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Cc: HMICFRS

Our Ref: JC/jpi

3 June 2021

Disproportionate use of police powers: a spotlight on stop and search and the use of force

I am writing to you in response to the above HMICFRS inspection report published earlier this year. Some of the most intrusive and contentious police powers are those that allow the police to use force and to stop and search people and I welcome this reports continued focus on the disproportionality in the use of these police powers.

The force has carried out a self-assessment against the recommendations set out in the report and has identified that it is making progress in all the areas, but that further work is required to fully implement the recommendations.

While West Mercia has recently been highlighted as including some best practice within OST training to enhance conflict management communication, the force will fully review its current and planned content in order to identify opportunities to improve.

Stop and Search and Use of Force SPOC's on local policing areas already examine a number of records a month including reviewing body worn video (BWV) and report back to individual officers directly and via a network of ambassadors (officers who have been selected and help mentor and deliver information to their colleagues). In response to the report findings, all relevant inspectors have been asked to conduct 5 reviews of BWV from officers on their teams. They will ensure that the officers involved are debriefed and good practice identified as well as learning points. The findings from this review will be scrutinised by the Strategic Stop and Search Board to ensure compliance and to identify opportunities to develop further.

The force has established IAG's who are very engaged and proactive across the force area. Part of their role includes regular dip sampling of BWV footage, with their findings reviewed by the force's tactical lead for any themes or issues.

To further strengthen the independent external scrutiny of BWV, I am reassured that the force is establishing a new Stop Search/Use of Force Panel to allow for a more tailored approach to this scrutiny. It is intended that the new the panel will be more representative of people who are likely to be searched and the members will be allowed to choose records for themselves to examine to show a truly transparent focus.

IAG leads are invited to and regularly attend Stop and Search and Use of Force board meetings, providing external scrutiny to both meetings, however the force is reviewing how to further improve engagement and transparency on its website and through the use of social media.

Self-defined ethnicity is already recorded on the forces stop search system. Where a person chooses not to provide their ethnicity, there is a separate field for officer-defined ethnicity to be included. The officer's definition of ethnicity is monitored as part of the Stop and Search Board meeting focusing on officers recording *unknown* and increasing confidence to make sure they ask this question.

It is clear from the Force's self-assessment against the report recommendations that there are improvements to be made. I will maintain my oversight at both the Stop and Search and Use of Force Boards to monitor progress against the recommendations and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure the changes identified are implemented so that West Mercia's communities can remain confident in the legitimacy of their force.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

John Campion
Police & Crime Commissioner
West Mercia