



ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSURANCE BOARD

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CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coercive Powers Annual Report 2025/26 provides assurance on Gwent Police's use of Stop and Search and Use of Force powers, outlining performance, governance, scrutiny and future improvement activity. The report highlights positive progress, with stop and search volumes reducing while arrest and find rates improved, indicating a more targeted and intelligence-led approach. Use of force recording compliance also improved, providing greater transparency and oversight, while Body Worn Video compliance remained high and external scrutiny arrangements continued to strengthen. There are no financial implications or additional staffing requirements identified within the report.

The report also identifies several ongoing areas for improvement, including self-defined ethnicity recording, disproportionality monitoring, supervisory oversight, safeguarding and PPN submissions for children, BWV compliance and availability, and use of force and Taser recording standards. These issues continue to present risks relating to public confidence, data quality, legitimacy and equality considerations. Future work will focus on improving recording quality, strengthening supervision, enhancing safeguarding arrangements, maintaining robust scrutiny processes and ensuring coercive powers are used lawfully, fairly and proportionately. Overall, the report provides assurance that governance arrangements are effective and that coercive powers are increasingly intelligence-led, while recognising the need for continued improvement in a number of key areas.

CYFLWYNIAD A CHEFNDIR | INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Stop and search and use of force are important policing powers which support the prevention and detection of crime, protection of the public, protection of officers and staff, and management of immediate risk. Both powers can have a significant impact on individuals and communities and must therefore be exercised lawfully, fairly, respectfully, necessarily and proportionately.

During 2025/26 the force continued to strengthen its approach to monitoring coercive powers. This included improved performance reporting, continued scrutiny of stop and search and use of force records, greater focus on body-worn video, self-defined ethnicity, safeguarding and supervisory review, and ongoing work to address HMICFRS areas for improvement relating to the fair and effective use of coercive powers.

The force remains committed to ensuring that coercive powers are intelligence-led, lawful, necessary and proportionate. This includes ensuring officers have the confidence and training to use powers appropriately, supervisors provide meaningful oversight, and communities have opportunities to scrutinise how these powers are used.

MATERION I'W HYSTYRIED | ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

INTERNAL SCRUTINY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

During 2025/26, Gwent Police continued to strengthen its governance and scrutiny of coercive powers through the monthly Coercive Powers Performance Meeting, chaired by the strategic lead. The meeting provides oversight of stop and search, use of force, Taser, exposure of intimate parts searches, BWV compliance, data quality, disproportionality and safeguarding.

The meeting reviews performance packs, subject data, arrest and custody comparisons, outcomes, tactics, injuries, impact factors, BWV compliance and disproportionality to identify trends, outliers, areas for improvement and organisational learning. Scrutiny is further supported through Response and Pillar performance meetings. In addition, the Force Governance Team undertakes monthly dip-sampling of stop and search and use of force records to assess compliance, recording quality and opportunities for organisational learning.

Individual feedback is provided to both officers and supervisors where learning is identified, with themes escalated through the Engagement Board and wider force governance arrangements to support improved recording, supervision, fairness, proportionality and public confidence.

TRANSPARENCY AND EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE

Body-worn video remains a key transparency and learning tool. Gwent Police expects officers to activate BWV during stop and search encounters, use of force incidents and other encounters where confrontation or the use of coercive powers is likely. BWV compliance remains high and is routinely considered through internal governance and external scrutiny arrangements.

The OPCC-led Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel continues to provide independent scrutiny of stop and search and use of force.

The force has also progressed work to strengthen external scrutiny arrangements, including the development of a lived-experience forum involving young people aged between 18-22, designed to improve representation and ensure the views of those most likely to be affected by coercive powers are heard.

STOP AND SEARCH DATA

Stop and search data is drawn from the coercive powers performance packs and supporting highlight reports. The data should be interpreted alongside the force's governance activity, audit findings and known data-quality limitations, particularly in



relation to self-defined ethnicity recording and changes to Niche recording categories during the year.

During 2025/26, Gwent Police recorded **3,590 stop and searches**, a reduction of **14.8%** compared with **4,213** in 2024/25. Person stops reduced from **3,756** to **3,178**, while vehicle stops reduced from **457** to **412**. Although overall volume reduced, outcomes improved: the arrest rate increased from **8.3%** to **10.5%** and the find rate increased from **25.1%** to **30.7%**. This indicates a stronger link between search activity, intelligence-led targeting and enforcement outcomes.

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	Change / Direction
Total Stop and Searches	4,213	3,590	-14.8%
Person Stops	3,756	3,178	Reduction
Vehicle Stops	457	412	Reduction
Arrest Rate	8.3%	10.5%	Improved
Find Rate	25.1%	30.7%	Improved
BWV Camera Used	96.8%	96.1%	Broadly stable

The full-year position shows a reduction in stop and search volume alongside stronger positive outcomes. This supports the assessment that activity is becoming more targeted and intelligence-led, with a continued focus on quality, necessity and proportionality rather than volume.

BWV use remained strong throughout the reporting period, with camera use recorded in 96.1% of person stops. Monthly dip-sampling and highlight reporting identified improvements in the availability and review of BWV, but also highlighted recurring risks where footage was not uploaded, not saved correctly or where cameras were unavailable, out of power or not activated. These issues remain subject to governance oversight and officer feedback.

Disproportionality continues to require scrutiny. The overall Relative Disparity Rate fluctuated during the year and was recorded at 1.37 in the latest rolling data, with higher disproportionality for Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnicity groups. Disproportionality does not in itself prove discrimination or unlawful practice, but it requires explanation, challenge and continued analysis through internal and external scrutiny.

Ethnicity recording remains a priority area. Highlight reports identified 100% compliance for officer-defined ethnicity within sampled records, but continued gaps in self-defined ethnicity, including records where ethnicity was not stated or the reason field was left blank. Improved self-defined ethnicity recording is essential to

strengthen assurance on fairness, proportionality and the reliability of disproportionality analysis.

Safeguarding for children subject to stop and search remains under active scrutiny. During monthly audits, PPN submission rates for children were inconsistent. The force continues to reinforce a child-first approach through training, feedback, tasking and review through the multi-agency task and finish group.

Audit activity during the year also identified areas for continued improvement in the quality of recorded reasonable grounds and supervisory review. Continued improvement in supervision and feedback remains central to ensuring stop and search is lawful, fair and effective.

Geographical analysis continues to support local accountability. Newport and Caerphilly remain areas of higher stop and search demand, with Newport accounting for a significant proportion of force activity in the latest rolling data. Area-level monitoring, hotspot analysis and scrutiny of grounds, outcomes, BWV and community impact will continue to support local performance conversations and ensure activity is linked to intelligence, harm and public safety priorities.

Overall, the 2025/26 stop and search data presents a balanced picture. Volumes reduced compared with 2024/25, while arrest and find rates improved. This provides positive assurance that stop and search is becoming more targeted; however, continued risks remain around self-defined ethnicity recording, PPN submission, BWV availability and the consistency of supervisory oversight.

USE OF FORCE DATA

Use of force data is extracted from QlikView and Niche. Each officer involved in an incident is required to submit an individual use of force form. This means that the number of forms does not equate to the number of incidents or people, as multiple officers may use force in the same incident and each officer may record more than one tactic.

During 2025/26, Gwent Police recorded **6,907 use of force forms**, representing an increase of **15.8%** compared with the previous financial year, when 5,964 forms were submitted. A total of **5,360 subjects** were identified during the year, an increase of **19.3%** compared with 4,492 subjects in 2024/25. The increase in both form submissions and identified subjects is assessed as reflecting improved recording compliance and greater visibility of use of force activity across the force.

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	Change
Use of Force Forms Submitted	5,964	6,907	+15.8%
Subjects Identified	4,492	5,360	+19.3%



The force continues to monitor the relationship between arrests, custody records and submitted use of force forms to identify potential under-recording and improve compliance. Arrest comparisons, custody audits and dip-sampling remain central elements of the force's governance framework.

Compliant handcuffing remained the most used tactic throughout the reporting period and continued to account for the largest proportion of all recorded force. This is consistent with national trends and reflects the routine use of lower-level control tactics when officers are managing risk, effecting lawful arrests or maintaining control of incidents.

The predominance of lower-level tactics provides assurance that force is generally being applied proportionately and in line with operational necessity, with higher-level tactical options used less frequently and subject to enhanced oversight.

Age and ethnicity data continued to be monitored throughout the reporting period to better understand who is affected by force and to identify any emerging disparities. Young people under the age of 18 represented a relatively small proportion of all identified subjects. Monitoring arrangements remain in place to ensure appropriate governance where force is used against children and young people.

The force continued to monitor ethnicity and disproportionality through the Relative Disparity Rate methodology. The overall RDR during the reporting period was 1.7, with Black subjects continuing to demonstrate the highest level of disproportionality at 2.7. Whilst disproportionality does not in itself indicate bias or unlawful practice, it requires ongoing scrutiny and analysis. Improving self-defined ethnicity recording remains a priority to support a fuller understanding of the impact of use of force across communities.

Use of force remained primarily associated with legitimate policing purposes, most notably lawful arrest, prevention of harm and management of immediate risk. Arrest continued to be the most frequently recorded outcome following use of force, providing assurance that force is predominantly being used within expected operational contexts.

Officer, staff and subject injuries remain subject to ongoing scrutiny through the coercive powers' governance framework. Most injuries recorded during 2025/26 were assessed as minor, with no evidence of any significant increase in serious injury resulting from use of force encounters.

Monitoring injury data supports organisational learning, training development, officer wellbeing and risk management activity. Injury trends are routinely reviewed to identify emerging operational risks and to ensure officers are equipped to use force safely and proportionately.

Use of force within custody environments remains subject to enhanced scrutiny. During 2025/26, there were 465 custody use of force forms, representing a reduction of 5.1% compared with the previous financial year. Custody data continues to be

cross-referenced against use of force submissions to ensure recording compliance, improve data quality and maintain public confidence.

Taser usage continues to be governed separately through the coercive powers framework due to the nature of the tactic and associated national reporting requirements. All Taser discharges remain subject to additional scrutiny and review.

During 2025/26, the force maintained a strong focus on improving Taser recording compliance, ensuring consistency between Taser application records and submitted use of force forms. This remains an area of ongoing improvement activity.

Overall, 2025/26 data demonstrates increased recording compliance, improved visibility of use of force activity and strengthened governance arrangements. Continued areas of focus include recording compliance, self-defined ethnicity completion, disproportionality monitoring, supervisory review, custody assurance, BWV oversight and Taser recording compliance.

CYDWEITHIO | COLLABORATION

Any collaboration will be contained within the report.

CAMAU NESAF | NEXT STEPS

- Continue to monitor the consistency of stop and search records, particularly reasonable grounds, legal powers and self-defined ethnicity completion.
- Strengthen supervisory review of stop and search and use of force encounters, including meaningful review of BWV where appropriate.
- Continue to monitor stop and search outcomes, find rates, arrest rates and disproportionality to ensure activity remains intelligence-led, fair and proportionate.
- Improve PPN submission and safeguarding oversight where children are stopped and searched or subject to use of force
- Continue to monitor use of force form submissions against arrest and custody data to identify under-recording and improve compliance.
- Use external scrutiny, lived-experience forums and community feedback to test whether the data reflects public experience of fairness, respect and legitimacy.



YSTYRIAETHAU ARIANNOL | FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any financial considerations are contained within the report.

YSTYRIAETHAU PERSONÉL | PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

No additional personnel considerations are identified within this report. Delivery of the coercive powers' improvement plan will continue to require operational, analytical, training, governance and community engagement support.

YSTYRIAETHAU CYFREITHIOL | LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The lawful, necessary and proportionate use of stop and search and use of force remains essential. Unlawful or disproportionate use of coercive powers may create legal, reputational and public confidence risks. The governance and scrutiny arrangements described in this report are intended to support compliance with legislation, College of Policing guidance and the Code of Ethics.

YSTYRIAETHAU CYDRADDOLDEB A HAWLIAU DYNOL | EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

RISG | RISK

The principal risks relate to public confidence, data quality, disproportionality, inconsistent supervisory review, incomplete recording, BWV availability and safeguarding compliance for children. These risks are being managed through monthly governance, performance analysis, dip-sampling, external scrutiny, officer feedback and the coercive powers delivery plan.

ATODIADAU | ANNEXES

None to note.

BUDD Y CYHOEDD | PUBLIC INTEREST

In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'?	Yes ☒ No ☐
Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain?	Yes ☒ No ☐
If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons:	

I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting 08.09.26.

I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain for the reasons stated previously.

Signature	
Date	23.09.2026

