



COMMISSIONER'S INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY REPORT

Use of Force Scrutiny

Thursday 13th November 2025

Scrutiny Panel:	USE OF FORCE
Members:	<p>Brian Churm Vicki Gwynne Garry Hamblin Caroline Strike James Thornton (Observing)</p> <p>Also in attendance: Chief Inspector Cliff Goodwin Michelle Ryan – SCO Holly Sproston – SCO</p>
Purpose:	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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:	<p>The period selected for the Use of Force incidents was from 01 September 2025 to 29 September 2025. 1960 UOF incidents were recorded in this period. The panel initially randomly selected fifteen incidents at their pre-meeting on 07 October 2025.</p> <p>Of those fifteen incidents, eight were reviewed at the meeting on 23 October 2025. Seven incidents were reviewed at the meeting on the 13th of November 2025.</p> <p>Of those seven selected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One incident had no BWV or a STORM Log. Since the meeting, the BWV footage has been found. It shows a compliant handcuffing of a male in a hospital setting.



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:

- The panel felt that the Use of Force had been necessary, reasonable, and proportionate in all the incidents viewed.
- Two incidents, **21250138747** and **21250138450** involved vulnerable children, both of whom were undergoing mental health crisis. The panel were impressed in how the attending officers managed these.
- No recommendations identified.

Force Lead Response:

Thank you to the panel for their thorough review and observations.

I note and welcome the conclusion that the Use of Force applied in all incidents reviewed was necessary, reasonable, and proportionate. It is particularly reassuring to see positive feedback regarding the management of vulnerable children in mental health crisis situations. This reflects the professionalism and empathy demonstrated by our officers in challenging circumstances.

For Occurrence **21250138747** (Officer 29885 Rowley) and Occurrence **21250138450** (Officer 5173 Coates and Sgt 5759 Smith), I will ensure that this commendation is shared with the officers involved. Their approach aligns with our commitment to safeguarding and delivering the highest standards of care when dealing with vulnerable individuals.

No recommendations were identified by the panel; however, we will continue to monitor compliance and maintain scrutiny through ongoing QATT reviews and performance reporting. Any learning opportunities identified in future reviews will be acted upon promptly.

Thank you again for your continued support in ensuring transparency and accountability in our Use of Force processes.

Chief Inspector C Goodwin
Force Lead – Use of Force



Appendix 1 Matrix of Use of Force Incidents.

Occurrence No.	Date	Tactic Type Used	UOF Necessary ?	UOF Proportionality?	Description / Comments
21250142937	27/09/2025	Non-compliant handcuffing / ground restraint	Yes	Yes	Adult white male. Initial fail to stop. Detained male is initially obstructive and argumentative. Panel indicated that UOF was necessary, and officers used appropriate force.
21250140695	12/09/2025	Ground Restraint/ limb restraint/ Spit and Bite guard/ non-compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Adult white female. Officers called as detainee had been aggressive to ambulance crew. Detainee was known for being aggressive to officers. Detainee had an arm injury. Consideration given to what type of force to use. Type of force escalated as detainee became more aggressive and spat at officers. Panel indicated that officers gave clear explanations of actions to detainee despite continual abuse. Officers showed resilience and composure in a particularly challenging arrest. UOF was necessary, and officers used appropriate force.
21250138747	09/09/2025	Improvised/ hand cuffing	Yes	Yes	Mixed Ethnic background, female Child/Young person. Reports of young girl on a major road standing the wrong side on a bridge over another major road after previously arguing with two adults. Single crewed officer attends. Detainee is identified as vulnerable child with complex and serious mental health issues. Officer retrains young person and ensures her safety quickly by securing her in a police vehicle. Officer manages the situation well with effective communication, compassion, and minimum amount of force. Panel felt the single crewed officer manages the situation extremely well.



Appendix 1 Matrix of Use of Force Incidents.

21250138450	08/09/2025	Non-compliant handcuffing/ground restraint	Yes	Yes	White, female child/young person. Child has complex mental health issues and attends a specialist unit. School reports that child has fled from the school and is running across a major A road. Child is experiencing a severe MH crisis. Officers work with representatives from the unit to calm the situation and escort the child back to the unit where she again attempts to flee across the main road. Force was used to prevent further injury to the child as well as others. Panel indicated that appropriate force was considered and used. Officers were sensitive in their approach to the demanding situation.
21250137734	07/09/2025	Non-compliant handcuffing/ground restraint/ PAVA	Yes	Yes	Adult Mixed Ethnic Background Male. Male found asleep in car on slipway suspected of either drunk or drug in charge. As officers are arresting him, a further two males appear challenging the actions of the officers. Despite being told to leave they do not, and the situation escalates into an assault of an officer and arrest of all three males. Panel indicated that officers acted reasonably and with appropriate force as the incident escalated.
21250039925	06/09/2025	Unavailable at meeting	Unavailable at meeting	Unavailable at meeting	BWV footage and STORM log could not be found initially. Further investigations since the meeting on 13 November 2025 have identified BWV footage which shows compliant handcuffing to an adult white male.
21250134365	01/09/2025	Compliant handcuffing	Yes	Yes	Adult white female. Pursuit of suspected cloned vehicle. Driver and occupants decant, and officer pursues driver. Minimal force used and good verbal de-escalation of situation once driver has been cornered. Level of force was appropriate.

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