

MINUTES

Stop and Search Reference Group Meeting Minutes

Date | time 9/29/2021 4:00 PM | *Meeting called by* SSRG | *Venue:* Online (Microsoft Teams Meeting)

In Attendance

Apologies

Phanuel Mutumburi - Chair Franstine Jones Georgia-Mae Chung Rebecca Webster Michelle Plume Roger Salmon (RS) Carlos Walker Flora Henry David Brown Simon Mills Liz Harlaar Ruby Peacock Philip Welham Audrey Ludwig Robert Jones Chris Garrod Richard Smith (RSm) Elisha Soanes	Lee Simons Lee Andrews-Pearce Megan Pres
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Welcome and Introductory Comments

Chair welcomed all and informed everyone present that the meeting was going to be recorded. Chair spoke with officers about the possibility of the recorded SSRG meetings being used for officer training. He agreed that this could potentially happen and that small parts of the meeting could be edited to be used by them for a specific purpose.

CW attended this meeting and asked if everyone present could introduce themselves and state what they wanted to get out of attending. Chair then went around every person present at the meeting so that this could be done. Some attendees spoke more about their roles and proposals alongside their introductions:

FH attended as a guest to represent Create Not Hate and she introduced the organisation to the group. She shared an article and a short film that Create Not Hate had put together in the meeting chat: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2021/09/28/misgendered-black-lgbtq-women-speak-out-about-stop-and-search-assault/?sh=3db8961977f2> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcT6v24Dsj0>

ES introduced herself as the Equality and Diversity Lead of the college groups: West Suffolk College, Suffolk One, and Abbey Gate Sixth Form. Chair spoke about this in the context of ISCRE's work with young people in schools and colleges and taking messages that are communicated in the Community Stop and Search Reference Group Meetings and passing them on to those young people by going to where they are and having conversations there. ES suggested the hosting of one of the meetings at West Suffolk College, since the students can then be a part of it in their space. SM endorsed this blended approach.

FJ spoke about how her and ES were part of the Suffolk Black Community Forum. FJ leads on criminal justice service and rehabilitation. She has developed a stop and search workshop and she has delivered one with ES. FH has attended because of the potential of delivering those workshops in London too.

Chair shared Rules of Engagement videos in the chat:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22ONDP5dRB8> and
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4syb_LHNc0

Review of Forms

RW took the active role of answering comments and providing information about the forms presented for the first time. She has taken over from RS.

Form M37164320215121191 – GMC clarified that this form looks different to those that are normally presented at the meeting because it is taken from the Optic database. It was carried out in Cornwall but was still completed by a Suffolk Officer. She commented that the grounds of the form were scant in that they said the subject was linked to a protest group, which does not explain enough to amount to reasonable grounds. She asked for elaboration on what the officer's thought process was.

RW said because it is out of force it is difficult to know what the officer was briefed on. It was part of the G7 event regarding extinction rebellion and they were told to detain a person who was asked to leave a site and who had been previously causing public nuisance as well as damage to property. She has heard nothing further back from the officer.

SM says that what is disappointing is that most of the officers who went down for G7 were experienced officers. He is wondering if there was some complacency because they were out of force and didn't think that they would get scrutinized as much. The chances are with such a big operation there was some form of briefing around the need to stop and search people given the location and the risk that was posed. He says that it is one for the police to pick up from a training point of view.

FJ referenced the questions of whether the subject understood why they were stopped and searched and if they were treated with respect. She saw that the person refused to give information like their name and gender from the form that was presented to the group. RW confirmed that it was present on the officer form and she did not know why it was not recorded here. She said that this would also be taken back as feedback.

SM says the police have a blended approach at the moment where they are trying to digitize everything, so they are trying to push everything through optic. They haven't quite gotten there yet so there are two different types of forms. They have had problems trying to extract the data from optic so some of the gaps may be because officers were trying to utilize the new system.

MP says that when she has been pulling the data through and there have been issues she has made the technical team and GMC aware. There have been some broken links but for the next meeting there will hopefully be a difference when the police are handing over the optic forms, and it should be easier to understand.

Form 264076 – GMC pointed out how the officer said that the subject only half matched the description and even though they gave the description beforehand they don't link it. The description itself was three white males but the information at the top of the form says that the officer perceived them as being black, making this very inconsistent. FJ and CW echoed these concerns.

RW noted that the supervisor had said the males were the only three males in the area. She takes on board that on the form itself it says they didn't fully match. The three males went down an alleyway to keep out of the way which the officer and supervisor felt was suspicious in itself. The feedback in terms of the description has been sent back to them. It has not been drilled down to about why the officer felt it acceptable to go from white males to black males.

SM agrees that the officers need to be clear. The time means there is no issue with lighting.

AL says the comments about the description concern her considerably. She notes the lack of time relationship between the report coming in and when the subject was located. She also points out that

we don't know the road or how busy it is and, given it wasn't a particularly unusual time of the day, these people could be innocently in the alleyway sometime after the report and it could be coincidental that there are three of them. She worries that there is a sort of complacency coming across which suggests they think they are entitled to do this even if it is some people who are vaguely similar to the original descriptions.

RW says that there was no body worn video footage.

GMC read the supervisor's comments out. She noted that they seem to see there is an issue with the descriptions but they haven't been detailed enough about it.

RS pointed out that the incident log says the officer arrived within 7 minutes of the call and the location is a busy area. It is mentioned that the witness did not see the males reported about coming out of the alleyway between when they went in and when the police arrived. Descriptions were brief such as the individuals being in their 20s, white with black jeans.

SM was pleased there was supervisor recognition that the grounds weren't appropriate so some positives to take.

Chair asked if this form could be brought back to the next meeting with more explanation.

Form 263883 – GMC chose this as an example of a good form. There is quite a lot of detail that has been included. She liked this stylistically as the officer had done a summary at the end of why they thought they had reasonable grounds and they've taken the time to make it obvious to people who have been scrutinizing it and members of the public who are receiving the form. She states one criticism in that the form talks about intelligence but doesn't say how recent and reliable it is.

Chair points out that, in the past, we have heard things like having not enough space for the grounds but this form shows us there is enough space there for someone to articulate what the grounds are and to show what raised their suspicion.

SM says the officer who did the search was from one of the proactive teams. They have had some criticism in the past because their forms aren't as good as those in local policing, but it is good to show that something has been learnt.

Chair says good forms like this show that it can be done. He asked if feedback could be given to the officer in question.

RS says he knows the officer and he recalls doing feedback with her with issues that have been raised at this forum so it looks like there is a complete circle there.

Chair also noticed the person who was searched said they were treated professionally and with dignity and they were given the signed form which is good.

Form 263531 – GMC said she picked up on this form because it is scant in detail and it isn't enough to pass scrutiny but the supervisors comments on this were quite brief: "a justified search but more detail is needed to pass scrutiny" and she didn't think this is enough. For this reason, she brought it to the meeting so that she could explain why it wasn't enough:

1. They haven't talked about how recent and reliable the intelligence is
2. They said the drug users were walking away from the hill and that a vehicle was also in the area, but they needed to be more specific about this because they could in fact have been a long way away.

RW and RS said feedback has gone back to the supervisor and the officer about how limited the grounds were. For context, in the area, it was previously reported that there was drug dealing mainly on foot. Do the officer had been looking for drug dealers in the area. He noticed a vehicle that was unsuitably parked with four males inside and this is why he challenged them, then he noticed inside the vehicle a male linked to drug supply. He says that all males inside were reluctant to provide reasons for being in the location and

were acting suspiciously, giving him a reason to stop and search in this scenario. RW and RS say that the officer seems to have taken feedback onboard which is positive.

AL said this is a good example of a form which bears no great relation to the actual suspicion the officer had and so could be used at a training event. On the face of it, it appears that people who used drugs are walking near a car and that is it. It is unclear what offence they are committing other than that there is reference to drugs. We have no sense of how immediate or recent the drug use or supply was. What we have heard from the spreadsheet is that the officer got a tip off from someone in the public. That should have been referenced along with how recent the intelligence was about the link to drug supply. All the reference to the occupants of the car behaving suspiciously should have been elaborated in terms of what that "suspicious" behaviour was. The difference between what is said on the form and what they are saying subsequently is quite considerable.

Chair points out that, in this scenario, it is important that we know an officer is not trying to be wise in retrospect.

CW says there is a lot of focus on how the subject cannot explain why they are in the area. He questions whether this is enough for them to continue to ask questions about different elements.

SM says the form is bad but he doesn't think the account given by the officer on the spreadsheet is overly helpful either. He notes that the police have an internal scrutiny meeting tomorrow around stop and search and this would be a useful one to have a conversation about and perhaps invite the officer who was involved in it.

Chair asks if SM can send ISCRE an email regarding the feedback from this.

SM said one of the things we haven't focused on an awful lot is the supervisors' input. We need to make sure that they are putting enough detail on themselves. They need to pass scrutiny themselves.

FJ says stop and search is quite a contentious issue for the black community, and she does not understand how officers don't take into consideration the trust and confidence that is not there for the black community in policing. To her it doesn't seem unusual that you will start talking to a group of black people asking this and they will be uncooperative or not want to talk to you. Officers should have that at the forefront of their head when they engage with people from the black community because disproportionality affects them. She notes this in the context of how a lot of the black community feel as if things are getting worse for them. She gains confirmation that this search was near a train station and points out that it is not unusual for people to be walking around near to a station. SM and RS note that this is important and it has been spoken about around officer training.

LH agrees that the supervisors comments are not enough and are essentially just saying that the officer "could do better". They need some examples and some genuine feedback.

RW agrees there is learning for the supervisor. SM will ask if it can be picked up tomorrow at the internal meeting as there will be a number of supervisors there and it is a message that they need to get out.

In response to concerns from CW, RS maintains that the group are seeing a gradual improvement in grounds recorded by the officers. However, they know there is lots of progress to be made. He says that the police have younger generations coming in who may be wiser to the contextual issues of things than older police officers. They also have training for PQF (Professionalization of the Policing Career) – degree entry training that will start from next year in Suffolk or Norfolk. For this, they have Anglia Ruskin university professors delivering the training around the frontloaded contextual awareness and the issues of race and policing. He would like to think that is more of an independent focus. There will be more external providers providing that training that historically would have been more police orientated.

FJ talks about the importance of having someone in that training who can give a community perspective.

SM said that the police used to see the SSRG as a difficult scrutiny panel but now they have gone to the meeting and learned things they have been fed back. He agrees that there is opportunity for them to move forward around community perspective through encounters. The rules of engagement project is a really good example of that and he thinks that it would be good to replicate this in officer training. Next year, the package for use of force for police officers is going to be very much scenario based. One of the recommendations from the college of policing for next year is to incorporate stop and search in the scenario. That may provide a better opportunity for people in the community to get involved. He says that he will talk to Sally about this.

RS says the police do include community representation in their training in terms of videos but often some of that material is metropolitan police based and it may not seem related to local Suffolk. He asks if we can capture some of the discourse that is taken back here and feed it back. He says perhaps ISCRE can get this going and that may be something that the police can incorporate into the training.

PW accuses police officers of labelling ISCRE as nitpickers who make it difficult for the police to do their jobs. He also says that the police are making money out of their mentality and they are financially empowered.

SM says if PW have evidence to demonstrate that that is the view of police officers of ISCRE then he should show that because at the moment there is real positivity taken out of the police's relationship with ISCRE and that is demonstrated by conversations with police officers. He doesn't see ISCRE being viewed by officers and staff as nitpickers.

AL says one of the important elements of their scrutiny process is the work of dip sampling where ISCRE go through a significant number of the forms at an earlier stage and identify ones they want to make comments about and get their responses. So, they see a lot more of the forms than what they bring to the meetings which are usually representative of themes positively and negatively. Over the years, what has changed is the vast majority of forms are a lot better. We get some poor forms but the meeting is here for that to remind them to keep up the standards.

Chair agrees there are improvements have been made but there is still disproportionality which needs to be tackled.

ES talks about the new BA degree on policing that is coming out next year. She says that she participated and wrote it on equality and diversity. She does not have a background in policing, but she has made suggestions that students do come and do work with the police. But one of the queries her colleagues and her have is that the new people coming on will have that training but they want to make sure the approach is reflected within the police forum. They do need to show that there is some impact from the involvement of the community.

Chair agrees this needs to be shared widely to the public because it is clear that a lot of people don't know their rights.

Forms 263658 and 264515 – GMC said the forms have the same kind of sentiment behind them. In both of them it is about someone who has been stopped because they were in the presence of someone else who there was intelligence for suggesting that they are carrying drugs. She does not think that the reasoning for the person being stopped has been adequately explained other than the subject being in that person's presence. For example, no indication is given of if there were other people around or how close they were to each other and how long they were meeting up for.

RW said that the officers for both forms have not yet engaged with the feedback. She also says that there is no body worn video.

Chair explains that there is an expectation that by the time we get to the meeting the officers will have been engaged with and we will have some feedback.

SM is in the process of reviewing the joint stop and search policy for both forces and he will take it back to the joint coercive powers board once himself, RS and RW have had the opportunity to review it. One of the things they are looking at is asking that body worn video is turned on during all stop and search encounters. An issue currently is they are in the process of doing a tech refresh so they have an issue with the body worn capability at that point, although that should be sorted out fairly quickly. He is keen to make sure that if body worn isn't available for any of those forms then the necessity of it is provided as feedback in advance of the meeting.

GMC said in the first form that we looked at there was a negative outcome but there was a positive outcome from the second form. She also made general comment that when she did the dip sampling she used to select the forms and then send them to the police and get comments from them before selecting the forms to bring to the meeting, which was helpful. She asked if this was something that could be resumed.

MP says she will chase what has happened with this and get back to ISCRE.

CG says that this is his first meeting. He likes the use of the phrase recent and reliable. He has noticed a massive change over the years where officers are justifying and evidencing what they are doing more. He thinks that getting a perspective from the community is brilliant and this needs to be developed a bit more. It is drummed into people that if you stop and search people, they are encouraged to wear body worn.

Chair agrees that body worn video needs to be used as much as possible because it benefits both members of the public and officers.

Roger Salmon Update on Complaints

RS says there were four complaints that were notified to him by professional standards that were stop or search related. Two of them related to a stop that doesn't relate to a stop search at all. There are two forms which he can share but they are both under active investigation so he is restricted on how much he could say about the fine detail of the cases until that comes to resolution.

Chair asks if ISCRE and RS can meet to talk about this outside of the meeting at a time when more information can be released.

Section 60

Chair is aware that there has been some section 60 activity. He asks for an update on what has been happening and what the circumstances were. A challenge for this group has been that, while we are contacted about section 60s, what is not available is how successful that process has been. They are told it is going to be implemented but there is no information about what the outcomes were at the end of that process. It is important to hear about how beneficial they have been.

SM said they have had two stop and searches since the last reference group. One of them was that there was a stabbing which took place in Ipswich and so there was intelligence which suggests that further violence would take place and the process for authorizing section 60 was followed as per the policy. There was a self-reflection that they could have ended it earlier. It was in place for 12 hours. But the reason why it was in place for that long was because they didn't know who the suspect was at the time. At the end of that time, there was one stop and search that ended up taking place which was that individual who then ended up being identified as the suspect they were looking for and was therefore arrested. Afterwards the decision was made to rescind the section 60.

He has raised that for the police to make the best use of section 60 they need to have sufficient resources to achieve the objective and sometimes that is quite difficult with the small resource that is available in Suffolk. On this occasion they did have the resources but this will continue to be reviewed.

There was a need in relation to the authority to ensure that officers had a clear understanding of the geographical area that searches were going to be conducted in and that is something they will take forward to make it readily available. He still thinks that section 60 is going to be relatively low use in Suffolk, and they will continue to engage with ISCRE and where there are debrief points they are happy to discuss them at this meeting if they want to to be kept as a standing item. It will form part of the stop and search review.

Chair said that even though section 60 is about a stopping of the stop and search rules as far as reasonable suspicion is concerned, Suffolk Police have always reassured ISCRE that they will try by all means to ensure that section 60s will be intelligence led. He is always told that the officers have an idea of who they are looking for. He notes that in the first stop and search since the last meeting they got a call but in the second one they just got an email. Even though he understands these decisions need to be made quite quickly it did mean ISCRE didn't get to ask questions and it has now turned out that the police didn't initially know who they were looking for. The rules allow this, but the fear is that this is being used as some kind of fishing expedition and anyone can be stopped. There is concern about the negative impact that this could have on the community and innocent civilians.

SM says the last section 60 concerned the information where they had an outstanding subject who was unknown but intelligence work was in progress. They also had concerns about retaliation, and it was about groups of people being out carrying weapons in a short timescale. Once they had the individual they were searching for it mitigated the risk because the word will have gotten out quickly that the person they are seeking to harm is in custody and the police have therefore safeguarded that individual and also that there will be extra patrols in place and that would also mitigate the need for a stop and search to take place under section 60. He asserts that there will always be intelligence led stops in any case.

Chair asks if officers capture any data in terms of the number of people stopped during section 60 and the specific outcomes?

SM says they do but it is hard to quantify this when the first person they have stopped and searched is the person they are looking for. One of the conversations that he and AM had was that, if they do start stop and searching people, they need to be able to provide the data back. But they have not yet had a scenario where they have a quantifiable amount of people stopped and searched.

Any Other Business

GMC announced that she would be leaving her role on 19th November 2021 and so she would not be presenting at the next SSRG meeting.

Chair said that ISCRE had a meeting with SM and the PCC office. One of the things that came out of it was that the Police and Crime Plan is going to be published soon and they would like to bring it to this group for comment. PM will share the draft with the group as soon as he receives it.

Chair asked people who have attended for the first time today how they found the meeting and whether they had any comments to make.

RSm said it has been useful and within his role in community engagement it is all about building bridges. The officers haven't been in contact with the school children for a while because of COVID so they are starting to get back into it again but it is positive if these things can be discussed to help with that. He thoroughly enjoyed the forum.

Chair says it is really important for the community engagement team to plug into this SSRG process through attendance or through being provided with the minutes.

RW says it is useful for her to know exactly what they are facing and what information they need from a scrutiny panel point of view so that she can have the information to feedback. It is also useful to hear our feedback to facilitate a two-way flow of feedback and information.

Chair says he is available if RW would like to talk about things from a community perspective.

RG talks about justifying things and the importance of it. He learned long ago that if you can't justify it to yourself you will never justify it to anybody else. He also talks about the importance of body worn.

Chair closes the meeting.