

# **Hertfordshire Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel**

**Annual Report 2024/25**



**Police & Crime  
Commissioner**  
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

## Chair's Foreword



It is my pleasure to present the Hertfordshire Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel's Annual Report for 2024/25 to the people of Hertfordshire. As Chair, I am proud to lead a group of volunteers who give their time, experience, and commitment to help ensure that stop and search powers are used proportionately, fairly, and transparently.

What's important to emphasise is that Panel members are not experts or officials — they are ordinary members of the public, just like you. They bring diverse lived experiences and perspectives, and this is what gives our scrutiny its value and strength. Independent public oversight matters — and our work ensures that policing in Hertfordshire is subject to genuine and meaningful accountability from the communities it serves.

For everyone who lives, works or studies in Hertfordshire, effective and fair policing is an essential aspect of our daily lives. Stop and search is a powerful and sometimes intrusive policing tool. When used appropriately, it can be effective in tackling crime and making communities safer. But its legitimacy depends on transparency and trust — and public confidence grows when there is clear, independent oversight.

Our Panel plays a vital role in that oversight. By reviewing stop and search records and body worn video (BWV), we highlight examples of good practice, identify where improvements are needed, and feed that learning back to Hertfordshire Constabulary. Thanks to strong feedback loops between the Panel and the Constabulary, our scrutiny continues to shape policy, improve officer training, and raise professional standards. The Hertfordshire Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel is recognised as an innovative example of effective community oversight, praised by HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) for enhancing transparency, informing police training, and building public confidence in policing practices.

Since its inception 11 years ago, the Panel has reviewed nearly 4,000 stop and search records. We have built a structured and consistent framework that ensures our feedback is timely, detailed, and acted upon. We have seen continued improvement in the quality of written records submitted by officers and have significantly increased the volume of BWV reviewed — something I intend to build on further in the year ahead.

We have also worked hard this year to improve engagement with young people and underrepresented communities. From delivering mock panel sessions in educational settings to strengthening links with the Constabulary's Race Inclusion Board and the Young People's Forum, we are actively involving more local people — particularly young Black residents — in the scrutiny process. This is making a meaningful difference.

However, I continue to find, as I go around the county and engage with local communities, that this independent public scrutiny remains one of Hertfordshire's best-kept secrets. Too few people are aware that this work is happening, or that they can get involved. That must change.

We need to do much more to increase visibility, public understanding, and participation. We have an engagement strategy in place, but the time has come to move from plans to measurable outcomes. We need to use every tool available — including social media, partnerships, and

community outreach — to raise awareness, create dialogue, and give the public greater opportunity to question and understand the work we do. I want to see real evidence over the coming year that these efforts are translating into greater reach and impact.

That also means addressing barriers to participation. We're trialling hybrid meetings with evening start times this year to make it easier for younger people and those with work or study commitments to take part. We're also reviewing our communications approach and will be working with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to ensure it delivers real, sustained progress in recruitment and engagement.

A reminder to readers: our meetings are open to members of the public who wish to attend as guest observers. If you're curious, concerned, or just want to understand more, you are welcome to attend. Details are available through the OPCC.

I want to thank the OPCC staff for their continued logistical and advisory support, and my fellow Panel volunteers for their tireless commitment to fairness, accountability, and public service. I offer special thanks to Vice Chair Mohammed Islam-Ruman for his steady leadership and insight, and to Ben Platt and Eddie McCarroll for their stewardship of the Panel's data subgroup, which has elevated the use of data in our scrutiny process.

Finally, I express my appreciation to Hertfordshire Constabulary for their professionalism and openness in engaging with the Panel's work. Our ability to provide effective, independent scrutiny depends on the strength and transparency of that working relationship.

As Chair, I remain committed to making our work more visible, more inclusive, and more impactful — so that every resident in Hertfordshire understands how their voice contributes to fair and accountable policing.

**Demitrius Nurse**

**Chair of the Hertfordshire Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel**

## **Police and Crime Commissioner's Foreword**



Stop and search is an important tactic for police officers to disrupt crime, take drugs and weapons off our streets and keep the public safe.

It is an intrusive power and must be used in a justified, proportionate and lawful manner.

External scrutiny has an important role to play in demonstrating to the public that these powers are being used appropriately, and the Panel plays a valuable role in helping police officers feel confident in using their powers when justified.

The Panel supports me to deliver on my statutory duty to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the Constabulary.

The Stop and Search Panel is a long-established part of the external scrutiny framework, and I am pleased to see through its work in 2024/25 the Panel remains confident that stop and search powers are used by Hertfordshire officers in an appropriate, proportionate, and ethical way. Everyone in Hertfordshire should be reassured by the fact the Panel's position of confidence in records scrutinised was 83.2% (an increase on 74.9% in the previous year).

I am pleased to see that the strong working relationship between the Panel and Hertfordshire Constabulary has continued to evolve over the past year. A record number of frontline officers participated in Panel meetings, giving them an insight into how members of the public view stop and search powers and in turn providing Panel members with expert operational advice to inform their scrutiny work. The Panel has an established feedback mechanism with the Constabulary which means that its scrutiny reinforces good practice and, where a need for improvement is identified, informs Constabulary policy, process and training.

The strength of the Panel-Constabulary relationship was highlighted in the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection report published in October 2024, which stated that the Constabulary invites external challenge through independent scrutiny panels and gives the panels a strong voice through representation on the Police Powers Board, the Constabulary's strategic board on police powers.

I am very grateful to all panel members for the time and effort they commit to the important work of the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel. I look forward to working with its members in the year ahead as the Panel continues to support me in discharging my statutory duties.

**Jonathan Ash-Edwards**

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire**

## Hertfordshire Constabulary's Foreword



As the senior officer responsible for overseeing how police officers in Hertfordshire use their stop and search powers, it is fantastic to see positive partnership working between the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel and the Constabulary continue to build over the last 12 months.

Stop and search is an important power - it takes weapons off the street, tackles crime and keeps the people of Hertfordshire safe. But we know that the police haven't always used this power fairly or appropriately, which risks undermining its use and its legitimacy with the public - particularly where we use stop and search disproportionately and without explanation.

I am confident that in the vast majority of cases we use our stop and search powers properly, and that officers are fair, respectful and can justify their actions. Our sergeants review every stop and search record and look at a high proportion of body-worn video to provide us with this confidence. I am pleased to see that over the past 12 months we have improved positive outcome and positive arrest rates for stop and search, indicating that our use of the power is more targeted.

However we cannot simply self-review our performance. This is why the work of the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel is so important. It provides crucial independent oversight to ensure that officers are complying with the law and policy, treating people with dignity and respect and are using their powers appropriately.

It is encouraging, therefore, to see that the panel remain broadly confident in our use of the power from the searches and body worn video that they have reviewed. Where there are concerns identified, we work with the panel and officers and the supervisors identified to improve their performance and amend training, policy and process where necessary.

As with previous years, I have continued to encourage frontline officers and supervisors to attend panel meetings. This not only allows the panel to gain an operational perspective on matters but also provides transparency and ensures that officers understand the role that the panel play and can share this information with their peers.

I am pleased that the panel chair and vice-chair continue to attend Police Powers Board which is where strategic decisions on police powers are made. Having this representation ensures that the panel's voice is heard and they are able to contribute to improving our approach to stop and search.

Thank you very much to all of those involved in making the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel a success. I'm sincerely grateful that the Constabulary has a committed group of volunteers to act as critical friends and help hold us to account. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the panel over the next 12 months.

**Chief Superintendent Jon Simpson**

**Chair of Hertfordshire Constabulary's Police Powers Board**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Key findings

- This year (2024/25), Hertfordshire Constabulary conducted 6,427 stop and searches – this is a 3% decrease on the previous year. As reflected in past annual reports, this is part of a general historical downward trend in volumes of stop and search through improved intelligence-led stops. This year, 1,364 (21.2%) of searches resulted in an arrest – this is a 1.8% increase in the arrest rate on the previous year (and the highest stop-to-arrest ratio at any point in the last decade).
- The countywide positive outcome rate for stop and searches this year was 38% - an increase of 3% on the previous year.
- Eight Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) saw improvements in positive outcome rates compared to last year (including St Albans and North Herts, both of which observed small decreases in positive outcome rates in the previous reporting period). Three Rivers and Welwyn Hatfield observed small decreases in positive outcome rates (of 4.4% and 2.2% respectively).
- This year, Hertsmere had the highest positive outcome rate of all CSPs with 47% (compared to Welwyn Hatfield last year with 43%).
- 496 dip-sampled stop and search records were scrutinised by the Panel this year. This represents 8.71% of all available records, which is an improvement on last year (6.8%). It also represents a 14.5% increase in the number of records scrutinised by the Panel on the previous year.
- The Panel's position of confidence (i.e. records graded 'Green') in records scrutinised was 83.2% (an increase on 74.9% in 2023/24 and 66.1% in 2022/23).

### Key achievements

- The Panel has continued to deliver on its core scrutiny role, supporting the Police and Crime Commissioner in his holding to account duty and increasing the proportion of total stops scrutinised this year on last.
- The Panel has reviewed 41 pieces of Body Worn Video (BWV) footage during the year (compared to 32 last year).<sup>1</sup> It has reviewed all under 18 strip searches, in line with the recommendation made by the Children's Commissioner for England.<sup>2</sup>
- The Panel has continued to improve how it uses data and trends in data to identify themes and areas for scrutiny and enhance its understanding of how stop and search powers are used across the county, including on the vital issue of disproportionality.
- Panel members have assisted the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in developing a cross-scrutiny panel communications and engagement strategy supporting ongoing efforts to raise public awareness of scrutiny of police powers and increase the diversity of panel memberships by age and ethnicity.

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<sup>1</sup> Body Worn Video (BWV) is camera footage that refers to video captured by cameras worn by police officers and Special Constables.

<sup>2</sup> <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2023/03/cc-strip-search-of-children-in-england-and-wales.pdf>

- As part of this work, Panel members have supported the OPCC in delivering a programme of 'mock panel' sessions in which OPCC staff and Panel members visit universities, colleges and schools to recreate the scrutiny process with groups of students by reviewing stop and search records and stop and search and use of force BWV. Through this ongoing programme, Panel members have helped reach over 200 young people in Hertfordshire.
- The OPCC has continued to strengthen its level of engagement with the Constabulary's Race Inclusion Board (RIB), which scrutinises the Constabulary's implementation of the Police Race Action Plan. Through this work, two RIB members have been recruited as OPCC scrutiny panel members.
- The OPCC and Stop and Search Panel have established a strong working relationship with the RIB Young People Forum, providing written records to the Forum for its members to review. The feedback from Forum members is relayed back to the Panel and to Constabulary officers, thus establishing a formal feedback loop. This arrangement now means that around 50 Black young people from across Hertfordshire are contributing to scrutiny of use of stop and search powers in the county.
- Panel members have taken up a multitude of training and wider learning opportunities throughout the year, including refresher training, observation of police officer training, and 'Ride Alongs' with the Constabulary.
- Panel meetings have continued to be hosted at different external locations, helping to build positive working relationships with partner organisations and facilitate attendance and participation in meetings by Neighbourhood Policing Teams from across the county.
- A total of 58 Officers – 2 Chief Inspectors, 1 Inspector, 14 Sergeants and 41 Police Constables – have observed Panel meetings over the course of the year (compared to 40 last year) to assist their understanding of scrutiny practices and how the public observe stop and search practices, supporting officer training and development. Their feedback has been very positive, and they have contributed valuable operational advice in support of the Panel's scrutiny work.

### **Recommendations for the year ahead (April 2025 – March 2026)**

- Continue to evolve the more data-influenced approach to scrutiny work now undertaken by the Panel, making more sophisticated use of PowerBI to understand trends and anomalies and identify issues requiring further investigation – and tracking progress over time.
- Continue to develop and implement the cross-panel communications and engagement strategy to increase community awareness of and involvement in scrutiny work, and diversity of panel membership by ethnicity, age and lived experience of police activity.
- Identify further ways to remove potential barriers to Panel membership for those in full-time work or study. Plans are now in place to trial evening and hybrid Panel meetings in the immediate term.
- Continue to increase the sample size of BWV scrutinised at meetings as a proportion of its wider scrutiny work, reflecting the value of BWV in enabling effective scrutiny.



## Become a Member of the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel!

We continue to recruit for new Members. As a Panel Member you would:

- **Attend and participate in Panel meetings**, delivering vital independent scrutiny of use of stop and search powers by police officers in Hertfordshire.
- **Be offered training to support your scrutiny**, including the opportunity to go on a Ride Along with police officers.
- **Be paid travel expenses**. Whilst this is a voluntary role, the OPCC meets any reasonable travel expenses incurred by Panel members.

We welcome applications from anyone who lives, works or studies in Hertfordshire. The OPCC is particularly interested to hear from younger people and those from minority ethnic communities to maximise diversity of thought and experience on the Panel.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a Panel Member, please email Susan McNeill at the OPCC: [susan.mcneill@herts-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:susan.mcneill@herts-pcc.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

This report summarises the work undertaken by the Hertfordshire Independent Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel (hereafter referred to as the 'Panel') between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.<sup>3</sup>

The Panel's assessments and feedback inform individual and organisational learning and development, and improvement in stop and search practices. This supports efforts to improve transparency and enhance public confidence in the Constabulary's ethical and lawful use of stop and search powers.

This report reflects on the work of the Panel's scrutiny function, including the random sampling and assessment of stop and search records, stop and search data, BWV, Section 60 authorisations, and under 18 strip searches.<sup>4</sup> It also assesses the Panel's development over the year and outlines next steps to continue strengthening its scrutiny function over the coming year.

This report uses the most recent data available to the Constabulary on PowerBI. Since last year's annual report was published, PowerBI has been updated and the total number of stop and searches for 2023/24 has increased slightly from 6,617 to 6,636.<sup>5</sup>

A glossary is included on page 41 to explain some of the terminology used in the report.

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<sup>3</sup> During the reporting period, the Panel met to review the preceding period's stop and search activity. Therefore, this report covers the Constabulary's stop and search activity from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 gives officers the right to search individuals within a specified locality, without any grounds for suspicion, in circumstances in which incidents involving serious violence may take place.

<sup>5</sup> This is due to additional records being uploaded to the system after the data for a period has been compiled.



*Panel members at their meeting in March 2025 at the Joint Emergency Services Academy in Stevenage*

### **Profile of Hertfordshire**

- Hertfordshire is a large county stretching from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to the north to the outskirts of London in the south. It borders Buckinghamshire to the west and Essex to the east.
- Hertfordshire has a population of 1,215,387. 28.2% of residents are from an ethnic minority compared to 26.5% in England as a whole.
- Urban areas make up around a third of Hertfordshire by area and account for around 89% of the population. There is no single dominant large urban centre. In total, there are 40 settlements with 4,000 or more residents in each.
- Hertfordshire Constabulary has Neighbourhood Policing Teams which operate in each of the ten Community Safety Partnerships. These represent the ten local district and borough councils: Dacorum, East Herts, North Herts, Welwyn Hatfield, Broxbourne, Hertsmere, Watford, Three Rivers, St Albans, and Stevenage.
- Hertfordshire has lower crime levels than the national average: 68.5 crimes per 1,000 residents compared to 80.8 in England (March 2024 – February 2025). However, levels of antisocial behaviour incidents are higher: 18.7 per 1,000 residents compared to 14.9 in England (March 2024 – February 2025).

See [HertsInsight](#) (ONS Census 2021 Data, ONS mid-2022 population estimates, April 2024) for references and more information.

## 2. Background

### National Guidance

In 2014, the then Home Secretary introduced the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme (BUSS) in response to concerns about police compliance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 Code of Practice A.<sup>6</sup> The intention was to significantly reduce the use of stop and search, encourage more intelligence-led stop and searches, and improve stop to arrest ratios. BUSS remains in use and was last updated by the Home Office in 2021.<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the College of Policing published its Authorised Policing Practice (APP) for Stop and Search.<sup>8</sup> The APP is based largely on the provisions of PACE Code A, alongside the BUSS and recommendations from reviews of stop and search carried out in recent years by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children. Mandatory content in the APP that is based on Code A is legally binding. The APP was last updated in 2018.

### Stop and Search in Hertfordshire

In August 2014, Hertfordshire Constabulary signed up to the original BUSS reforms, including measures to allow stop and search records to be scrutinised by community representatives through independent external scrutiny. The Constabulary approached the OPCC to establish an external independent scrutiny panel and, following scoping work in November 2014, the OPCC set up the Panel in 2015.

The Panel's remit was to provide a voice for community concerns; and to help inform and influence police training around stop and search practices. The Panel today provides clear and transparent information for both Constabulary and community benefit; and enhances public confidence in police performance. This was again reflected in the most recent HMICFRS Peel Inspection, published in October 2024, which found that Hertfordshire Constabulary has effective independent panels that scrutinise the Constabulary's use of stop and search.<sup>9</sup> HMICFRS' report on Section 60 and community scrutiny of stop and search, published in December 2023, highlighted Hertfordshire's stop and search scrutiny arrangements as "an example of innovative practice of a partnership approach to the independent community scrutiny of stop and search."<sup>10</sup>

The Panel's work is complemented by multiple additional strands of stop and search scrutiny undertaken by the Constabulary and external partners. The Constabulary's Police Powers Board, which meets quarterly and is chaired by a Chief Superintendent, has strategic oversight of the use of police powers, including the legitimate use of stop and search, and is attended by the Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels and OPCC staff. The Constabulary's Race Inclusion Board meets with senior

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<sup>6</sup> In 2014, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reported that 27% of stop and search records they examined did not contain reasonable grounds to search people, even though many of the records had been endorsed by supervising officers.

<sup>7</sup> [Best use of stop and search scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/best-use-of-stop-and-search-scheme)

<sup>8</sup> [Stop and search | College of Policing](https://www.collegeofpolicing.org.uk/stop-and-search)

<sup>9</sup> PEEL 2021/22 An Inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary, HMICFRS, p.10

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-assessment-2021-22-hertfordshire/>

<sup>10</sup> [Report on the Criminal Justice Alliance's super-complaint: Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and independent community scrutiny of stop and search \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123456/Report_on_the_Criminal_Justice_Alliance_s_super-complaint:_Section_60_of_the_Criminal_Justice_and_Public_Order_Act_1994_and_independent_community_scrutiny_of_stop_and_search.pdf)

officers and members of Black communities in Hertfordshire to oversee different areas of work around race and inclusion, chiefly around implementation of the Police Race Action Plan. In addition, the Constabulary's Operational Strategy Team undertakes internal dip-sampling of stop and search records, whilst supervisors dip-sample their officers' encounters to assess BWV and recorded grounds for stops. These activities combined mean that Hertfordshire has a comprehensive approach to scrutiny of use of police powers including stop and search.

### 3. Panel Membership and Leadership

The Panel's work has continued to benefit from consistency in leadership and membership this year. Demetrius Nurse has served as Chair of the Panel for two years, with Mohammad Islam-Ruman as Vice Chair. Ben Platt and Eddie McCarroll have led the work of the Panel's data subgroup, strengthening the role that data now plays in the wider Panel's scrutiny work.

As of May 2025, the Panel has a total membership of 21 members, all of whom live, work or study in Hertfordshire. Over the course of the year, three members have left the Panel and two new members have joined.

The following table provides a refreshed breakdown of Panel membership by gender, age and ethnicity compared against Hertfordshire's 2021 Census data.

The Panel's diversity by ethnicity has improved on last year but there is more progress to be made:

Category	Panel	2021 Census <sup>11</sup>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	33.3%	51%
Male	66.7%	49%
<b>Age</b>		
16 – 24	4.8%	9.4%
25 – 39	0%	19.9%
40 – 54	19%	21.3%
55 – 70	38.1%	17.2%
70+	38.1%	12.5%
<b>Self-defined Ethnicity</b>		
White	76.2%	81.8%
Asian/Asian British	4.8%	8.6%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	9.5%	3.8%
Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African	9.5%	3.7%
Other Ethnic Group	0%	2.1%

### 4. External Engagement and Recruitment

Panel members have assisted the OPCC in developing a cross-scrutiny panel communications and engagement strategy supporting efforts to raise public awareness of scrutiny of police powers and

<sup>11</sup> ONS Census 2021 Hertfordshire: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/areas/E10000015/>

increase the diversity of panel memberships by age and ethnicity. This means that the panels now have defined targets and an action plan to help deliver them.

The strategy is ambitious in its breadth and the OPCC has so far focused on prioritising the following strands of activity:

- Panel members have supported the OPCC in delivering a programme of ‘mock panel’ sessions in which OPCC staff and Panel members visit universities and colleges and recreate the scrutiny process with groups of students by reviewing stop and search records and stop and search and use of force BWV. Through this ongoing programme, Panel members have helped raise awareness and undertaken police scrutiny work with over 200 young people in Hertfordshire. Feedback has been incredibly positive to the extent that the University of Hertfordshire and West Herts College have now embedded mock panels in their student programmes. Mock panel sessions will be rolled out to additional colleges and schools, and plans are already in place to deliver a series of sessions with Hertford Regional College at its campuses in Broxbourne and Ware and with North Hertfordshire College later in 2025.
- The OPCC has continued to strengthen its level of engagement with the Constabulary’s RIB, which scrutinises the Constabulary’s implementation of the Police Race Action Plan. Through this work, two RIB members have been recruited as OPCC scrutiny panel members.
- The OPCC and Stop and Search Panel have also established a strong working relationship with the RIB Young People Forum, providing written records to the Forum for its members to review. The feedback from Forum members is relayed back to the Panel and to Constabulary officers, thus establishing a formal feedback loop. This arrangement now means that around 50 Black young people from across Hertfordshire are contributing to scrutiny of use of stop and search powers in the county – this is a significant step forward.
- The Panel and OPCC continue to identify ad hoc opportunities to raise awareness of and diversity of participation in scrutiny. In September 2024, the Panel Chair joined a Black History Month Community Event in Watford, helping to raise awareness of the work of the Panel with dozens of attendees. In February 2025, members of the OPCC team took part in a careers fair at the University of Hertfordshire which resulted in a small cohort of students attending a series of Panel meetings as observers.

With Panel support, the OPCC will continue evolving and implementing the strategy. Progress has been made this year but there is still much to do.





*Panel Chair Demitrius Nurse with fellow Panel Member Bukola Efunshile at a Black History Month Community Event in Watford in September 2024*

## 5. Panel Training

We have continued to evolve and widen the training offer to Panel members this year. Before attending their first meeting as a Panel member, each member is required to undertake a mandatory training session which is jointly designed and delivered by the OPCC and the Constabulary. The training session gives Panel members the information required to conduct informed and effective scrutiny, providing them with an understanding of:

- Key national legislation around stop and search including PACE Code A, including what does and does not constitute reasonable grounds for a stop and search.
- Section 60 and Sections 10/11, including how these are addressed by the Panel in its scrutiny.
- Police procedure for stop and search, including GOWISELY and Hertfordshire Constabulary Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for written records.
- Panel governance and organisational arrangements for the Panel.
- The record selection and scrutiny processes, including the RAG grading system and what is expected of Panel members during meetings.
- The Panel's feedback loop with the Constabulary and the impact of its scrutiny on policing practice.
- The complaints process for stop and search, including how feedback and learning from the OPCC's complaints team is reported into the Panel on a quarterly basis.

When this training package is delivered to new members, it is also offered as a matter of course to all existing members as a refresher training opportunity. This helps maintain and further develop members' understanding of police powers and ability to critically challenge and scrutinise the Constabulary's stop and search data.

Panel members are encouraged at any point in their membership to participate in the Constabulary's Ride Along scheme, giving members the opportunity to join officers on patrol and experience daily policing first-hand to provide them with the operational context in which stop and searches are conducted across different scenarios. This year, nine members across the scrutiny panels have taken up the opportunity of a Ride Along.

We continue to work with the Constabulary to identify opportunities for Panel members to attend and observe officer training, not just for stop and search but for relevant wider topics such as Bias training. In October 2024, Panel members were given the opportunity to observe officer training and, in May 2024, were provided with a briefing on unconscious bias training. This gave members additional insight into the training officers receive around how bias training is being used to minimise the impact of any assumptions, biases, or stereotyping and how that can impact decision-making in policing.

Later this year, the Operational Strategy Team that oversees the use of police powers for Hertfordshire Constabulary are providing a training input to all intervention and neighbourhood policing colleagues. Panel members have been invited to observe these sessions to further their understanding of training received by frontline officers.

### **What is a Stop and Search?**

When an officer stops you or your vehicle and searches you, your vehicle, or anything you are carrying.

Powers to stop and search must be used fairly, responsibly, with respect for people being searched and without unlawful discrimination.

### **What is the purpose of Stop and Search?**

To enable officers to eliminate or confirm suspicions that an individual may be in possession of stolen or prohibited items, without exercising their power of arrest, and to provide safeguards for those who are searched.

### **What is reasonable suspicion?**

Reasonable grounds for suspicion is the legal test which an officer must satisfy before they can stop and detain individuals or vehicles to search them. Reasonable grounds for suspicion will depend on the circumstances of each case.

There must be an objective basis for that suspicion to be based on facts, information, and/or intelligence that are relevant to the likelihood of finding an article of a certain kind. Reasonable suspicion can never be supported on the basis of personal factors. It must rely on intelligence or information about, or some specific behaviour by, the person concerned.

An officer has powers to stop and search you if they have 'reasonable grounds' to suspect you are carrying:

- illegal drugs
- a weapon
- stolen property
- something which could be used to commit a crime.

## **6. Meetings**

Terms of Reference (ToR) are in place to guide the work of the Panel and these are published on the OPCC website.<sup>12</sup>

A Superintendent, Chief Inspector, Inspector and Sergeant (or combination thereof) from the Operational Strategy Team is present at all meetings to support the Panel. In addition, CSP Chief Inspectors are invited to attend meetings during which stop and search records and BWV footage from their areas are reviewed during "deep-dives". They are accountable for any issues and concerns identified that are linked to their own CSP. As the Panel continues to conduct meetings at different venues across the county, Sergeants and PCs from Neighbourhood Policing Teams are

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<sup>12</sup> [ss-panel-terms-of-reference-oct-23-2024.pdf \(hertscommissioner.org\)](#)



invited to attend meetings as a matter of course to observe and understand the work of the Panel. Feedback from attending officers continues to be extremely positive.

During the reporting period, the Panel decided to invert its standard meeting agenda and begin its scrutiny work at the very start of the meeting. Standing updates and items for discussion are now delivered post-scrutiny, which crucially frees up time for frontline officers attending Panel meetings by allowing them to depart the meeting once the scrutiny is complete. This change has had a positive impact and will be implemented on a permanent basis across the scrutiny panels.

Appendix C sets out the totality of scrutiny processes which are undertaken at Panel meetings. At each meeting, the Panel dip-samples a selection of stop and search records. They will also scrutinise a selection of BWV footage, all Section 60 authorisations, and all strip searches of a child (in line with recommendations made by the Children's Commissioner for England).<sup>13</sup>

The Panel welcomes opportunities to take on new and ad hoc elements of scrutiny. During the reporting period, the Panel reviewed and graded a series of stop and search records to assist the Constabulary in formulating its response to the HMICFRS inspection report published in October 2024. This input was very welcome. The Constabulary also updated its Standard Operating Procedure on stop and search this year and members were given the opportunity to review and inform changes to the policy.



*Panel members meeting in October 2024, with Police and Crime Commissioner Jonathan Ash-Edwards in attendance*

Countywide data was reviewed at each meeting in the reporting period. In addition, the following themes/scrutiny were undertaken by the Panel:

Scrutiny undertaken over the last year	
May 2024: North Herts	October 2024: 0-17 year olds
July 2024: 'Not stated' ethnicity	November 2024: 0-17 year olds
August 2024: 'Not stated' ethnicity	March 2025: Broxbourne
September 2024: 'Not stated' ethnicity	

<sup>13</sup> [Strip search of children in England and Wales | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/stip-search-of-children-in-england-and-wales/)

The well-established feedback loop between the Panel and the Constabulary continues to operate effectively, meaning that the work and views of the Panel have a direct and meaningful impact on the training and performance of officers on the ground. Following each meeting, all the Panel's scrutiny feedback is circulated to the relevant senior officers in the Constabulary, including the Chief Inspectors of the Local Policing teams). Feedback is provided direct to individual officers, and where appropriate is also used to inform future training activities. The Constabulary representative at meetings then reports back to the Panel on agreed courses of action for individual incidents, to complete the feedback loop. In rare cases involving serious misconduct, procedures are in place to enable the Panel to refer an incident directly to PSD. Appendix D illustrates the feedback loop between the Panel and the Constabulary.

## 7. Key Findings

### Stop to arrest ratio

In 2014, in line with national guidance, Hertfordshire introduced a package of reforms as recommended by the then Home Secretary to make stop and searches more intelligence-led and improve the stop to arrest ratio. Figure 1 illustrates how over time the number of stop and searches in Hertfordshire has reduced in parallel to an improvement in the stop to arrest ratio.<sup>14</sup>

During this reporting period, Hertfordshire Constabulary conducted 6,427 searches - a decrease of 3% on the previous year. 1,364 (21.2%) of these searches resulted in an arrest - a 1.8% increase in the arrest rate on the previous year. Hertfordshire is fifth out of eight forces in terms of the average monthly number of stop and searches conducted within their Most Similar Force area (the same as in the previous reporting period), as defined by the Home Office (see Appendix A).

#### How does Hertfordshire compare to other areas?

Compared to the Most Similar Force Group\*, Hertfordshire is **fifth out of eight forces** in terms of the average monthly number of stop and searches conducted over the last year.

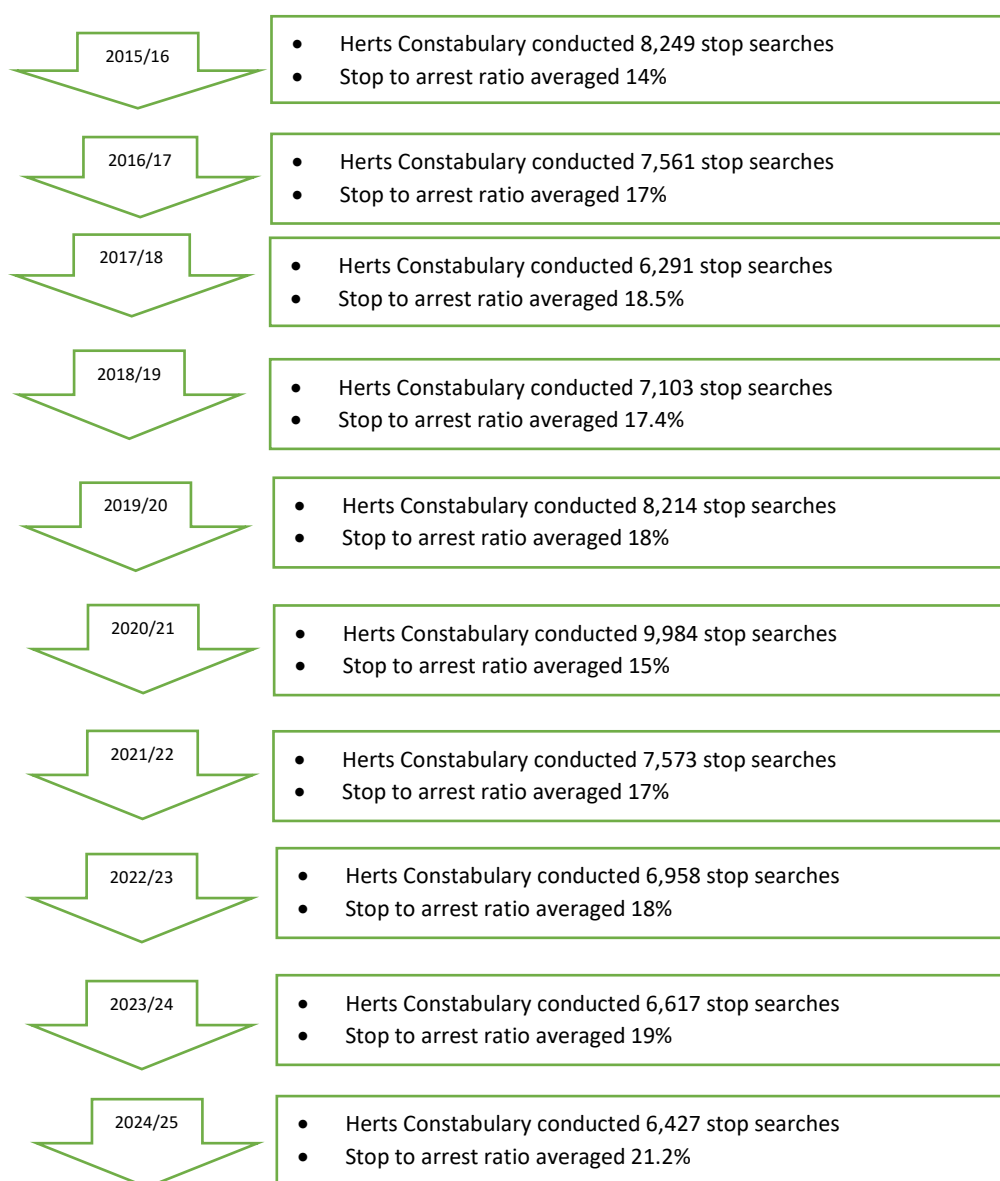
Within the Most Similar Force Group, Staffordshire and Sussex have comparable numbers of average monthly stops (536 in Staffordshire and 516 in Sussex compared to Hertfordshire's 532). However, Sussex has a better arrest rate (22.9%) than Hertfordshire (14.9%).

For more information, see Appendix A: Comparison of Stop and Searches figures from Hertfordshire and Most Similar Force areas (March 2024 – March 2025)

*\*Most Similar Force Groups are determined by the Home Office. They are groups of police force areas that have been found to be the most like each other based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics relating to crime. For more information about Most Similar Force Groups and how they are formed, please see: [Data - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/data-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)*

<sup>14</sup> For 2023/24, the number of stop and searches conducted has been updated to reflect the latest available figures.

Figure 1: Stop and Search arrest ratio in Hertfordshire (2015/16 - 2024/25)



(source: PowerBI, accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

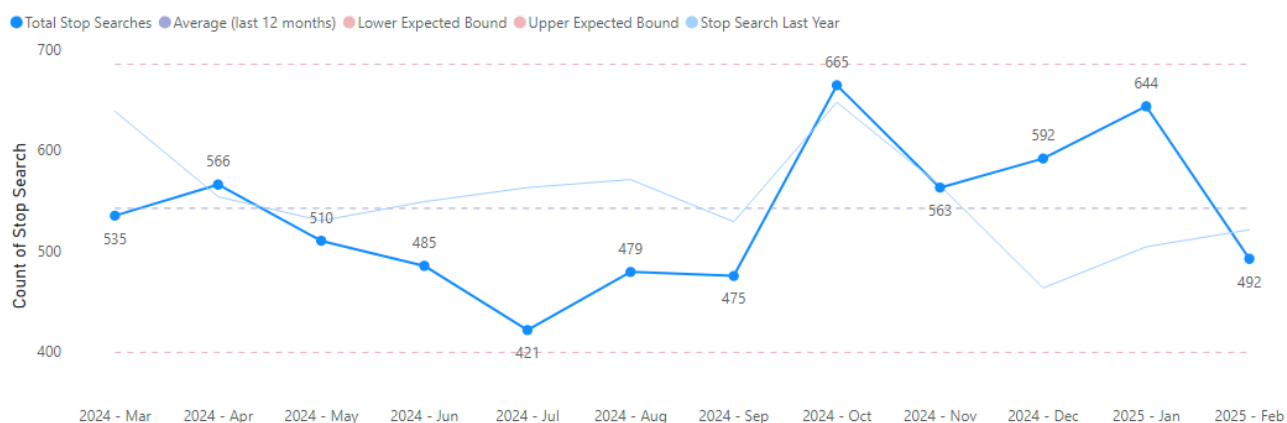
## Number of searches

The number of searches conducted per month has fluctuated from a low of 421 in July 2024 to highs of 665 in October 2024 and 644 in January 2025. Figure 2 indicates some seasonal correlation with the pattern of searches in the previous reporting period, notably in October. Additionally, it is of note that throughout the year, the number of searches conducted each month did not exceed the Constabulary's modelled upper or lower bounds.

There are a range of factors which can lead to a stop and search taking place. These include reports from members of the public, police activity in the vicinity of a crime, a Section 60 being put in place, and credible, specific and recent intelligence that crime is affecting a defined area.

Figure 2: Stop and Search by month (2024 – 2025 compared to preceding year)

#### Stop Search by Month

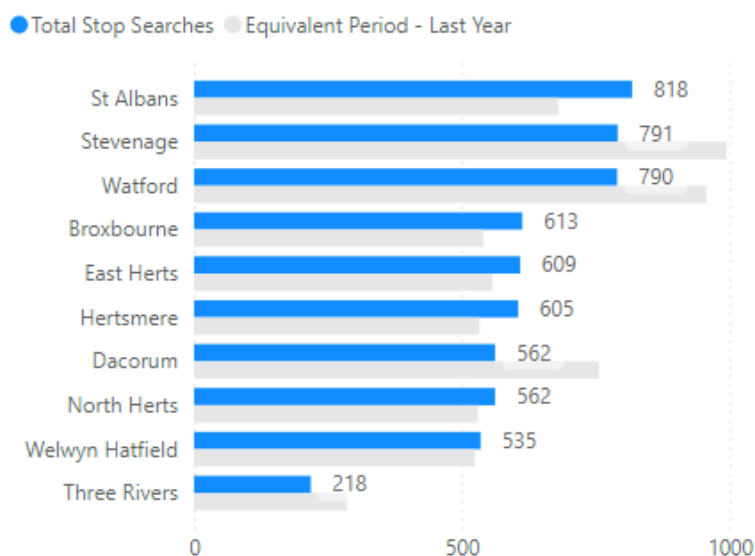


(source: PowerBI, accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of stop and searches across the county's ten CSPs. This year, St Albans conducted the greatest number of searches (818), compared to 989 in Stevenage in the previous reporting period. As with last year, Three Rivers carried out the fewest searches compared to other CSPs (218, a decrease of 67 on the previous year).

Figure 3: Stop and Search Volumes by CSP (2024 – 2025 compared to preceding year)

#### Stop Search Volumes by CSP



(source: PowerBI, accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

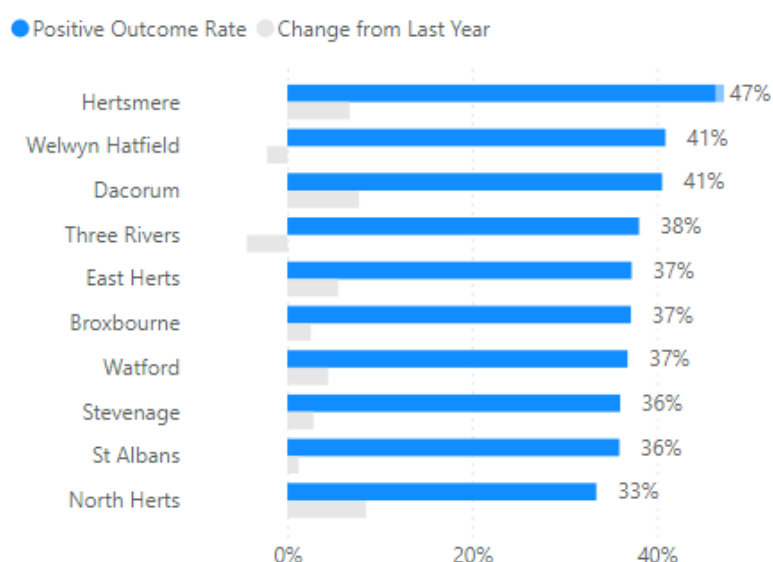
## Positive outcome rate

Positive outcomes include arrests, plus out of court disposals, such as community resolutions or conditional cautions, which negate the need for individuals to be formally processed through custody suites. The average positive outcome rate for the year was 38%, an increase of 3% on the previous year.

Figure 4 summarises the positive outcome rate across Hertfordshire's ten CSPs. All CSPs saw increases in positive outcome rates compared to 2023/24, apart from Three Rivers and Welwyn Hatfield which witnessed small decreases in positive outcome rates of 4.4% and 2.2% respectively.

Figure 4: Percentage of total positive outcome rate by CSP (2024 – 2025 compared to preceding year)

### Positive Outcome Rate



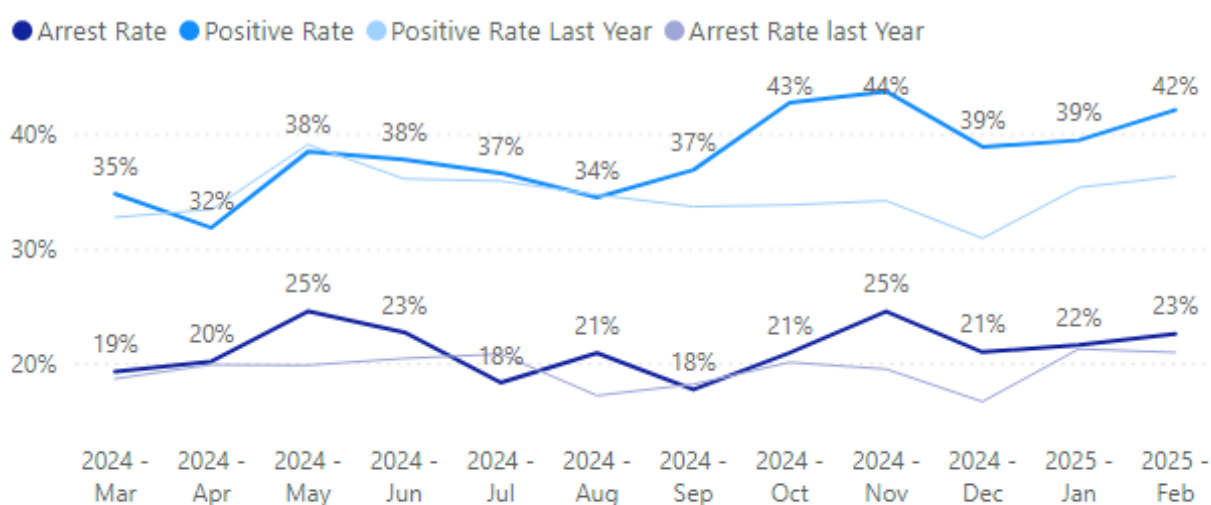
(source: PowerBI, accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

## Number of arrests and positive disposals

Arrest rates following a stop and search this year have been relatively stable from month to month, fluctuating between 18% and 25%. Figure 5 indicates that positive disposal rates are broadly in line with arrest rates. It also shows that positive disposal rates have been higher each month this year compared to last except for April, May and August 2024. This differs from trends seen in 2023/24, where the positive disposal rate was lower each month for the period of November 2023 to January 2024 compared to the year before.

Figure 5: Arrest Rate and Positive Disposal Rate (2024 – 2025 compared to preceding year)

### Arrest Rate and Positive Disposal Rate



(source: PowerBI, accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

### Panel scrutiny of stop and search records

This year, 496 dip-sampled stop and search records in Hertfordshire were scrutinised. This represents a 14.5% increase (up from 433) in the number of records scrutinised by the Panel on last year. The Panel assessed 8.7% of all stop and search records available, compared to 6.8% in the previous year. The records which the Panel review are taken from tuServ, the Constabulary's recording system which officers can access whilst out on patrol. The Panel review the written grounds, the time and location of the search and the powers which have been used.

The Panel's position of confidence in the stop and search records (written records and BWV) scrutinised this year was **83.2%** (an increase on 74.9% in 2023/24 and 66.1% in 2022/23).

The year-on-year increase in the Panel's position of confidence reflects the fact that the Panel continues to see improvements in the overall quality of written records. These improvements are at least in part attributable to the scrutiny work of the Panel itself, with a strong and established feedback loop in place to ensure its work informs Constabulary policy, practice and training. These improvements have in turn enabled the Panel to continue increasing the overall volume of scrutiny undertaken year-on-year.

The key themes in records in which the Panel was not confident remain broadly consistent with those reported last year, chiefly:

- Insufficient detail provided by the officer, particularly around time and location and chronology of events.

- Mentions of 'intelligence' without explicitly defining how recent that intelligence is or how it is relevant to the individual who has been stopped, e.g. the record might not state how the individual matches the description given.

Two additional themes were identified by Panel members this year:

- Lack of detail on engagement between officer and detained person (this was particularly identified in the deep dive of stops taking place in Broxbourne).
- Ineffective use of templates – often when a template is used it leads to a less coherent report, whereby the narrative is hard to follow as the information is split up in a counterintuitive manner to satisfy the template headings.

#### **Case Study of a record the Panel were not confident in**

Intelligence has informed us that the vehicle was being used for drug use/dealing. I myself saw cannabis and cocaine residue when the car was abandoned the week prior. The driver of the vehicle name 1 is a well know drug dealer/user as well, further adding to the grounds

**Panel comments: How old is the intelligence? Officer stopped due to intelligence a week ago. Lacks detail**

The record above exemplifies a common concern flagged by the Panel where the precise nature of the 'intelligence' cited to justify the stop is lacking. This suggests there is a requirement for the Constabulary to ensure the need to provide clear detail on intelligence is embedded in the mindset of officers.

#### **Case Study of a record the Panel were confident in**

Police received a call from owner of a house stating that there were two individuals in his rear garden who were attempting to gain entry to his property. His property had been targeted before and he was the victim of burglary. The home owner stated that the front and rear garden was very overgrown and his property was in a poor state. The state of the garden meant that there was little visibility from the front of the property meaning that the property was an ideal target for those looking to steal property. The home owner stated that he was having to hide within his own property due to the concerns that he had that these individuals may gain entry. The individuals were described as both teens, maybe in their twenties, one in a white shirt and a blazer and the other was a black male all in black. On arrival we entered the rear garden around the side of the building. Once in the back garden two individuals matching the description of the suspects were standing right next to the rear door, exactly where the reporting party stated that they would be. One of the individuals was the subject of this search and could be described as a black male, in his teens, with short black hair and dressed all in black with a black puffer jacket. There was slight damage to the rear door of the property (this was later confirmed by the home owner to be historical from a previous police incident). On announcing our arrival as police officers both males froze and didn't offer any explanation of their presence at the location, therefore raising suspicion.

**Panel comments: great detail including relevant surroundings**



The Panel always recognises good practice as part of its scrutiny and regularly highlights records considered excellent to the Constabulary. Panel comments on records in which they are confident typically focus on two themes: the officer has provided a clear narrative; and a precise explanation of the relevant intelligence and how it resulted in the stop of the individual concerned. The record above was flagged by the Panel as a textbook example of a written record.

The Panel's assessment of records is shared with the appropriate CSP Chief Inspector as appropriate to feed back to their officers. (See Appendix D for a full illustration of the established feedback loop between the Panel and the Constabulary.)

If we are to continue increasing Panel confidence in stop and searches, written records would need to, on a more consistent basis, include clearly stated grounds/intelligence justifying the stop; a clear and sequential narrative; more appropriate use of templates; and sufficient detail to enable the Panel to make an informed grading. Whilst the Panel continues to find identical records where grounds are copied and pasted for separate incidents, these are now far fewer in number, and this represents an area where Panel feedback has directly improved Constabulary practice.

## 8. Data and Disproportionality

### Data-driven scrutiny

Thanks to the work of the data subgroup, the Panel has adopted a more targeted, data-influenced approach to its scrutiny. In addition to continuing to dip-sample stops, the Panel dedicates a portion of scrutiny time to assess areas and groups identified by the subgroup's independent data analysis work.

During the reporting period, the data subgroup helped the Panel deliver scrutiny deep dives on the following themes:

- Stop and searches in North Herts CSP, due to the complaints trigger threshold being met<sup>15</sup>. The Panel graded as Green 76.2% of records and no thematic issues of concern were identified across the selection of records reviewed.
- The data subgroup identified that stops with a 'not-stated ethnicity' typically had poorer positive outcome and arrest rates. The Panel ran deep dives in July, August and September 2024 and the records reviewed did not reveal any trends of concern.
- The subgroup also identified that stops involving 0–17-year-olds had poorer positive outcome rates compared to other age ranges. Deep dives took place in October and November 2024. The Panel's position of confidence in stops involving 0–17-year-olds was 81.2% and thus broadly equivalent to its overall position of confidence for all records reviewed in the year.
- The deep dive of stops in Broxbourne CSP flagged several records lacking detail on officer engagement with detainees. These comments were fed back to the Constabulary and the Panel will revisit this deep dive at a future meeting to track progress.

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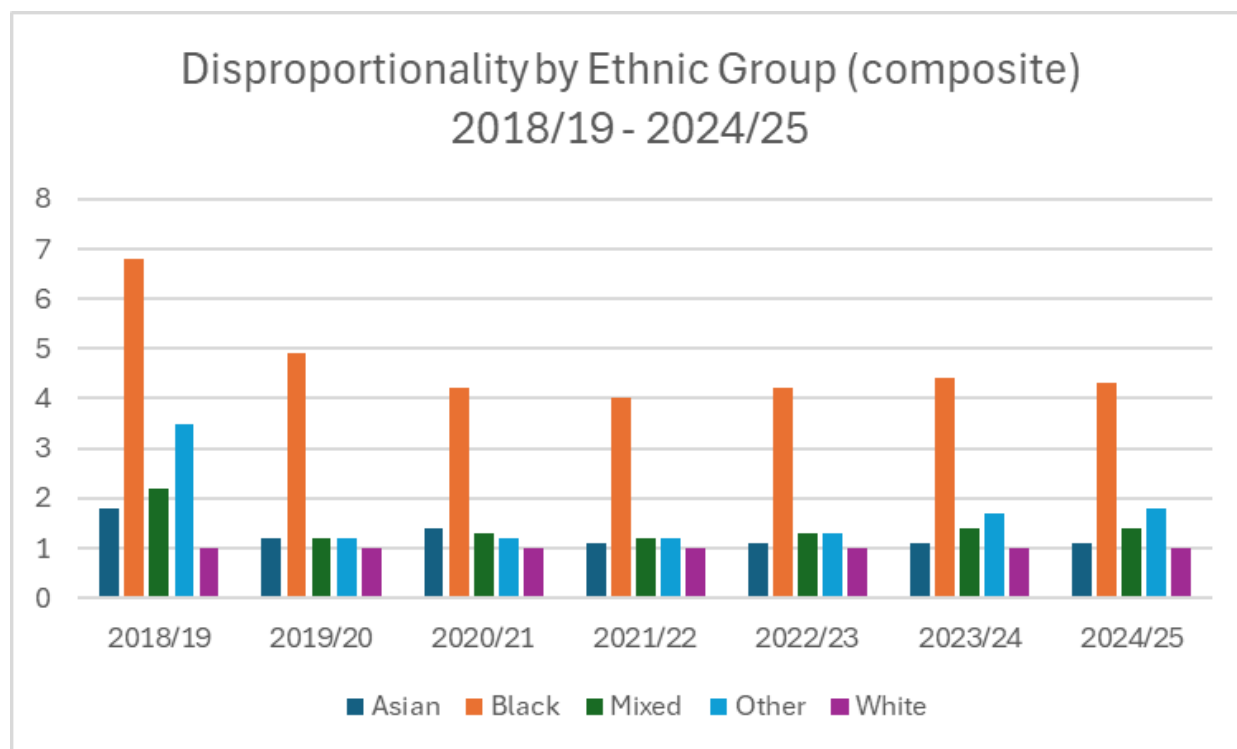
<sup>15</sup> It was agreed by the Panel that a Community Complaints Trigger will be issued if the number of complaints for a particular district is higher than one per month.



## Constabulary data on disproportionality

Figure 8 reflects the latest data<sup>16</sup> available from PowerBI, indicating stop and search disproportionality by ethnic group from 2018/19 to 2024/25. The disproportionality rate for Black people being stopped and searched reduced from 6.8 in 2018/19 to 4.3 in 2024/25 (compared to 4.4 last year).

Figure 8: Disproportionality by Composite Ethnic Group



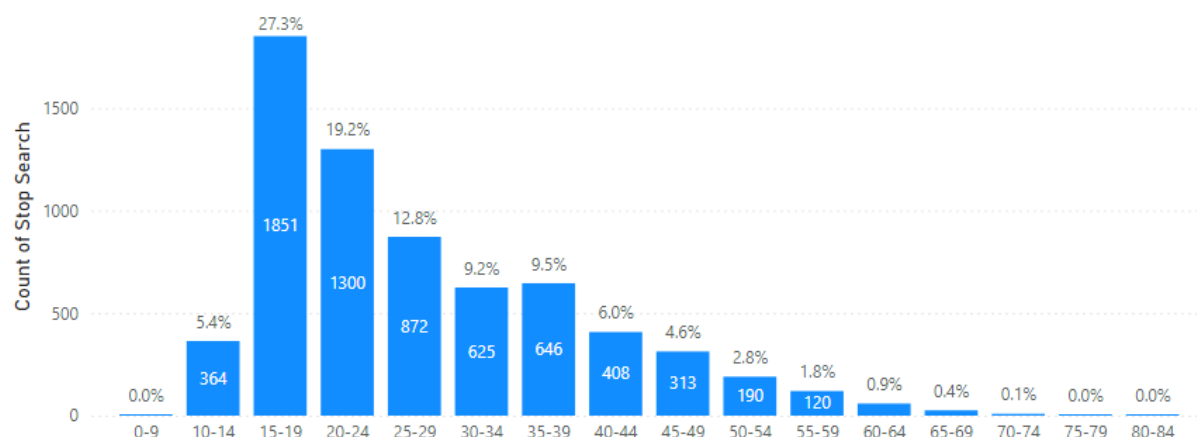
(source: PowerBI, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025)

Figure 9 illustrates that people aged 15 to 24 accounted for almost half (46.5%) of all stops in Hertfordshire in 2024/25 (compared to 47.1% in the previous year), whilst figure 10 shows that in the same period the vast majority of stops (78%) were of Males. This is a reasonably significant decrease on last year's figure of 84.7%.

<sup>16</sup> There are caveats to consider when reviewing disproportionality data. Those who are stopped and searched with no further action do not have to provide any personal information, e.g. their age, ethnicity and address. To augment any data given, officers are asked to use their judgement to record ethnicity: this is referred to as 'officer defined ethnicity'. The disproportionality data is composite data: if data has not been provided by the person who was stopped and searched then officer-defined ethnicity has been used. It also important to bear in mind that officer actions are also led by the intelligence they receive from the public.

Figure 9: Stop and Search by age (2024 – 2025)

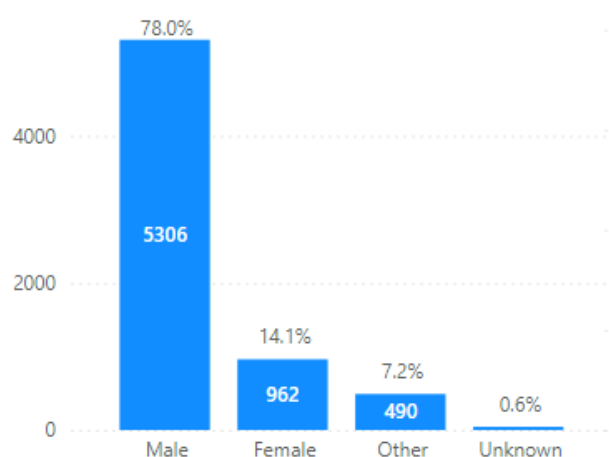
Stop Search on Person by Age Group



(source: PowerBI, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025)

Figure 10: Stop and Search by gender (2024 – 2025)

Stop Search on Person by Gender



(source: PowerBI, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025)

## 9. Body Worn Video (BWV)

The Panel has delivered on its commitment to scrutinise more BWV footage this year. The aim is to continue increasing the amount of BWV assessed by the Panel year-on-year, to enable members to better identify trends in behaviour/compliance with PACE Code A.

The Panel assessed 41 pieces of BWV this year, compared to 32 in 2023/24 and 18 in 2022/23. Of the 41 pieces of BWV scrutinised, the Panel were confident (i.e. Green 1 or Green 2) in 36 records.

Two concerns were noted by the Panel during its scrutiny of BWV, which were also noted last year:

- On seven occasions, the Panel felt that key details, such as the incident timeline recorded in the written record, did not correspond to the BWV viewed.
- On seven occasions, it was noted that GOWISELY could not be heard in its entirety.

On four occasions, the Panel noted officers for excellent conduct, particularly around being professional, respectful and thorough during the incident. There were two incidents where the Panel was confident in the BWV but not the corresponding written record, and three incidents where the Panel was confident in the written record but not the corresponding BWV. For the latter, this was principally due to details in the written record around the detained person's behaviour, or the circumstances of the stop, not matching what was observed in the BWV.

## 10. Section 60s

Whilst there was no use of Section 60 for the Panel to review during the reporting period, in line with best practice, the Panel reviews all uses of Section 60 when they do occur as a matter of policy. When uses of Section 60 are reviewed, an Inspector attends to set out the decision-making process, explain the outcome and take questions from the Panel.

### What is a Section 60 search?

Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is different to normal stop and search as it gives police the temporary powers to search people without reasonable grounds. This can only happen in a defined area at a specific time when a senior officer believes there is a possibility of serious violence, or weapons are involved.

## 11. Complaints

All expressions of dissatisfaction are initially logged by the Hertfordshire OPCC's Complaint Resolution Team (CRT). Those complaints which meet a certain risk criterion (including any relating to a stop and search) and any logged matters which cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction are referred to the Constabulary's PSD.

In 2024/25:

- 17 complaints relating to stop and search were made by the public, a decrease of 10 on last year.
- 6,427 stop and searches were conducted in Hertfordshire. This means there was a complaint raised for 0.26% of all stop and searches (compared to 0.41% last year).
- Of the 17 allegations received, complaints related to not being provided the relevant paperwork, being unlawfully stopped and searched or without reasonable grounds, and individual officer behaviour of either being intolerant, impolite, unprofessional, or overbearing.
- Of the 17 complaints made regarding stop and search, CRT handled 14 of these and found no failings/learnings. The remaining 3 were formally recorded and redirected to PSD, either due to a complainant's request for the complaint to be formally logged OR due to the

nature of other allegations (e.g. discrimination) being made within the same complaint meaning that CRT were unable to informally handle the complaint.

## 12. Conclusion

This report evidences the Panel's overall view that there are no serious concerns about the use of stop and search in Hertfordshire. The Panel's position of confidence in records reviewed has increased to **83.2%** in 2024/25 (from 74.9% in the previous year).

More widely, the historical trend of year-on-year improvements in arrest rates and positive outcome rates continued in 2024/25. 21.2% of searches resulted in an arrest – a 1.8% increase on the previous year. The countywide positive outcome rate for stop and searches this year was 38% - an increase of 3% on the previous year.

This report notes the Panel's successes this year, and proposes steps to enhance further its work in scrutinising the use of stop and search powers in Hertfordshire:

- Continue to evolve the more data-influenced approach to scrutiny work now undertaken by the Panel, making more sophisticated use of PowerBI to understand trends and anomalies and identify issues requiring further investigation – and tracking progress over time.
- Continue to develop and implement the cross-panel communications and engagement strategy to increase community awareness of and involvement in scrutiny work, and diversity of panel membership by ethnicity, age and lived experience of police activity.
- Identify further ways to remove potential barriers to Panel membership for those in full-time work or study. Plans are now in place to trial evening and hybrid Panel meetings in the immediate term.
- Continue to increase the sample size of BWV scrutinised at meetings as a proportion of its wider scrutiny work, reflecting the value of BWV in enabling effective scrutiny.

Progress against delivering on these recommendations is underway and will be reported on in next year's annual report.

## Appendix A: Comparison of Stop and Searches figures from Hertfordshire and Most Similar Force Group (March 2024 – March 2025)<sup>17</sup>

March 2024 to March 2025	Avg Monthly stops %	Average NFA %	Avg arrest %	Avg % other outcomes	Arrest + other outcomes Avg
Hertfordshire	532	75.9%	14.9%	13.3%	28.2%
Avon & Somerset	512	59.0%	23.4%	13.3%	36.7%
Essex	1220	66.9%	13.9%	19.2%	33.1%
Hampshire	1101	72.2%	11.4%	15.7%	27.1%
Leicestershire	411	68%	17.6%	10.9%	28.5%
Staffordshire	536	61.4%	15.1%	14.3%	29.4%
Sussex	516	59.7%	22.9%	14.8%	37.7%
Thames Valley	1405	75.5%	9.5%	14.8%	24.3%

<sup>17</sup> Please note that comparison with most similar forces is made using data.police.uk data submitted by forces through Crimemapper. This data does not match the reporting standards for Annual Data Requirement 150 (ADR150) through which internal reporting and annual reporting on the use of stop and search is made. **As such, numbers in this chart do not correspond to PowerBI data referenced throughout this report.**

## Appendix B: Progress Review on Last Year's Recommendations

2023/24 recommendations		Progress update
1.	Building on the findings from the University of Hertfordshire's report on stop and search, ensure disproportionality becomes a routine area of scrutiny.	Business as usual. Data and disproportionality is now embedded in the Panel's scrutiny work.
2.	Adopt a more data-influenced approach to scrutiny work, making more sophisticated use of PowerBI to understand trends and anomalies and identify issues requiring further investigation – and tracking progress over time.	The data subgroup has delivered significant progress this year in using data to shape the direction of the Panel's scrutiny. Use of data to shape scrutiny will remain a priority for the year ahead.
3.	Find effective ways to deliver a more diverse Panel membership by ethnicity, age and those with lived experience of police activity.	Ongoing. New and innovative ways have been found to involve young and ethnically diverse groups in scrutiny, principally through the mock panels and RIB Young People Forum. The next stage is to increase diversity of membership on the Panel.
4.	Deliver a communications strategy spanning the OPCC's scrutiny panels to increase community awareness of and involvement in the panels' work.	Strategy in place and being delivered. There is more progress to be made.
5.	Continue to identify public venues for meetings to maximise opportunities for members of the public to observe the Panel's work; and working to establish effective, practical hybrid meeting options to help attract and retain younger, more diverse panel members.	Being delivered. The Panel has been hosted by new external venues this year. Plans are in place to trial hybrid meetings at a police estate location before potentially rolling out this format more widely.
6.	Continue to increase the sample size of BWV scrutinised at meetings.	Business as usual. The Panel increased the volume of BWV reviewed this year and the objective is to keep increasing the volume year-on-year.
7.	Work with the OPCC's CRT to understand how its rich data sets can be used to inform and advance areas of Panel scrutiny.	Business as usual. CRT provide regular updates at Panel meetings which informs scrutiny and wider learning.
8.	Continue to implement the Health Check recommendations and adopt the Home Office's draft National Guidance for Community Scrutiny	Complete. The Home Office guidance is now under review following the change in government. We benchmark against national best practice from NPCC and peer

	Panels to ensure that the Panel aligns with national best practice.	review against other force areas to continue improving.
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## Appendix C: Panel Meetings

During their meetings, the Panel may do any of the following:

### The dip-sampling of stop and search records

Members will split into small groups of between two and four individuals to review a random selection of the stop and searches which have taken place in the preceding month in Hertfordshire. Each group is allocated a portion of the spreadsheet (for example up to 20 rows) from which they randomly select records to review.

They record their conclusions for each record on a feedback form, stating whether they were confident or not confident in the officer's grounds. Following each meeting, the feedback forms are processed and provided to the Constabulary's lead officer for follow-up with supervisors and officers.

### Reviewing stop and search data

The Constabulary provide the Panel with data which outlines stop and search activity from the preceding period. The data pack includes:

- The number of stop and searches where the object of the search was found, as well as other property found.
- The gender of those stopped and searched for all stops.
- The total number of stop and searches (including a breakdown of ethnicity, both officer defined and subject defined), arrests and positive outcomes by CSP.
- The total number of stop and searches in relation to drugs and acquisitive crime and how many resulted in an arrest or a positive outcome.

### Body Worn Video footage

The Panel also review some selected BWV footage. The Panel are provided with the correlating stop and search record, before reviewing the footage. Each clip is assessed against a series of prompts, including whether the record reflects what they saw in the footage and whether the officer complied with procedures appropriately. Following a group discussion, Panel members decide as to whether they felt confident or not confident in the appropriateness of the search and of the conduct of the officer(s) concerned.

Following the meeting, the feedback forms are processed and provided to the Constabulary's lead officer for follow-up with supervisors and officers.

### Section 60 authorisations

In 2018, the Panel began reviewing Section 60 authorisations. Officers searching under Section 60 are not required to provide reasonable grounds for individual searches and therefore, there is no requirement for the Panel to scrutinise individual grounds. To ensure the Panel can fulfil their scrutiny function effectively, in line with the guidance under Code of Practice Code A and the Best Use of Stop and Search, the Panel are presented with the following:

- Overview of the application made to a senior officer and the rank of the authorising officer.



- Details of how the authorisation was managed.
- Outline of how, and through what means, the use of the power was communicated to the public/local community before (where practicable) and after its authorisation.
- Summary of activity during the period concerned. For example, the number of stop and searches, details of items found and positive outcomes.

### Complaints

In accordance with the Best Use of Stop and Search guidance, the Panel are sighted on any complaints made by the public about a stop and search event which has undergone investigation and resolution by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) and/or the Complaints Resolution Team (CRT).

It was agreed by the Panel that a Community Complaints Trigger<sup>18</sup> will be issued if the number of complaints for a particular district is higher than one per month, with the Scrutiny Panel being given the option to do a further deep dive of these complaints.

### Strip searches of a child

PACE Code C<sup>19</sup> sets out the legal requirements for the strip search of a child. All children must be treated as vulnerable due to their age and safeguarding prioritised. A strip search should only be carried out in extenuating circumstances. The search must take place at a police station (not custody) unless there are extenuating circumstances with an appropriate adult present. A search may only take place in the absence of the appropriate adult if the subject signifies in the presence of the appropriate adult that they do not want them to be present and the adult agrees. A record must be made of the decision and signed by the appropriate adult.

In Hertfordshire, local policy states that no child can be strip searched without an Inspector's authorisation. This is in line with the Children's Commissioner's recent recommendation<sup>20</sup>.

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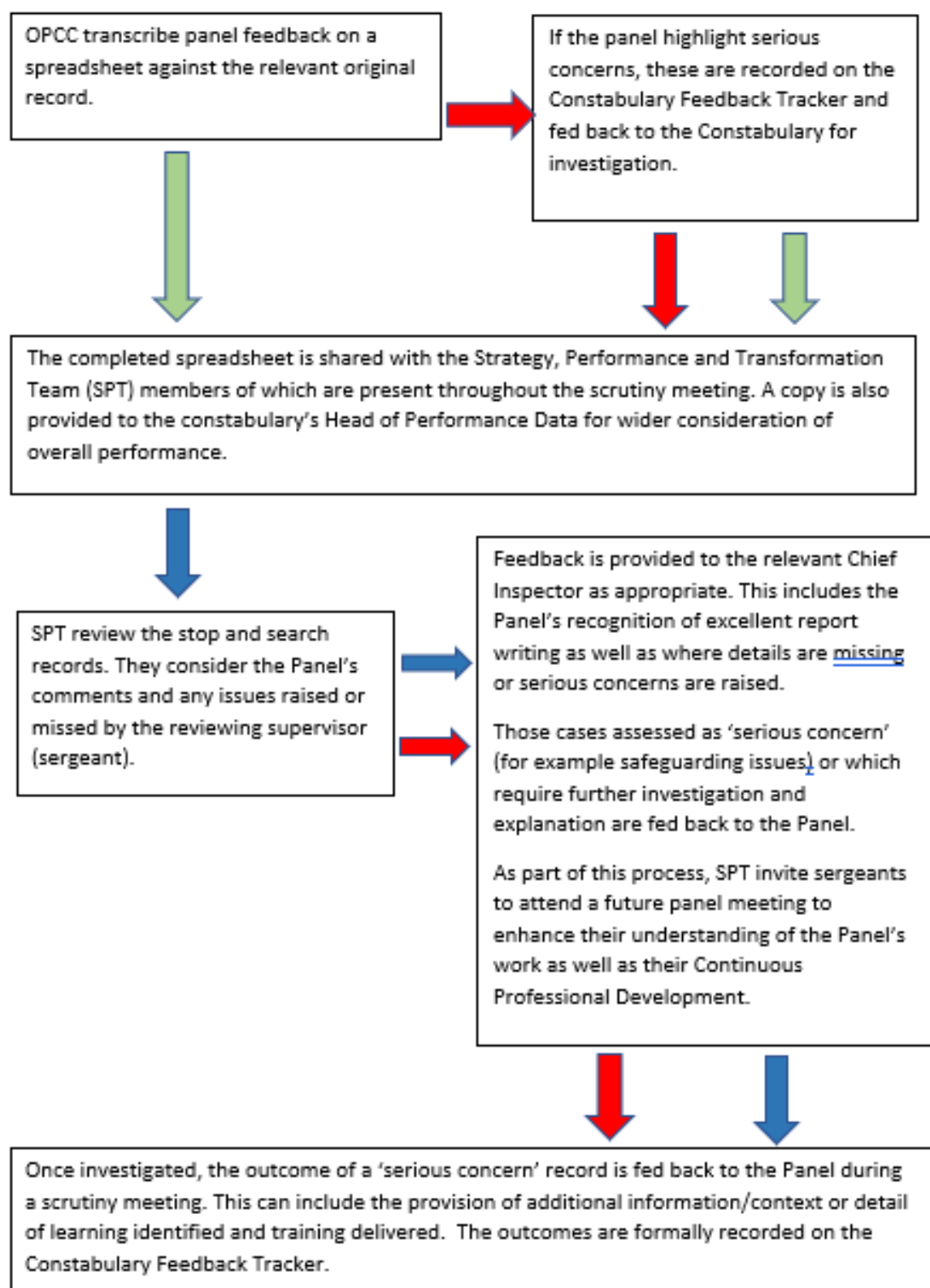
<sup>18</sup> The Community Complaints Trigger is a complaint policy that requires the police to explain to the community how the powers are being used if there is a large volume of complaints. This is in addition to the force complaints process. This allows for an independent review and ensures there is a response to any public concerns about stop and search activity in their community. More information about the Trigger can be found here - <https://www.herts.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/st-s/stop-and-search/sst/stop-and-search-trigger-application/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/police-and-criminal-evidence-act-1984-pace-codes-of-practice>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/strip-search-of-children-in-england-and-wales/>

## Appendix D: Feedback Loop

### Scrutiny Feedback Loop



## Appendix E: RAG Grading Systems for Written Records and BWV

Written Record	
<b>EXCELLENT</b>  <i>The grounds for the stop and search were evidenced and clear.</i>	<p>1. Panel members were able to make a straightforward judgement. The written report evidenced the grounds and the officer's decision making and justification were clear.</p>
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>  <i>The grounds for the stop and search were correctly applied. However, the report would benefit from clarification.</i>	<p>2. The correct use of stop and search has been applied but the report would benefit from minor clarification*. Panel members should note what this is on the feedback form.</p> <p>* For example, timeline of events, descriptions of the person searched, proximity of people stopped to location</p>
<b>NOT CONFIDENT</b>  <i>Panel members understand why stop and search was used but the report does not fully justify the search.</i>	<p>3. Panel members were unclear how the report related to the individual who has been stopped and searched and/or key information is missing*. Panel members should note the missing information on the feedback form.</p> <p>* For example, how the detained person matches the intelligence received</p>
<b>SERIOUS CONCERNS</b>  <i>There were no clear grounds for the stop and search.</i>	<p>4. The written report does not contain the justification required for the stop and search.</p>

Body Worn Video	
<p><b>EXCELLENT</b></p> <p><i>The officer issued GOWISELY clearly and appropriately. They always acted with professionalism. The footage reflects the written grounds.</i></p>	<p>5. Panel members were able to make a straightforward judgement. The officer acted with professionalism and always treated the detained person with dignity. The footage reflects the written grounds.</p>
<p><b>SATISFACTORY</b></p> <p><i>The officer issued GOWISELY appropriately. They acted with professionalism. The footage reflects the written grounds. However, the interaction could have been improved.</i></p>	<p>6. The footage reflects the written grounds. The officer has behaved professionally but would benefit from minor improvement*. Panel members should note what this is on the feedback form.</p> <p>* For example, they rushed through GOWISELY or one part of GOWISELY was not clearly heard.</p>
<p><b>NOT CONFIDENT</b></p> <p><i>Panel members understand why stop and search was used but the written record only partially reflects the footage.</i></p>	<p>7. The footage only partially reflects the written grounds. Panel members agreed that the interaction would have been satisfactory but have minor concerns around the language* or behaviour used by the officer. Panel members should note this on the feedback form.</p> <p>*For example, unnecessary swearing.</p>
<p><b>SERIOUS CONCERNS</b></p> <p><i>There were no clear grounds for the stop search and/or the officer's professionalism was of serious concern.</i></p>	<p>8. The footage does not reflect the written grounds. Panel members have serious concerns about the search and/or the officer's professionalism.</p>

## Glossary of Terms

Terms	Acronym (if applicable)	Description
Best Use of Stop and Search	BUSS	The Best Use of Stop and Search scheme was announced by the Home Secretary in 2014. The scheme introduced a number of measures designed to create greater transparency, accountability and community involvement in the use of stop and search powers.
Body Worn Video	BWV	The cameras which officers wear to capture both video and audio evidence.
Complaint Resolution Team	CRT	Complaints about Hertfordshire Constabulary are initially by the Complaint Resolution Team (CRT). If a complaint can be handled outside of Schedule 3 of legislation the CRT will attempt to service recover the complaint. If a complaint needs to be formally recorded within Schedule 3 of legislation due to its nature, then it will be forwarded to the Professional Standards Department in Hertfordshire Constabulary who will handle all these matters.
Community Safety Partnership	CSP	Community Safety Partnerships are made up of representatives from the police, Local Authorities, fire and rescue authorities, health and probation services (the 'responsible authorities'). The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer.
Force Communications Room	FCR	The Force Communications Room is responsible for taking emergency and non-emergency calls, recording crime and deploying resources to incidents
GOWISELY	GOWISELY	The national mnemonic <sup>21</sup> is a prompt for officers to remind them of the reasonable steps they must take before conducting a search: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounds for the search (reason for suspicion)</li> <li>• Object of the search (i.e., what is being looked for)</li> <li>• Warrant number, (if not in uniform)</li> <li>• Identification (officer's name except in terrorism cases when the force number only will be given. Police officers not in uniform will show their warrant cards)</li> <li>• Station to which the officer is attached.</li> <li>• Entitlement to copy of search within 3 months or 12 months in the case of Section 60</li> <li>• Legal Power being exercised.</li> <li>• 'You are detained for the purpose of a search' (person searched must be informed of this)</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.college.police.uk/app/stop-and-search/professional>

Microsoft PowerBI		Power BI is an interactive data visualization software product developed by Microsoft with primary focus on business intelligence.
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	OPCC	The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner helps the Commissioner to discharge their statutory duties and deliver their Police and Crime Plan. Office staff are politically restricted. This includes being a member of a political party.
Police & Crime Commissioner	PCC / the Commissioner	The role of the Commissioner is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of policing. Commissioners aim to cut crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service within their force area.
Police & Criminal Evidence Act Code A	PACE Code A	PACE Code A covers police powers to stop and search persons and vehicles and the requirements for officers to make a record of a stop or encounter.
Positive Outcome		Positive outcomes, include arrests, as well as out of court disposals. An out of court disposal may be a community resolutions or conditional cautions, which negate the need for individuals to be formally processed through custody suites. These cautions or resolutions may involve fines, behaviour change programmes or victim reparation.
Professional Standards Department	PSD	The Professional Standards Department consists of Complaints, Misconduct, Anti-Corruption and Vetting, all committed to maintaining and improving public confidence and quality of service, protecting and enhancing the integrity of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire forces
Red, Amber, Green rating	RAG	Also known as 'traffic lighting,' this rating system is used to summarise indicator values, where green denotes a 'favourable' value, red an 'unfavourable' value and amber a 'neutral' value.
Section 60	S60	<p>Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is different to normal stop and search as it gives police the temporary powers to search people without reasonable grounds. This can only happen in a defined area at a specific time when a senior officer believes there is a possibility of serious violence, or weapons are involved.</p> <p>This means anyone in that area, for example, near a football ground, may be searched for weapons without the police officer having reasonable grounds for each person searched.</p>
Stop and Search	S&S	<p>A police officer has powers to stop and search you if they have 'reasonable grounds' to suspect you are carrying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• illegal drugs</li> <li>• a weapon</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• stolen property</li><li>• something which could be used to commit a crime, such as a crowbar</li></ul>
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