

COMMISSIONER'S INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY REPORT

Use of Force Scrutiny

Tuesday 02 June 2026

Scrutiny Panel:	USE OF FORCE
Members:	John Buckle Brian Churm Garry Hamblin Vicki Gwynne Caroline Strike Also in attendance: Chief Inspector Cliff Goodwin Michelle Ryan – SCO Holly Sproston - SCO
Purpose:	That the Use of Force policy and procedure have been followed and the Body Worn Video reviewed are compliant with the law and are being used effectively. The panel will focus on: • Whether Body Worn Video policy was adhered to • Whether the Use of Force level used was necessary • Whether the Use of Force level used was proportional to the incident • Is the action/behaviour justified? • Has it been explained adequately? • Has it been recorded properly?
Panel Findings:	The period selected for the Use of Force incidents was from 20 March 2026 to 20 April 2026. 1336 UOF incidents were recorded in this period. The panel agreed to focus on the use of PAVA. At the pre meeting on 29 April 2026 the panel selected eleven incidents where PAVA had been drawn or used. Of the eleven incidents selected, body worn video footage could be found for all, but STORM logs could not be located for two. It was agreed not to view these two incidents as the context for the use of force could not be ascertained. In another incident it was identified that PAVA was neither drawn or used and the UOF form did not indicate that it had. This incident was also disregarded.

The remaining eight incidents all had body worn video footage and corresponding STORM logs.

The Incidents viewed are outlined in Appendix 1

STORM logs of the incidents were provided. Panel members were reminded that the STORM log is a live record of events as they happen and indicate calls and information being provided by officers as the incident unfolds. It is not the investigation record. The STORM logs are provided to give some context to the incident leading up to the use of force being deployed and enables panel members to be cognisant of the situation in determining whether the use of force was appropriate in a potentially quickly developing situation.

Observations and Recommendations:

Incident 21260054144 – The panel had a number of concerns about the body worn video footage of this incident. They felt the incident escalated quickly due, in part, to the attitude of the lead officer. It was felt that a different approach would have led to a different outcome. The officer failed to de-escalate the situation and his tone and aggressive language was inappropriate. The PAVA seemed to be used quickly, and the panel were split as to whether this was used appropriately or was proportionate. The panel felt this could have been handled in a calmer manner by the initial officer. The panel were informed that the incident had been referred to the Professional Standards Unit for review. The panel would like to be updated on the outcome of any review.

Incident 21260033464 - The panel felt that the two female officers had been very patient with the young male and exhausted many de-escalation methods to resolve the situation. The panel felt that officers should be commended for the empathy shown and their patience and resilience in trying to resolve the situation without force.

Incident 21260059479 – The panel felt that officers should be commended for the way they calmly handled the situation and the compassion they showed.

Recommendations - none

Force Lead Response:

Incident 21260054144

The panel's concerns regarding this incident have been noted. The matter was referred to the Professional Standards Department for review and enquiries are currently ongoing. Once the review has concluded and the outcome has been received, an update will be provided to the panel.

Incident 21260033464

Staffordshire Police welcomes the panel's observations regarding this incident. The feedback highlights the professionalism, patience and communication skills demonstrated by the attending officers, who employed a range of de-escalation techniques in an effort to resolve the situation without resorting to force. The panel's positive comments will be shared with the officers and their supervisors in recognition of their empathetic and proportionate approach.

Incident 21260059479

Staffordshire Police welcomes the panel's comments regarding the calm and compassionate manner in which officers dealt with this incident. The panel's recognition of the officers' professionalism, communication skills and measured approach is appreciated. This feedback will be shared with the officers concerned and their line management as an example of positive practice and effective de-escalation.



Appendix 1 Matrix of Use of Force Incidents.

Occurrence No.	Date	Tactic Type Used	UOF Necessary?	UOF Proportional?	Description / Comments
21260058362	15/04/2026	PAVA used/ Ground Restraint/Non-compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Adult Asian Male. Appears heavily under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Incoherent at times and fails to engage fully with officers. Officers trying to assist and establish what has happened. Male becomes aggressive. Force was reasonable and proportionate
21260056603	12/04/2026	PAVA used/ Limb restraint	Yes	Yes	Reports of male threatening householders and neighbours. Male has been seen entering a house. Householder indicates that she is and her children are the only occupants. Search identifies male hiding in understairs cupboard. Male is belligerent and resists arrest and is aggressive. Force was reasonable and proportionate.
21260054144	08/04/2026	PAVA used/ Ground Restraint/Non-compliant handcuffing	Yes, but could have been avoided	Undecided	Reports of shouting and slamming of doors. Two officers attended initially to an adult white male. Initial officer fails to de-escalate the situation and the panel felt he led to the escalation of the incident by not fully explaining the purpose of their visit and trying to calmly get to the root of the problem. Officer used aggressive tone and unacceptable language. The PAVA seemed to be used quickly, and the panel were split as to whether this was used appropriately or was proportionate. The panel felt this could have been handled in a calmer manner by the initial officer.
21260051266	02/04/2026	PAVA used/ non-compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Adult white male jumps from a first-floor window to escape officers. An on-foot pursuit follows. Male is caught and PAVA is used to assist in the detention of the



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					male by the female officers. Force was reasonable and proportionate.
21260048778	29/03/2026	PAVA drawn/non-compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Adult white male is seen by officers whose bail conditions mean he should not be in the area. Male becomes abusive and runs. Officers give chase and capture male. Male is initially aggressive, resisting arrest but calm when the threat of PAVA is given. A couple of panel members felt that a comment used by one of the officers in terms of 'wearing' the PAVA was unnecessary. Male becomes compliant. Force was reasonable and proportionate.
21260046442	25/03/2026	PAVA drawn/ Compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Adult black female has been arguing with a taxi driver and reports indicate that she is in possession of a knife. Officers approach with their PAVA drawn. Female is compliant and officer removes knife from coat pocket. Officer is calm in his approach and fully explains what they are doing and why. The manner and behaviour of the officer de-escalates the situation. Excellent verbal skills. Force was reasonable and proportionate.
21260033464	23/03/2026	PAVA drawn/ Ground restraint	Yes	Yes	White male young person is with white female young person and female has been reported as a missing person. Officers spend considerable time with the female encouraging her to return to guardians home. Male is advised to leave on several times, and it is made clear that he will be arrested if he fails to leave. Male fails to leave and then becomes aggressive as officers try to escort him away. PAVA is drawn and male is taken to the floor where he becomes compliant. Panel felt that officers had been very patient with the male and exhausted many de-escalation methods to resolve the situation. The panel felt that officers should be commended for the empathy shown and their resilience in trying to resolve the situation without force. Force was reasonable and proportionate



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21260059479	17/04/2026	PAVA drawn/ Compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Officers attend as part of a safeguarding issue. White adult male is known to have mental health issues and can be violent. Instruction is given to officer to covertly have his PAVA ready. PAVA is drawn and not used as male is compliant. Male is handcuffed. Both officers are compassionate to the situation and fully explain what is happening. Panel felt that officers should be commended for the way they calmly handled the situation and the compassion they showed. Force was reasonable and proportionate.
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