

Solihull Stop & Search Scrutiny Panel

Date: 2nd February 2015

Location: Solihull Police Station

Present: Mr Baker, Mr Page, Mr Sumner, Mr Husain and Insp. Sarling.

The panel meets independently of the Solihull Independent Advisory Group (IAG); the IAG does have an agenda item for Stop & Search.

Insp. Sarling presented three months of data for November 2014 to January 2015.

Statistics

	November	December	January
Persons	61	63	107
Persons & Vehicle	15	23	25
Vehicle Only	5	2	3

A discussion followed on:

- A significant number of S&S were for persons over 25yrs and one person was aged fifty. In December this was attributed to a police operation @ Apres Bar, Solihull, when twenty people were searched.
- The vast majority of S&S remain in the Force's and local 'priority areas'.
- Solihull Town Centre has seen 49 S&S in January 2015, due to an increase in shoplifting activity (which maybe seasonal) and anti-social behaviour in and around a 'hotspot' @ McDonalds.
- Vehicle-related S&S may reflect a renewed response to an increase in petrol station "drive offs"; this is a force-wide problem, although has been a local issue for many years.
- Half of all S&S are for drugs (as in previous months)
- A number of mistakes and snags had been identified with the electronic system when a S&S is initially inputted. As a result a small number of S&S had no identifiable officer.

- A lengthy discussion concerned the numbers of BME persons subject to S&S, which due to the Home Office's criteria, using the 2011 Census, meant Solihull was stopping more BME than live locally. It was noted one S&S in February, in Solihull Town Centre, involved five Asian males and that one incident would exceed the set criteria. The numbers did not merit concern, but this matter will be reviewed again.
- It was noted that there was a tension between the Home Office's focus on 'positive outcomes' (arrest plus) and the force's move away from the use of custody to other options.
- The majority of S&S are done locally by the Priority Teams; a small number are done by the Response Teams (although there was an incident when four were searched by Solihull response officers just across the boundary with Birmingham East, so would not be shown on the system).
- What would happen if a S&S was found to have been illegally conducted when it was reviewed? Would the person be informed by WMP, so raising the possibility of civil legal action, a complaint and adverse publicity? It appears that this dilemma had not been considered.

Insp. Sarling reported that to his knowledge there still had been no complaints about S&S on Solihull LPU. Mention was made that at the December 2014 'Stop & Search Commission' meeting the handling of complaints made been raised. It was unclear whether the Professional Standards Dept. (PSD) notified any complaints about S&S to the 'Gold' lead and the local Inspector responsible for S&S.

As of 2nd February WMPCC was publishing S&S data to enable mapping on the Police UK website, starting from December 2014 and was normally shown on a Beat basis. This is explained in detail here: <http://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/news/news-2015/west-midlands-police-force-sign-up-to-stop-and-search-mapping/>

To view mapping use: <http://www.police.uk/west-midlands/stop-and-search/> and to select a Neighbourhood from the list on: <http://www.police.uk/west-midlands/>

The Panel would meet on a quarterly basis and the dates would be arranged jointly.