



SUFFOLK POLICE POWERS

PUBLIC SCRUTINY

(SPPPS)



Background and Information

Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny (SPPPS) is an independent community led group that monitors and scrutinises the Use of Force and Stop & Search police powers within the community.

Scrutinising police powers is essential for maintaining a fair and just society. It ensures that the police operate within the bounds of the law and with the consent of the public they serve.

Why Scrutinise?

Transparency - Public scrutiny helps to improve transparency and better public understanding of how powers are applied appropriately according to official guidance and standards.

Accountability - Police officers wield significant power. Scrutiny helps ensure they use it appropriately and are held responsible for misuse.

Public Trust - When the public feels the police are fair and accountable, they are more likely to cooperate with investigations and feel safe.

Effectiveness - Scrutiny can identify areas where police practices could be improved upon, leading to more effective crime prevention.

The Purpose of the Panel

ISCRE has been scrutinising one element of police powers since 2009, police stop & searches. This was on the back of research undertaken in 2008 to investigate the causes of disproportionality against people from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly black people as visible minorities.

The purpose of the panel is to bring together members of the community and the police to discuss firstly, why is disproportionality happening and secondly, to look at what needs to be done to bring that parity or proportionality in the way that Suffolk Police use their powers.

In addition to looking at disproportionality, the panel is able to scrutinise the use of force by police in general, on community members from all backgrounds.

This is an open public forum for communities to share their experiences and for the police to give us their perspective on why they do the things they do.

This panel is to also to help officers to see and hear the impact that does happen to those effected. We are also trying to bring to the meetings those lived experiences, people sharing their experiences of why police powers needs to be applied correctly and how it impacts on those different individuals and communities.

How Does Scrutiny Happen?

ISCRE, along with the community provides independent oversight and scrutiny by way of Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny (SPPPS). This is a community Scrutiny Panel comprising of members of the community, ISCRE and Suffolk Police representatives. The main focus of the panel is to review police actions and provide feedback on their interactions with the community. The SPPPS are able to do this by reviewing the following:

Stop & Search - Scrutiny can ensure the police use of this power is based on reasonable suspicion and carried out lawfully and respectfully.

Body-Worn Video - Provides us with valuable evidence within our scrutiny processes. As a part of the scrutiny process, ISCRE will review samples that relate to cases to be taken to the public panel for scrutiny.

Use of Force and Taser - Reviewing use of force and Taser incidents helps determine if it was proportionate and necessary. The SPPPS have adopted the GOWISELY and PLANTER models to assist with analysing the police Use of Force and Stop Searches. (see models below).

Data Analysis - There are opportunities at the panel to look at data on police stop and searches, and use of force which can reveal patterns and potential biases. If you would like to look at the latest Suffolk police data and statistics, take a look [Here](#).

Challenges to Public Scrutiny

Community Engagement - Scrutiny panels need to include representatives of the community. ISCRE works with the community to ensure that community members have the opportunity to attend meetings and have their voices heard.

Finding the Balance - Scrutiny shouldn't hinder police effectiveness, but it needs to be robust enough to prevent abuse. ISCRE has maintained a good balance in working with Suffolk police and the community, bringing community issues to the police for improvements where practice issues have been highlighted.

Scrutinising police powers is an ongoing process. By looking at various methods and addressing challenges, our communities can work with the police to create a safer and fairer society for all in Suffolk.

GOWISELY

GROUNDS - for suspicion-based searches, the police must clearly explain the basis for their reasonable suspicion.

OBJECT - of the search. The police must clearly explain what they are looking for.

WARRANT CARD - The police must show you this if you ask for it, or if they aren't wearing a uniform.

IDENTITY - of the police officer or officers. The police officers involved in stopping and searching you must give you their name and shoulder number.

STATION - The police must tell you which police station they work at.

ENTITLEMENT to a search record. The police must provide you with a copy of the search record or, if this is not practicable, provide information on how you can get a copy.

LEGAL - power used. The police must tell you what legal power they are using to stop and search you.

'YOU are detained for the purposes of a search'. The police must tell you this. 'Detained' means you are not free to leave until they tell you.

PLANTER

P - Was the amount of force used **PROPORTIONATE** for the risk faced by the officer?

L - Was the **LENGTH** of time the force used acceptable?

A - Did the **ACTIONS** of the member of the public warrant force to be used?

N - Was it **NECESSARY** to use force to protect the officer or members of the public?

T - Was the **TYPE** of force used, the minimum appropriate level to achieve compliance/de-escalation?

E - Was it **ETHICAL** to use force in the situation?

R - Was it **REASONABLE** for the officer to use force?

Guidance for Panel Members

The SPPPS consists of members from the community, ISCRE staff members and Suffolk Police. The panel adheres to the following guidance:

- Engage with the chair and panel process in scrutinising the samples
- Ask relevant questions relating to the samples
- Act as an external independent critical friend to Suffolk Police, providing constructive challenge relating to the samples, based on people's lived experiences
- Openly discuss the disproportionality in police powers of minoritised communities in Suffolk and co-produce solutions with the police

ISCRE has an information sharing agreement with the police. Receiving information prior to the panel meeting that the team analyse and identify ones we have concerns about. We will ask questions of the police and we will also share some good examples analysed so that everyone at the meeting can see what a good practice looks like.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED?

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