



# SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

**ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**PAPER NO: AP25/32**

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –  
11 JULY 2025**

**SUBJECT: USE OF POLICE POWERS IN SUFFOLK –  
1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025**

## **SUMMARY:**

1. Volumes of stop and search in Suffolk appear to have plateaued following a period of steady decline.
2. Small reductions have been seen in positive outcomes and arrest rate, but these are similar to those recorded previously and within expected levels of fluctuation.
3. Disproportionality has increased for Black ethnicity groups for the first time since the year ending September 2021. Disproportionality has been declining for the Other ethnicity group in recent years while Asian and Mixed groups see broadly consistent rates.
4. When focussing only on Under 18s, disproportionality relating to ethnicity is only apparent within Black ethnicity groups and is at a rate higher than that seen for adults.
5. Searches for Offensive Weapons may be a contributor towards the disparity shown towards subjects from Black ethnicity groups. However, Find Rates for Offensive Weapons do not support the disproportionate searching of Black subjects.
6. Controlled Drugs is the reason for the majority of stop searches, and for all strip searches. Searches for Controlled Drugs have the highest Find Rate.
7. Use of strip search has remained at a similar volume as previously reported.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is asked to consider the progress made by the Constabulary and raise issues with the Chief Constable as appropriate to the PCC's role in holding the Chief Constable to account.

## **1. INTRODUCTION - USE OF POLICE POWERS – 1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025**

- 1.1. Police powers are governed through the quarterly Joint Norfolk and Suffolk Police use of Powers Board which focusses on areas of disproportionality and, where necessary Police complaints. This provides additional scrutiny and early identification of issues and/or trends. It is the overarching board that tracks recommendations from the College of Policing, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).
- 1.2. HMICFRS will soon be commencing the next round of inspections. It is anticipated a focus will be on areas relating to the searching of juveniles, reporting mechanisms, use of safeguarding tools for children, along with a focus on intelligence led searches and how this delivers a problem solving approach to keep communities safe.
- 1.3. Suffolk Constabulary maintains strong engagement with the Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE). The wider inclusion of Police Powers has gathered momentum and has provided opportunities to discuss and debate the wider use of policing powers and new areas that have previously not been within scope, for example, officers honestly held beliefs and the tests of subjectivity.
- 1.4. Use of Force
  - 1.4.1 The new 2 day Public and Police Safety Training (PPST) Module is now being delivered after going 'live' in March 2025. The training is a comprehensive, scenario-based package testing key areas such as Stop and Search, handcuffing and reminders relating to the use of Body Worn Video (BWV). The package covers in more detail the legislation sitting behind the use of powers, promoting legitimacy through testing legal basis and rationale.
- 1.5. Body Worn Video (BWV)
  - 1.5.1 BWV is regularly reviewed throughout the scrutiny process and is a valuable tool when studying the use of police powers. Levels of compliance associated with the use of BWV at the time of a Stop and Search are now tracked alongside the quarterly data in respect of Stop and Search. The levels of compliance associated with initial activation and recording are good.
  - 1.5.2 The complexities of the Digital Asset Management System (the system used to save BWV footage) makes it difficult to track compliance levels associated with officers saving non-evidential recordings for the purposes of public scrutiny. Stop search policy has been amended to support improvements in this area, along with reminders to officers in the course of their PPST training. A new package has also been amended for student officers along with recent training inputs to all Response Investigation Officers across the Constabulary.
- 1.6. Transgender Searching
  - 1.6.1 The recent supreme court ruling relating to the legal definition of a woman being based on biological sex has witnessed a number of key challenges and Suffolk Constabulary is following National interim guidance and drafting amendments to policy as a result.
- 1.7. Section 163 Road Traffic Act (RTA)
  - 1.7.1 Recent changes to OPTIK have delivered an upgrade providing a cloning functionality which automatically reads details across Traffic Offence Reports (TOR) and a S.163 RTA stops to make

streamline processes and reduce officer time completing the required information. There is an anticipated increase of recording in this area.

## 2. OVERALL TRENDS - STOP AND SEARCH

### 2.1 Use of stop and search

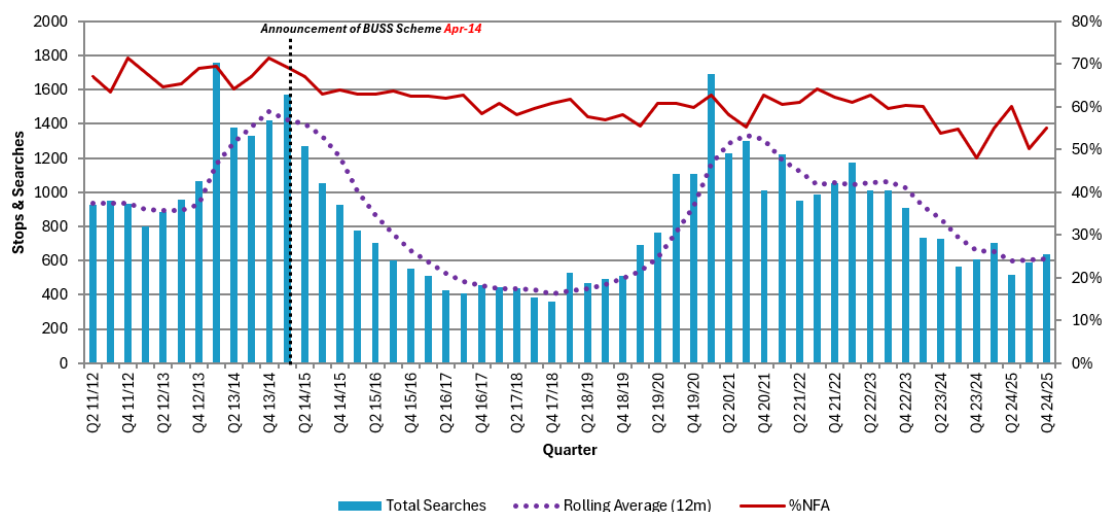


Figure 1: Long-term trends in use of stop and search in Suffolk

Figure 1 displays long-term trends in stop and search over time, from Q2 2011/12 to Q4 2024/25. The volume of searches has begun to plateau following a general downward trend post pandemic.

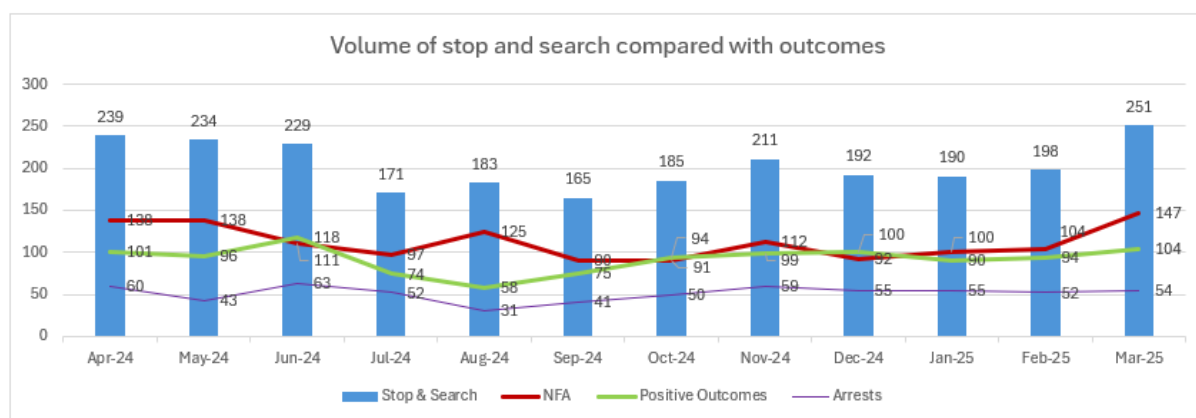


Figure 2: Monthly volume of Stop and Search compared with outcomes 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

2.1.1 2,448 stop searches took place in the current reporting period (01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025). Figure 2 above displays usage of stop and search in Suffolk each month, alongside No Further Action (NFA), positive outcome and arrest rates. There was an increase of 7.7% in overall volume over the last twelve months compared with the previous reporting period (01/10/2023 – 30/09/2024).

2.1.2 In the current reporting period

- The rate of searches resulting in NFA was 54.9%
- The positive outcome rate was 45.1%
- The arrest rate was 25.1%.

‘Positive outcomes’ refers to all outcomes that are not NFA. The NFA rate in Suffolk has increased by 1.1p.p since the last reporting period. The arrest rate has decreased by 0.8p.p.

2.1.3 The positive outcome rate for white subjects was 45.0% compared with 40.1% for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME). For subjects where ethnicity was not stated/declined, the positive outcome rate was 47.6%. The arrest rate for white subjects was 24.5% compared with 23.7% for BAME groups. The NFA rate for white subjects was 55.0% and for BAME groups it was 59.9%.

## 2.2 Proportionality - Ethnicity

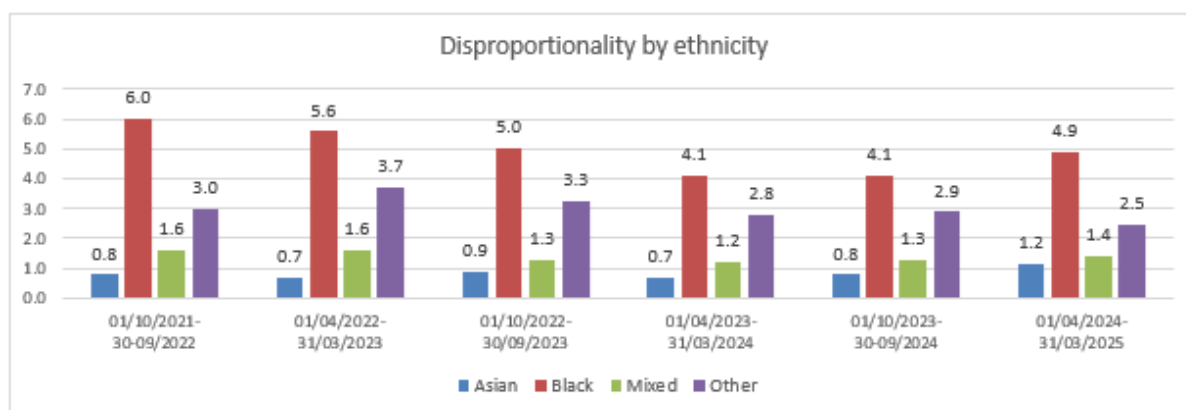


Figure 3: Disproportionality rates by ethnicity group and reporting period, 01/10/2021 – 31/03/2025

2.2.1 Disproportionality is calculated using Suffolk population data from the 2021 Census. A value of one would indicate parity while a figure greater than one indicates disproportionate use of stop and search. In the current reporting period, BAME individuals were 2.1 times more likely to be subject to stop and search than their white counterparts. This has increased since the previous reporting period but includes subjects from out of the county.

2.2.2 Figure 3 displays the disproportionality by each ethnicity group in the current reporting period compared with the previous five reporting periods. Figure 3 shows disproportionality levels for the Black ethnicity group had been steadily declining but has increased this period. The rate for the other ethnicity group has reduced since the last period. Levels for Asian and Mixed ethnicity groups are close to parity but have seen small increases.

Reason for search	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
All searches	1.2	4.9	1.4	2.5
Controlled drugs	1.3	4.7	1.3	2.4
Offensive weapons	0.7	8.4	2.0	1.8
Other Reasons for search	0.8	2.9	1.4	3.2

Table 1: Comparison of disproportionality rates by Reason for Search

2.2.3 Table 1 compares the disproportionality rates for the two most recorded Reasons for Search. The data indicates that suspicion of possession of an offensive weapons has more of an impact on the disproportionality ratio for Black subjects than controlled drugs, but it is these two reasons that drive the disproportionality. When these are excluded, within Other Reasons for Search it is the Other ethnicity group that has highest disproportionality. It should be noted however, that this disaggregation reduces the sample size for each set of stop searches, therefore making the disproportionality rates more sensitive to small changes in the number of incidents, potentially leading to large changes in the ratios. As such, these values should be used with caution.

2.2.4 Not all people subject of stop and search in Suffolk are resident in the county. This appears to influence disproportionality rates, as county population data is used for their calculation. In this reporting period;

- 11.7% (286) of persons subject to stop and search were not Suffolk residents and, 24.6% (602) did not have any address recorded.
- The rate of subjects residing outside of Suffolk was most prominent within the Other ethnicity group;
- 28.2% of subjects from the Other ethnicity group who were stopped and searched recorded a home address outside of Suffolk compared with 21.7% of subjects from Asian ethnicity groups, 21.1% of subjects from Black ethnicity groups, 11.2% of subjects from White ethnicity groups, and 8.6% of subjects from Mixed ethnicity groups.

When subjects with addresses outside of the county are excluded, disproportionality decreases for Black and Other ethnicity groups, remains stable for Asian ethnicity groups, and increases slightly for Mixed ethnicity groups.

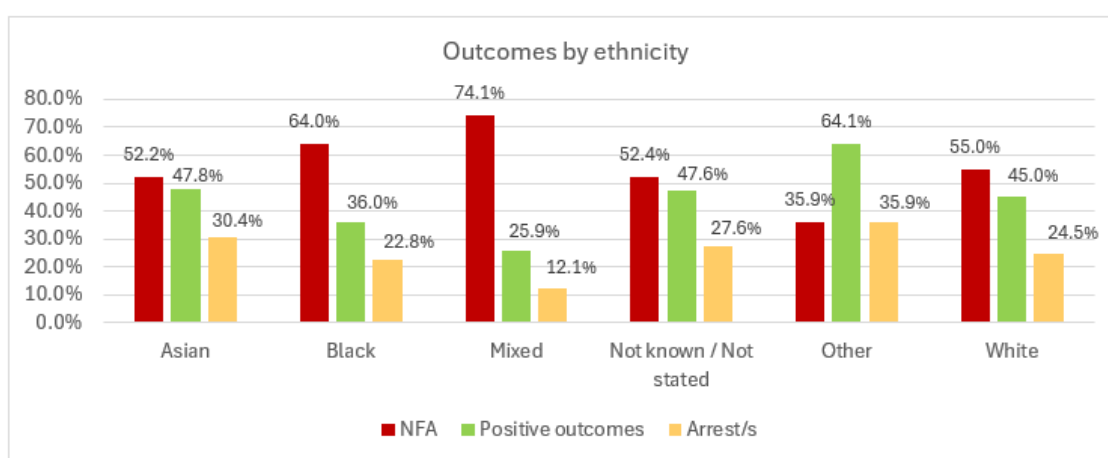


Figure 4: NFA, positive outcomes and arrests by ethnicity 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

2.2.5 Figure 4 shows the rate of NFA outcomes, positive outcomes, and arrests in the current reporting period, split by ethnicity.

- The highest rate of positive outcomes is within the Other ethnicity group (64.1%).
- Arrest rates are also highest within the Other ethnicity group (35.9%).
- The highest rate of NFA outcomes is within the Mixed ethnicity group (74.1%).

District	BAME Population*	Stop search count	BAME stop search count	Disproportionality
Babergh	3,073	193	12	2.5
West Suffolk	14,792	709	58	1.2
Ipswich	21,886	864	135	1.5
Mid Suffolk	3,238	142	13	4.0
East Suffolk	9,433	502	34	2.4
<b>Suffolk total</b>	<b>52,422</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>2.1</b>

Table 2: Suffolk BAME population, number of stop & search, and disproportionality by district

\* As per 2021 Census, ONS

2.2.6 Suffolk is split by local authorities which do not precisely align with policing commands. Table 2 displays the rates of disproportionality by ethnicity for each district. Some recorded searches were conducted outside of the five local authority areas; hence the total is not equal to 2,448 stop searches overall.

2.2.7 The highest rate of disproportionality is seen in Mid Suffolk district whereas West Suffolk is close to parity. Levels of disproportionality are more likely to fluctuate by larger amounts when looking at small datasets. This is prevalent in districts with smaller population numbers, and smaller volumes of searches.

### 2.3 Proportionality - Age

Age Group	Stop search count	Percentage of all stop search
Aged 10-14	95	3.9%
Aged 15-17	369	15.1%
Aged 18-24	701	28.6%
Aged 25 and over	1153	47.1%
Unknown	130	5.3%

Table 3: Count and percentage of stop searches by age group, 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

2.3.1 Table 3 displays all stop searches by subject age group.

- 464 subjects of stop search were under 18, accounting for 19.0% of stop search in the current reporting period.
- 79.5% (369/464) of under 18s were within the 15-17 age group.

2.3.2 In the current reporting period, and when looking only at under 18s, BAME individuals are 1.5 times as likely to be subject to stop and search as their white counterparts, regardless of whether they live in Suffolk or not.

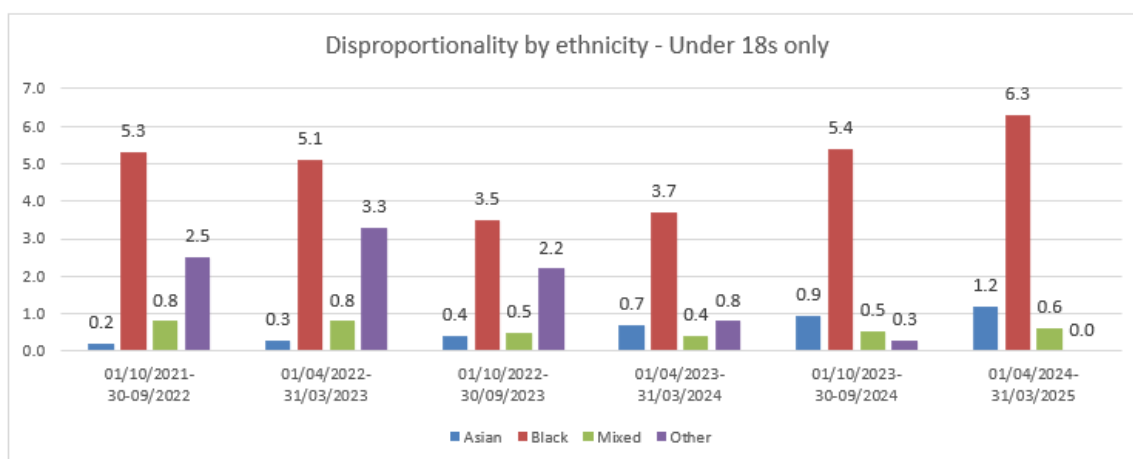


Figure 5: Disproportionality amongst under 18s by ethnicity, 01/10/2021 – 31/03/2025

2.3.3 However, figure 5 displays the disproportionality by each ethnicity group for under 18s against previous reporting periods and shows that the Black ethnicity group experiences high disproportionality in this age group while each of the other ethnicity groups sees a rate either close to or below parity. Note; Figure 5 looks at all Under 18s, regardless of whether they reside in Suffolk or elsewhere.

Reason for search	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
All U18 searches	1.2	6.3	0.6	0.0
Controlled drugs U18s	1.5	7.0	0.3	0.0
Offensive weapons U18s	1.9	9.2	1.1	0.0
Other Reasons for search	0.0	2.3	0.7	0.0

Table 4: Comparison of Under 18s disproportionality rates by Reason for Search

2.3.4 Table 4 compares rates for the two most recorded Reasons for Search. These are now very small sample sizes so should be interpreted with caution, but would again indicate offensive weapon searches have a strong impact on disproportionality for Black subjects.

2.3.5 When under 18 subjects with addresses outside of Suffolk are excluded, disproportionality decreases to 5.9 for the Black ethnicity group. The Asian ethnicity group value increases to 1.3, and the rates for Mixed and Other ethnicity groups stay the same.

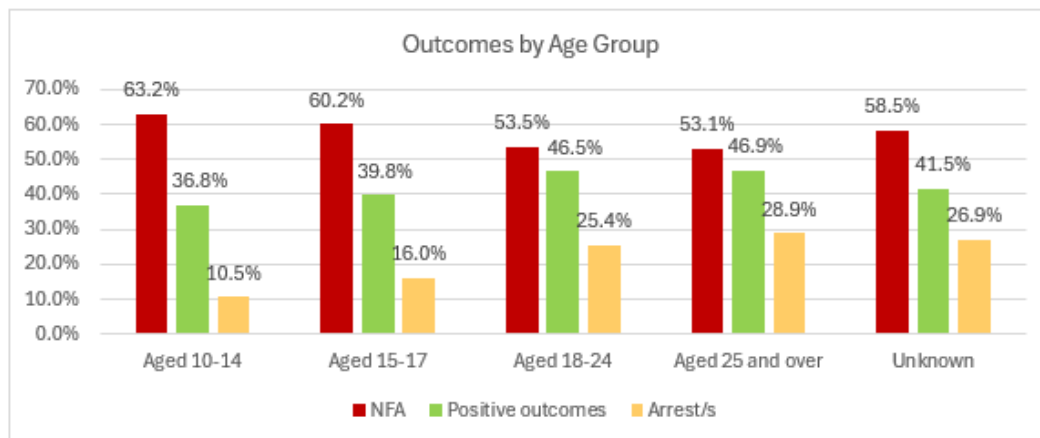


Figure 6: NFA, positive outcomes and arrests by age group 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

2.3.6 Figure 6 shows the rate of NFA outcomes, positive outcomes, and arrests in the current reporting period, split by age group. The highest rate of NFA outcomes is within the group aged 10 to 14, and this age group also sees the lowest rate of arrests. The group aged 25 and over has the highest rates of positive outcomes and arrests.

Age group	Male		Female		Other / Not stated	
	Count	Percentage of all ages	Count	Percentage of all ages	Count	Percentage of all ages
10 to 14	73	3.6%	20	5.3%	2	3.8%
15 to 17	317	15.7%	50	13.2%	2	3.8%
18 to 24	611	30.3%	86	22.8%	4	7.5%
25 and over	934	46.3%	215	56.9%	4	7.5%
Not known	82	4.1%	7	1.9%	41	77.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5: Stop searches by gender and age group, 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

2.3.7 82.4% of subjects of stop search in the current reporting period were male, similar to the last reporting period (83.3%). 15.4% were female and 1.7% had no data recorded for gender. The remaining 0.4% either stated Other, Self-Defined gender or Preferred not to say.

## 2.4 Object of search

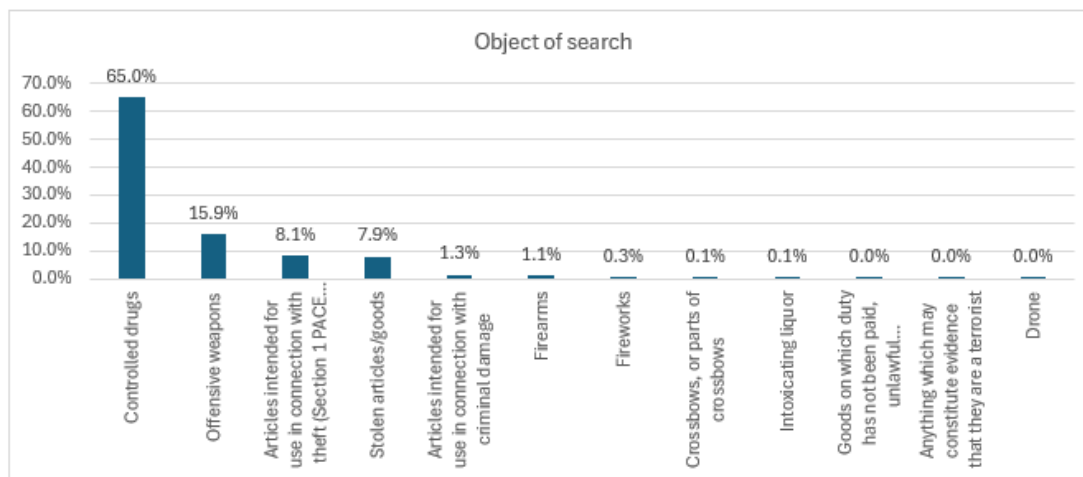


Figure 7: Percentage breakdown of Object of Search, 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

2.4.1 Figure 7 displays the reason for searches undertaken in Suffolk during this reporting period. In the majority of stop searches (1,591, 65.0%) controlled drugs has been recorded as the object of search. The highest volume of these searches took place in West Suffolk (536) followed by Ipswich (459).

2.4.2 Offensive weapons were the reason for search in 389 (15.9%) cases.

Object of search	Number of stop searches	Item searched for found	Find rate	Anything found (whether searched for or not)	Find rate for anything (searched for or not)
Controlled drugs	1591	532	33.4%	590	37.1%
Offensive weapons	389	64	16.5%	84	21.6%
Articles intended for use with theft	199	53	26.6%	69	34.7%
Stolen articles/goods	193	50	25.9%	59	30.6%
Others	76	22	28.9%	28	36.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2448</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>33.9%</b>

Table 6: Volume of searches and Find Rates – by Object of search

2.4.3 The overall Find Rate for items searched for was 29.5%. This rate is higher for Controlled drug searches and lower for other search types. There were occasions where an item not being searched for was found. Combining these, 830 (33.9%) stop searches found something, whether it was being searched for or not.

Ethnicity	Number of searches for offensive weapons	Offensive weapons found	Find rates for offensive weapons by ethnicity
Asian	4	0	0.0%
Black	27	2	7.4%
Mixed	11	0	0.0%
Other	4	1	25.0%
Not known / Not stated	119	21	17.6%
White	224	40	17.9%

Table 7: Volume of Offensive Weapon searches and Find Rates – by Ethnicity

2.4.4 Having noted earlier an increase in disproportionality for Black subjects when conducting searches for offensive weapons, Table 7 shows Find Rates for offensive weapon searches by ethnicity. The Black ethnicity group has a lower Find Rate for offensive weapons than Other, White, and Not Stated ethnicity groups. Asian and Mixed ethnicity groups did not have any weapons found in those searches.

## 2.5 Use of strip search



Age group	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
15 - 17 yrs	0	2	0	2
18 - 24 yrs	1	37	0	38
25 and over	9	59	0	68
Unknown	0	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>110</b>

Table 8: Number of strip searches by Age group and Gender

- 2.5.1 In total, Suffolk has recorded 110 strip searches (involving exposure of intimate parts) from stop and search for the year period, similar to that of the previous reporting period (108). All of these were searches for Controlled Drugs. 99 (90.0%) were conducted on males, and two (1.8%) were conducted on juveniles. The youngest subject of a strip search was aged 16.
- 2.5.2 In the previous report, it was mentioned that a data issue had been discovered in that some strip search records had been double counted from custody records which had contributed to Suffolk's high position nationally for strip searches of children (Children's Commissioner report). This data issue has been resolved and is not present within the current reporting period.
- 2.5.3 8.2% of the strip searches (9) were undertaken on subjects from ethnic minorities. This is a decrease of 2.9p.p from the previous reporting period where 11.1% of people subject to strip search were from ethnic minorities. Comparatively, 10.5% of all stop searches undertaken this period were on individuals from ethnic minorities.
- 2.5.4 Item(s) being searched for were found in 36 strip searches (32.7%), whilst additional items not being searched for were found in 11 strip searches (10.0%).
- Overall, 44 out of 110 strip searches found something, whether it was the item being searched for or not, giving an overall find rate of 40.0% for strip searches.
  - This is an increase of 3.9p.p from the previous reporting period.

Self-defined ethnicity	Number of strip searches	Item searched for found	Find rate	Item not searched for found	Anything found (whether searched for or not)	Find rate for anything (whether searched for or not)
Asian	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
Black	5	0	0.0%	1	1	20.0%
Mixed	2	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Other	2	1	50.0%	0	1	50.0%
White	90	31	34.4%	10	38	42.2%
Not known / Not stated	11	4	36.4%	0	4	36.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32.7%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>40.0%</b>

Table 9: Total strip searches and Find Rates, by ethnicity

## 2.6 Use of Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act



Figure 8 – Number of vehicle stops under section 163 of RTA

- 2.6.1 Over the last 12-months, there have been 1,552 vehicle stops recorded under s.163 compared with 1,624 in the previous reporting period. Figure 8 shows a peak in December 2024.

### 3. NATIONAL COMPARISON

- 3.1 The latest national stop and search data published was up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. In the year ending March 2024 there were 530,093 stop and searches conducted by police in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police) under section 1 of PACE (and associated legislation), a decrease of 2.3% compared with the previous year. For the same period of time in Suffolk (April 2023 to March 2024) the number of stop and searches under section 1 of PACE decreased from 4,041 the previous year to 2,733 (-32.4%).
- 3.2 The national data for the year April 2023 to March 2024 showed that Suffolk conducted 3.5 stops per 1,000 population compared with 8.8 per 1,000 population for England and Wales.
- 3.3 In the year ending March 2024, in England and Wales, those whose self-defined ethnicity was Black were approximately 3.7 times more likely to be stopped as those who identified as White, a reduction from 4.1 the previous year. For Asian ethnicity groups, the value was 1.3 (down from 1.4 the previous year). For Mixed ethnicity groups the value was 1.7, the same as the previous year. For Other ethnicity groups, the value was 1.4 (up from 1.3 the previous year).
- 3.4 In Suffolk, for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, those whose self-defined ethnicity was Black were also 3.7 times more likely to be stopped as White subjects, although this figure increased to 4.1 times when including subjects not resident in Suffolk. The value for Asian and Mixed ethnicity groups were lower than seen nationally (0.7 and 1.2 respectively). The value for Other ethnicities was 2.5, increasing to 2.8 when including subjects not resident in Suffolk. Having previously been highlighted as the Force area with highest rate for Other ethnicities, Suffolk was third highest for this group in this data period.

### 4. OVERALL TRENDS – USE OF FORCE

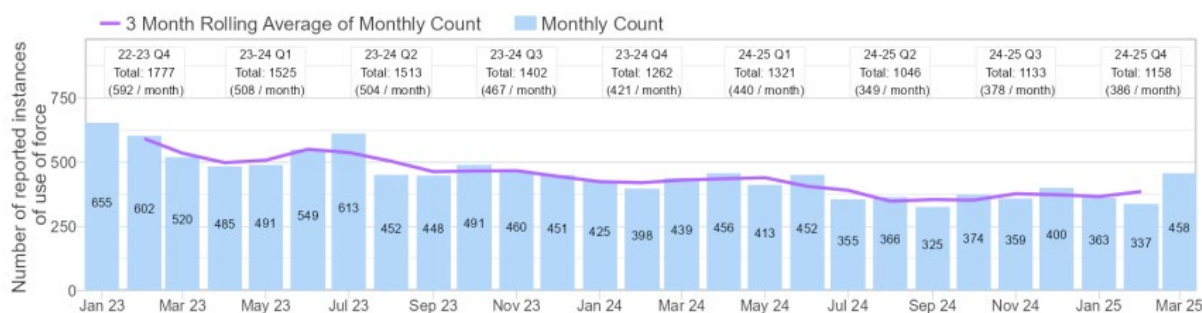


Figure 9: Number of reported instances of Use of force in Suffolk, 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2025

- 4.1 4,658 reported instances of use of force were recorded in the current reporting period. This is a reduction of 7.4% since the previous reporting period which had 5,031 (12 months ending September 2024).

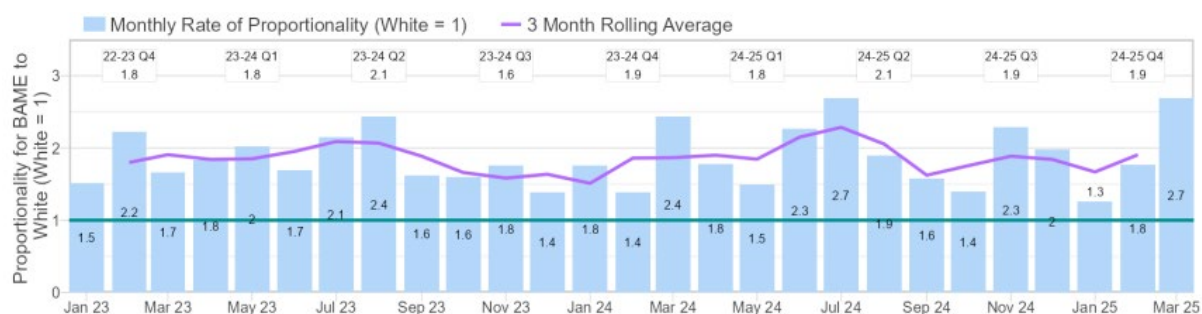


Figure 10: Proportionality for BAME to White individuals subject to Use of force in Suffolk, 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2025

4.2 Figure 10 shows there were two monthly peaks in disproportionality during the 12-month reporting period, in July 2024 and March 2025 (2.7). Levels came closest to parity in January 2025 (1.3).

## 5. OVERALL TRENDS – CONDUCTED ENERGY DEVICE (CED) – TASER USAGE

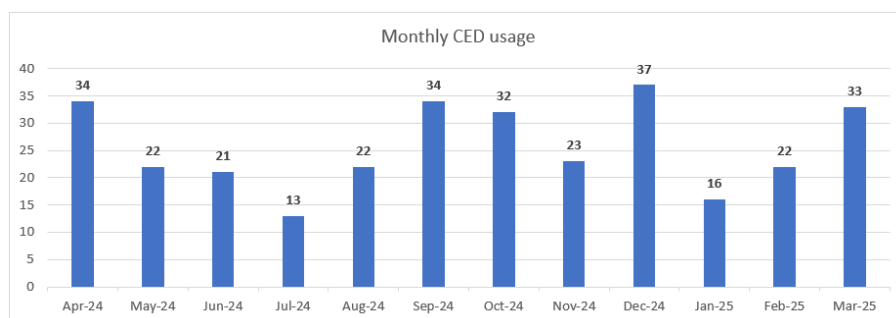


Figure 11: Monthly Conducted Energy Device (CED) usage 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

- 5.1 Over the 12-month reporting period, Conducted Energy Device (CED) usage totalled 309 – an increase of 17% compared with the last reporting period (264). This represents an average of 26 usages a month.
- 5.2 89.6% of the subjects where a CED was used were of white ethnicity, and 10.4% were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (this includes all forms of CED usage, not just when fired).

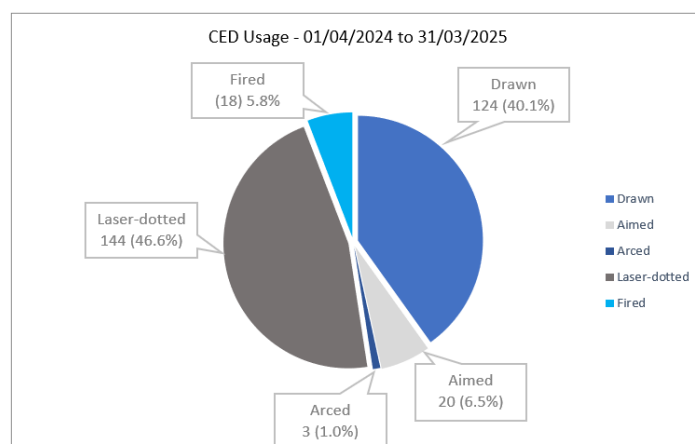


Figure 12: CED usage breakdown 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

## 6. BEST USE OF STOP AND SEARCH (BUSS)/HMICFRS INSPECTIONS/ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR CHILDREN (APPGC) RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Home Office has requested that all police forces in England and Wales provide returns in relation to progress against actions arising from Best Use of Stop and Search, HMICFRS PEEL Inspections and APPGC (in terms of use of stop and search on children and young people) in one standardised format.
- 6.2 Appendix A displays the latest statistics in respect of the Proportionality of Stop and Search Use in Suffolk in respect of BAME and Age, for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Please note this was produced for internal scrutiny purposes in May 2025 but has been

included as it offers further information on proportionality with regard young people and ethnicity, in an accessible format.

## **7. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ISCRE ON THEIR WORK TO ADMINISTER THE POLICE POWERS SCRUTINY GROUP**

- 7.1 A report compiled by ISCRE detailing their work to administer the Police Powers Scrutiny Group is attached at Appendix B.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 9.1 There are no other implications or risks associated with this report.

## **10. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION**

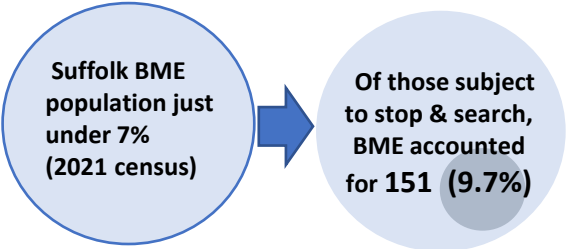
- 10.1 This report provides an overview of the use of police powers in Suffolk between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The volume of stop and search activity has plateaued following a previous decline, with 2,448 searches conducted during the period. While positive outcomes and arrest rates have seen minor decreases, they remain within expected fluctuations. Disproportionality in stop and search has increased for Black individuals, particularly among under-18s, despite no corresponding increase in find rates for offensive weapons. Controlled drugs remain the most common reason for searches and have the highest find rate. Strip search usage has remained stable, with a 40% find rate, and a reduction in the proportion involving ethnic minorities.
- 10.2 The Constabulary continues to enhance transparency and accountability through training, policy updates, and engagement with community groups such as ISCRE. Body Worn Video compliance is strong, though challenges remain in managing non-evidential footage. National comparisons show Suffolk's stop and search rate remains below the England and Wales average, though disproportionality for Black individuals is consistent with national figures. The report highlights ongoing efforts to address disproportionality, improve data accuracy, and ensure the lawful and proportionate use of police powers.

# PROPORTIONALITY OF STOP & SEARCH USE IN SUFFOLK – ETHNICITY

Annex A

Date Range 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

Unless stated, all numbers exclude subjects with addresses outside Suffolk.  
Under 18 refers to those aged 10 to 17. A total of 1,560 stop searches of Suffolk residents were recorded during the reporting period.



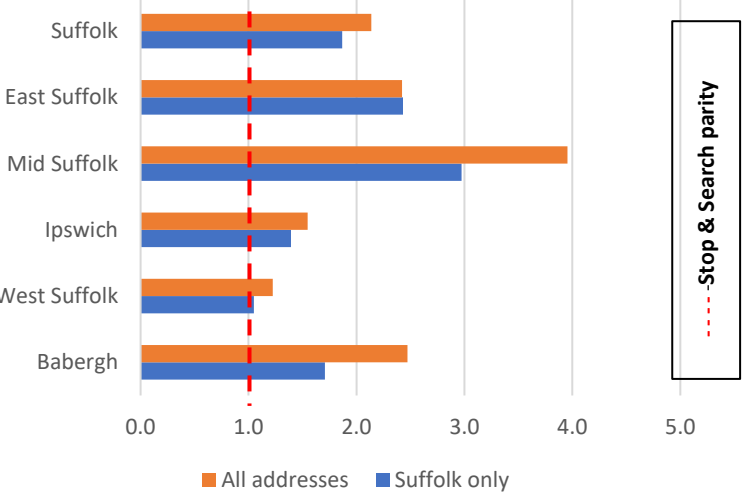
## Disproportionality by ethnicity for Suffolk

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.2	3.7	1.5	1.9
All addresses	1.2	4.9	1.4	2.5

Since the last reporting period, there has been an increase in disproportionality for subjects from the Black ethnicity group. The rates for all other ethnicity groups are similar to those from the previous quarter. See comparisons in the two charts below:

## Disproportionality by District

- Excluding subjects with addresses outside Suffolk, the local BME community were **1.9** times more likely to be subject of stop & search than white counterparts. This has increased since last quarter (1.7). The value increases to **2.1** when including subjects from outside of Suffolk.
- For Suffolk residents, the disproportionality was limited to males – BME males were 2.0 times more likely to be subject of a stop search than white males, whereas for BME females, the rate was 1.0 (parity).
- Mid Suffolk had the highest disproportionality rates. Mid Suffolk also recorded the smallest volume of stop searches.
- West Suffolk had proportionate results, and Ipswich was close to parity.



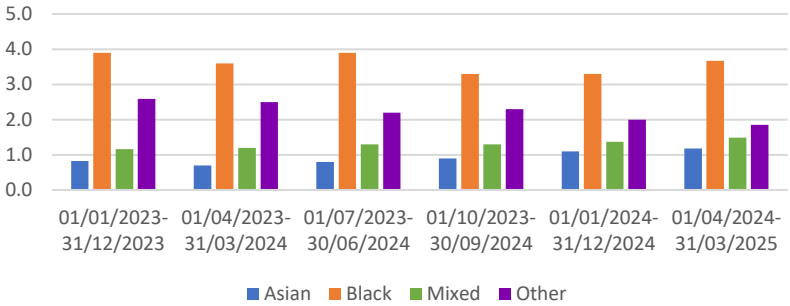
The majority of those subject to stop & search were male (81.9%). Males were 4.9 times more likely to be subject of stop & search than females.

Of all U18s subject to stop & search, BME=11.6%

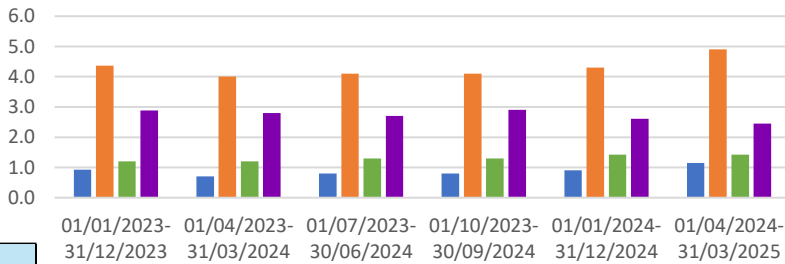
Reviewing just the U18 population, BME subjects were 1.5 times more likely to be stop searched than white peers.

District	Suffolk addresses		All addresses	
	BME	White	BME	White
All	151	1093	252	1592
East Suffolk	25	258	34	352
Mid Suffolk	6	62	13	101
Ipswich	80	309	135	469
West Suffolk	34	362	58	529
Babergh	6	102	12	141

Disproportionality by ethnicity  
Suffolk only



Disproportionality by ethnicity  
All addresses



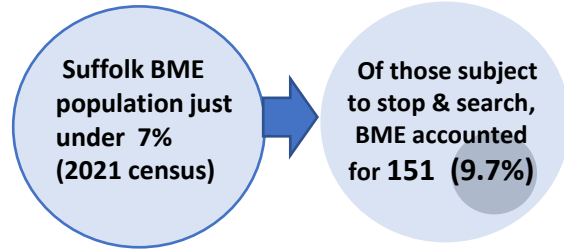
The table to the left displays the counts of stop searches conducted on persons split by White/BME and District.

BWV compliance  
(all addresses)

95.1%

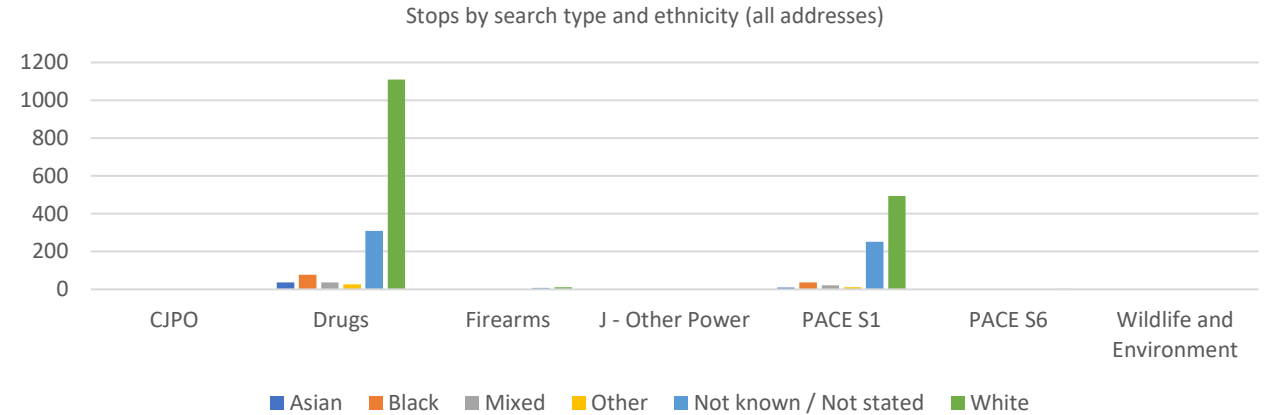
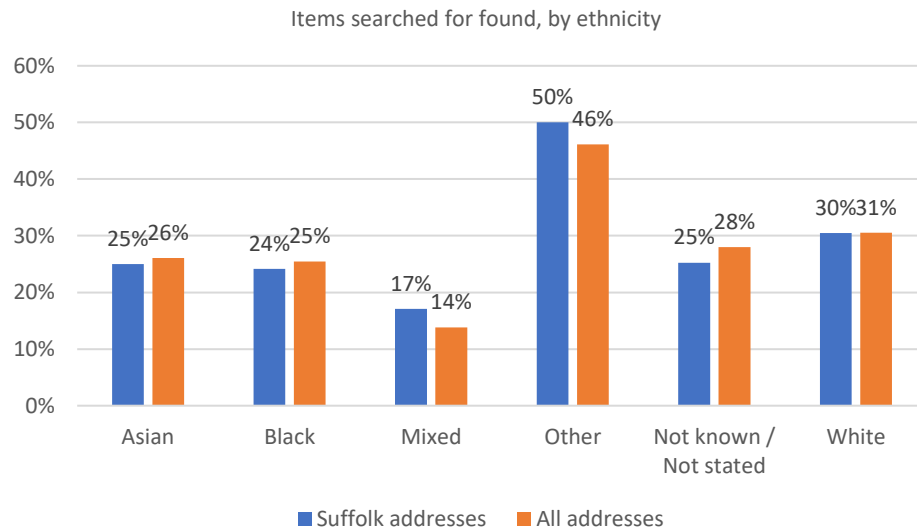
# PROPORTIONALITY OF STOP & SEARCH USE IN SUFFOLK – ETHNICITY

Date Range 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

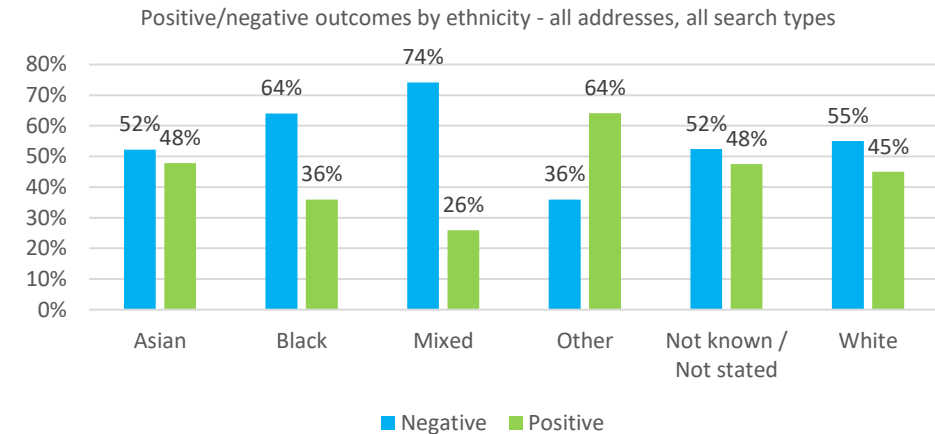


For Suffolk residents, Find rates for items that have been searched for irrespective of ethnicity have reduced when compared with the previous quarter (from 30.8% to 29.0%). For all addresses, the Find rate for items searched for is 29.5%. Find rates have increased for the Other ethnicity group but for all other ethnicities the rate has either reduced or stayed the same.

The (Suffolk residents) Find rate is higher for females (35.6%) than males (27.7%).



The most prevalent reason for search is Drugs (S23 Misuse of Drugs Act). This is consistent with previous reporting periods.



The percentages in the graph above are the percentages of each ethnicity total rather than a percentage of all stops in Suffolk. Negative relates to NFA and positive is all other outcomes.

For all addresses, since last reported, Positive outcome rates increased for the Asian (+2pp), and Other (+9pp), ethnicity groups. There were decreases in positive outcome rates for the Black (-6pp), Mixed (-6pp), and White (-2pp) ethnicity groups. The rate for the Not known / Not stated group remained the same.

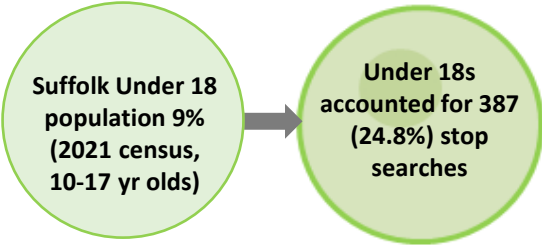
The overall positive outcome rate has decreased slightly since the last reporting period to 45.1% (down 1.8pp). The positive outcomes rate was better for males (45.7%) than for females (41.5%).

# PROPORTIONALITY OF STOP & SEARCH USE IN SUFFOLK - AGE

Date Range 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

Unless stated, all numbers exclude subjects with addresses outside Suffolk.

Under 18 refers to those aged 10 to 17. A total of 1,560 stop searches of Suffolk residents were recorded during the reporting period.

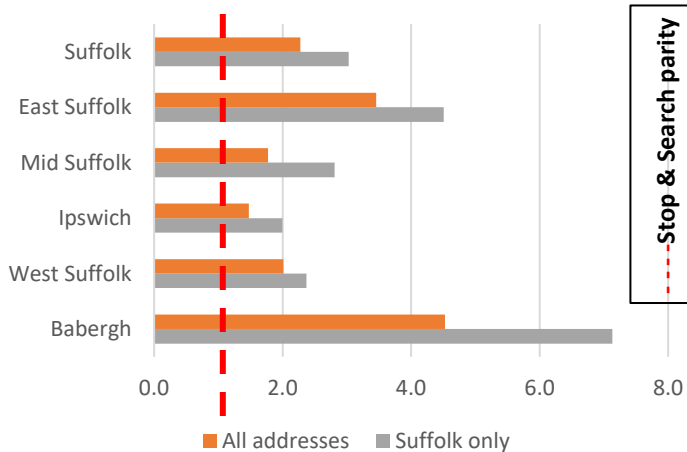


Disproportionality by ethnicity for Suffolk for Under 18s

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.3	5.9	0.6	0.0
All addresses	1.2	6.3	0.6	0.0

Disproportionality for Under 18s from the Black ethnicity group is higher than for adults and has increased from 5.8 last quarter to 5.9. When including non-Suffolk residents, the rate is higher still. All other ethnicity groups are either close to parity or below parity for Under 18s.

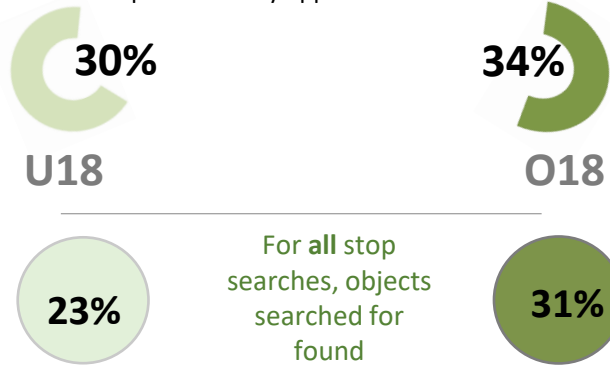
Age disproportionality by district



- The Suffolk U18 community is **3.0** times more likely to be subject of stop/search than over 18 counterparts, decreasing to **2.3** times when including subjects from outside Suffolk.
- This age disproportionality reduced for females (2.4) but was consistent for males (3.0).
- This is a small decrease in age disproportionality since the levels in last reporting period (down 0.1).
- Babergh** had the highest proportion of under 18s stop searched.

Items Searched for by reason for search

Drugs were the most common items searched for overall; 65% of stops gave Drugs as the reason for search. Find rates for drugs decreased by 2pp for Over 18s since the last reporting period and by 3pp for under 18s.

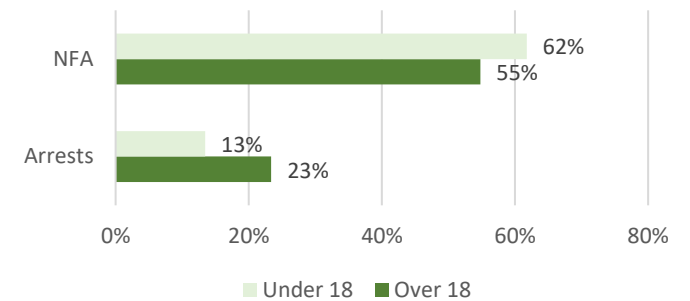


The percentage of objects searched for found has reduced in both age groups, by 1pp for under 18s and by 2pp for over 18s.

## Under 18 Disproportionality within Suffolk's BME communities:

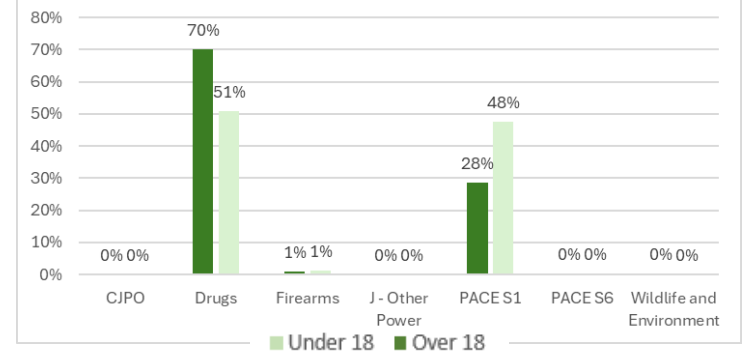
Looking only at Suffolk's BME communities, under 18s are **2.1** times more likely to be subject of stop and search than over 18s. This is lower than the overall Age Disproportionality value.

Outcome by Age



Following stop search, under 18s are subject to NFA more often than over 18s, and subject to arrest less often. Rates are similar to those seen last quarter.

Stop search by type and age



Drugs and PACE S1 are the most common reason for stop searches. Rates are similar to those seen last quarter.



# PROPORTIONALITY OF HANDCUFF USE IN SUFFOLK STOP SEARCHES

Date Range 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

2,448 Optik records showed whether or not handcuffs were used during the Stop Search (all addresses):

Handcuffs used	All addresses	%	Suffolk only	%
Yes	1120	46%	655	42%
No	1328	54%	905	58%
Total	2448	100%	1560	100%

Overall Disproportionality by ethnicity for Suffolk  
(copied from slide 1 - for comparison)

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.2	3.7	1.5	1.9
All addresses	1.2	4.9	1.4	2.5

## Disproportionality where handcuffs were used:

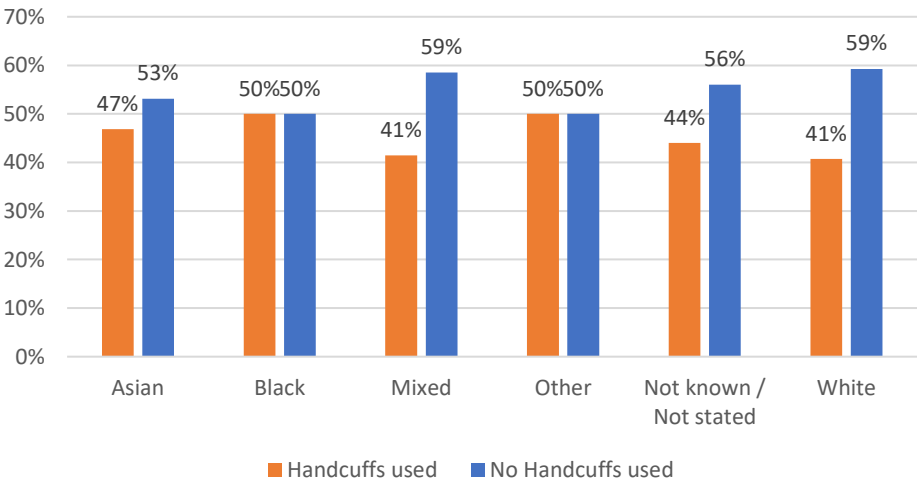
Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.4	4.5	1.5	2.3
All addresses	1.1	5.8	1.5	2.8

## Disproportionality where handcuffs were not used:

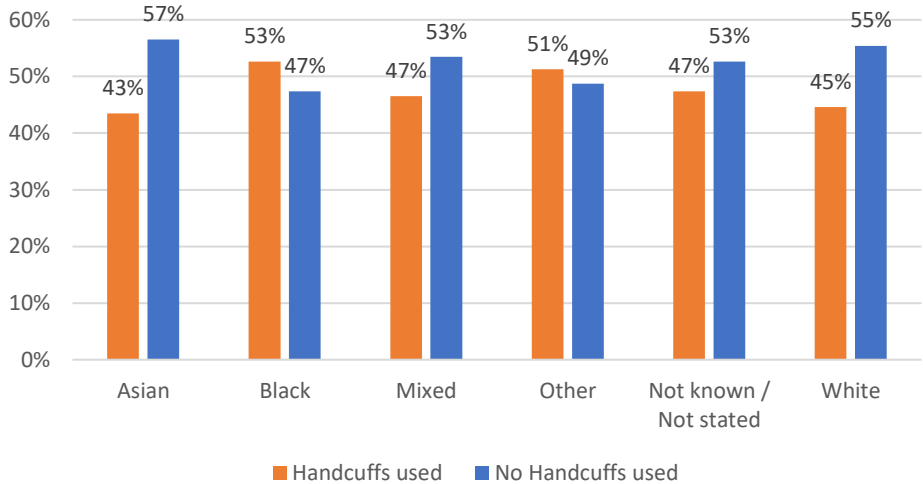
Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.1	3.1	1.5	1.6
All addresses	1.2	4.2	1.4	2.2

Comparing the disproportionality values shows that subjects from Asian, Black and Other ethnicity groups have higher disproportionality for stop searches involving handcuffs than for those that don't i.e. they are more likely to be handcuffed during a stop and search than white subjects. For subjects from the Mixed ethnicity group, the use of handcuffs (or lack of use) made very little difference to the overall stop and search disproportionality rate.

Proportion of handcuffs used, by ethnicity - Suffolk addresses only



Proportion of handcuffs used, by ethnicity - All addresses





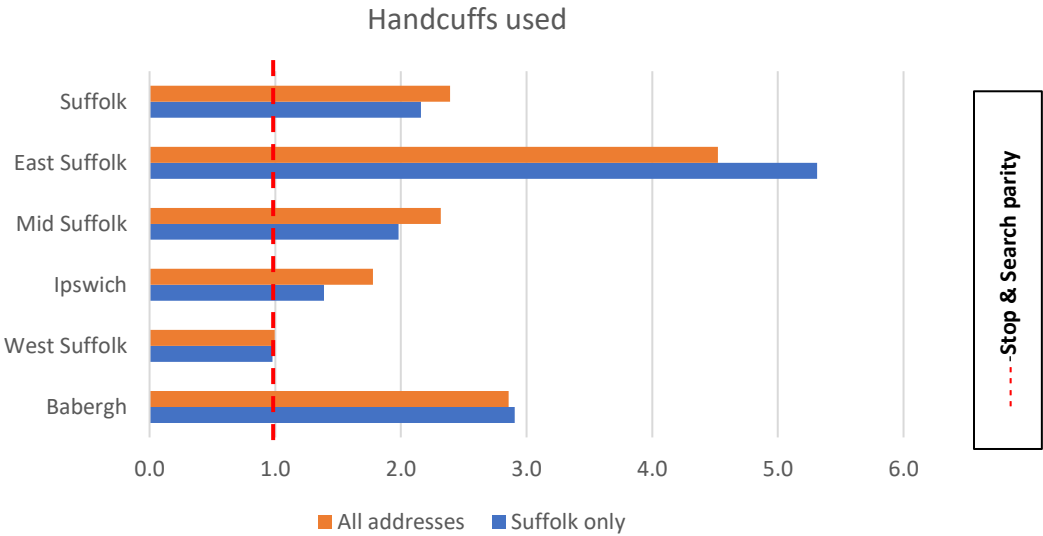
# PROPORTIONALITY OF HANDCUFF USE IN SUFFOLK STOP SEARCHES

Date Range 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

District	Suffolk addresses						All addresses					
	Total stop-searches	Using handcuffs	(%)	Total BME stop-searches	BME stop-searches using handcuffs	(%)	Total stop-searches	Using handcuffs	(%)	Total BME stop-searches	BME stop-searches using handcuffs	(%)
Babergh	122	45	37%	6	4	67%	193	83	43%	12	6	50%
West Suffolk	448	194	43%	34	14	41%	709	344	49%	58	23	40%
Ipswich	542	240	44%	80	33	41%	864	420	49%	135	70	52%
Mid Suffolk	78	36	46%	6	2	33%	142	68	48%	13	4	31%
East Suffolk	363	136	37%	25	18	72%	502	184	37%	34	22	65%
All*	1,553	651	42%	151	71	47%	2,410	1,099	46%	252	125	50%

## Handcuffing Disproportionality by District

- Excluding subjects with addresses outside Suffolk, the local BME community was 2.2 times more likely to be subject of a stop search where handcuffs are used. This is an increase since the last time this was reported on (1.9).
- When including all subjects regardless of their address, BME subjects were 2.4 times more likely to be subject of a stop search with use of handcuffs, an increase from 2.1 previously.
- West Suffolk has the lowest disproportionality rate for handcuffing and is at parity for both local subjects and when including non-Suffolk residents. Ipswich is also close to parity for local subjects.



\* Where District is shown as Out Of Force, these records have been excluded

## ISCRE's Report on the Police Powers Public Scrutiny Group

### June 2025

ISCRE facilitates the Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny (SPPPS). This includes the public scrutiny of police Use of Force, Taser Incidents and Stop/Searches.

ISCRE, with the community, 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 people as visible colour being stopped and searched by the police.

Whilst we have seen significant improvements in the disproportionality reduced from 9% to 5%, it remains, not only in police stop searches, but also in the police Use of Force and Taser incidents. A decision was therefore made that scrutiny would be extended to wider police powers to include their Use of Force and Taser.

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

### Why Scrutinise?

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.

**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 have significant power. Scrutiny helps to 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.

### Memorandum of Understanding

The MoU between Suffolk Constabulary, ISCRE and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk was agreed in March 2024 to allow members of the local community to review individual police interactions with the public and to consider any disparity in use of wider police powers.

The reflections from the SPPPS group are that our observations and feedback are helping Suffolk Police to learn lessons from participants' lived experiences, thereby helping to improve services and ensure greater accountability.

The relationship between the SPPPS and the police continues to improve with individual police attending scrutiny panel reporting that it has helped them to use their powers more confidently with the backing of the community. Young people report that the group's work improves their understanding of how and why police powers are used in Suffolk.

ISCRE will review a selection of Body Worn Videos prior to each scrutiny panel. There are still some challenges around the scrutiny process with unavailability of some body worn video footage. This is being worked through, and we hope to see improvements.

## **Training**

Under the terms of the MoU, ISCRE will deliver a series of sessions to the police regarding the scrutiny of police powers. As an independent, external partner, ISCRE is uniquely positioned to share authentic accounts of communities' lived experiences. These sessions highlight the profound impact on individuals and the wider community when the grounds for police actions are questioned due to their potential negative consequences.

The training has been highly engaging and interactive, with positive feedback from officers who report a significantly improved understanding of how their actions can affect individuals after hearing these personal stories.

To date, sessions have been successfully delivered on May 9, 2025, May 23, 2025, and June 6, 2025, with another session planned for June 20, 2025.

## **Use of Force & Taser Training – Observation Sessions for ISCRE Staff**

During this reporting period, ISCRE staff who are a part of the SPPPS scrutiny, have attended as observers, Use of Force and Taser training sessions and Suffolk Police HQ. This not only gave ISCRE valuable insight into the level of training that police officers are involved in, but it also helped ISCRE to be able to better support the community in its scrutiny processes with;

**Improved understanding** - ISCRE gained a deeper understanding of situations where force is necessary, the types of force available for use, and the decision-making process involved. There may also be situations where ISCRE staff can provide a valuable independent perspective on training scenarios and the appropriateness of force used. This scrutiny can help identify potential areas for improvement in training and policies.

**Enhanced decision-making** – Our new knowledge and understanding has led to better decisions when scrutinising incidents involving the use of force.

**Increased trust and accountability** – Having a better understanding of the realities of policing where force is used, has helped ISCRE understand the challenges police officers face, helping us develop greater trust in the training process and the decision-making of officers. This also increases accountability by providing the community with a better understanding of the standards and procedures in place.

**Improved communication** - Shared training experiences we believe has led to better communication and understanding between police officers and ISCRE staff, which helps to reduce misunderstandings in the public scrutiny process.

**Potential to reduce complaints** - Having a better understanding of the circumstances in which force is used can help ISCRE to share the information with the community at scrutiny meetings, helping to reduce complaints through a lack of understanding or awareness.

**Improved policies and procedures** – ISCRE, with this training can provide valuable insights into the development of policies and procedures related to the use of force from the public's perspective.

### **Public Scrutiny Meeting held May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Attendance: - 19

Venue: - Online via Teams

<b>Stop &amp; Search</b>	There was a total of 689 stop and search forms, and out of that we selected the following, to audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• W1 – 32 out of 324 forms</li><li>• BAME – 26 out of 79 forms</li><li>• White Other – 13 out of 126 forms</li><li>• Ethnicity Not Stated – 16 out of 161</li></ul>
<b>Use of Force</b>	58 Samples – Reviewed down to 10 samples with more detailed analysis, 2 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
<b>Taser</b>	43 Samples – Reviewed down to 3 samples with more detailed analysis, 1 taken to panel for further scrutiny.

### **Public Scrutiny Meeting held March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Attendance: - 170 (20 + 150 students)

Venue: - Alde Valley Academy Leiston

<b>Stop &amp; Search</b>	There was a total of 367 stop and search forms, and out of that we selected the following, to audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• W1 – 17 out of 173 forms</li><li>• BAME – 14 out of 41 forms</li><li>• White Other – 6 out of 55 forms</li><li>• Ethnicity Not Stated – 10 out of 96</li></ul>
--------------------------	---

<b>Use of Force</b>	58 Samples – Reviewed down to 10 samples with more detailed analysis, 2 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
---------------------	--

<b>Taser</b>	43 Samples – Reviewed down to 3 samples with more detailed analysis, 1 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
--------------	---

### **Public Scrutiny Meeting held January 29th 2025**

Attendance: - 17

Venue: - Held Online

<b>Stop &amp; Search</b>	<p>There was a total of 389 stop and search forms, and out of that we selected the following, to audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W1 – 22 out of 215 forms</li> <li>• BAME – 10 out of 30 forms</li> <li>• White Other – 5 out of 49 forms</li> <li>• Ethnicity Not Stated – 10 out of 95</li> </ul>
--------------------------	---

<b>Use of Force</b>	83 Samples – Reviewed down to 10 samples with more detailed analysis, 2 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
---------------------	--

<b>Taser</b>	63 Samples – Reviewed down to 3 samples with more detailed analysis, 1 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
--------------	---

### **In-person Public Scrutiny Meeting held in March at Alde Valley Academy**

ISCRE is working to expand scrutiny panels across Suffolk, offering other community members the opportunity to become involved. An in-person Public Scrutiny Meeting was held in March at Alde Valley Academy. During this meeting, ISCRE and the police seized the opportunity to deliver a "Know Your Rights" Workshop, given the high number of young people in attendance. A show of hands revealed that many young people in the audience were unaware of their rights during a police stop and search. "Theories" and "GOWISELY" (a police acronym which sets out the minimum information that officers must give to a subject of a stop search) were explained to the young people, who volunteered to participate in scenarios and role-play exercises provided by the police. There was excellent engagement and interest from the young people, who also posed a number of thought-provoking questions.



Police Powers Public Scrutiny Meeting held March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Alde Valley Academy Leiston

The "Know Your Rights" cards, examples of which were presented to students and visitors, provided a means for them to access additional information regarding their rights during a stop and search. A QR code on these cards facilitates direct access to the information booklet hosted on ISCRE's website.



## **Main Points:**

- We continue to observe instances where some officers have not fully recorded the grounds for a search, or the stated grounds do not completely cover all aspects of GOWISELY. Additionally, there have been occasions where supervisory oversight was insufficient or not robust enough to assure public confidence in the police's internal checks and balances. We consider it good practice when a supervisor identifies issues and clearly records what occurred, and we do not seek further scrutiny of those forms. However, we have also noticed instances where supervisors have signed off on grounds without comment or any clear sign of accountability for the officer's failure to record clear grounds or fully address GOWISELY.
- The panel has challenged recent examples of police use of force, specifically addressing cases where some suspects were automatically handcuffed. In these instances, the panel seeks to understand the specific rationale behind the immediate application of restraints. Our objective is to ensure that officers adhere to the principle of proportionality, where use of force, including handcuffing, is demonstrably necessary and justified by the circumstances, rather than a default action.
- The panel has questioned officers' language used with suspects. On one occasion, an officer told a suspect "not to bring the race card into it." The panel views such comments as problematic, as they can convey a message that individuals from visible minoritised backgrounds are perceived as misusing their ethnicity as a pretence for being a police suspect. This stands in contrast to the reality that, statistically, a disproportionately higher percentage of individuals from minoritised communities are subjected to police stop and search, often resulting in no further action.
- The timeliness of raw data provided to us continues to be an issue in some areas. The data is not always supplied within reasonable timescales, often due to police resourcing capacity. This delay has impacted the time ISCRE has to fully review the data and request further information when necessary. However, this situation should now improve with the recent recruitment of a staff member specifically for these duties.
- We are pleased to note an improvement in the Use of Force (UOF) raw data, which now includes the critical 'rationale' for each instance of force. This addition has been helpful to our scrutiny process, as it provides immediate context, allowing us to quickly determine which cases require further information. Extending this level of detail to Taser samples would significantly benefit our review, and we are hopeful that this can be implemented in due course.

## **Remaining Police Powers Public Suffolk Scrutiny dates in 2025:**

July 30<sup>th</sup> Online Via Teams

September 24<sup>th</sup> In Person – Venue tbc

November 26<sup>th</sup> Online Via Teams

Sharon Lee - ISCRE