



Community Scrutiny Panel –Stop & Search

Date:	12 th February
Time:	17:30-20:00
Location:	Rugby Police Station
Chair:	Vicky Hoppitt
Attendance:	Vicky Hoppitt (Equality and Engagement Officer), Dave Valente (Stop Search Lead) Community Scrutiny Panel members.
Clips viewed:	6 Use of Force / Stop Search / Vehicle Stop Body Worn Video (BWV) reviewed
Next meeting:	18 th March – Nuneaton Justice Centre

This document provides a summary of feedback from the Community Scrutiny Panel. Panel members are independent members of the public. They are not employed or paid by Warwickshire Police to provide these views.

The content is taken from feedback forms completed by panel members following the session. Responses have been reviewed and summarised to highlight key themes and remove repetition. This document does not include full verbatim comments but aims to present an accurate and balanced overview of the feedback provided.

Feedback from the panel is shared with Warwickshire Police learning and development teams to support ongoing reflection and to help identify potential training and development needs.

Overview

Overall, the panel recognised a consistently professional approach by officers, with strong communication skills and good handling of a range of situations.

The feedback also identified some clear and recurring areas for improvement, particularly around consistently explaining legal rights and ensuring all required procedures are followed in every interaction.



Positives

Professional and respectful approach

- Officers were consistently described as calm, respectful and professional, even in challenging or fast-moving situations
- Interactions were generally handled in a measured and controlled way, helping to manage risk and maintain safety
- Officers were seen to be assertive without being aggressive, which helped prevent escalation

Communication and engagement

- Strong communication skills were evident across the encounters
- Officers often made efforts to:
 - Build rapport
 - Use clear and respectful language
 - Reassure individuals during the process
- In many cases, officers explained what they were doing step by step, helping people understand the process

Safeguarding and respect for dignity

- Positive examples of safeguarding included:
 - Moving individuals away from public view where possible
 - Taking steps to maintain dignity during searches
 - Providing reassurance, particularly in more sensitive situations
- Officers showed awareness of vulnerability and took steps to make individuals feel more comfortable

Search practice and handling

- Searches were generally carried out in a controlled and respectful manner
- Officers demonstrated care in how they handled people and their property
- There were examples of clear explanations of search actions and appropriate handling of items

Leadership and teamwork

- Good teamwork was observed, including:
 - Clear roles during incidents
 - Effective support between officers
- Some officers demonstrated strong leadership, taking control of situations and directing others appropriately

Areas for Improvement

Consistent use of legal requirements

The most common theme across all reviews was the need for greater consistency in explaining legal rights and grounds.

While some elements were often provided, the panel noted that not all parts were consistently delivered in every encounter.

Clarity and timing of explanations

- In some cases, explanations were:
 - Given too late
 - Delivered while other conversations were happening
- This reduced clarity and made it harder for individuals to fully understand what was happening

Public understanding and transparency

Some panel members felt that:

- The reasons for police actions were not always fully understood
- Certain processes (such as requesting details) were not clearly explained

Search quality and visibility

- A small number of searches were seen as:
 - Too quick
 - Lacking visible thoroughness
- This can affect public confidence, even where the search is lawful

Use of force and officer presence

- In one instance, the use of force was perceived as happening **very quickly**
- There were also comments about:
 - Too many officers being present
 - Some appearing to be observing rather than actively contributing

Key Message

Strengths

- Professional, calm and respectful policing
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Good safeguarding awareness and care for individuals
- Effective teamwork and leadership

Main areas for improvement

- Consistent and complete explanation of legal rights
- Clearer and better-timed explanations
- Improving public understanding of police actions
- Ensuring searches are visibly thorough
- Managing perceptions around use of force, officer numbers and privacy