

# Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Community Scrutiny Panel

## Minutes of Use of Force Scrutiny Session

Date: 25 July 2023  
Time: 18:30 – 20:30  
Venue: Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters

### Attendees:

- 7 Panel Members in attendance
- Constabulary - Superintendent Robin Sissons (RS), Sergeant Ciaran Constable (CCo), Caitlin Bones - Ethics & Legitimacy Co-ordinator (CB)
- OPCC - Jack Hudson (JH), Charlie Murfitt (CM), Nic Goddard (NG)

### 1. Chairs Introduction and welcome

- 1.1 Community Scrutiny Panel (the 'Panel') members welcomed by Chair (KP) to this scrutiny meeting of Cambridgeshire Constabulary's (the 'Constabulary').
- 1.2 HMICFRS in attendance and introduced themselves and outlined the purpose of being present.

### 2. Minutes of previous Use of Force meeting (23 May 2023)

- 2.1 KP asked panel members whether they agreed with the minutes sent to them following the previous meeting and whether they had any further comments. The panel agreed that the minutes published were a true and accurate record of the previous UoF Scrutiny Meeting. Minutes agreed.
- 2.2 **Action Schedule:** The action schedule from previous meetings reviewed and updated.
- **Training:** Attendance at Training events. Opportunity for members of the Scrutiny Group to attend training events. The action is for the Constabulary to notify the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) when the

events are going to take place and then the OPCC will circulate details and seek volunteers.

- **Exercising powers:** Officers who have exercised their powers the most in April 22 - Constabulary to add increased insights.
- **Admin:** Finalise a standardised form for feedback to incorporate points identified from this S&S Scrutiny Group.

### 3. Scrutiny of Use of Force incidents

#### 3.1 Incident Reference – UF/0469440226/23

Brief circumstances:

- **Subject:** 13-year-old vulnerable person.
- **Impact Factors:** Mental health, possession of a weapon, prior knowledge,
- **Reason for use:** To protect the subject, officers, and staff. To prevent further offences, harm, and escape
- **Background:** Report from care home that the vulnerable person, who is subject to a deprivation of liberty order has jumped from a window and run off. Identified as a vulnerable person, who is known to police and that they are currently awaiting more suitable accommodation. They are of significant risk of harm and pose a danger to themselves. Power to detain under care order.
- **Use of Force:** Unarmed skills (pressure points etc.)
- **Outcome:** Subject arrested. Conveyed to hospital for further assessment.

The Panel considered and discussed this UoF. An issue was highlighted re the UoF applied. RS explained current Officer training in relation to the application of pressure points, to help the panel in their deliberations.

The Panel suggested that it would have been beneficial to have seen BWV from other officers. This would have provided greater clarity and understanding of the incident.

For the Panel and Chair's comments see Appendix 1. The Panel rated the incident as Green 1 overall. Of note, a panel member did indicate that they considered it Amber 4 and wanted this noting.

***ACTION: 23/07/25/01 Additional BWV should be made available where multiple officers are involved in order to assist in their scrutiny of the incident.***

### 3.2 Incident Reference – UF/1986582785/6

Brief circumstances: **Subject:** 17-year-old male

- **Impact Factors:** acute behavioural disorder; alcohol, crowd, drugs, mental health, possession of a weapon; size/gender/build
- **Reason for use:** protect self; protect public; protect subject; protect other officers; prevent offence, effect arrest; prevent harm; prevent escape.
- **Background:** Breach of bail. Refuses to come out of address. Threatens to stab officers.
- **Use of Force:** Taser (Red dot laser sight active); other: UoF against person present who was failing to comply with commands. They were not allowed inside the premises as the officer was concerned for their safety. After the subject was arrested an explanation was provided and an apology given.
- **Outcome:** Subject arrested.

A Panel member questioned the number of officers present. RS explained the Constabulary's approach to executing planned Search Warrants with a need for a reasonable and proportionate number of officers to be present to secure the scene, mitigate threats and undertake the search with potentially multiple occupancy an issue which needed to be managed.

For the Panel and Chair's comments see Appendix 2. The Panel universally agreed that the UoF was graded as Green 1.

### 3.3 Incident Reference – UF/1090816036/29

Brief circumstances:

- **Subject:** 51-year-old male.
- **Impact Factors:** Alcohol; Possession of a weapon
- **Reason for use:** Protect self; prevent offence; effect arrest; prevent harm; prevent escape.
- **Background:** Call received that two males were trying to kick the door in at an address subject of a tenancy dispute. It was reported that there was swearing and shouting and that a van outside had been damaged.
- **Use of Force:** Handcuffs due to non-compliance; Other / improvised: Kick to the leg.
- **Outcome:** Subject arrested for public order related offence.

A member of the Panel considered that it would have been beneficial to observe how all parties were engaged and dealt with as part of their scrutiny.

A member of the panel considered that the approach adopted by the Officer from the start escalated rather than de-escalated this incident. This may have prevented the need for an arrest and the UoF. There was a comment in relation to the arrest with a member of the panel suggesting that it was excessive. One member of the Panel considered it unclear why the male had been arrested.

There was a query regarding the dog concerning where it was and whether he was intending to take the dog for a walk.

The panel noted that the aggressive approach of the officer towards the female did not seem to be helping to de-escalate. The panel thought that the officer could have de-escalated better than they did and that the tone was instrumental in how the incident escalated.

There was a discussion in relation to the grading of this incident. For the Panel and Chair's comments see Appendix 3. The Panel rated the incident Amber overall.

### 3.4 Incident Reference – UF/3300551278/25

Brief circumstances: (Initial BWV does not show sufficient detail due to the number of people present so BWV viewed from a separate entry chosen, Entry 94 UF/3787947664/9).

- **Subject:** 28-year-old male.
- **Impact Factors:** Acute behavioural disorder; alcohol; drugs; mental health; size/gender/build.
- **Reason for use:** To effect an arrest.
- **Background:** CCTV camera picks up staff at pub struggling with a male, who had been ejected from the establishment but refused to leave. He then started to fight with door staff.
- **Use of Force:** PAVA incapacitant spray used; Limb / body restraints (inc. leg restraints used)
- **Outcome:** Subject arrested

There were several occasions where officer(s) were heard swearing, which the panel considered unacceptable. However, they considered the UoF was proportionate in the way it was carried out.

The panel felt that it was unnecessary for the door staff to remain involved in the whole incident and that the officers should have taken control of the situation. The panel felt that the Police were off hand with other members of the public.

Five members of the Panel agreed that it was a Green 3. The remaining member considered that it was Amber 4.

### 3.5 Incident Reference – UF/2772384742/6

Brief circumstances:

- **Subject:** 33-year-old female
- **Impact Factors:** Mental health, possession of a weapon.

- **Reason for use:** protect self, protect public, prevent offence, effect arrest, prevent harm, prevent escape; information or intelligence indicated a weapon may be present.
- **Background:** Report from male that his wife has attacked both himself and a young family member and that they are still in the house and may be in possession of a kitchen knife. Other family members aged between 4 and 12 years of age are present. It was reported that she may have mental health issues. Language barrier with person reported.
- **Use of Force:** Taser (Red dot laser sight active); handcuffing (co-operative); Minor pressure across body to carry out a search for any items that may harm herself or others while in transport and in custody.
- **Outcome:** Subject arrested. She disclosed to officers that she just snapped due to constant abuse from her husband.

The panel felt that the officer was in command and had effective communication. The commented that the officer spoke very well and made his name and concern clear.

The issue of Mental Health training was discussed. Specifically, the extent to which this training is included initially for new recruits and then officers maintain their knowledge and understanding. A summary of initial training and training days was discussed. It was confirmed to the panel that Armed Police officers receive enhanced mental health.

The panel rated this incident Green 1.

#### **4. AOB - Recruitment**

- 4.1 CB highlighted that the next S&S scenario training is 31 July 2023.
- 4.2 NG provided an update to the group regarding the ongoing marketing and recruitment work that is being carried out to support the panels.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

- 5.1 The date of the next Community Scrutiny Panel meeting is on the 28 August 2023 and is a Stop & Search.

**Action and Decision Log: Use of Force Community Scrutiny Panel**

<b>Action/Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Owner Update</b>	<b>Further Information Required</b>
ACTION: 22/06/28/3.2.1	28/06/2022	<p>Constabulary to review Panel feedback on incident reference UF/0241441404/7. This assessment can be seen in two parts. The dealing by the initial officers and their interaction followed by the arrival of the supervising sergeant and his interaction. Initially then, with the subject having a complicated history of self-harm and running away, as well as a difficult family background, the female officer dealing with this teenage minor showed excellent rapport, empathy, and a</p>	Constabulary	<p><u>History</u>                      This incident was not the first time we have dealt with this female. She refuses to accept rules and boundaries set by parents, school etc and has been known to try and manipulate friends and professionals when things are not going her way. She has previously made allegations of abuse against her parents and convinced her friend's parents that she needed to live with them as a result. The allegations were investigated, and it was deemed that no abuse had taken place. She admitted she had</p>	

		<p>natural ability to de-escalate the situation as peaks of heightened attitude arose. The male officer then called over his sergeant supervisor who quite clearly had very recent experience of dealing with the subject.</p> <p>The sergeant's initial immediate interaction was a forceful laying on of hands to sit the subject back down with a harsh tone, all accompanied with foul language and a reference to the previous day. This could be seen as approaching the situation with a degree of prejudice, which is unacceptable. His presence was provocative and his interaction similarly so. There</p>		<p>exaggerated incidents when speaking to her friend and the police. She has also made threats to harm/kill herself, but these threats are always made when parents or teachers attempt to enforce rules against her. The day before she was also reported missing and considerable time was spent negotiating with her to get her somewhere safe when found. She continually rejected all reasonable compromises.</p> <p><u>Incident</u></p> <p>Female made threats to kill herself after teachers at school took her phone off her and tried to put her into isolation due to her poor behaviour. She managed to leave the school site and was</p>	
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		<p>were occasions where the Sergeant calmed down and the situation improved but he appeared ready to engage in provocative discussion easily. The calm input of the female officer is worthy of commendation and her ability to remain resolute in calming the situation despite the brash approach by her more senior colleague is worthy of individual praise. Panel would be grateful for feedback on the Sgt's interaction and why he had approached the situation thus. Of equal value would be whether the Sgt noticed he had indeed tackled this situation in the way the Panel perceived it.</p>		<p>reported missing. She was spotted by officers in Ely and ran from police when seen.</p> <p>There was no traumatic incident prior to being found by police and her behaviour/demeanour was because she had been found by police. Having met her before this is a very similar reaction to her being found previously.</p> <p>A female officer at scene tried to negotiate with her but it became clear that she was not going to co-operate with us. Knowing her history and previous behaviour, it needed to be made clear to her that we were not going to walk away and that she would not be allowed to walk off. I recall her</p>	
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		<p><b>27/09/2022: The Panel understand the Sergeant's anticipation of a difficult encounter but feel that in respect to the code of ethics, his reply fails to recognise that his experiences from the day before create a prejudice which is evident in his handling of the subject. Consequently, he demonstrated a lack of fairness, respect, and objectivity. It is the Panel's understanding that each interaction is meant to be treated as an individual exclusive circumstance and from the officer's comments, this is clearly not the case.</b></p>		<p>standing up at one point and being firm with her telling her to sit down. My concern was that if she tried to walk off we would need to restrain her which would risk injuring either her or an officer. We are more able to control her and reduce the risk when she is sitting. She was given the option of being taken home or to the police station under PP both of which she rejected.</p> <p>From the incident the previous day I knew that negotiation was unlikely to succeed and that she would continue to refuse to cooperate. I decided to try a firmer approach, making it very clear what her options were. From my</p>	
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		<p><b>The general feeling of the Panel was that the female officer should have been allowed to continue dealing with the subject and that the Sergeant did not need to assert authority.</b></p> <p><b>Constabulary are requested to advise on this.</b></p>		<p>experience sometimes this works and sometimes it does not. In this case the female was taken back to police vehicle and back to the police station promptly with a minimal use of force by any police officer. It is my view that we could have tried a softer approach for longer but we would still have needed to use force to get her away from the scene.</p> <p>It is worth mentioning that her demeanour completely changed once she was placed in a police vehicle. She spoke calmly and engaged well with all officers who had further interactions with her. It is my view that this is because she understood police were not going to back down or give in to</p>	
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			<p>any demands. Within 10 minutes of leaving the scene, I was sat at the police station having made her a cup of tea talking about her home life and plans. She was laughing and joking and was in no way distressed or upset.</p> <p>While I appreciate that a very firm and direct approach may appear harsh when viewed in isolation, I hope that the previous police interactions with this female go some way to explain why this approach was tried in this case.</p> <p><b>Further response provided following 21/02/2023 meeting:</b> The Constabulary has reviewed all entries made by the sergeant from the date</p>	
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				of the incident to the current day (22/02/2023). All have been proportionate and there have been no entries that have caused the reviewing officer (Inspector Rice) concern. We are therefore content that this action is closed.	
ACTION: 23/02/21/1.6	21/02/2023	<b>Constabulary to review the length of time that audio and video records are retained to support availability for scrutiny.</b>	Constabulary		
ACTION: 23/02/21/2.1	21/02/2023	<b>Arrange a custody suite visit for Panel members to attend.</b>	Constabulary	This was discussed at a S&S panel on 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 and all members were made aware that this can be organised on request. This is now closed.	
ACTION: 23/02/21/2.1.1	21/02/2023	<b>To review the wording of the RAG ratings to ensure there</b>	OPCC & Panel Chair		

		<b>is a clear difference between each grade.</b>			
ACTION: 23/02/21/2.2	21/02/2023	<b>Would like to provide feedback to the female Sergeant present that she showed a good use of de-escalation.</b>	Constabulary		
ACTION: 23/02/21/2.3		<b>Constabulary to provide feedback to the officer for the tone of his engagement and putting his foot on the subject.</b>	Constabulary		