



## STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### Body Worn Cameras

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report is to provide an update to the Strategic Police and Crime Board since the introduction to Body Worn Cameras (BWC) rolled out within West Midlands Police

#### INTRODUCTION

2. Since we conducted trials within WMP in 2013 we had an ambition from the outset to improve public confidence by being more transparent with our use of stop and search powers and our Use of Force, particularly for our use of Taser.
3. We had the objectives of reducing complaints against officers, improving our quality of the evidence we collected; thus increasing our victimless prosecutions, increasing our ability to charge offenders, and increase early guilty pleas.
4. All of this would save officer time by reducing time spent at court, reducing the amount of preparation time needed for case files for court and saving investigation officer time for complaints, allowing this time to be better re-invested in serving the public.
5. This report will explore these areas with the aim of giving reassurance of the contribution made and describing the likely benefits we will continue to see with a greater roll out of the devices. In phase 1, BWC was delivered on time, under budget and above spec. For Phase 2 we will see the rollout to the rest of the force which is currently under development and on track.
6. Our vision is to continue;
  - To give all front line officers a camera and allow all other officers to have access to one.
  - To remove the need to print images
  - To reduce the amount of physical exhibits that officers seize and we store
  - To remove the need to burn any video footage to hard media
  - To reduce complaints and times to deal with complaints.
  - To increase charges and success rates at court through better evidence

## **BIRMINGHAM SOUTH PILOT**

7. We conducted this pilot in 2015 in partnership with Cambridge University, alongside other forces to properly test what benefits could be secured by investing in Body Worn Cameras. The results during the pilot showed that:
8. Overall charges were increased by 12%
  - a. DV incidents 13% increase
  - b. Public Order 22% increase
  - c. Racially motivated incidents 12% increase
9. Early Guilty pleas were increased by 9%
  - a. Overall increase in charges and Early Guilty Pleas led to a 13% reduction in No Guilty Pleas (over 2000 less cases per annum)
10. Reduction in complaints
  - a. 100% reduction in Birmingham South
  - b. 46% reduction in Wolverhampton
11. Use of force
  - a. 89% increase in force being used if a camera was not present
  - b. 100% chance of a non-compliant offender if camera was not present
  - c. 106% increase in use of physical force if a camera was not present
  - d. 188% chance that an offender is injured in an arrest if a camera is not present
12. We found the original randomised control trials compelling as it can demonstrate that where BWC compliance is high, benefits realisation is also high. Therefore the decision was made to continue the rollout to all frontline staff, including all firearms officers and this commenced around October 2016.
13. The implementation of BWC progressed on the basis of the original trial in WMP, and the supported academic research that this would provide benefits to the organisation. There was no requirement in the original business case to continue to collect data in the way in which we conducted the pilot. This was not sustainable within our current systems as the data collection is not automated. However, we have qualitative descriptions on how we can describe the ongoing benefits.

## **CURRENT ROLLOUT**

14. The below data shows our progress on current rollout which is on track and agreed original scope.
15. 1617 Body Cameras purchased
  - Issued to all response officers (PC and Sergeant)
  - Approx. 1250 cameras issued to all response officers
  - 1051 officers have uploaded evidence in previous 6 weeks
  - The remaining have been used as reserve stock for broken cameras and have also been deployed for specialist operations such as OP Pelkin and OP Shaw.
16. 263 Head cameras purchased
  - Issued to all firearms officers
  - 200 officers have uploaded evidence in the past 6 weeks

- Remaining cameras are to be issued to officers as part of the firearms uplift and reserve stock for breakages.

17. 2781 officers with active accounts on Evidence.com

- 13,500 – 14,500 videos per month currently recorded
- 10,500 – 11,500 images uploaded per month
- 23% of videos recorded are evidential
- 83% of images uploaded are evidential

## **EVIDENCE GATHERING**

18. Evidence.com allows for automatic uploading of videos and auto deletion of footage in line with home office guidelines. Footage will automatically be deleted after 31 days unless it is marked as evidential. Marking footage as evidential will save it for a minimum of 6 years, in line with Management of Policing Information (MOPI) guidelines.

19. Officers are able to show images and body worn video footage in interview on the DIR (digital interview room) machine without the need to print the images or burn the footage to disc.

20. An update to our File Build system will be required prior to us being able to send evidence electronically to CPS. We are currently at the testing phase to determine when we are likely to be able to do this.

21. We are currently unable to obtain witness accounts to be produced in court, this is due to the requirement of special measures.

## **TRAINING**

22. Training has been delivered to approximately 3500 officers across the force. Over the past 12 months, this has resulted in an increase in recordings (from 9,500 a month to 14,000 approx) and also an increase in evidence that is being retained as evidential (from 18% to 23%).

23. We have also worked with the Fairness in Policing Team to influence the ongoing training of officers so that they better understand the links between compliance and improved outcomes for our communities and themselves.

## **GOVERNANCE**

24. We have now established a governance group designed to drive up levels of compliance in the use of BWC, similar to the governance group that oversees the use of stop and search.

25. We have commissioned a review by the Business Change Department and brought in a Business Analyst to identify where force-wide process changes are required in order to help us better track those benefits that can be directly attributed to the use of BWC, but whilst these systems and process changes have to be worked through by IT&D and other departments, we continue to drive up levels of compliance generally through the governance group.

26. We mandated the use of BWC in Domestic Abuse (DA) cases and we can search against DA arrests by Response officers who are all equipped with BWC. If we can measure levels of compliance here we can infer similar levels of compliance in other areas.
27. We are engaged in the national users group and through the force's Digital Board we ensure that areas for improvement and delivery of identified and evidenced best practice are built into our processes and policy.
28. BWC is subject on ongoing audit processes of the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **EFFECTS**

29. Due to our limitations in recording BWC usage in current processes, we cannot statistically show the cause and effect from the use of body worn video footage, however we remain satisfied the strategy is an effective one to increase public confidence and we continue to embed change in an individual's behaviour.

## **Complaints**

30. Although we cannot associate the complaint figures with BWC; we can only describe them as a downward trend. Our Professional Standards Department (PSD) consider that the use of Body Worn Cameras is very good, particularly when it comes to the length of investigations when cameras are involved. This is because a vast amount of investigator time is saved when they can just view the independent footage and make an assessment at the very early stages.
31. Complaints data only records those referred to PSD. If we are able to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, i.e. member of the public comes into the front office or speaks to a duty supervisor and the video footage can be viewed, this matter will be resolved at this point rather than the need to refer to PSD.

## **Charging Cases**

32. CPS Charging statistics are summarised below, but again no causal link can be made to BWC. In the past 12 months;
  - The number of cases that have gone to CPS for pre-charge advice has dropped by 29%
  - Guilty results at magistrates court have risen by 2% to 85%
  - Cases discontinued at court, through lack of evidence have dropped by 19%
  - Cases that CPS have stated No Further Action on pre-charge advice have dropped by 37%
  - The number of Domestic Violence cases charged has increased by 6%
33. The following is just one example of the qualitative evidence available; it is a quote from a Public Protection Unit Investigator dealing with a vulnerable adult who had been assaulted and as a result of their vulnerability was not a cooperative witness:

*"We were unable to interview her, however because the attending officer had obtained an account from the victim, where her vulnerabilities are clearly visible along with her injuries the defendant was charged and pleaded guilty - it was invaluable evidence and helped secure the conviction."*

## **NEXT STEPS**

34. A further 2600 personal cameras will be issued to all front line officers.
35. Body worn Cameras is forming part of the New Ways of Response project in WMP2020. We are looking to include the following;
  - We are currently consulting on the use of head cameras for public order deployments.
  - Exploring a digital option with CPS for transfer of digital files such as body worn video and 999 calls. (This will remove the need to transport 30,000 discs to CPS annually)
  - Placing the Integration of evidence.com system into our Operational Policing Solution (OpPolSol) project.
  - Utilising BWC for Victim Impact Statements
  - Interviewing suspects; however this requires a change to PACE (Consultation commenced 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and is being led by the College of Policing).
36. We continue to build and work on behaviours associated with the use of BWC and we will continue to see related benefits when it's rolled out across the force, and a continual improvement on our processes as we refine and deliver compliance.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

37. Savings of £409,000 were predicted by 2020. This figure has now increased by a further £400,000 as we are predicting a huge underspend in our data storage. This is due to the fact that the size of the footage (in megabytes) is smaller than was initially planned for.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

38. At this time we are relying on the common law principle and there is nothing stating police cannot use an overt video camera and therefore can be used to prevent and detect crime. This is alongside the ECHR Article 8 Right to a Private and Family life, restricting the use of cameras to 'police necessity' and thus preventing continuous recording.
39. The cameras are overt and the data recording and capturing of information is protected by the Data Protection Act.
40. Article 8 has been a measured and considered approach where we engaged with our Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) who were very supportive. We are covered by Common Law legislation which stipulates;
41. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.
42. As part of our ongoing commitment and consultation around Article 8, we have recently reviewed our position following the introduction of the Cabinet Home Office Data Science Ethical Framework and we meet their conditions that we will only keep non evidential material for 31 days.

**ACC Marcus Beale  
Operations**