

May 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

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

The issue of disproportionality in different ethnic groups' experience of policing has been in the spotlight for some time, and we are grateful for this HMICFRS review of this important topic.

West Yorkshire is a region of diverse ethnic communities, and the outgoing Police and Crime Commissioner has sought to understand the different concerns which communities hold, whilst regularly scrutinising our police service's performance with regard to disproportionality.

Within the last year, PCC Mark Burns-Williamson has reviewed West Yorkshire Police's approach to Stop and Search through his Community Outcome Meetings, and presented a paper to the West Yorkshire Police & Crime Panel exploring the wider issue of respect for equality and inclusion within, and in the operations of, West Yorkshire Police.

These meetings have highlighted West Yorkshire Police's work to adopt the recommendations made by HMICFRS and improve the accuracy of data collected on individuals' ethnicity. Our presentation to the Police and Crime Panel also outlined WYP's 'Proportionality Strategic Plan', which has been developed to capture organisational work streams and monitor progress towards understanding proportionality across police operations.

Although the report identifies that West Yorkshire Police (WYP) record one of the lowest rates of drug related stop/searches amongst forces, there can be no doubt about the important requirement for all forces nationwide to address any disproportionality in their work or recruitment.

Moving on to the work to address HMICFRS's national recommendations, I would like to provide the following update from West Yorkshire:

- **Recommendation:** By July 2022, forces should ensure that officers and staff have effective communication skills, in line with the National Policing Guidelines on Conflict Management. This should be in addition to existing training on conflict management and de-escalation.  
***West Yorkshire Police is considering the introduction of a College of Policing de-escalation training package, and is currently consulting with the Learning and Organisational Development team to finalise this proposal.***
- **Recommendation:** By September 2021, forces should:
  - ensure that officers record on body-worn video (when this is available) the entirety of all stop and search encounters, including traffic stops and use of force incidents;
  - provide external scrutiny panel members with access to samples of body-worn video footage showing stop and search encounters and use of force incidents, taking

account of the safeguards in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice.

***West Yorkshire Police force policy is already clear that body-worn video is used in all encounters where police powers are used. This is re-iterated in the Stop & Search force policy. Body-worn video is also provided to members of the Stop & Search Scrutiny Panel, in line with College of Policing Data Protection requirements.***

***West Yorkshire Police is also developing an internal monitoring process for review of body-worn video. The current work-stream includes ensuring that the review of BWV across different areas of business is recorded on a single platform so that officers' performance can be consistently assessed. There is also a proposal to introduce an additional Use of Force scrutiny panel for added reassurance.***

- **Recommendation:** By July 2021, forces should ensure they have effective internal monitoring processes on the use of force, to help them to identify and understand disproportionate use, explain the reasons and implement any necessary improvement action.

***West Yorkshire Police have a comprehensive management information dataset recording use of force, which includes disproportionality measures. WYP is formalising a governance structure so that it can continue to expand its oversight and understanding of the use of force. These governance arrangements will have close links to the WYP Inequalities Governance Board and Threat Delivery Group.***

- **Recommendation:** With immediate effect, forces should ensure that all stop and search records include detail of the self-defined ethnicity of the subject. When this information is refused by the subject, the officer-defined ethnicity code should be recorded.

***West Yorkshire Police mandates the recording of Officer Defined Ethnicity and Self-Defined Ethnicity in their crime recording. This is currently the subject of an internal review to check compliance data before we seek to return to HMICFRS in the near future to request final approval of the work toward this recommendation.***

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has recently transferred to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, under the leadership of the newly elected Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin. Going forward, scrutiny of the work of West Yorkshire Police will be led by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime. A preferred candidate for Deputy Mayor has been selected, and that appointment will be reviewed by the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel later this month.

Yours,

Janine Nelson, Head of Policing and Crime

West Yorkshire Combined Authority