

Solihull Youth Independent Advisory Group

Stop and Search review

Date: 4/3/2014

Location: Vanessa Carroll Suite

Solihull Youth Independent Advisory Group was set up to establish a conduit between the police and young people of the Borough. The Group meet every month and discuss various topics. A meeting was set up yesterday to look at Stop and Search records for February 2014. The following are results of the meeting along with the details of the task set for the group.

The group were given 61 stop and search records to view from February 2014. They were in sight of the real forms with all the relevant details blocked out. The group were asked to look at the time of day, and the reason for the search with the detail given on the form. They were asked to make comment on what they felt was a justified stop and search and ones that were not justified. It was also suggested that they didn't try to second guess what was going on rather look at the detail on the forms and decide. I have already taken a session with the group to establish how a stop search is conducted and I quickly re-visited that beforehand. I then reminded the group of the various reasons for why people are stopped and searched, i.e. misuse of drugs act, section 1 PACE etc.

The results show that out of 61 stop and search forms, they felt that 40 were justified and understandable stop and searches. The group felt 17 were not justified, and there were 4 records that did not have enough information on them to decide whether the stop and search was justified. There were questions raised during the exercise which I answered, but did not give the group any indication of what my thoughts were.

Main Issues:

The group really enjoyed giving us feedback and said it was one of the best pieces of work they had undertaken whilst in the group. The main problems they felt were :-

Not enough detail on some forms to establish whether there were enough grounds (maybe an issue with the form)

Looking from the outside they would need to know what "suspicious" was. They had sus behaviour, and they wanted to know what that actually was.

The group felt that there was a generally poor standard of handwriting and suggested officers used block letters to make it easier to read.

The group agreed that the smell of Cannabis in the air was generally not good enough for a stop and search and there would need to be a direct correlation between the smell of cannabis and the person. When the smell was coming from inside a car, this was appropriate as it was in a closed environment.

There was a suggestion that there be a slightly bigger form to assist officers to put more information on the form. The group also accepted that the search forms could be completed on the street so therefore very difficult to keep literate.

In conclusion the Group felt that two thirds of the forms were justified and generally had there have been more information to hand that they may very well have said more but without the information and not second guessing what the officers knew, they couldn't make judgement.

Martin Hudson

Young Person Officer

Solihull Partnership Team.