

COMMISSIONERS INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY REPORT

Stop Search

16th December 2025

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| Scrutiny Panel: | STOP SEARCH |
| Members: | <p>Andrew Cowan Anne Griffiths Philip Hackwood Georgina Hughes Matt Round Paula Stanton</p> <p>Also Attending: Chief Inspector Mark Barlow – Force Lead Michelle Ryan – SCO Holly Sproston – SCO</p> |
| Purpose: | <p>The Panel are to check that Stop and Search procedure has been followed and that Body Worn Videos reviewed are compliant with the law and are being used effectively. The panel will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether Body Worn Video Policy was adhered to,• Whether the principles of GO WISELY were followed,• Whether the principles of JOG were followed. <p>Note: GO WISELY & JOG Principles available in Appendix 1.</p> |
| Panel Findings: | <p>The period selected for the Stop and Search incidents for this scrutiny was 01 October 2025 to 25 October 2025. During this period 568 Person Stop and Search incidents took place.</p> <p>12 Incidents were selected randomly by the panel. One of the incidents selected was a vehicle search and therefore not under the remit of this panel. A check on the BWV stored, by the Commissioner's Office, indicated that Body Worn Video (BWV) was available for ten of the twelve selected stop search incidents.</p> <p>There was no Body Worn Video (BWV) for Occurrence 21250165797. The officer concerned was contacted by the Force Lead for an explanation. The officer responded whilst the scrutiny was being conducted and indicated that he had not activated his body worn camera. However, his colleague had, the footage was located, and the panel were able to view the stop search incident.</p> |

Incident 21250159438 had BWV footage, but this had been wrongly identified as a Stop Search. No Stop Search took place.

Of the ten incidents viewed there were eight incidents where the execution of the Stop Search was clear, complete, and professionally undertaken. The panel felt that the officers in these incidents demonstrated respect and their explanations to the individuals was clear and distinct, covering all requirements of a well-executed Stop Search. In two incidents GOWISELY was partially completed. In one incident there was poor audio/ clarity of sound due to very windy conditions. GOWISELY may have been executed but the panel were unable to hear it clearly.

The information on the Stop Search report indicated the grounds for the Stop Search and this was clear and defined in all incidents scrutinised.

Incident matrix & findings available in Appendix 2.

Observations and Recommendations:

Observations:

- The panel noted that the BWV camera was poorly positioned in incident 21250152647 and the search of the detained could not be viewed properly.
- The panel recognise that the weather conditions on one of the incidents, 21250165689, affected the audio on the body worn video footage. This meant that the panel were unable to hear whether GOWISELY was clearly executed.
- In incident 21250165937 it was noted that the officer indicated that he had the power to search the contents of the mobile phone. It was clarified that the officer only had the power to seize the phone.
- The panel acknowledge the professional and respectful manner of officers in executing Stop Search. It was noted that the officer in incident 21250157418 was considerate and empathetic to the female detainee.

Recommendations:

- Whilst recognising that situations may be difficult, officers to be cognisant of anything that may impede or impair BWV recording and to be aware of the position of the BWV camera.

Force Lead Response:

Officers who conducted the searches highlighted by the panel have been informed of the observations and advised accordingly. In addition, the force has also issued guidance to all officers regarding stop search related legislation. The force would again like to thank the panel members for their commitment to improving the transparency of the use of stop and search in the Staffordshire area.

Chief Inspector Mark Barlow
Force Lead – Stop Search

| Occurrence No. | Date | GOWISELY adhered YES/NO | JOG adhered YES/NO | Comments |
|----------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 2125015647 | 04/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | Although the GOWISELY was closely followed by the officer the positioning of the BWV camera was poor, and the actual search was not seen so the panel were unable to confirm that the actual search was conducted correctly. |
| 21250155867 | 10/10/2025 | n/a | n/a | This was a vehicle search and not under the remit of the panel. |
| 21250157418 | 14/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | GOWISELY followed. Officer undertaking search was very respectful and empathetic. |
| 21250159438 | 16/10/2025 | n/a | n/a | BWV footage does not show a Stop Search. Incorrectly labelled as a Stop Search. |
| 21250159826 | 17/10/2025 | Partial | Not seen | GOWISELY partially completed. Person was not searched but bags and trolley were, and a large quantity of stolen goods identified. |
| 21250162112 | 22/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | GOWISELY followed. A thorough search well conducted. Clear and concise delivery. |
| 21250165116 | 27/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | GOWISELY followed. A thorough search well conducted. Clear and concise delivery. |
| 21250165549 | 28/10/2025 | Yes | Not seen | GOWISELY followed but undertaken by two officers. However, complaints process was not stated. BWV viewed was of the officer who did not conduct the search but who was present and gave details. |
| 21250165689 | 28/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | GOWISELY was followed. The weather conditions were extremely windy which meant that the audio was distorted. Thorough search undertaken. |
| 21250165797 | 28/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | GOWISELY was followed. Thorough search undertaken. |
| 21250165937 | 27/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | GOWISELY followed. Thorough search of detained person. Another officer undertook a search of the detained persons bag and a knife found. Panel questioned whether second officer should have given his details. Officer indicated that he had a power to search the mobile phone. It was confirmed that the officer only had a power to seize the phone. |
| 21250165541 | 29/10/2025 | Yes | Yes | A high risk stop search due to reports of a machete. TASER drawn. GOWISELY followed. Thorough search of several individuals. Not clear whether detainees were advised of the availability of a copy of the search. |

Explanation of GOWISELY and JOG

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| G | Explain G rounds for search |
| O | Explain the O bjective of the search |
| W | Show their W arrant Card |
| I | I dentify themselves by name |
| S | Which S tation they work from |
| E | Explain their E ntitlement to a copy of the record |
| L | Under which L egal power is the search being performed |
| Y | Y ou are being detained for the purpose of a search |
| JOG | Remove only suspects J acket, O uter coat, and G loves |

Note: Uniformed Officers do not have to show their Warrant Card.