

# **Stop & Search, Use of Force (Coercive Powers) Annual Report 2024 - 2025**

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BWRDD ATEBOLRWYDD  
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***ACCOUNTABILITY AND  
ASSURANCE BOARD***

**24 October 2025**



## 1. *DIBEN AC ARGYMHELLIAD* | PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The purpose of this annual report is to provide a transparent view of the use of stop and search and use of force powers in Gwent over the last 12 months from April 2024 to March 2025. It will explain what Gwent Police is doing to improve the service it provides and ensure police powers are used effectively, legally, and proportionately.

## 2. *CYFLWYNIAD A CHEFNDIR* | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The use of stop and search is hugely important for protecting the public, tackling crime, and keeping our streets safe. Gwent Police understands that there is both a national and local impact of the use of stop and search on communities and individuals. The transparent and fair use of powers is a key element of maintaining public confidence.
- 2.2 The main reason we use stop and search is to allow officers to investigate their suspicions about an individual, without having to arrest. How effective stop and search is, is as much about avoiding unnecessary arrests as it is about a crime being detected. We believe a stop and search is most likely to be fair and effective when:
- The search is justified, lawful and stands up to public scrutiny.
  - The officer has genuine and objective reasonable suspicion they will find a prohibited article or item for use in crime.
  - The person understands why they have been searched and feels they have been treated fairly and with respect.
  - The search was necessary and was the most proportionate method the police officer could use to establish whether the person has such an item.
- 2.3 We welcome scrutiny and will continue to work with our communities and stakeholders to improve the quality of interactions and ensure that stop and search continues to protect the public.
- 2.4 Following the COVID pandemic and the reduction nationally and locally of the use of stop and search, the force continues to place significant focus on the use of appropriate, ethical, and proportionate stop searches. Legitimacy still remains a clear priority for Gwent Police. The sub sections which follow highlight the monitoring and scrutiny we have in place.
- 2.5 Engagement Board monthly meetings are chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable, where data about the use of stop and search and use of force powers are presented. There is a specific focus on disproportionality with the use of Police powers.
- 2.6 The Coercive Powers Scrutiny meeting is chaired by the portfolio lead, which meets monthly and actively seeks to identify information which could suggest any abuse in the use of powers or discriminatory behaviour. The group was formed in 2020 and consists of a cross section of senior police managers, training and equality and diversity officers who provide internal oversight and scrutiny on the use of coercive powers to include stop search, more thorough searches which involve the exposure of intimate parts of the body, use of Taser and use of force. The group reviews stop



search and use of force data from the most recent period carrying out careful analysis to determine any concerning trends or patterns, unacceptable use, learning opportunities, matters of policy and the examination of disproportionality.

2.7 Local Performance Meetings are held monthly in each of the workstreams whereby stop and search and use of force forms part of the strategic performance review, and scrutiny at this level includes reviewing:

- Disproportionality and trends and comparative data across areas.
- Find rates across teams, including disparity and volume and trends by individual officers.
- Activity alignment to local and force priorities.
- Individuals subjected to repeat stops.
- lawfulness of grounds recorded.

2.8 Supervisors of officers conducting stop and searches also have a responsibility to check the quality of grounds recorded on all stop and search forms and to ensure activity is proportionate. They also view body worn video records and, if necessary, take steps to address improvement such as further training or supervisory action.

2.9 Coercive Powers Operational Tactical Group has recently been reformed with additional oversight. The group is chaired by a Chief Inspector, which supports the Coercive Powers Scrutiny meeting. To assist with the continued improvement the Chief Inspector is supported by three leads for the following:

- Stop & Search
- Use of Force
- Engagement

2.10 In addition, there is also a nominated Custody lead who will feed into this group and develop bespoke areas of work needing improvement. This includes:

- Dip sampling of all stop & search and use of force records and officers Body Worn Video.
- Training and development.
- National and best practice and scanning

2.11 A summary of the last 12 months of data is as follows:

- Total Stops increased in 2024/25 over the previous from 2990 to 4180 stops.
- 54% of all stops were conducted under S23 Drugs Act, a number which is higher than in previous years.
- The largest proportion of people Stop Searched has changed from those aged between 18- 25yrs (20.1%) to those aged between 10-17yrs (24.4%). The number of under 17s being stopped is monitored closely at all scrutiny meetings.
- The overall Race Disproportionately Rate (RDR) was 1.3 meaning the ethnic heritage population in Gwent were 1.3 times more likely to be stopped than the white population. This is a reduction from the previous year of 1.6.
- The find rate for the Force as a whole increased to 25.1%.
- The use of Body Worn Video (BWV) for stop and search increased to 96.8%.



2.12 The table below highlights that overall stops have risen between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 by 28.4%.

|                      | 23/24       | 24/25       |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Person Stops</b>  | 2472        | 3727        |
| <b>Vehicle Stops</b> | 518         | 453         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>2990</b> | <b>4180</b> |

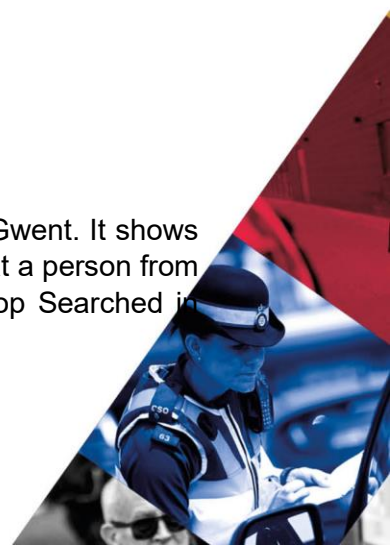
2.13 The below table shows that 'S23 Misuse of Drugs Act 1971' continues to be the most used power for stopping people, accounting for 54% of total Stop Searches carried out.

| <b>Legal Power</b> |         |
|--------------------|---------|
|                    | 2024/25 |
| S1 PACE 1984       | 1,656   |
| S23 Drugs 1971     | 2,258   |
| S47 Firearms 1968  | 51      |
| S6(3) PACE 1984    | 2       |
| Not Recorded       | 213     |

2.14 The below table shows all Person Stops by section where a known location is recorded. As can be seen, Newport accounted for 36.2% (n=1515) of all stops conducted within the Force area, which is a decrease from 2023/2024 where 41.4% of all stops were conducted in Newport. However, the actual number of stops has increased.

| <b>Stops by Section 24/25</b> |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
|                               | 2024/25 |
| Blaenau Gwent                 | 369     |
| Caerphilly                    | 608     |
| Monmouthshire                 | 529     |
| Newport                       | 1,515   |
| Torfaen                       | 496     |
| Other                         | 663     |

2.15 Below is the breakdown RDR (Race Disproportionality Rating) for Gwent. It shows that overall, the Force has a RDR of 1.3 for the year. This means that a person from the ethnic heritage community was 1.3 times more likely to be Stop Searched in



Gwent during 2024/25 than someone from a white background. This is a decrease from 2023/2024 where the RDR rate was 1.6.

| RDR     |         |
|---------|---------|
|         | 2024/25 |
| Asian   | 1.4     |
| Black   | 5.2     |
| Mixed   | 1.3     |
| Other   | 0.4     |
| Overall | 1.3     |

2.16 The below table highlights the find rates for all Stops carried out during 2024/2025 and indicates that overall, on 25.1% of occasions the item searched for was recovered. This is an increase on the previous year's data where the find rate was 24.8%.

| Find Rate       |         |
|-----------------|---------|
|                 | 2024/25 |
| Primary Found   | 748     |
| Secondary Found | 189     |
| Person Stops    | 3,727   |
| Total Finds     | 937     |
| Find Rate (%)   | 25.1%   |

2.17 As can be seen in the below table, BWV compliance during 2024/25 force wide was 96.8%, increasing from 94.5% in 2023/2024. The small number of instances where BWV was not used, camera out of power was the most prevalent reason. The benchmark for HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and the Fire Service) is 90%. Gwent Police consistently performs above this benchmark.

| BWV                 |         |
|---------------------|---------|
|                     | 2024/25 |
| Camera Faulty       | 27      |
| Camera Out of Power | 39      |
| No Camera Available | 34      |
| Officer Discretion  | 20      |
| Camera Used         | 3,607   |
| Person Stops        | 3,727   |
| Camera Used (%)     | 96.8%   |

2.18 EIP searches were formally known as Strip Searches and the language has been changed to consider the sensitivities aligned to the previous term. The force closely monitors the number of EIP searches of children. In 2024/2025 there were 5 EIP searches recorded of a child under 18 years.



- 2.19 Section 60 powers allow a constable in uniform to stop and search any pedestrian, or anything carried by them, or any vehicle, its driver, and any passenger, for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments. The constable can make any search they think fit, whether they have any grounds to suspect that the person or vehicle is carrying the above items.
- 2.20 Such wide powers must be used only where necessary and in a proportionate manner. Their use must therefore be authorised, and their geographical scope and duration must be limited. Engagement with Key Community members must take place at the earliest opportunity to assess the impact of S60 Powers on the community.
- 2.21 This power is very rarely used in Gwent and in 2024/2025 the powers were authorised on one occasion following a serious assault, which involved the use of a knife and subsequent tensions and threats.
- 2.22 Following the conclusion of the authorisation this matter was placed before the Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel, which is an independent panel made up of OPCC, Independent Advisory Group, Youth Offending Service, and the Strategic lead for the Police. The incident inclusive of authorisation and engagement was reviewed along with the searches that took place under this power. In terms of early engagement with key community members, this was deemed positive and gave the opportunity for the Police to understand both the feeling of the community and any existing tensions. The authorisation was deemed appropriate in the circumstances and the searches that took place under this authorisation were also deemed appropriate.
- 2.23 In 2024/2025 there were a total of 6,078 forms which is a slight decrease on the previous year where there was a total of 6,371 use of force forms submitted, a decrease of 4.9% This data is closely monitored at internal governance meetings. The volume of forms does not correlate to the number of people where force has been used. Multiple officers may attend an incident and submit a form separately for Use of Force. The number of actual people who had force used against them in 2024/2025 was 5338.
- 2.24 In the below table, of the 6,078 use of force forms submitted in 2024/2025, 4,789 (89.7%) stated that the subject was of White ethnicity and 579 (10%) forms stated the subject was from an Ethnic Heritage group. This is based on Officer perceived ethnicity. However, the force is now able to access Self-Defined ethnicity data, and this should give a more accurate picture in 2025/2026.
- 2.25 The below table is based on all tactics used by all officers. As already stated, multiple officers may use force during the same incident. In addition, each officer may use more than one tactic. Officers must fill out the form in the order the tactics were used.
- 2.26 As in previous years, in 2024/2025 the most used tactic was Compliant Handcuffing, which was used a total of 3113 times. Unarmed Skills was the second most used tactic and was used 1563 times, followed by Non-Compliant Handcuffing which was used 1489 times.



| All Tactics Used            |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
|                             | 2024/25 |
| AEP drawn                   | 23      |
| AEP Used                    | 2       |
| Baton drawn                 | 7       |
| Baton Used                  | 3       |
| C.E.D                       | 472     |
| Compliant handcuffing       | 3,113   |
| Dog bite                    | 2       |
| Dog Deployed                | 7       |
| Firearms aimed              | 35      |
| Firearms fired              | 0       |
| Ground restraint            | 0       |
| Irritant spray              | 680     |
| Irritant spray - CS drawn   | 16      |
| Irritant spray - PAVA drawn | 18      |
| Irritant spray - PAVA used  | 65      |
| Limb/body restraints        | 106     |
| No Tactic Recorded          | 631     |
| Non-compliant handcuffing   | 1,489   |
| Other/improvised            | 556     |
| Shield                      | 2       |
| Spit and bite guard         | 134     |
| Unarmed skills              | 1,563   |

2.27 Due to updates to the data processing methodology there may be a difference in the figures of up to 2% when compared to other data covering this time frame.

2.28 In 2024/2025 the number of use of force forms submitted for Taser use was 438 and this related to 402 people. Regarding Taser use it is helpful to explain the different types which is depicted in the table below:

| Highest Use  |         |
|--------------|---------|
|              | 2024/25 |
| Drawn        | 140     |
| Aimed        | 62      |
| Red-dot      | 198     |
| Arced        | 4       |
| Discharged   | 33      |
| Not Recorded | 1       |

2.29 As already stated in this report we are now able to access data on self-defined ethnicity. This will be included in the annual report for 2025/2026.

### 3. MATERION I'W HYSTYRIED | ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Nationally HMICFRS have identified there is an over representation of ethnic heritage and the use of stop and search and have recommended that all forces understand their data and if there is a disparity the force is clear on why.

### 4. CYDWEITHIO | COLLABORATION

- 4.1 Gwent Police has issued personal Body-worn video cameras (BWV) to all of our frontline officers and staff and there is an expectation that recording is activated whenever coercive powers are used or when attending incidents likely to involve confrontation. The force reviews the footage from such incidents both internally and via the showing of randomly selected footage to the external independent Legitimacy and Scrutiny Panel.
- 4.2 The Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel is chaired by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and is held on a quarterly basis. Members of the panel include OPCC, Police, Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and Youth Offending Service. The panel provide feedback to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and to Gwent Police on the use of Police powers regarding stop and search and use of force. The Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel review records and video footage including stop and search, Taser use and other use of force. The panel provide feedback to Gwent Police on any identified training or development gaps.
- 4.3 We have invested in training all our frontline officers and providing practical guidance in line with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for using powers to stop and search. Training is provided through the completion of online material but reinforced with ongoing personal briefings to frontline staff during force training days.
- 4.4 Multi-Agency Task & Finish Group – Police Protection Notices (PPN's) was implemented following joint working around searches of children, specifically those searches with resulted in the exposure of intimate parts of the body (EIP). The group consists of representatives from all agencies that are part of the Local Safeguarding Board (LSB) following the implementation in October 2024 of PPN's submission for every child who is stopped and searched. The group track both quality and volume of PPN's.

### 5. CAMAU NESAF | NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Chief Supt Jason White is the new lead for Coercive Powers and a focus within the Coercive Powers Scrutiny meeting will be upon the AFI's in relation to ethnicity data and any disparity in use of coercive powers.
- 5.2 Work is underway to ensure there is sufficient varied representatives, including lived experience within external scrutiny panels such as the IAG and Youth IAG to ensure





the voices of those most likely to be impacted by coercive powers is heard to improve public confidence and processes.

## 6. *YSTYRIAETHAU ARIANNOL* | FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 There are possible financial implications in terms of unlawful use of coercive powers through civil legal routes and also the impact on public trust and confidence.

## 7. *YSTYRIAETHAU PERSONEL* | PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 None

## 8. *YSTYRIAETHAU CYFREITHIOL* | LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Joint Legal Services are involved with any unlawful use of coercive powers.

## 9. *YSTYRIAETHAU CYDRADDOLDEB A HAWLIAU DYNOL* | EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

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

9.2 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.

## 10. *RISG* | RISK

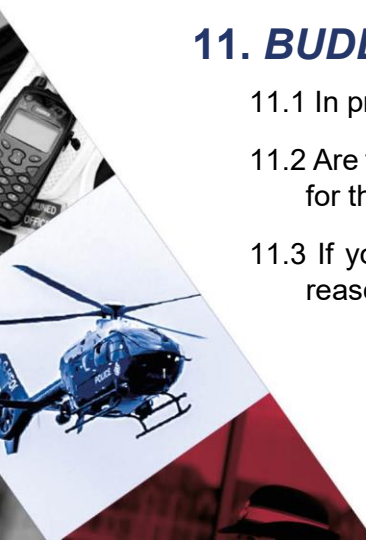
10.1 None

## 11. *BUDD Y CYHOEDD* | PUBLIC INTEREST

11.1 In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'? **Yes**

11.2 Are the contents of this report, observations, and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? **Yes**

11.3 If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons: **(Not applicable)**



## 12. *AWDUR YR ADRODDIAD* | REPORT AUTHOR

12.1 T/Chief Superintendent Leanne Brustad

## 13. *PRIF SWYDDOG ARWEINIOL* | LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

13.1 T/ACC Vicki Townsend

## 14. *ATODIADAU* | ANNEXES

(None)

## 15. *CYMERADWYAETH LLYWODRAETHU A BRIF SWYDDOG* | GOVERNANCE BOARD AND CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

15.1 This report has been presented to the following oversight board: **Operational Efficiency Board**

Meeting chaired by: **DCS Andrew Tuck**

Meeting date: **25.07.25**

Actions or amendments arising from meeting: **None.**

15.2 This report has been presented to the **Scrutiny Executive Board.**

Meeting chaired by: **DCC Nicola Brain**

Meeting date: **05 August 2025**

Actions or amendments arising from meeting: **None**

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

Meeting date: 14.08.25

15.4 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain for the reasons stated in 11.3

Dyddiad | Date: 14 Aug

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