

Public Protection and Enforcement PDS Committee—8th December 2020

Question from Cllr Kathy Bance to the Police for Oral response with answers from the police:

With the release of the Independent Office for Police Conduct's report which identifies eleven opportunities for the Met to improve on stop and search, can the police confirm that they will be adopting all these recommendations as below?

1) Taking steps to ensure that their officers better understand how their use of stop and search powers impacts individuals from groups that are disproportionately affected by those powers

Yes: The BCU has already begun training staff with unconscious bias training. This new training package is being adopted across the Met now as best practice. Because of costs, the training will be phased through next year to front line staff.

2) Ensuring there is a structure in place so leaders and supervisors are proactively monitoring and supervising the use of stop and search powers and addressing any concerning trends or patterns/ sharing any identified good practice at; individual, unit or organisational level

Yes: CMG monitoring of stop and search, including body worn video clips is now taking place again after a 12-month lapse. Supervisors in the command will soon have specific stop/search supervision actions as part of individual PDR performance objectives and the compliance of supervision is now monitored weekly.

3) Taking steps to ensure that assumptions, stereotypes and bias (conscious or unconscious) are not informing or affecting officers' decision making when carrying out stop and searches, especially when using these powers on people from Black communities

Yes: as well as new training, supervisors monitor individual officers and dip sample body worn video to ensure compliance and professionalism as well as identify training needs. The lead to the BCU (CI KNIGHT) for stop and search also monitors complaints and any adverse findings to ensure learning is captured.

4) Ensuring officers are not relying on the smell of cannabis alone when deciding to stop and search someone and use grounds based upon multiple objective factors

The smell of cannabis alone should never be grounds in itself. The circumstances have to be taken into account, so for example the smell of cannabis around a group may lead to a conversation and the concealment of what is suspected to be a cannabis cigarette by one of the group may then mean one is searched.

5) Ensuring officers carrying out stop and searches always use the principles of GOWISELY and engage in respectful, meaningful conversations with the persons being stopped

Yes: The use of GOWISELY should be embedded on every search. The video lag of BWV does mean that this may be missed and training is rolling out with new cameras where the lag of the videos sound is reduced.

6) Ensuring stop and search training incorporates a section on de-escalation, including the roles of supervisors and colleagues in controlling the situation and providing effective challenge

New training rolled out across the met includes inputs on de-escalation.

7) Ensuring officers exercising stop and search powers are ending the encounters once their suspicion has been allayed, in a manner that minimises impact and dissatisfaction, unless there are further genuine and reasonable grounds for continued suspicion

Again this is embedded into new training rollout.

8) Ensuring officers exercising stop and search powers are not using restraint/handcuffs as a matter of routine and are only using these tools when reasonable, proportionate and necessary

Use of force is being monitored closely in all encounters. Each use is a decision for the officer based on the individual circumstances of the incident and as such blanket communication on use of handcuffs or powers to detain without supporting training won't be undertaken locally. When senior leaders discuss stop and search with teams, the use of handcuffs is a part of this communication to reiterate proportionate use.

9) Amending stop and search records to include a question about whether any kind of force has been used. The records should also state where information about the kind of force will be recorded

This is being undertaken centrally.

10) Ensuring officers are following APP and MPS policy and switching on their body-worn video camera early enough to capture the entirety of a stop and search interaction

The issue with BWV is a 30 second lag on sound on old cameras. The BCU has been first to roll out new technology cameras with less lag and communication includes very clear message regarding early switch on. BCU compliance for BWV use is over 90% on stop and searches.

11) Ensuring supervisors are taking a proactive role in monitoring and ensuring compliance with body-worn video APP and MPS policy.

Again this will feature as a performance indicator for supervisors moving forward into next year. Commander Connors is looking at how this can be implemented across every BCU in Metpol.