

COMMISSIONERS INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY REPORT

Stop Search - Section 60 Incident - Scrutiny Review

24th June 2025

Scrutiny Panel:	STOP AND SEARCH - Section 60 Review of Incident on 16th March 2024
Members:	<p>Andrew Cowan Anne Griffiths Philip Hackwood Geraint Lang Matt Round</p> <p>Chief Inspector Mark Barlow – Force Lead Michelle Ryan – SCO Holly Sproston - SCO</p>
Purpose:	<p>On the 16 March 2024 a Section 60 Powers to Stop and Search in anticipation of violence was used under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.</p> <p>The Order was for the 12-hour period on the 16th March 2024 from 12 noon to Midnight. This covered a specific area within Hednesford. Local intelligence had identified an increased and specific risk of serious violence and anti-social behaviour in this area following a memorial gathering for a local young person.</p> <p>Following authorisation Section 60 order from the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 was in place from midday on 16 March 2024 until midnight on 16 March 2024.</p> <p>Over the previous few days, there had been multiple reports relating to the event to indicate that the event would be attended by at least 100 persons as advertised on social media and arranged by friends of the young person. The threat level for this event was believed to be high due to rival groups believed to be attending. It was reasonably believed that groups from the local area and other areas, including neighbouring force areas would attend the event with information to suggest that some of those attending planned on causing serious disorder and would be in possession of bladed articles.</p> <p>It was believed that this authority was necessary as a preventative measure and to safeguard persons from the potential of serious harm given the information and intelligence of the potential for violence and the carrying of weapons. The event was believed to be attended by mainly juveniles and given that the event centred around the murder of a young male through knife crime, the authority was to prevent any serious violence from taking place in the locality.</p> <p>The order granted officers the power to stop and search vehicles or members of the public within a designated area on suspicion of possessing a dangerous weapon or item.</p> <p>The purpose of the scrutiny was to review the process and in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the use of Section 60 suitable on this occasion? • Was there sufficient intelligence to justify the Section 60? • Was there sufficient mitigation implemented? • Does Staffordshire Police have the correct approach to Section 60, in particular, the rank of officer (Superintendent) required for authorisation?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the process of recording the Section 60 and the result sufficient? • What role did the media department play in the process? • Had feedback from the local community been obtained?
Panel Findings:	<p>The panel were provided with all relevant information relating to the appropriate legislation and powers for Section 60. The panel were also provided with copies of the police logs for the incident which gave information on how the incident escalated.</p> <p>The panel focused on the police logs and supporting information and their findings are summarised below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the use of Section 60 suitable on this occasion? Yes. There was sufficient intelligence to suggest potential rising levels of unrest. This was clearly demonstrated in the comprehensive intelligence documents viewed. 2. Was there sufficient intelligence to justify the Section 60? Yes. The intelligence documents were clear and comprehensive. They gave robust information on the potential threat and this was clearly evidenced with excerpts from social media. 3. Was there sufficient mitigation implemented? Yes. The overview of what could potentially happen was clear and the action taken to mitigate this was clear and precise. The media strategy was also clearly evidenced. 4. Does Staffordshire Police have the correct approach to Section 60, in particular, the rank of officer (Superintendent) required for authorisation? Yes. The documents clearly evidenced the rationale for the Section 60 and that this had all been signed off by the appropriate Superintendent. 5. How many Stop Searches were undertaken as part of this Section 60? Seven. The panel were able to view the log of all searches. 6. Was Body Worn Video footage available for all incidents? No. There was BWV evidence for one incident available and this was viewed. As the Section 60 was implemented in March 2024, there is only a requirement to keep BWV for Stop Searches for a 12-month period. This period had elapsed by the time the scrutiny took place. Therefore, there are no issues with the other BWV footage not being available at this scrutiny. The BWV footage viewed of the Stop Search showed a young male being asked to remove a face mask, which was later confiscated. GOWISELY was not followed clearly on the footage viewed. 7. Is the process of recording the Section 60 and the result sufficient? Yes. The panel felt the level of detail was appropriate and that the explanation and intelligence reports were clear and comprehensive. 8. Was communication to the public during the Section 60 robust? How was this

	<p>delivered?</p> <p>Yes. Various methods of communication were used. This included the Local Press; Local Radio and various Social Media platforms.</p> <p>9. Was a debrief session held within the Force to determine whether the Section 60 had been successful?</p> <p>The panel were informed that there was a feedback session. There is an email from the sergeant who conducted the debrief but this was not in the briefing pack but is available for the panel to view.</p> <p>10. Was feedback obtained from the local community after the event?</p> <p>It was not clear whether feedback had been received from the local community after the event.</p>
Observations and Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel were impressed with the documentation provided and the level of detail in the intelligence reports and Section 60 request forms leading up to and including the duration of the Section 60 event. • The panel recommends that any feedback from the public post the implementation of a Section 60 should also be logged and viewed at future scrutiny.
Force Lead Response:	<p>As Stop Search Tactical Lead I would like to thank the panel members for their time and valuable insights. As a force we are committed to being open and transparent with local communities when using intrusive powers such as Section 60, as it is essential that maintain the trust and confidence of the public. The Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panel is vital in this process and we will continue to work with local communities to improve policing in Staffordshire.</p> <p>From reviewing the report the force will commit to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring reviews of Section 60 operations are conducted within a 12 month period to ensure Body Worn Video footage can be viewed. • Creating dedicated channels for public feedback post any Section 60 operation. • Feedback will be provided to any officers highlighted in this report. <p>CI Mark Barlow</p>

Appendix 1

Explanation of GOWISELY and JOG

G	Explain G rounds for search
O	Explain the O bjective of the search
W	Show their W arrant Card
I	Identify 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

