



**Police and Crime Commissioner  
for Dyfed Powys**

**Community Scrutiny Panel Report**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

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## Introduction

The Dyfed Powys Community Scrutiny Panel plays a key role in providing independent oversight and constructive challenge to policing practices, with a particular focus on areas such as Stop and Search and Use of Force. Its purpose is to enhance transparency, promote accountability, and help build public trust and confidence in policing by involving members of the community in scrutiny activity.

Consideration has been given to alternative and proportionate approaches to scrutiny, including the adoption of a risk-based approach to engagement, to maintain effective oversight while broadening access and participation. This supports the objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan to increase the diversity of volunteer groups and ensure they are fully representative of the communities they serve.

## Guidance on Use of Force and Stop & Search

To support the Panel's understanding of the use of force and stop and search footage, a Police Sergeant (PS) from the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) delivered an input on the purpose of use of force powers in keeping the peace and upholding the law, emphasising the importance of justification for their use.

The Panel were reminded of the range of use of force measures open to police officers which include:

- Handcuffing
- Shield
- Unarmed skills
- Irritant spray
- Ground restraint
- Body restraint
- Taser
- Firearms
- Spit and bite guard
- Dog deployment
- Baton
- Tactical communication
- Other / improvised

In addition, the PS provided input on police powers that must be complied with in relation to the use of force and stop and search, including:

- Common Law
- Section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967

- Section 1 & 117 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)
- Section 135 & 136 of the Mental Health Act (2005)
- Section 5 & 6 Mental Capacity Act (2005).
- Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act

In addition to the above, the PS also emphasised the importance of the Panel to understand the perception of the officer (consider what they know at the time), assess whether the application of use of force was appropriate and was use of force considered as a last resort.

For stop and search, the PS delivered an input on the acronym GOWISELY:

- **G**rounds – reason for the search
- **O**bject – what is being searched for
- **W**arrant card – if not in uniform
- **I**dentify – officer name & collar number
- **S**tation – officer's base
- **E**ntitlement – copy of the record
- **L**egal power – legislation being searched under
- **Y**ou – explain you are being detained for a search

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## Summary of findings

### Positive

- Officers displayed excellent patience, compassion and temperament throughout each video observed.
- Officers were deemed to have followed legislation and guidance. There was no indication of malpractice.

### Area for Improvement

- The use of PAVA in record 1 was questioned alongside certain officers' risk assessment.
- The grounds for a historic search were not deemed thorough enough for Stop and Search record 3.
- Further consideration is required on location when a subject is stop and searched to protect their dignity and respect in record 4.
- Officers should consider the use of language line when dealing with subjects who do not speak English as their first language, to ensure they understand their rights.

## CSP Findings on Use of Force

### Record 1

<b>Circumstance:</b> <i>A shoplifter has been apprehended at supermarket. The associate of the shoplifter is intoxicated and is obstructing officers in their arrest. Officers are required to use force to reprimand the associate.</i>	
<b>Observation from the Panel</b>	<b>Force response</b>
It was difficult to know what happened. There were so much shouting and the Body Worn Video (BWV-footage of the incident) seemed to only focus on the arrested/subject.	<i>From a safety point of view, the officer should have turned to face the threat. It would seem that the officer was concerned with subject being arrested whilst the colleague was handling the threat. These officers are young in service and may not be aware of this.</i>
Did the other officer have their BWV? There did not appear to be enough footage to judge if the force used was reasonable.	<i>Yes, the other officer did have their BWV, and I wanted to show the video with the most amount of footage. Unfortunately, the other officer's BWV was too close to the subject and therefore would not have been helpful to the Panel.</i>
How long does PAVA (incapacitant) spray last for and why was it used?	<i>Approximately 30 minutes, with open air and water to clean the fluid from the subject's eyes. In my opinion, PAVA should not have been used; however, it is difficult to restrain someone and not injure them. I would have liked to have heard "stop resisting or I'll spray you". Sometimes this is enough of a deterrent to prevent the actual use of the spray which is very uncomfortable for the officers and the subject. In this instance, the subject</i>

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	<p><i>was already on the floor and therefore negated the requirement for PAVA in my opinion. In the officer's learning and development, they are taught to assess their surroundings for risk, assess whether their colleague is in danger and judge what would the ramification be of backing away whilst awaiting support from another unit who were nearby.</i></p>
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## Record 2

<b>Circumstance:</b> <i>A female has been apprehended after running away from officers. The female subject is surrounded by her friends and other members of public who are interfering with the arrest.</i>	
<b>Observation from the Panel</b>	<b>Force response</b>
The arrested female was requesting for a member of public to stop recording via their mobile phone. Officers should have reacted for her welfare, dignity and safeguarding by asking the member of public to stop filming.	<p><i>It is not a public offence to record someone on their phone in a public place. The member of public was advising that this was being done to protect the female, and officers are unfortunately familiar with encountering this issue.</i></p> <p><i>I would agree that officers appeared to ignore the request and the member of the public. From my point of view, at the very least, the officers could have asked the member of public to stop recording as I agree with you, this was an escalating factor.</i></p>
Why was the female handcuffed to the rear? She stated that she was in discomfort.	<i>Officers did show that they were turning her round and offered to re-adjust her handcuffs to make her more comfortable. When an individual is in pain, they will enter a fight or flight mindset which can put officers and the public at risk. Officers need to recognise this as a potential escalating factor too. One consideration I would have for handcuffing at the front, is that this</i>

	<p><i>could pose as a risk if the female decided to use the handcuffs as a weapon</i></p> <p><i>As officers were transporting her from some distance to the police van, I would agree that handcuffing her from the front would have made this process more comfortable for the female as well as the officers.</i></p>
<p>There were many voices heard in the footage. Why did officers listen to the arrested female for so long?</p>	<p><i>I can see that officers are attempting to de-escalate circumstances and the person is rightly under their care; however, once officers were escorting the female to the van, they should have provided more force to quicken the process.</i></p> <p><i>I thought officers did quite well to listen to the female subject and her friends who potentially didn't have the capacity to understand what was happening. Had the officers not taken this approach, the circumstances could have been more volatile than what transpired.</i></p>
<p>Is there another way to arrest someone without handcuffing them. Ultimately, this is a young female; was force necessary?</p>	<p><i>Officers must justify the use of handcuffs. There are a number of elements that officers must consider when applying handcuffs that include the risks, the unknown, compliance, body language and/or aggression. Officers in this instance believe that this female poses an unknown risk to herself and other with a history of</i></p>

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	<p><i>running away. She is known to have tendencies to lash out and a history of self-harm and could be at risk of concealing a sharp item. Ultimately, officers are trying to stop her to try to ensure she receives the right support in a safe space.</i></p>
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## CSP Findings on Stop and Search

Record 3

<b>Circumstance:</b> <i>A young black male is stop and searched in a supportive accommodation.</i>	
<b>Observation from the Panel</b>	<b>Force response</b>
Does a hat constitute as outer clothing?	<i>In my view, it is outer clothing unless it is used for religious purposes such as a turban for someone who is Sikh or a hijab for a practicing female Muslim.</i>
Why was there someone there watching the stop and search being conducted?	<i>The location is in supported living for juveniles. The attendee was a support worker, who was asked to be there by the juvenile male.</i>
Is there an issue that the premise of the search is being conducted from a historic issue as opposed to present knowledge?	<i>The information that has required the officer to conduct the search has to be recent. You cannot stop and search someone based on history, and this is why police powers in this area must be treated carefully. Unfortunately, there is no official definition for the term 'recent' by its defined meaning. With regards to the context of this instance, I would assess that the grounds are not thorough enough.</i>

## Record 4

<b>Circumstance:</b> <i>An intoxicated female has been alleged to have taken an illegal substance in a public house.</i>	
<b>Observation from the Panel</b>	<b>Force response</b>
Would the officers be allowed to search female's hair band?	<i>Yes, they are. Male officers are also able to search female subjects, but they must display caution and be conscious of being in a public place. Stop and searches will not pickup concealed items in the bra or underwear of female subjects, as these are intimate parts.</i>
What is the law when someone appears to be incapacitated? Can they still be stop and searched, as they will not understand the grounds of their search?	<i>By law, officers need to have legal power by giving the information to the subject even if they are intoxicated. The justification should be written in the grounds which when the subject is sober, they will have access to those records of the search.</i>
Could the officers have taken the female to a more secluded area? It was done in front of the public house and in the street in front of everybody.	<i>There is nothing specific in law that states that they have to do this; however, I agree, there should have been some consideration for the females decency and dignity by offering to take her to a private room in the public house or they could have considered moving around the corner out of public sight.</i>
Is there a purpose to check for someone for small substances as opposed to targeting the suppliers of drugs?	<i>The Force has a priority team for serious Organised Crime Groups (OCG) to tackle the issue surrounding the suppliers of drugs.</i>



	<p><i>Ultimately, officers have a legal responsibility to handle low level drugs too. Fundamentally, the substance that is alleged, is an illegal substance. The police are now moving in the direction where we will look to use alternative disposal methods that include a community caution, which encourages diversion or intervention to prevent future use.</i></p> <p><i>The local Neighbourhood Police Team has a specific focus to deal with low level crime as it is seen that these low-level incidents have a way of impacting the community over time and it is important for the police to be seen to be proactive in resolving these issues such as substance misuse.</i></p>
<p>If someone was transgender, how would the police handle this with regards to a stop and search?</p>	<p><i>Officers must establish if the subject is a transgender or transvestite as these are two different things. If officers encounter someone who is dressed as a woman but appears to be male, officers should ask how do they identify themselves. This will correspond which officer gender will conduct the search.</i></p>
<p>Does every S&amp;S get recorded on BWV and are officers able to delete footage?</p>	<p><i>Force policy determines that every stop and search must be recorded via BWV. The footage is saved for 30 days and must be logged and tagged for 7 years.</i></p> <p><i>BWV is constantly recording and it records 30 seconds before you turn it on. It is for the protection of officers</i></p>

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	<p><i>and members of the public. The issues officers encounter is that routinely BWV is triggered to record automatically every time there is taser pulled out or a blue light is triggered in a vehicle; therefore, it is not unusual for 30-40 videos uploaded per shift for officers. They must recall to tag and save the footage after each shift which does not always happen.</i></p>
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## Record 5

<b>Circumstance:</b> <i>Ethnic Minority male has been stopped in a vehicle on an A road. The male does not speak English as his first language. The vehicle and person have been stopped due to the smell of an illegal substance.</i>	
<b>Observation from the Panel</b>	<b>Force response</b>
Why was the officer searching the car without the driver being present?	<i>There are two occupants. The driver has already been arrested after being identified concealing a prohibitive item. The person observed was the passenger and this person should be treated separately to the driver; and therefore, does not need consent to search the car.</i>
Clearly an issue with the language barrier. Officer is clear that the male is not understanding of what is being said. Officer was giving GOWISELY irrespective of male not understanding it.	<i>I agreed with this point. I see no value in giving someone their legal rights if they do not understand it. In the officer's tablets, there is a function to call language line which will require the subject to specify their preferred language. This should have been considered by the officer. I hear many instances where officers will say, "do you understand?" It is clear that nothing is being understood, and I consider that this would be good feedback to the officer involved.</i>
What personal safety should officers consider protecting themselves? Could the officer have searched the male closer to the boot of the vehicle?	<i>The term that officers are taught is called 'contact and cover'. The gold standard is to dynamically risk assess the subject all the time. There should be a shadowing officer maintaining line of sight constantly. Ideally, I would want two officers to discuss with a subject</i>

	<p><i>removed from the vehicle, one to lead discussions and the other at the side of the subject; and if possible, a third conducting the vehicle search. However, as a rural Force, this isn't always possible.</i></p> <p><i>The manner with how the search was conducted is based on personal preference. There is always an element of risk when you are conducting police powers on members of the public. In this instance, there is no justification to handcuff the subject as he has not posed a risk and officers have to manage this.</i></p>
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### General feedback from the Panel to the Force:

Observation from the Panel	Force response
<p>I think officers must have an incredible amount of patience.</p>	<p><i>We are entrusted by the members of public to treat everyone fairly. This how we must maintain to build trust and confidence.</i></p>
<p>Within all the three stop and searches viewed, the individuals appeared subdued. It must be difficult to conduct a search when someone is not compliant.</p>	<p><i>Whilst it is a challenge, legislation and public trust means that we must endeavour to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Officers are trained and undertake</i></p>

	<p><i>this responsibility when they enrol, and police powers must always be implemented with caution.</i></p>
<p>Are you satisfied with the level of police responses/resources available?</p> <p>I've personally encountered an incident where one person, with no background in crime, had four police vehicles attend their home, this seems disproportionate?</p>	<p><i>This would depend on the risk assessment, the circumstances, and also, to maximise our resources, sometimes officers drive a vehicle single crewed. Officers will offer support for risk. The number of vehicles present is not representative of how many officers are actually present.</i></p> <p><i>Historically, officers used to attend everything; however, technology has improved to allow a reduction in demand. Systems are in place to determine whether resources are required to attend.</i></p> <p><i>I am personally seeing a big resurgence with our Neighbourhood Police Team who are integral to solving our community problems. Additional funding is being pushed into that area and I suspect that this will be observed by the community.</i></p>

## General feedback from the Panel regarding policing:

Observation from the Panel	Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) response
<p>Is there a concern surrounding policing being under-funded is this why was the Aberystwyth police station not open today.</p>	<p>Overview of funding across England &amp; Wales- Wales has been better funded in contrast to the English Forces. Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) have more police officers than it ever has, the Neighbourhood Police Team, that includes PCSOs, have been retained, whereas some English Forces have abolished them due to their financial difficulties.</p> <p>DPP also provide a lot of resilience in police staff, who will support officers to remain operational.</p> <p>The challenges are surrounding the duration of recruitment when you consider the application process, the interview, the vetting clearance required, which impacts the support resource function.</p> <p>Currently the Force has 25% on restricted duties or are on sick. Some of these are due to pregnancy; however, there needs to be a deeper understanding of what is restricting certain officers from duty which is currently the focus.</p>

Is the funding agreed by the Senedd?

No, it is from the Home Office and is also from taxation. Around 56% of DPP budget is taxed which due to inflation, this has contributed to the rise of taxes in recent times. As of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026, the Police and Crime Commissioner announced the policing precept for 2026-27, which announced an increase in the policing element of council tax by 7.47% (around £26.95 a year for a Band D property) to help fund local policing, supporting investment in frontline services, improved response times and greater focus on prevention.