

Bedfordshire Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panel

September 2024 Bulletin

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Our Newly Appointed Vice Chair

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has recently appointed another Vice Chair for the Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panel. We are happy to announce that Kim Taylor has been appointed. Kim joined the Scrutiny Panel in 2022 and is keen to help improve the local community. She aims to build the relationship between the residents of Bedfordshire and Bedfordshire Police. Kim says that since joining she has seen many positive changes from the videos we review to the way we pick our videos and the categories that we now choose.



‘I am keen to improve our public awareness and show how we are making changes. I believe what we do as a panel, holding the police accountable for their actions, sharing good policing, and sharing the skills I've learnt.’

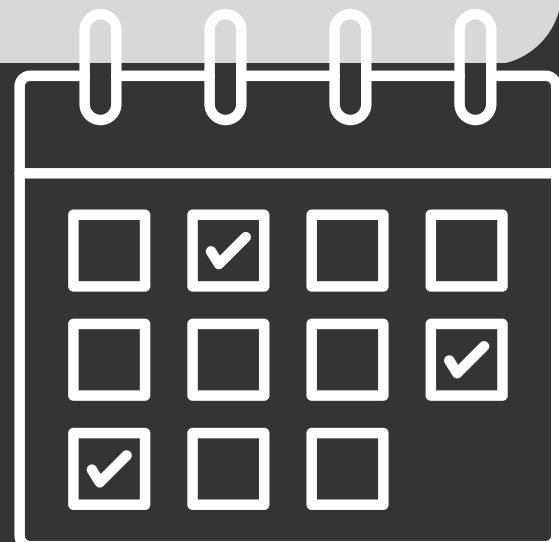
Section 163 Panel

Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides police officers in uniform and traffic officers a power to stop a mechanically propelled vehicle or cycle on the road. The legislation does not specify that an officer is required to have a reason or suspicion for stopping a vehicle; and if a member of the public fails to comply by not stopping when required to, they are then guilty of an offence.


The NPCC recommended the recording of S163 stops and inviting community scrutiny with the aims to improve transparency and accountability, and as a result increasing public trust and confidence in police legitimacy.

Bedfordshire Police have been recording S163 stops since 2022. This has created the ability to review the use of this power, assessing its use and proportionality levels. Our community scrutiny panel currently scrutinises stop and search and police use of force. However, as a recent addition, we will also be scrutinising police use of S163 powers.


The S163 Scrutiny Panels will officially begin in Quarter 4, with the first training session being held on the 19th of September 2024.



Changes within the Force



In the most recent panel, our member's observed officers were not using their earpieces and instead listening to their airwave radios out loud. This can increase the risk of intelligence and other sensitive information being passed over airwaves, being heard by passersby, or by persons being dealt with directly by officers. Following this panel meeting, feedback was provided to the force. This feedback was then sent to all officers throughout the force with a reminder to wear their issued earpieces and the reasons as to why it is necessary. This shows, that with the help of the scrutiny panels, we can improve and provide learning to the force.



As part of the Race Action Plan, the force is introducing cards for individuals who have been stop and searched or involved in use of force. The cards will list the laws, their entitlements and a QR code. The QR code will guide the individual to a government website which states the law in more detail and provides a questionnaire regarding their interactions with the police. The cards and questions have not been confirmed nor printed yet but is soon to come.

GOWISELY is an acronym used by officers to remind them of the information they are supposed to provide prior to stop and searching an individual. Recently, an additional letter E will be added to the acronym, creating GOWISELYE. The extra letter E will stand for 'explain'. The purpose of this addition comes useful in case where it is not possible to complete GOWISELY entirely, therefore officers must explain their actions to the individual after every interaction. This will aid in the trust and confidence of the individual and the officer as well as ensuring they understand the reason for that occurrence.

Recent Panel Meeting Actions

Contact the personal safety team and the training team to enquire about the practice of using PAVA and a spit hood soon after or at the same time.

Look into the use of excessive language by officers when communicating with the public.

Look into the lack of earpieces used by officers whilst on duty, risking sensitive information and intelligence to be overheard by the public.

Look into the number of false intelligence and the effect it has on disproportionality figures. In addition, understanding the intelligence process and how intelligence is graded.

Recruitment

As of September 2024, we currently have 25 members.

We are constantly recruiting for more Independent Scrutiny Panel Members aged 16 and above, based in Bedfordshire.

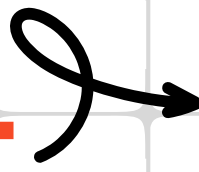
The PCCO (Police and Crime Commissioners Office) is attending the Bedfordshire University Fresher's fayre in September 2024 to promote the panel to students. This will help us reach out to the younger demographic and have discussions around the use of police powers and how they can hold the police force to account through joining the panel.

Statistics show that within Bedfordshire and across the country, black and minority ethnic people are statistically more likely to be stopped and searched. Therefore, it is essential for stop and search and use of force to be continuously analysed to ensure that these police powers are used in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.



As a result, it is important for us to have a diverse panel, that is representative of a variety of ethnic minorities and age groups, to ensure police powers such as stop and search and use of force are being used appropriately and effectively.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!



Bedfordshire Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panel

Can you spare some time for your community?



WHO ARE WE?

- We are an independent panel formed to consider the way that Bedfordshire Police use stop and search, to ensure it is being used appropriately.

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

- We aim to ensure accountability, through openness and transparency with the police service, provide learning and increase public confidence in the police.

WHAT DO WE DO?

- We assess individual cases to identify areas of concern and good practice using a RAG (red, amber, green) traffic light system.

Interested in joining us or would you like to find out more information?

Contact us: PCC@beds.police.uk

