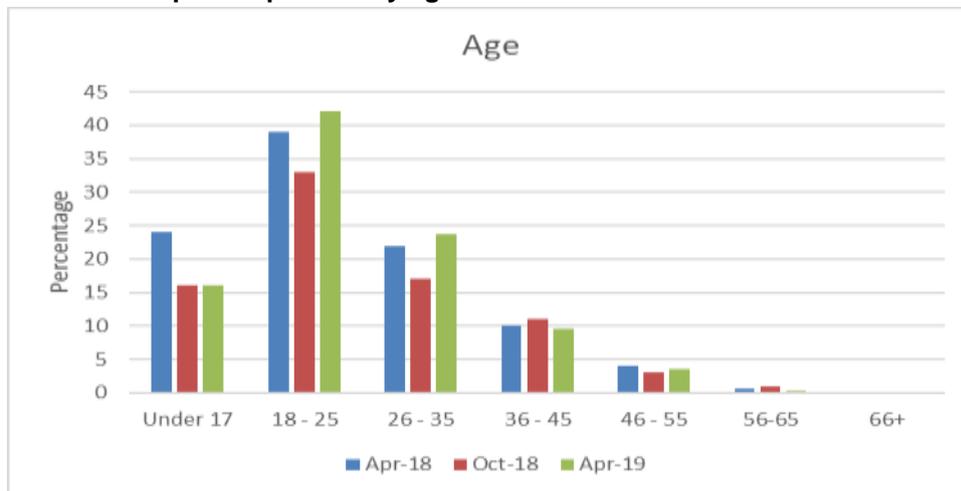
In considering the overall data set of 1365 records, 13.8% BAME and 76.6% white were identified as male, 0.2% BAME and 8.6% white as female. Whilst the BAME figures are similar to those from the previous scrutiny exercise, the white figures have increased for both male and female encounters.

Gwent Police needs to understand the causes of any large variances in gender data and be able to identify where repeat stops of individuals have an impact on the figures.

Age

Within the dip sample, 23.1% of encounters were recorded with individuals in the 18 to 25 age range, 16.7% for 26 to 35, and 11.4% for the 17 and under age range. Table 3 provides a comparison by age and percentage of the last three dip samples.

Table 3 – Stops comparison by age



The greatest increases were seen for the 18 to 25 and the 26 to 35 age groups and, in considering the population data for Gwent, individuals aged 18 to 25 continue to be over-represented in terms of stop and search. This may relate to the demographics of the available population, the time of day and geographic locations of encounters and the impact of operational activity.

Further analysis regarding the location of stops across the whole data set for the top three age groups identified that:

- 12.9% of the 17 and under stop-searches were located within the Stow Hill ward, 7.0% within Pillgwenlly, and 4.8% within Victoria
- 9.2% of the 18 to 25 stop-searches were located within the Pillgwenlly ward, 8.1% within Stow Hill, and 5.4% within Victoria
- 11.7% of the 26 to 35 stop-searches were located within the Pillgwenlly ward, 8.8% within Victoria, and 5.9% within Stow Hill.

This is relatively consistent with previous analysis and may be linked to city centre night-time economy and known operational activity.

Gwent Police needs to demonstrate an understanding of the reasons behind the appearance of the age demographics as linked to operational or other activity. This will help to provide public reassurance that certain age groups are not targeted for stop and search.

Purpose

Drugs remains the highest purpose for stop-searches in Gwent. The dip sample showed that 44.3% of BAME stop-searches were on suspicion of drugs, with 22.9% for white. The BAME dip sample is consistent with the previous exercise, with white results showing a decrease by comparison. When reviewing all records for the period, this changes to 11.1% for BAME stop-searches and 58.2% for white. Once again, the BAME result is consistent with the previous exercise; however, there is a significant increase in white stops-searches for drugs, aligned to the increase in the number of recorded encounters for the period.

Searches for bladed articles and offensive weapons provided the second and third highest recorded purposes. Bladed articles accounted for 4.7% of BAME and 7.6% of white activity, showing slight decreases compared to the previous exercise, whilst offensive weapons accounted for 2.9% of activity for each ethnicity grouping, providing a slight increase on both counts. In terms of all records, 1.2% of bladed article stop-searches related to BAME encounters, a nominal increase compared to the previous exercise, whereas this accounted for 7.3% of white searches, a small decrease on the last period. 0.7% of BAME and 3.4% of white searches related to offensive weapons, once again a nominal increase for BAME encounters and a small increase for white encounters.

Gwent Police needs to evidence understanding of why certain ethnicities are more likely to be stop-searched for particular purposes. This will help to demonstrate that activity is justified and not linked to racial profiling. 'Mapping' operational activity showing purpose, ethnicity, location and outcome for each operation will support this and should be routinely fed into the Operational Tactics and Equality 'Legitimacy and Fairness' Meetings as appropriate.

Outcomes

No Further Action (NFA) remains the most common outcome within the dip sample, accounting for 39% of BAME and 21.1% of white encounters. This shows a marked increase for BAME encounters compared to the previous period. In terms of arrests, the dip sample showed that 4.4% of BAME encounters and 9.0% of white encounters were associated with this outcome. Drug warnings were issued in 1.2% BAME and 4.2% white stop-searches. 'No Outcome' was recorded for 8.2% and 2.6% of records respectively.

Across all records, NFA accounted for 9.7% BAME and 55.7% white outcomes, an increase in either case compared to the previous exercise but proportionate to the increased stop-search activity for the scrutiny period. Arrests accounted for 1.1% BAME and 9.4% white outcomes, a significant increase for white ethnicities compared to previously. Drug warnings were issued in 0.6% BAME and 5.2% of white encounters, nominal and minor reductions respectively compared to the previous exercise which could have been affected by the increases in arrests for the scrutiny period.

'No outcome' was recorded for 2.0% BAME and 9.1% white outcomes, with a reduction for BAME records compared to the previous exercise. However, the presence of 'no outcome' impacts on the data as it is not possible to determine what the appropriate outcome should have been in each case. This may relate to the way that QlikView has drawn the data across from Niche, or may indicate a blank field where the officer has not recorded the outcome for the encounter. The QlikView team had previously reviewed the way data is imported from Niche into QlikView which should have helped to ensure the accurate transfer of source information. However, it is still unclear whether the 'No Outcome' result is due to a genuine lack of outcome recording by officers or is a result of data transfer processes.

Gwent Police needs to ensure that data transfer processes are accurate and demonstrate understanding of the causes of any significant variances in outcomes for BAME groups.

Copies Provided

Following a stop and search encounter, PACE Code A (section 3.8 (e)(i)) requires that a copy of the stop and search record or a receipt is provided to anyone requiring it. Officers were reminded to offer a paper receipt to individuals and work has been undertaken with the Digital Services Division to implement an electronic version that can be sent by e-mail. Recent feedback from police colleagues has highlighted challenges in obtaining subjects' contact information to enable digital receipts to be issued.

Gwent Police should continue to work with the community to build confidence and trust in the way police powers are used in Gwent,

raising awareness of how to obtain copies or make a complaint regarding their stop and search experience.

Ethnicity Proportionality

The RDR helps indicate whether different groups of people are being stop and searched more disproportionately than others. Table 4 provides comparisons across the total stop and search data for the last three years.

Table 4 – Three year comparison

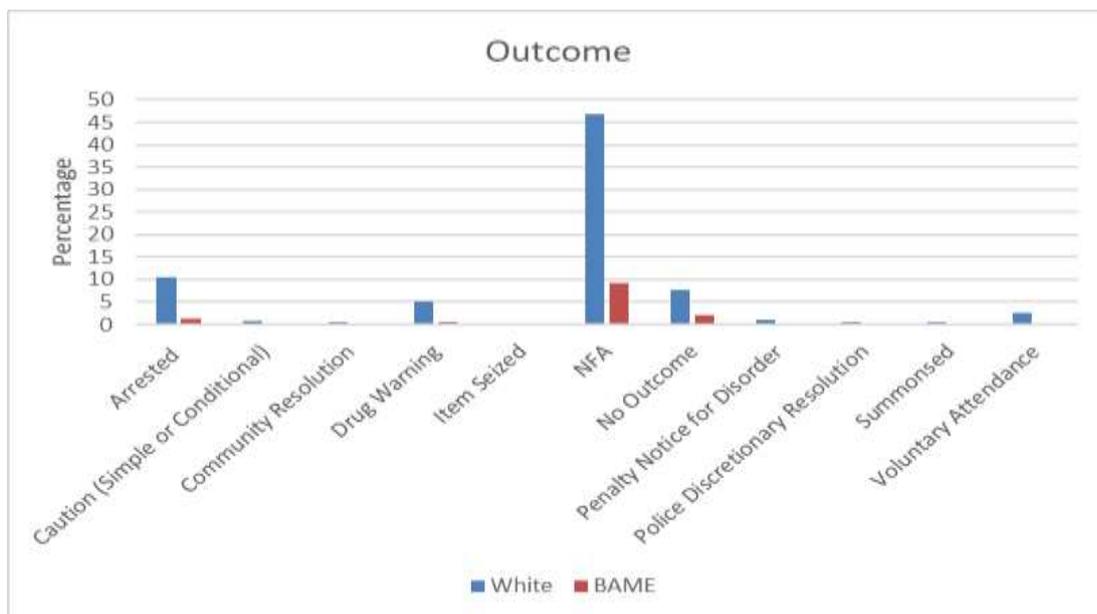
Stop and Searches	# of Stops (Total)	# of Stops ('White')	# of Stops (BAME)	% of Stops ('White')	% of Stops (BAME)	RDR
2016/17	1410	1248	127	88%	9%	2.5
2017/18	1296	872	103	67%	8%	2.9
2018/19	1365	999	194	73%	14%	4.9

In line with national trends, Gwent had experienced a significant and progressive reduction in the number of recorded stops encounters year-on-year between 2013/14 and 2017/18. This showed a large decrease in the number of encounters recorded for white ethnicities but only a small reduction across BAME stop-searches during this time.

The 2018/19 period showed a 5% increase in overall stop-searches compared to 2017/18, whilst remaining below the numbers recorded in 2016/17. However, the number of BAME stop-searches has continued to increase disproportionately. Over the last twelve months, Gwent Police's targeted operational campaigns have taken place mainly within geographic areas of higher BAME populations, which may have contributed this increase. In calculating the RDR based on the current data, BAME people in Gwent are stop-searched around five times more than white people. Compared to the national RDR of over 8, Gwent Police continues to operate below this threshold.

In considering BAME drug-related stop-searches, Asian people in Gwent were stop-searched at 2.8 times the rate of white people, black people were stop-searched at 1.5 times the rate and those in the 'mixed' group were stop-searched at 1 times the rate of white people. For bladed articles, Asian people and black people were stop-searched at 1.6 times the rate of white people, and those in the 'mixed' group were stop-searched at 1 times the rate of white people. Table 5 provides a comparison of white to BAME outcomes for all records.

Table 5 – Outcome by ethnicity (all records)



The range of disposals used for stop and search outcomes for this period is consistent with the previous exercise and presents a combined positive outcome rate of 23.9% for the period, which breaks down to 2.6% for BAME stop-searches compared to 21.4% for white stops. This suggests that stop and search activity with white subjects yields a greater number of positive results than with BAME ethnicities. In terms of drug-related offences, Asian people were arrested at 2.4 times the rate of white people, followed by the mixed group at 1.4 times the rate, with black people arrested at 0.9 times the rate of white people.

The high number of NFAs remains a concern with an increase shown in comparison to the previous exercise (55.7% white, 9.7% BAME compared to 47% white and 6% BAME). Further analysis showed that Asian people were 2.6 times more likely to receive an NFA outcome than white people, with black people 1.4 times more likely and the mixed group 0.9 times more likely to receive an NFA outcome.

Stop and search activity in Gwent has the greatest impact on our Asian communities, who were stop-searched for drugs more often and arrested for a range of offences more often than other ethnicities during the scrutiny period.

Once again, incomplete ethnicity data presents a risk in determining accurate proportionality and the true RDR may be lower than seen here. 10.6% of all records showed the SDE as 'Officer Called Away', with the outcomes recorded as:

- 14.5% arrested
- 70.3% NFA
- 12.4% 'no outcome'
- 0.7% police discretionary resolution

- 2.1% voluntary attendance.

Gwent Police needs to demonstrate an understanding of the reasons why stop and search activity disproportionately affects the Asian community in Gwent.

Body Worn Video

Comments are collectively drawn from member's observation forms completed during the body worn video review to gain feedback on the legitimacy of the stop and search and the officer's conduct and treatment of individuals in each case.

Video 1: A young male was searched at night and found to be in possession of a bag of cannabis. The subject then admitted that two additional bags of cannabis found on the floor also belonged to him. Due to his age, the male was released with arrangements to attend at a police station with an appropriate adult if required. The subject was also referred to the Youth Offending Service.

Panel members were satisfied that the encounter had been conducted according to PACE requirements and that the individual had been treated in a manner appropriate to his age. Positive comments were also made regarding the officer's use of clear communication and commendable attitude towards the individual.

Video 2: A single-crewed officer on daytime mobile patrol located two males rolling a cigarette in the immediate vicinity of a cannabis grinder. The first male was searched with a negative result; however, a roll-up cigarette was found which, although not smelling of cannabis may have had some cannabis remnants in which had been disposed of. The second male produced a lock knife from his sock prior to the search and was arrested. A further search also located a screwdriver.

Panel members were satisfied that the encounter with the first male had been conducted according to PACE requirements and that the officer involved had treated the individuals professionally, fairly and with respect. Comment was made that the officer appeared to presume that the second male had heard and understood what had been explained to his associate, with suggestion that the grounds should have been repeated to ensure both individuals had understood what the officer was searching for. Members also raised concerns for the officer's safety in this context, should the situation have escalated.

Video 3: A single-crewed officer located a young male in bus stop during the daytime. The search resulted in a number of bags of cannabis, two mobile phones and approximately £600 in cash. The subject offered an explanation for the items in his possession but was subsequently arrested for possession

of drugs with intent to supply (PWITS).

Panel members were generally satisfied that the encounter had been conducted according to PACE requirements. However, a number of concerns were raised relating to the number of officers that attended to provide assistance in detaining the individual, the perceived attitudes (body language) of some of the additional officers, and why the individual was not moved to a more discreet location. To determine whether any further information was available, a search for the Niche record was conducted; however, this provided a negative result suggesting that no form was submitted for this particular encounter.

Following the scrutiny exercise, the issues identified were raised with the local Inspector, who confirmed that the search had been undertaken in connection with suspected local organised crime activity. The additional officers were in the immediate vicinity as a result of this and attended due to the perceived link and the subject's known history. The feedback was also escalated to the Chief Superintendent (Operations) for consideration at the next Operational Tactics Meeting and Panel members have since received an update.

Video 4: As part of Operation Sceptre, three males were located in a known hot spot for drug use. The search of the subject in question was problematic due to him appearing not to speak English. One of the younger males at the scene was asked to assist with translation. The search resulted in an NFA.

Panel members were generally satisfied that the encounter had been conducted according to PACE requirements. However, as the camera was activated after the encounter had begun, some of the 'GOWISELY' elements were missing from the footage; therefore, members were unable to confirm that the officer had provided all the required information to the individual. Minor concerns were also raised at the risk of misinterpretation of information (deliberate or otherwise) between the subject and the young male, and that they could not be sure that the subject had understood why he had been searched.

Video 5: Officers attended a report of a youth observed on CCTV attempting to steal a bike. They detained a youth matching the description and during the search located two Stanley knives in his possession. Following confirmation from their Sergeant, the youth was not arrested but conveyed home where arrangements were made for a voluntary interview for a later date. This was due to his age, to allow for collection of CCTV and that he had not been making threats with the knives.

Members were generally satisfied that the encounter had been conducted according to PACE requirements, with one comment that the lead officer had identified them as police but not given a name and collar number. Members agreed that the officers had acted appropriately for the subject's age and had demonstrated a respectful and positive attitude towards the individual.

Video 6: Officers responded to a call regarding a 30 year old male reported to be trying to fight a 70 year old male. On arrival, the younger male stated that older male had stolen his wallet. A search was conducted of the 70 year old with a negative result.

Members were satisfied that the encounter had been conducted according to PACE requirements. They also commented that the officers had treated the subject in a professional, reassuring and friendly manner, clearly explaining the elements of the search.

Gwent Police should regularly promote positive internal messages about use of BWV and positive outcomes relating to stop and search to provide reassurance to officers in using their powers. Support should continue to be provided to new officers to ensure confidence in using powers legitimately.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Public perceptions of policing and negative media coverage regarding the use of stop and search powers linked to perceived institutional racism remain a challenge to the service. Concerns over the increase in knife crime and serious violence and national changes to the use of section 60 powers² also to contribute to negative perceptions towards the police service.

Overall, Gwent Police continues to demonstrate improvement in the recording of stop and search encounters during the scrutiny period. The review of BWV footage also provided generally positive feedback and members remain impressed with the way officers are seen to engage with subjects during encounters. There was no discernible evidence of any adverse impact related to the introduction of new front-line officers in terms of quality.

Current public engagement work regarding stop and search will also help support improvement in public confidence. Following on from the 'Know Your Rights' awareness sessions delivered through the Police Schools' Liaison Programme and Positive Futures, a joint OPCC and Gwent Police stop and search engagement programme commenced in late 2018. Delivered by the Diversity and Inclusion Team, the programme engages initially with young people to raise awareness of why the police use stop and search, their rights if they are stopped, and how to make a complaint if they feel they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against. Over time, the programme will engage more broadly across our BAME communities to help better understand people's historic experiences of stop and search and to promote

² Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act allows the police to stop and search anyone in a designated area without needing reasonable grounds for suspicion if serious violence is anticipated

more positive engagement with the police.

Whilst the majority of recommendations relate to data quality, others aim to support Gwent Police's transparency around use of stop and search, improve public confidence in its use, and to promote a better understanding by the organisation of the causes of any apparent disproportionality for BAME encounters.

- 1. Gwent Police should continue to focus on improving data quality to ensure that the causes of any discrepancies or ambiguities are understood and, where possible, addressed to provide greater accuracy.**
- 2. Gwent Police should ensure that supervisor record checks are regularly carried out and include the quality of grounds to improve the standard of entries. Where grounds are found not to be satisfactory, supervisors should ensure that feedback and guidance is provided to those officers to encourage improvement. In addition, manual entries created by the CMU should be consistent with the original data submission from officers.**
- 3. Gwent Police should regularly remind officers of the importance of recording a subject's SDE to minimise the absence of ethnicity information, which provides data inaccuracy and impacts on the RDR. Where this field shows 'Officer Called Away', Gwent Police needs to be confident, as far as possible, that this is an accurate reflection of operational demand and not being completed in error.**
- 4. Gwent Police needs to understand the causes of any large variances in gender data and be able to identify where repeat stops of individuals have an impact on the figures.**
- 5. Gwent Police needs to demonstrate an understanding of the reasons behind the appearance of the age demographics as linked to operational or other activity. This will help to provide public reassurance that certain age groups are not targeted for stop and search.**
- 6. Gwent Police needs to evidence understanding of why certain ethnicities are more likely to be stop-searched for particular purposes. This will help to demonstrate that activity is justified and not linked to racial profiling. 'Mapping' operational activity showing purpose, ethnicity, location and outcome for each operation will support this and should be fed routinely into the Operational Tactics and Equality 'Legitimacy and Fairness' Meetings as appropriate.**

- 7. Gwent Police needs to ensure that data transfer processes are accurate and demonstrate understanding of the causes of any significant variances in outcomes for BAME groups.**
- 8. Gwent Police should continue to work with the community to build confidence and trust in the way police powers are used in Gwent, raising awareness of how to obtain copies or make a complaint regarding their stop and search experience.**
- 9. Gwent Police needs to demonstrate an understanding of the reasons why stop and search activity disproportionately affects the Asian community in Gwent.**
- 10. Gwent Police should regularly promote positive internal messages about use of BWV and positive outcomes relating to stop and search to provide reassurance to officers in using their powers. Support should continue to be provided to new officers to ensure confidence in using powers legitimately.**

The Stop and Search and Use of Force Action Plan will continue to provide a focus on continuous improvement. Recommendations and observations from the Scrutiny Panel reports will continue to be provided to Gwent Police for follow-up as appropriate. As part of this, Gwent Police should provide timescales linked to the recommendations within this. Progress will be monitored via the Operational Tactics and Equality Meetings as appropriate. Any thematic issues identified from either external sources or thorough Gwent Police self-assessment processes will be used to inform future Scrutiny Panel exercises.

CONTACT OFFICER

Caroline Hawkins
Policy Officer, OPCC.