

I would like to request the following information- please can you answer **every** question and sub-question concisely and as I have requested:

Q1) Does your police force, as of the current date, have an Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel?

The West Midlands policing geography is covered by 8 NPU's which are the local policing units and responsible for the delivering of neighbourhood policing, each of these NPU's has an active scrutiny panel (in some cases more than 1 panel) that comes together at regular intervals (at their discretion) to scrutinise WMP officers use of Stop & Search powers as well as times when officers have used force. In addition to these panels some other more specialised force departments also have scrutiny panels, with more departments such as custody looking to create a scrutiny panel in addition to the lay visitors they have. These panels have always been conducted in person and at a police station, unfortunately due to CoVID the ability to do these panels in this way has not been practicable. Understanding the importance of this process we have developed a process whereby scrutiny panels have been able to run virtually using technological platforms, some of these scrutiny panels run as a standalone meeting whilst others form part of the Independent advisory group (IAG).

Internal scrutiny of officers Stop & Search and Use of Force is also carried out through formalised review processes and reflective practice. This is conducted across the force by individual supervisors, the catalyst for some will be a formal trigger review process as is the case with use of force whilst others will be identified through departmental service improvement meetings where managers independently review others teams.

Unfortunately I do not have the ability to give a figure of exactly how many scrutiny panels and internal reviews have been conducted during this time, as this information is not currently collated.

1a) If yes: How often do they meet? I) What date (DD/MM/YYYY) was the panel first operational? II) How many of the people currently on the panel are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background? (Could you also tell me the total number of people on the panel as of the current date).

There are numerous scrutiny panels within west midlands police. For example:

Formal commission meeting (PCC)

Stop/search scrutiny panels for all neighbourhood policing areas (NPU)

Young people's scrutiny panel

These are an example of some of the panels, the list is not exhaustive.

Each panel is run differently and dates / times are often set to meet the availability of the persons attending (members of the public / volunteers), as many have jobs and have been impacted by covid-19.

The ethnicities of the attendees of such panels and dates that they meet is information that we do not currently collate, and as a result each NPU would need to be contacted, and then each individual contacted to see how they view their ethnicity. This would exceed costs for the purposes of FOI as these panels are often attended by different people each time that dip in and out of the meetings depending on their availability. The information would

therefore not only vary but would not be accurate. To locate this information would exceed the 18 hours' time frame for the purposes of the Freedom of information act. We can however, say though that there is a cross section of the community and the majority of the attendees are of an ethnic background.

Attendees are volunteers and are not selected or handpicked by West Midlands Police.

1b) If your force does have such a panel, are panel members made to review a sample of stop and search records and related body-worn video footage at meetings? This can be a simple Yes or No answer.

Nobody is "made" to view a stop search record. There are a random selection of 200 stop searches provided, and the panel select a few numbers, and these are played to the panel and reviewed.

Panel members are volunteers and always have the choice whether to view or not to view.

1c) If your force does have such a panel, what sort of mandatory training do panel members receive in order to perform their role?

There is no training given. West Midlands Police want the perception of the public from their opinion, as they see it through their eyes. If we gave training then this would not be an independent review.

1d) If your force does not currently have an operational Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel, have official plans been drawn up that would see the implementation of one in the future? (If so, please specify when)

Not applicable

Q2) Does your force provide body-worn video cameras to your officers? If so, to which ones, and is its use mandatory for specific activities (for example, but not limited to: during stop and searches- please specify)?

All officers that have public facing role, ie response, CID, Neighbourhood Policing.

We use the Axon Body 2 and Axon Flex 2 cameras – mainly the body cameras.

Force policy is that the following are mandatory recordings:

Mandatory recordings.

The following are mandatory for officers to record:

- All stop and searches
- All use of force (where practicable)
- All use of spit hoods
- All use of Taser (where practicable)
- All Domestic Incidents (unless it can be justified by the officer that obtaining best evidence requires the camera to be turned off)

- When deployed to a Mental Health Institution (see below) notwithstanding that the Mental Health Unit (Use of Force) Act 2018 has yet to take effect
- If recordings could not be made before a spontaneous incident, recording should commence as soon as it is possible to do so to take advantage of the pre-record function

2a) If they are indeed provided to officers, between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2021, how often did your police force review body-worn video footage as part of your internal monitoring and external scrutiny of stop and search and use of force?

Internal scrutiny of officers Stop & Search and Use of Force is also carried out through formalised review processes and reflective practice. This is conducted across the force by individual supervisors, the catalyst for some will be a formal trigger review process as is the case with use of force whilst others will be identified through department's service improvement (SIM) meetings where managers independently review others teams.

Unfortunately I do not have the ability to give a figure of exactly how many scrutiny panels and internal reviews have been conducted during this time. This is because it is down to individual supervisors how often they review and record.