



Stop & Search Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel is to improve the trust and confidence of communities. It will provide Sussex Police and the wider public with transparent and independent quality assurance and scrutiny around the use of Stop and Search powers.

2. Primary Functions

Primary functions will include interrogating disproportionality of district level data, assessing the lawfulness of grounds provided by officers, and outcomes of activity. The Scrutiny panel will report direct into the Local police accountability board/ Force Legitimacy Board, and make recommendations where appropriate.

3. Membership

Membership will comprise interested parties across Sussex's communities. The panel will be facilitated by representatives from the local Policing and Diversity teams. To promote transparency and independence, once established the chair will be a member of the public; supported by the "police lead". The chair will be appointed for a period of one year and this will be reviewed annually. Key Stakeholders will include representatives from the external Race Advisory group and the OSPCC.

4. Remit and responsibilities of the Panel

All members will be provided with a detailed information regarding the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme, and specific laws around the use of this power. Members will also be provided with support for quality assuring grounds and outcomes.

The key functions of the panel are to scrutinise:

1 Disproportionality of district level data: presentation of force wide statistical data around stop and search will enable panel members to select a district for in depth scrutiny at subsequent meetings.

2 The lawfulness of grounds: Members will scrutinise random sample of stop search records using a calibrated framework to assess lawfulness. Grounds falling below the required standard will be reported to the Legitimacy/Local Policing Board, and generate notification of the assessment to the individual officer.

3 Outcomes of activity: An assessment of items found (or not) will also be conducted, reported upon and feature within the report to the board.

4 Stop and Search Complaints: Assessment of complaints relating to Stop and Search, providing feedback on investigation decisions.

To maintain transparency, Sussex Police will publish a report on the public facing website, detailing purpose and outcomes of assessment following each panel meeting.

5. Secretary

The Diversity team will support the chair in the management of the panel, coordinate attendees, the local policing team will be responsible for meeting room requirements, abridged minutes and constructing reports on behalf of the panel to the relevant board and for public consumption. The local policing team will also be responsible drawing attention to national dialogue and best practice around stop and search.

6. Frequency and venue of meetings

Meetings will take place quarterly at Sussex Police HQ, Lewes 6-8pm. standing agenda items will include the areas set out above in section 4.

7. Relationship with Surrey Police

It is anticipated that scrutiny panel activity and learning will be shared at Chief Officer Level by chair of the relevant reporting board.