



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP26/05

SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
16 JANUARY 2026

SUBJECT: USE OF POLICE POWERS IN SUFFOLK –
1 OCTOBER 2024 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

SUMMARY:

1. Volumes of stop and search in Suffolk have increased by 8.2% since the previous reporting period.
2. Small increases have been seen in positive outcomes and arrest rate, but these are within expected levels of fluctuation and counter the reductions noted in the previous reporting period.
3. Disproportionality in stop and search is highest within the Black ethnicity group and has not yet reduced following the increase observed in the last report. The Other ethnicity group has also seen a small increase in disparity while Asian and Mixed groups see broadly consistent rates close to parity.
4. When focussing only on Under 18s, disproportionality relating to ethnicity is only apparent within the Black ethnicity group and is at a rate higher than that seen for adults. However, this has reduced since the previous reporting period.
5. Controlled Drugs was the most common reason for stop and search. This search type records higher disparity for Black and Other ethnicity groups.
6. Handcuffing data also shows higher disparity for subjects from Black ethnicity groups. This appears to be linked to Controlled Drug searches.
7. Searches for stolen goods / articles have the highest Find Rate, followed by Controlled Drug searches.
8. Use of strip search has reduced by 10% since previously reported. However, the find rate for strip searches has increased.
9. Use of Section 163 vehicle stops recorded a large increase in volume since May 2025 when reporting methods were improved.

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 OCTOBER 2024 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

- 1.1. Dedicated Delivery and Scrutiny Groups oversee police powers, including Stop and Search, Use of Force, Section 163 vehicle stops, strip searches, and Section 60 Public Order Act powers. Internal scrutiny is complemented by external oversight, ensuring transparency and accountability. This process is closely linked to the Joint Norfolk and Suffolk Police Powers Board and the strategic and operational groups under the Police Race Action Plan.
- 1.2. The Boards review data on the use of these powers with a particular focus on areas of concern raised by the community, any evidence of disproportionality, and emerging trends that may indicate issues or highlight good practice. This approach allows for early identification of problems and supports continuous improvement.
- 1.3. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will inspect the Constabulary in April 2026. In preparation, the Constabulary has responded to data requests to support the inspection. It is anticipated that the inspection will examine disproportionality, the relationship between stop and search activity and crime trends, and internal processes for scrutinising officers who make frequent use of these powers. Inspectors are also expected to review evidence demonstrating how community concerns have influenced policy changes and officer training.
- 1.4. External scrutiny is provided by the Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE). Vetted ISCRE members have access to body-worn video footage and provide direct feedback, which has proved invaluable in identifying improvements to training and highlighting officer behaviours, both positive and those requiring development.
- 1.5. Safeguarding remains a focus across the Constabulary and within the context of stop and search, changes to the digital platform officers use to record stop search is being implemented in December 2026 to allow a more comprehensive tracking of vulnerability and safeguarding considerations made by officers.
- 1.6. Use of Force
 - 1.6.1. In March 2025, Public and Police Safety Training (PPST) was extended from one day per year to two consecutive days. The revised programme is scenario-based, focusing on the practical application of powers such as Stop and Search and the use of force within realistic contexts. This approach replaces the previous drill-based method and incorporates diversity considerations, as well as guidance on the use of body-worn video. The enhanced training provides officers with a more comprehensive understanding of how to apply these powers appropriately.
 - 1.6.2. Oversight of the use of force has also been strengthened. Officers whose annual training qualification has expired are monitored to ensure they do not deploy until they have completed refresher training. Data is reviewed to identify trends and officers who use higher levels of force, ensuring appropriate oversight and understanding.
- 1.7. Body Worn Video (BWV)
 - 1.7.1. Body-worn video continues to play a vital role in the scrutiny process. Compliance with activation and recording during Stop and Search remains positive. The Optik application, which records details of Stop and Search and confirms the presence of body-worn video, is now well embedded in practice and demonstrates strong compliance.
- 1.8. Section 163 Road Traffic Act

1.8.1. Following the introduction of mandatory recording for Section 163 Road Traffic Act stops, there has been an increase in reporting. This new dataset will be closely monitored to ensure the power is used appropriately and proportionately, and to identify any disproportionality at an early stage.

2. OVERALL TRENDS - STOP AND SEARCH

2.1. Use of stop and search

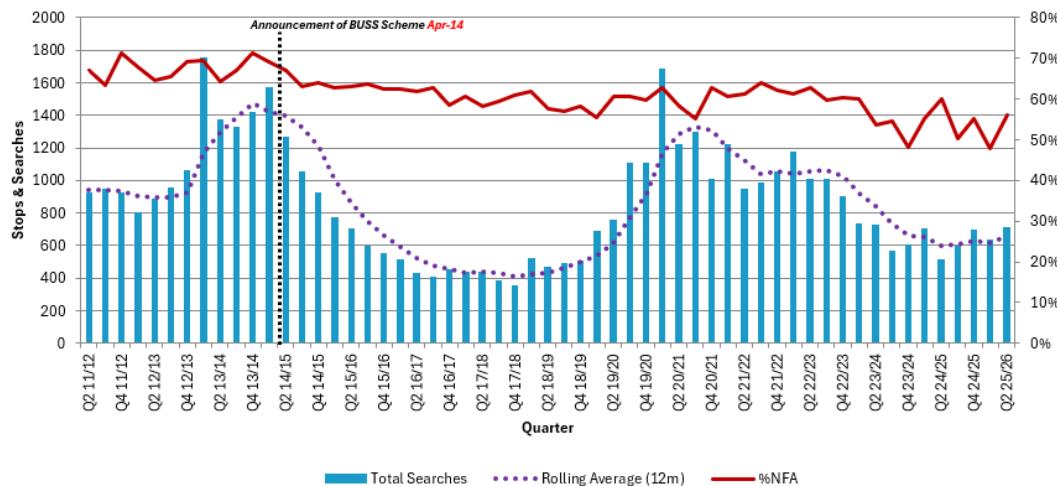


Figure 1: Long-term trends in use of stop and search in Suffolk

Figure 1 displays long-term trends in stop and search over time, from Q2 2011/12 to Q2 2025/26. The volume of searches had begun to plateau following a general downward trend since the pandemic.

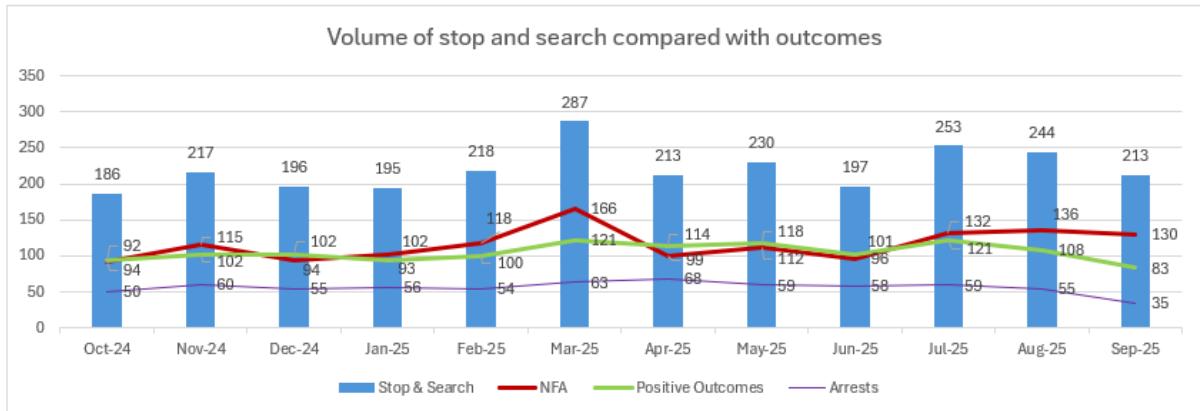


Figure 2: Monthly volume of Stop and Search compared with outcomes 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

2.1.1. 2,649 stop searches took place in the current reporting period (01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025). This represents an increase of 8.2% in overall volume when compared with the previous reporting period (01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025). Figure 2 above displays the trend in usage of stop and search in Suffolk for each month, alongside the No Further Action (NFA), positive outcome and arrest rates.

2.1.2. In the current reporting period, the current rates were NFA 52.5%, positive outcomes 47.5% and the arrest rate was 25.4%. ‘Positive outcomes’ refers to all outcomes that are not NFA. The NFA rate in Suffolk has decreased by 2.4p.p since the last reporting period. The arrest rate has increased by 0.3p.p.

2.1.3. The positive outcome rate for white subjects was 47.3% compared with 44.6% for ethnic minority groups. For subjects where ethnicity was not stated/declined, the positive outcome rate was 49.2%. The arrest rate for white subjects was 25.2% compared with 22.5% for ethnic minority groups. The NFA rate for white subjects was 52.7% and for ethnic minority groups it was 55.4%.

2.2. Proportionality – Ethnicity

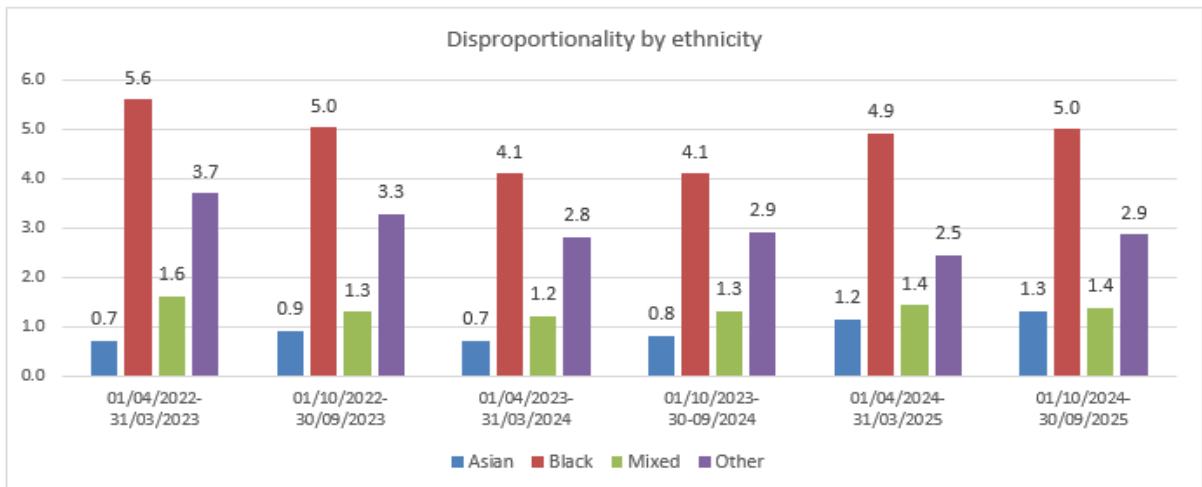


Figure 3: Disproportionality rates by ethnicity group and reporting period, 01/04/2022 – 30/09/2025

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, ethnic minority individuals were 2.3 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 declining but in the last two reporting periods have increased. The rate for the Other ethnicity group had also been declining over time but has increased in the latest period. Levels for Asian and Mixed ethnicity groups are close to parity and record small fluctuations.

Reason for search	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
All searches	1.3	5.0	1.4	2.9
Controlled drugs	1.6	5.6	1.4	3.6
Offensive weapons	0.9	4.4	2.0	0.9
Other reasons for search	0.3	3.2	1.0	2.0

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. In the previous reporting period, a higher rate of disproportionality was observed for Black subjects within offensive weapon searches. That has reduced in this reporting period. Controlled drug searches are the most common search type (67.4% of all searches). Within the remaining search types, the disparity rates are reduced.

2.2.4. Not all persons that are subject of stop and search in Suffolk are resident in the county. This can influence disproportionality rates, as county population data is used for their calculation. In this reporting period, 11.7% (310) of persons subject to stop and search were not Suffolk residents and 23.8% (631) did not have any address recorded. The rate of subjects residing outside of Suffolk was most prominent within the Asian ethnicity group; 29.6% of subjects from the Asian ethnicity group who were stopped and searched recorded a home address outside of Suffolk compared with 24.5% of subjects from Other ethnicity groups, 17.2% of subjects from Black ethnicity groups, 11.5% of subjects from White ethnicity groups, and 8.3% of subjects from Mixed ethnicity groups. When subjects with addresses outside of the county are excluded, disproportionality decreases for Asian, Black and Other ethnicity groups, and increases slightly for Mixed ethnicity groups.

2.2.5. Disparity rates for handcuffing data have been included within internal reporting over the last year. This has revealed that the Black ethnicity group, already experiencing higher disparity in stop and search, is more likely to be handcuffed during a stop search. Figure 4 compares the overall stop and search disparity rates alongside handcuffing disparity rates over the last four periods of analysis, for all subjects regardless of where they live. It can be seen that the Asian and Mixed ethnicity groups see little difference in disparity regarding handcuffing. However, the Black ethnicity group has consistently seen a higher rate of handcuffing disparity, indicating greater likelihood of being handcuffed while searched than the white ethnicity group.

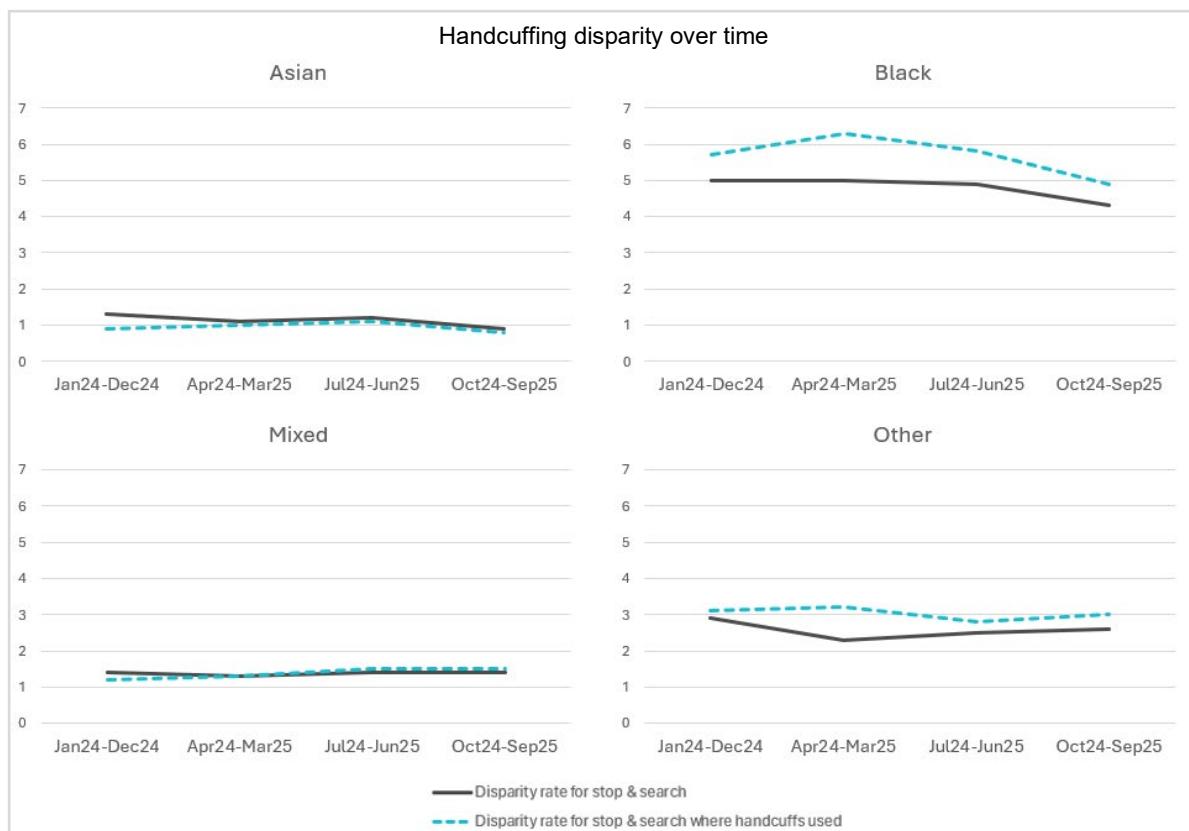


Figure 4: Comparative disparity rates for stop and search against stop and search with handcuffs, by ethnicity, 01/01/2024 – 30/09/2025

2.2.6 One proposed explanation for the additional disparity is that searches related to offences such as shoplifting, which typically do not necessitate the use of handcuffs, were more frequently conducted on individuals of white ethnicity. In contrast, searches associated with drug-related offences, where handcuffing may be required, were disproportionately carried out on individuals of Black ethnicity.

Handcuffs Used	Suffolk residents only				All subjects			
Reason for search	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
All searches	1.1	4.3	1.4	2.7	0.9	5.7	1.2	3.1
Controlled drugs	1.2	4.6	1.3	4.0	1.0	6.5	1.2	3.9
All searches excluding drugs	0.9	3.9	1.2	1.3	0.9	3.9	1.2	1.3

Table 2: Comparison of handcuffed disproportionality rates by Reason for Search

2.2.7 To test this hypothesis, disparity rates were recalculated using only cases where subjects were handcuffed, shown in Table 2. The observed increase in disparity for drug-related searches and decrease for non-drug searches suggests that the search type may be a factor in handcuffing disproportionality. It should be noted that this disaggregation of data reduces the sample size for each set of stop searches, making the resulting rates more sensitive to small variations in incident numbers and potentially amplifying changes in ratios. As such, these values should be interpreted with caution.

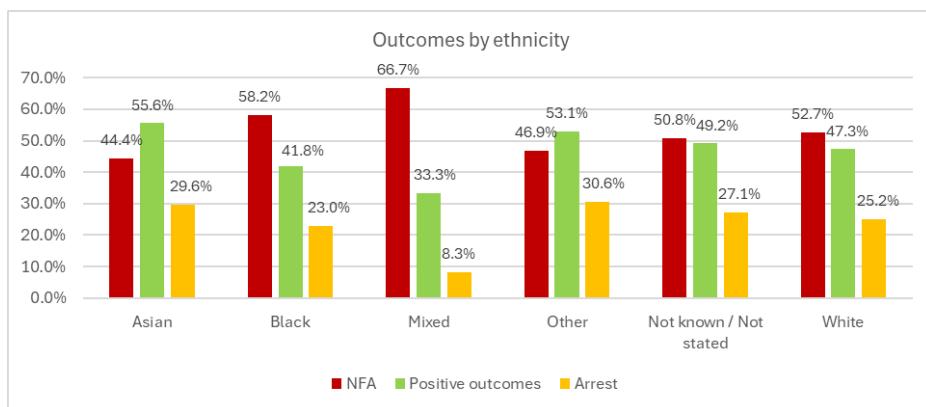


Figure 5: NFA, positive outcomes and arrests by ethnicity 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

2.2.8 Figure 5 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 Asian ethnicity group (55.6%). Arrest rates are highest within the Other ethnicity group (30.6%). The highest rate of NFA outcomes is within the Mixed ethnicity group (66.7%).

District	Ethnic Minority Population*	Stop search count	Ethnic Minority stop search count	Disproportionality
Babergh	3073	189	11	2.3
West Suffolk	14792	695	58	1.3
Ipswich	21886	997	169	1.8
Mid Suffolk	3238	175	15	3.5
East Suffolk	9433	568	30	1.9
Suffolk total	52422	2624	283	2.3

Table 3: Suffolk BME population, number of stop & search, and disproportionality by district

* As per 2021 Census, ONS

2.2.9 Suffolk is split by local authorities which do not precisely align with policing commands. Table 3 displays the rates of disproportionality for ethnic minorities in each district. Some recorded searches were conducted outside of the five local authority areas; hence the total is not equal to 2,649 stop searches overall.

2.2.10 The highest rate of disproportionality is seen in Mid Suffolk district, although this has reduced since the previous reporting period. West Suffolk is close to parity and has been consistently so. 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	112	4.2%
Aged 15-17	320	12.1%
Aged 18-24	712	26.9%
Aged 25 and over	1397	52.7%
Unknown	108	4.1%

Table 4: Count and percentage of stop searches by age group, 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

2.3.1 Table 4 displays all stop searches by subject age group. 432 subjects of stop search were under 18, accounting for 16.3% of stop search in the current reporting period. 74.1% (320/432) 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, ethnic minority individuals are 1.4 times as likely to be subject to stop and search as their white counterparts, regardless of whether they live in Suffolk or not.

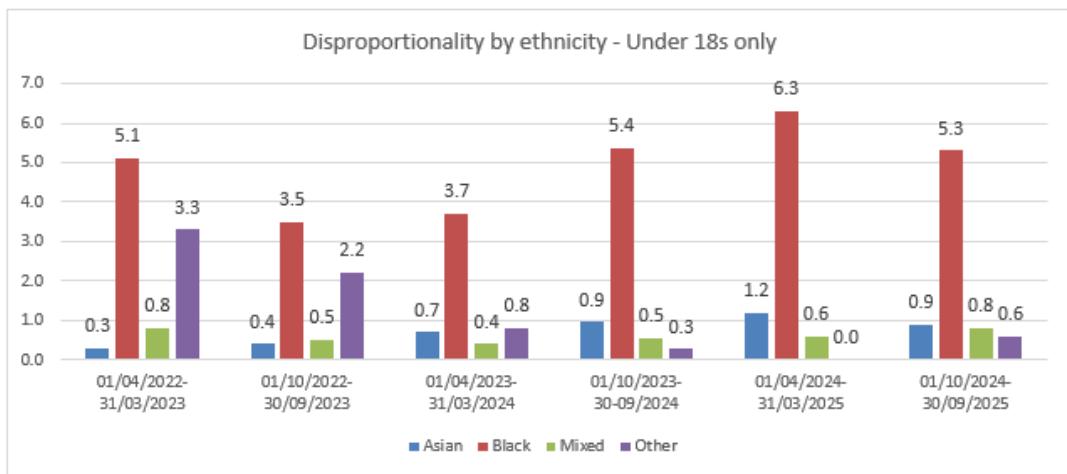


Figure 6: Disproportionality amongst under 18s by ethnicity, 01/04/2022 – 30/09/2025

2.3.3 However, figure 6 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 below parity. Figure 6 looks at all Under 18s, regardless of whether they reside in Suffolk or elsewhere. The rate decreases for just Suffolk based under 18s but is still high (4.9).

Reason for search	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
All U18 searches	0.9	5.3	0.8	0.6
Controlled drugs U18s	1.1	7.2	0.6	0
Non drug searches U18s	0.7	3.4	1.0	1.1

Table 5: Comparison of Under 18s disproportionality rates by Reason for Search

2.3.4 Table 5 compares rates for drug searches against other searches. With such small sample sizes, these findings should be interpreted with caution but would suggest that drug searches have a strong impact on disproportionality for Black subjects under 18.

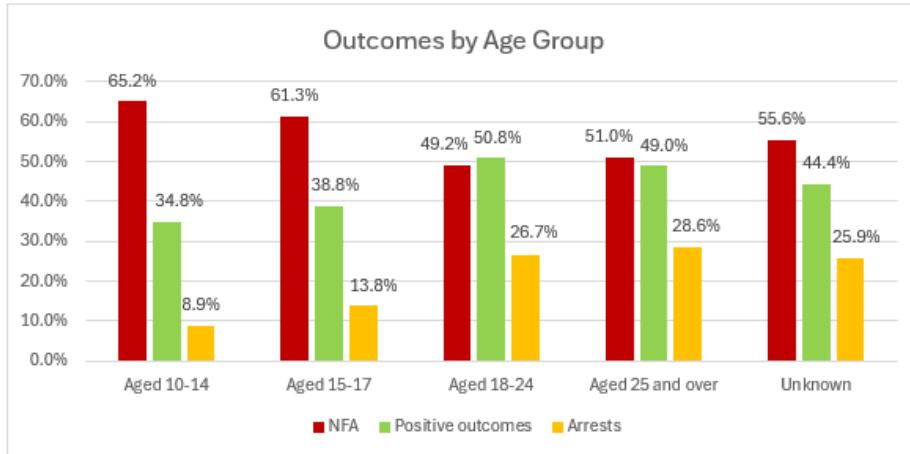


Figure 7: NFA, positive outcomes and arrests by age group 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

2.3.5 Figure 7 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. Positive outcomes were more common in the 18-24 age group, while the group aged 25 and over has the highest rate of arrest.

Age group	Male		Female		Other / Not Stated	
	Count	Age group as % of male total	Count	Age group as % of female total	Count	Age group as % of unknown total
Aged 10-14	91	4.2%	21	4.7%	0	0.0%
Aged 15-17	274	12.6%	44	9.9%	2	6.1%
Aged 18-24	613	28.2%	94	21.2%	5	15.2%
Aged 25 and over	1121	51.6%	273	61.6%	3	9.1%
Unknown	74	3.4%	11	2.5%	23	69.7%
Total	2173	100%	443	100%	33	100%

Table 6: Stop searches by gender and age group, 01/10/2024 – 30-09/2025

2.3.6 82.0% of stop searches in the current reporting period were conducted on males, similar to the last reporting period (82.4%). 16.7% were on females and 1.2% either had no data recorded for gender or were recorded as Other.

2.4 Object of search

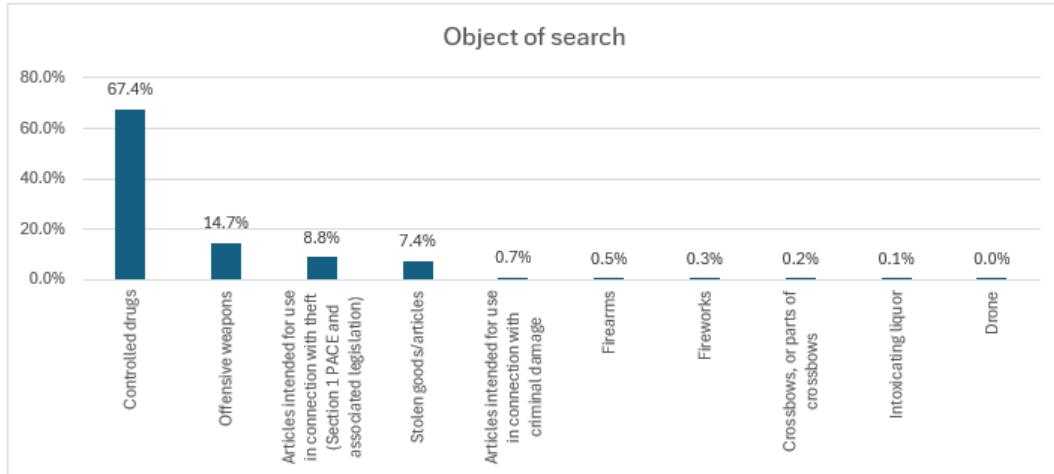


Figure 8: Percentage breakdown of Object of Search, 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

2.4.1 Figure 8 displays the reason for searches undertaken in Suffolk during this reporting period. In the majority of stop searches (1,785, 67.4%) controlled drugs has been recorded as the object

of search. The highest volume of these searches took place in Ipswich (608) followed by West Suffolk (547).

2.4.2 Offensive weapons were the reason for search in 389 (14.7%) 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	1785	634	35.5%	701	39.3%
Offensive weapons	389	79	20.3%	97	24.9%
Articles intended for use with theft	232	57	24.6%	81	34.9%
Stolen goods/articles	195	71	36.4%	84	43.1%
Others	48	12	25.0%	13	27.1%
Total	2649	853	32.2%	976	36.8%

Table 7: Volume of searches and Find Rates – by Object of search

2.4.3 The overall Find Rate for items searched for was 32.2%. This rate is higher for Controlled drugs and stolen goods/articles searches and lower for other search types. There were also occasions where an item not being searched for was found. Combining these, 976 (36.8%) stop searches found something, whether it was being searched for or not.

2.5 Use of strip search

Age group	Female	Male	Total
Aged 10-14	0	0	0
Aged 15-17	0	2	2
Aged 18-24	0	31	31
Aged 25 and over	5	61	66
Grand Total	5	94	99

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

2.5.1 99 strip searches recorded, down 10% from 110 last year. 97 of these were searches for Controlled Drugs. One was for offensive weapons and one for articles intended for use with theft. 94 (94.9%) were conducted on males. Two (2.0%) were conducted on juveniles. The youngest subject of a strip search was aged 16.

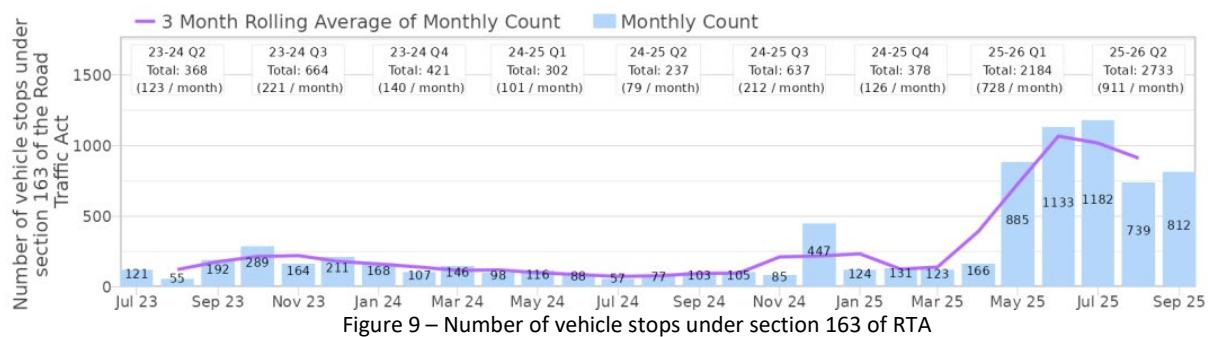
2.5.2 10.1% of the strip searches (9) were undertaken on subjects from ethnic minorities. This is an increase of 1.9p.p from the previous reporting period where 8.2% of people subject to strip search were from ethnic minorities. Comparatively, 10.8% of all stop searches undertaken this period were on individuals from ethnic minorities.

2.5.3 The item(s) being searched for was/were found in 42 strip searches (42.4%), whilst additional items not being searched for were found in nine strip searches (9.1%). Overall, 47 out of 99 strip searches found something, whether it was the item being searched for or not, giving an overall find rate of 47.5% for strip searches. This is an increase of 7.5p.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 (searched for or not)
Asian	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
Black	6	2	33.3%	0	2	33.3%
Mixed	3	1	33.3%	0	1	33.3%
Other	1	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Not known / Not stated	12	7	58.3%	0	7	58.3%
White	77	32	41.6%	9	37	48.1%
Grand Total	99	42	42.4%	9	47	47.5%

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

2.6 Use of Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act

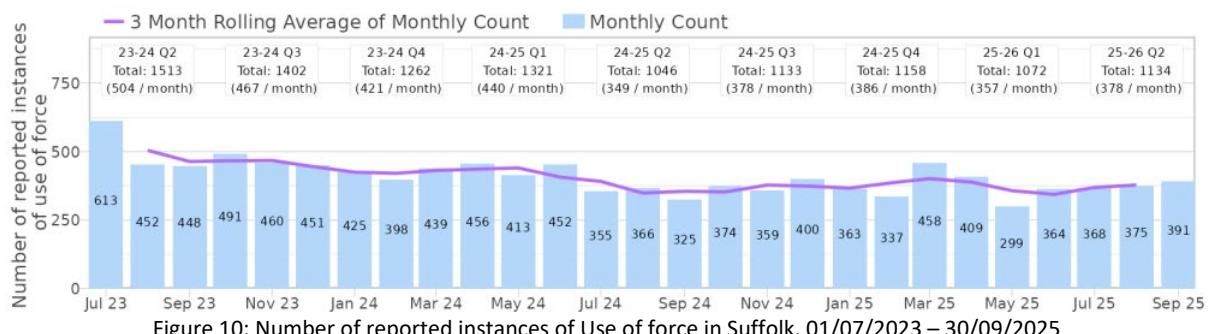


2.6.1 Over the last 12-months, there have been 5,932 vehicle stops recorded under s.163 compared with 1,552 in the previous reporting period. Figure 9 shows a significant increase since May 2025 when a system upgrade improved recording.

3. NATIONAL COMPARISON

- 3.1. The latest national stop and search data published was up to 31st March 2025. In the year ending March 2025 there were 522,670 stop and searches conducted by police in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police) under section 1 of PACE, a decrease of 1.5% compared with the year ending March 2024. For the same period of time in Suffolk (April 2024 to March 2025) the number of stop and searches under section 1 of PACE decreased from 2,733 the previous year to 2,530 (-7.4%).
- 3.2. The national data for the year April 2024 to March 2025 showed that Suffolk conducted 3.2 stops per 1,000 population compared with 8.6 per 1,000 population for England and Wales.
- 3.3. In the year ending March 2025, in England and Wales, those whose self-defined ethnicity was Black were approximately 3.8 times more likely to be stopped as those who identified as White, an increase from 3.7 the previous year. For Asian ethnicity groups, the value was 1.4, up from 1.3 the previous year. For Mixed ethnicity groups the value was 1.8, up from 1.7 the previous year. For Other ethnicity groups, the value was 1.5, up from 1.4 the previous year.
- 3.4. In Suffolk, for the year ending March 2025, those whose self-defined ethnicity was Black were 3.7 times more likely to be stopped as White subjects, although this figure increased to 4.9 times when including subjects not resident in Suffolk. The value for the Asian ethnicity group was 1.2, and for the Mixed ethnicity group was 1.5. The Other ethnicity group was the only group where the rate was higher than nationally, with a rate of 1.9, increasing to 2.5 when including subjects not resident in Suffolk.

4. OVERALL TRENDS – USE OF FORCE



- 4.1 4,497 use-of-force incidents were reported, down 3.5% from 4,658 last year.



Figure 11: Proportionality for BAME to White individuals subject to Use of force in Suffolk, 01/07/2023 – 30/09/2025

4.2 Figure 11 shows March 2025 recorded a peak in use of force disproportionality during the 12-month reporting period (2.7). Levels came closest to parity in January and April 2025 (1.3).

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

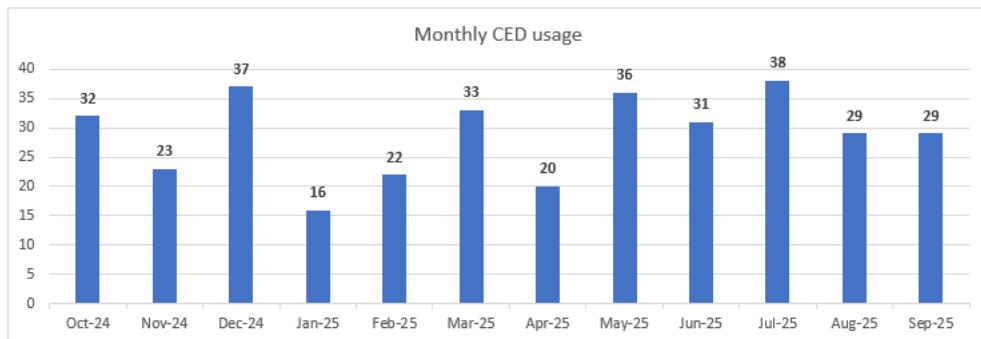


Figure 12: Monthly Conducted Energy Device (CED) usage 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

5.1 CED (Taser) usage rose 12% to 346 (from 309).

5.2 90.8% of the subjects where a CED was used were of white ethnicity, and 9.2% were from ethnic minority groups (this includes all forms of CED usage, not just when fired).

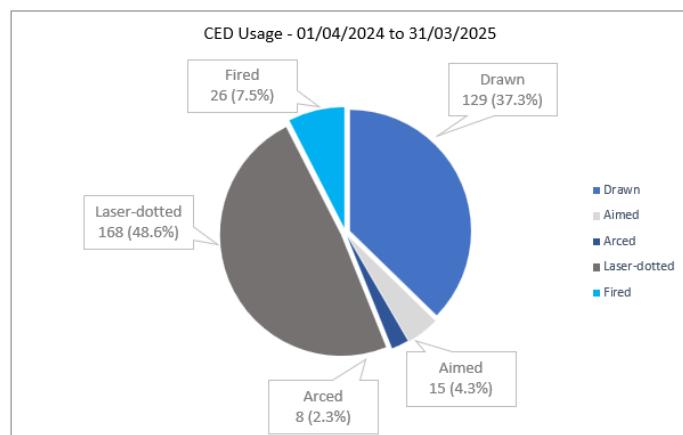


Figure 13: CED usage breakdown 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

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 ethnicity and age, for the period 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. Please note this was produced for internal scrutiny purposes in October 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.

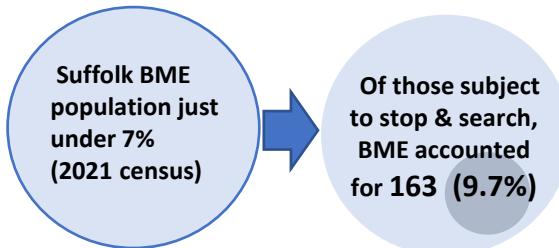
10. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION

10.1. Suffolk Constabulary's use of police powers between October 2024 and September 2025 reflects both operational improvements and ongoing challenges. Stop and search volumes increased by 8.2%, with positive outcomes rising to 47.5% and strip searches reducing by 10% while achieving higher find rates. Enhanced officer training, strong body-worn video compliance, and expanded scrutiny through ISCRE demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability. Community engagement initiatives, including youth workshops and external oversight, continue to strengthen public trust.

10.2. However, disproportionality remains a key concern. Ethnic minority individuals are 2.3 times more likely to be stopped than white counterparts, with Black individuals, particularly under-18s, experiencing the highest disparity. Handcuffing and controlled drug searches show strong links to disproportionality. ISCRE highlighted issues around officer language, incomplete recording of grounds, and dignity during searches. These findings underscore the need for sustained focus on proportionality, cultural awareness, and robust supervisory oversight to maintain public confidence - focus for the Police Powers portfolio lead over the coming months.

PROPORTIONALITY OF STOP & SEARCH USE IN SUFFOLK – ETHNICITY

Date Range 01/10/2024 to 30/09/2025



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

Under 18 refers to those aged 10 to 17. A total of 1,689 stop searches of Suffolk residents were recorded during the reporting period.

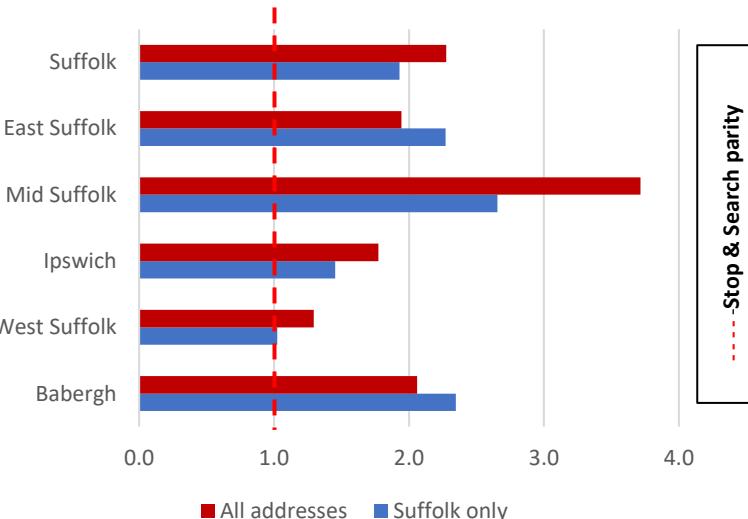
Disproportionality by ethnicity for Suffolk

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.1	3.8	1.5	2.4
All addresses	1.3	5.1	1.4	2.9

Since the last reporting period, there has been an increase in disproportionality for subjects from the local Black, Other, and Mixed ethnicity groups. The rates for the Asian ethnicity group remains at parity. Over time, rates fluctuate by small amounts, suggesting the decreases seen in recent years have plateaued. 22% of records for local subjects had no self-defined ethnicity recorded. 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 **2.3** when including subjects from outside of Suffolk.
- For Suffolk residents, the disproportionality was to males only – BME males were 2.1 times more likely to be subject of a stop search than white males, whereas for BME females, the rate was 0.9 (below parity).
- Mid Suffolk, East Suffolk and Babergh had higher local disproportionality rates.
- West Suffolk** had proportionate results.



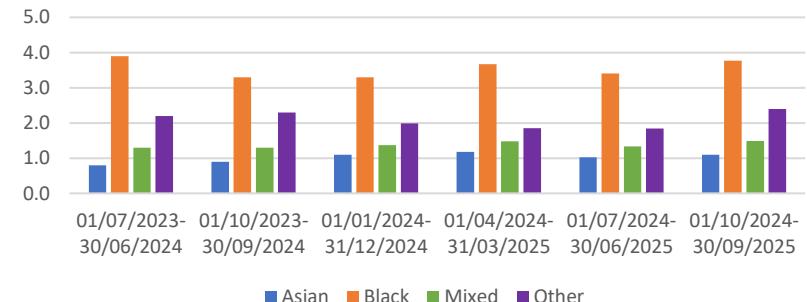
The majority of those subject to stop & search were male (80.7%). Males were **4.4** times more likely to be subject of stop & search than females.

Of all U18s subject to stop & search, BME=**10.7%**

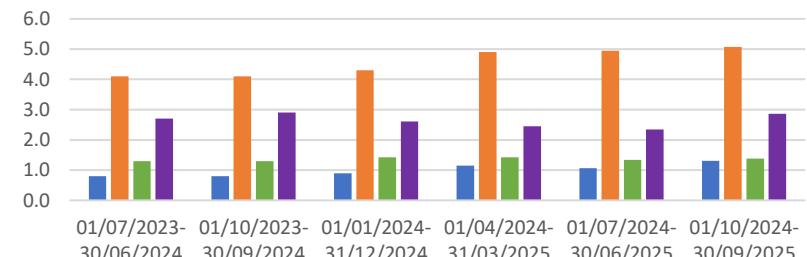
Reviewing just the U18 population, BME subjects were **1.4** times more likely to be stop searched than white peers.

District	Suffolk addresses		All addresses	
	BME	White	BME	White
All	163	1142	279	1656
East Suffolk	25	276	30	387
Mid Suffolk	7	81	15	124
Ipswich	91	337	166	504
West Suffolk	32	349	58	500
Babergh	8	99	10	141

Disproportionality by ethnicity
Suffolk only



Disproportionality by ethnicity
All addresses



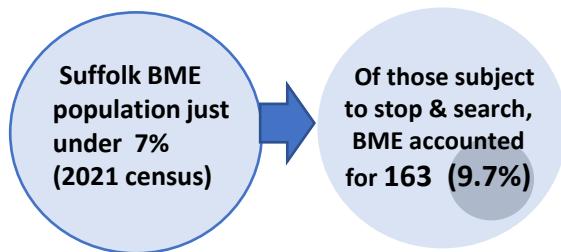
The table to the left displays the counts of stop searches conducted on persons split by White/BME and District.

BWV compliance (all addresses)

96.2%

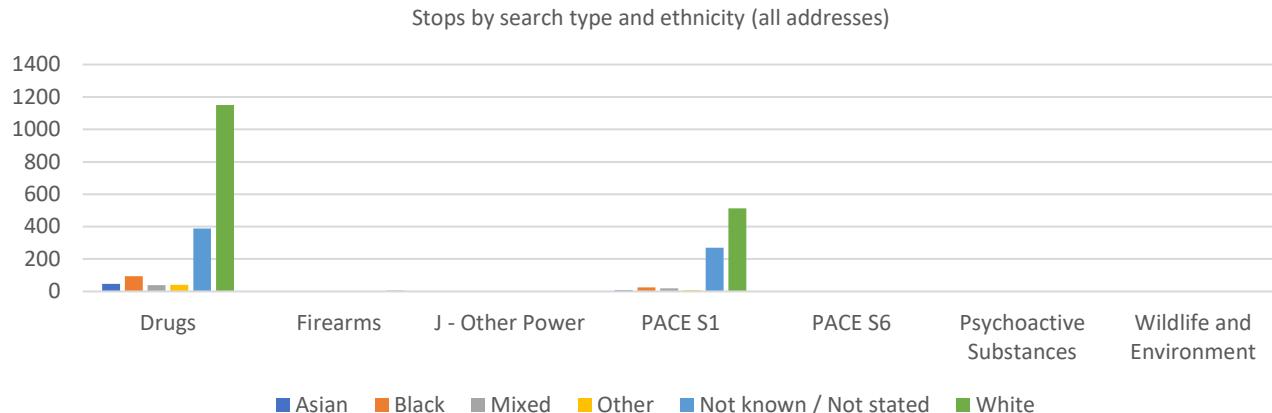
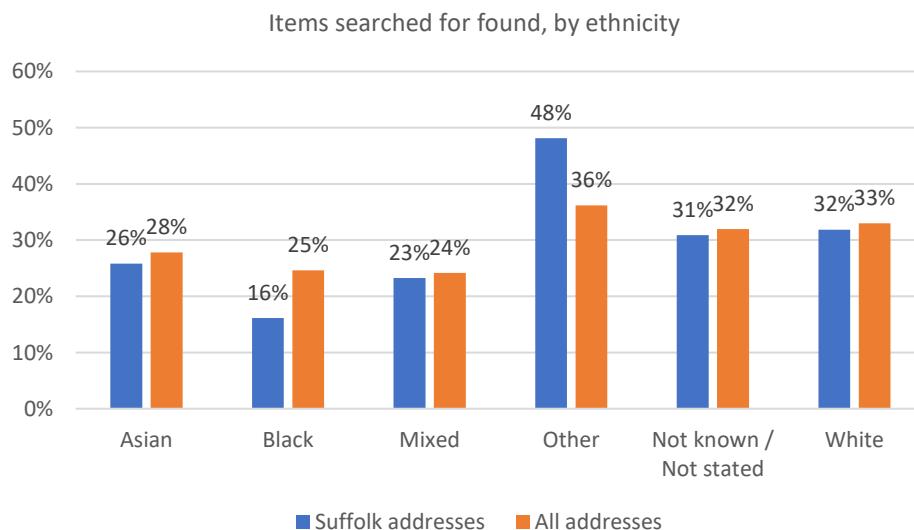
PROPORTIONALITY OF STOP & SEARCH USE IN SUFFOLK – ETHNICITY

Date Range 01/10/2024 to 30/09/2025



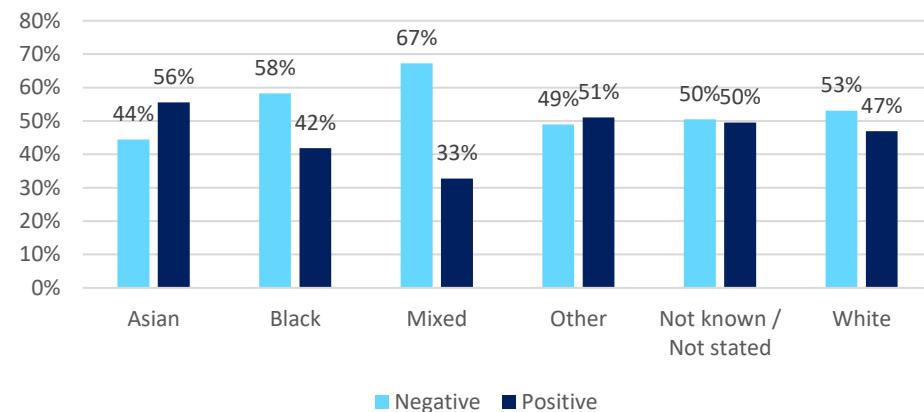
For Suffolk residents, Find rates for items that have been searched for irrespective of ethnicity are similar to last quarter (up from 30.5% to 31.0%). For all addresses, the Find rate for items searched for is 32.1%. Find rates have increased for the Other ethnicity group and reduced for the Black ethnicity group. For all other ethnicity groups, the rates are similar to previously recorded.

The (Suffolk residents) Find rate is higher for females (33.0%) than males (30.7%).



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

Positive/negative outcomes by ethnicity - all addresses, all search types



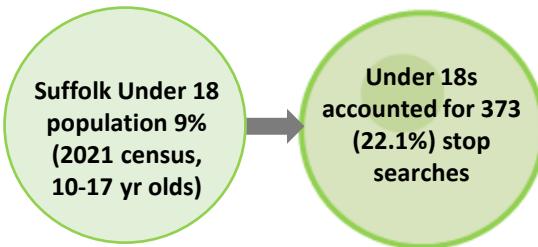
The percentages in the graph above are the percentages of each ethnicity total rather than a percentage of all stops in Suffolk. Negative relates to NFA and positive is all other outcomes.

For all addresses, since last reported, Positive outcome rates increased for all ethnicity groups except Asian and Other: Black +3pp, Mixed +5pp, White +1pp. The Other ethnicity group saw a decrease of -8pp and the Asian group a decrease of 4pp. The rate for the Not known / Not stated group also increased (+1pp).

The overall positive outcome rate has increased since the last reporting period to 47.3% (up 0.6pp). The positive outcomes rate was higher for males (47.7%) than for females (45.2%).

PROPORTIONALITY OF STOP & SEARCH USE IN SUFFOLK - AGE

Date Range 01/10/2024 to 30/09/2025



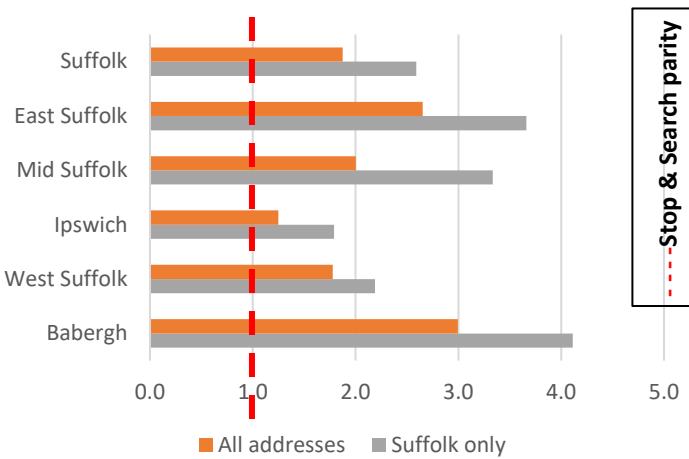
Unless stated, all numbers exclude subjects with addresses outside Suffolk. Under 18 refers to those aged 10 to 17.
A total of 1,689 stop searches of Suffolk residents were recorded during the reporting period, of which 373 were under 18.

Disproportionality by ethnicity for Suffolk for Under 18s

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.0	5.0	0.8	0.3
All addresses	0.9	5.4	0.8	0.6

Disproportionality for Under 18s from the Black ethnicity group is higher than for adults although has reduced from 5.3 last quarter to 5.0. The other ethnicity groups either show parity or were below parity for Under 18s.

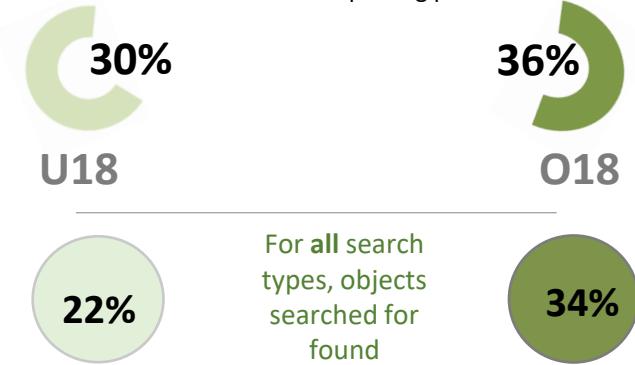
Age disproportionality by district



- The Suffolk U18 community is **2.6** times more likely to be subject of stop/search than over 18 counterparts, decreasing to **1.9** times when including subjects from outside Suffolk.
- This is a slightly lower than the levels in last reporting period (down 0.1).
- Age disproportionality was higher for both males (2.7) than females (1.8).**
- 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; 67% of stops gave Drugs as the reason for search. Find rates for drugs increased by 1pp for adults and reduced by 1pp for under 18s since the last reporting period.

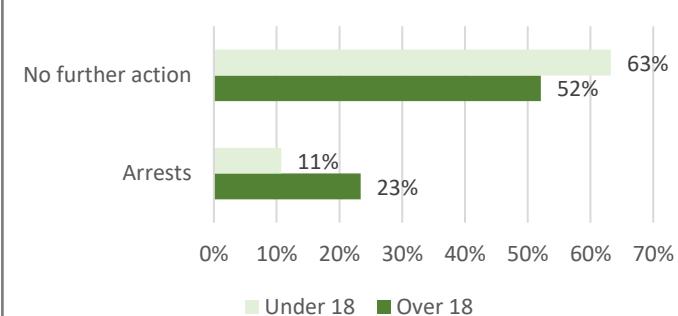


The percentage of objects searched for found has increased by 1pp for adults and reduced by 3pp for under 18s.

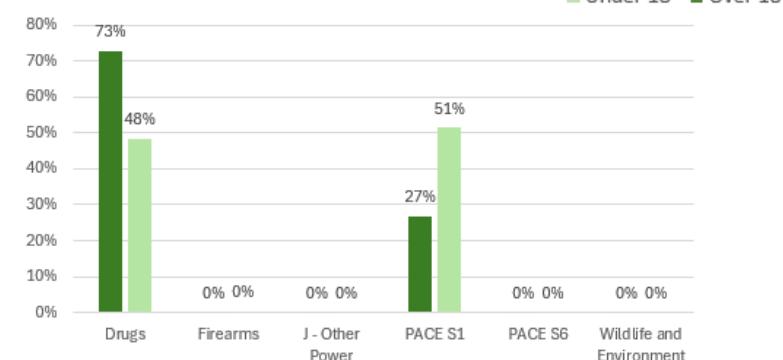
Under 18 Disproportionality within Suffolk's BME communities:

Looking only at Suffolk's BME communities, under 18s are **1.6 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



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 01/10/2024 to 30/09/2025

2,615 records showed whether or not handcuffs were used during the Stop Search (all addresses):

Handcuffs used	All addresses	%	Suffolk only	%
Yes	1164	45%	683	40%
No	1451	55%	1006	60%
Total	2615	100%	1689	100%

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

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.1	3.8	1.5	2.4
All addresses	1.3	5.1	1.4	2.9

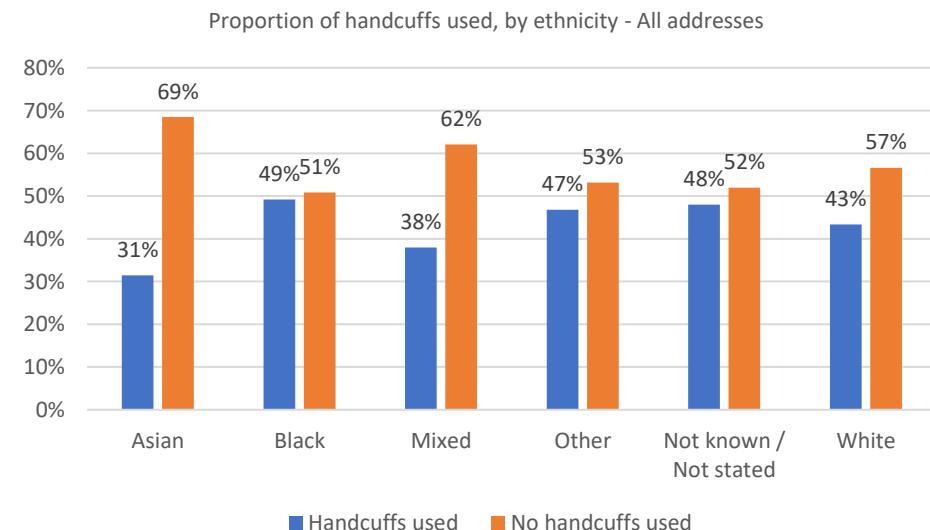
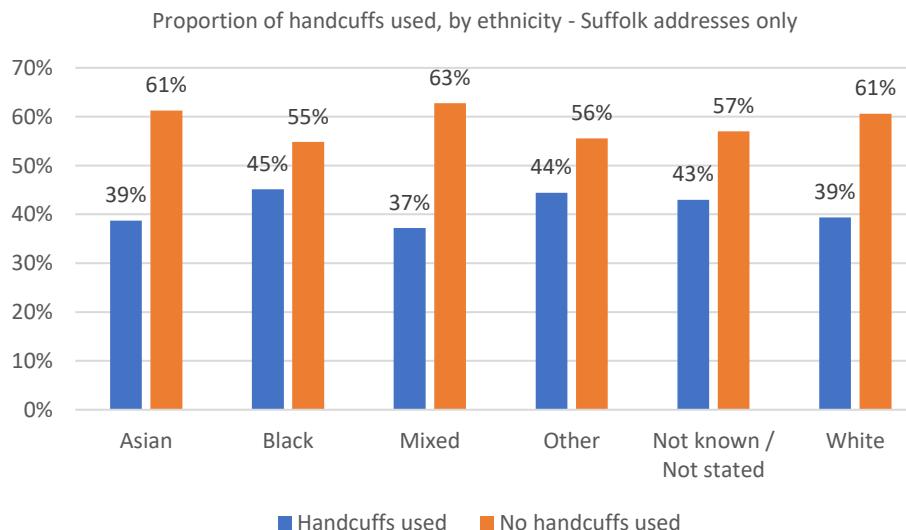
Disproportionality where handcuffs were used:

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.1	4.3	1.4	2.7
All addresses	0.9	5.8	1.2	3.1

Disproportionality where handcuffs were not used:

Addresses	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
Suffolk addresses	1.1	3.4	1.5	2.2
All addresses	1.6	4.6	1.5	2.7

Comparing the disproportionality values shows that subjects from 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 or Asian ethnicity groups, the use of handcuffs (or lack of use) made very little difference to the overall stop and search disproportionality rate.



PROPORTIONALITY OF HANDCUFF USE IN SUFFOLK STOP SEARCHES

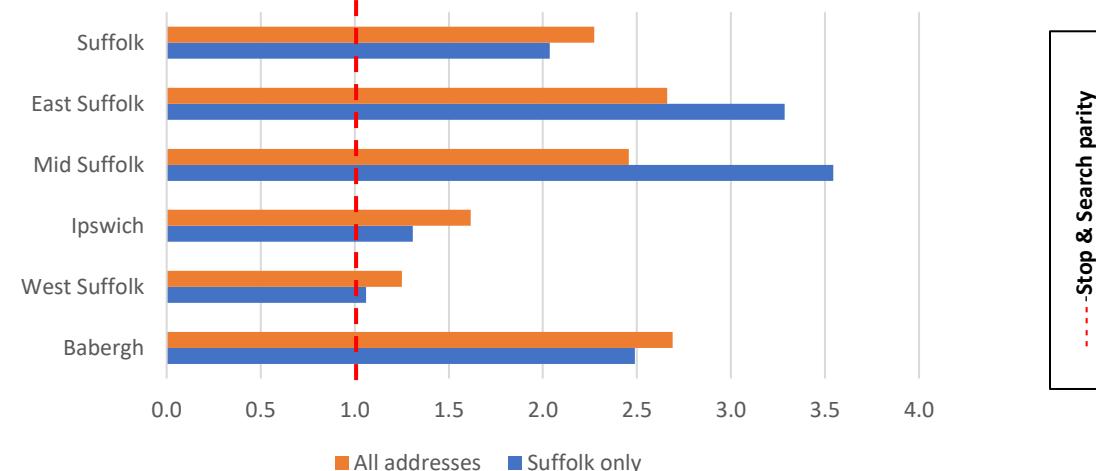
Date Range 01/10/2024 to 30/09/2025

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	43	35%	8	3	38%	187	74	40%	10	5	50%
West Suffolk	436	202	46%	32	15	47%	685	356	52%	58	28	48%
Ipswich	627	273	44%	91	36	40%	984	460	47%	166	70	42%
Mid Suffolk	100	33	33%	7	3	43%	169	66	39%	15	4	27%
East Suffolk	398	131	33%	25	11	44%	566	198	35%	30	14	47%
All*	1,683	682	41%	163	68	42%	2,591	1,154	45%	279	121	43%

Handcuffing Disproportionality by District

- Excluding subjects with addresses outside Suffolk, the **local BME** community was **2.0** times more likely to be subject of a stop search where handcuffs are used. This is the same as reported last quarter.
- When including **all subjects** regardless of their address, BME subjects were **2.3** times more likely to be subject of a stop search with use of handcuffs, a decrease from 2.5 previously.
- West Suffolk** has the lowest disproportionality rate for handcuffing and is around parity for local subjects and near parity when including non-Suffolk residents. Ipswich is also close to parity for local subjects.

Handcuffs used



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



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

December 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.

Sessions were successfully delivered in 2025, May 9th, May 23rd, June 6th and June 20th.

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

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 perspective.

On September 2, 2025, ISCRE attended a training session on reviewing Body Worn Videos (BWVs) where a Taser was deployed. This training directly enhances our ability to perform independent scrutiny of police actions.

Taser deployment is a significant use of force. By understanding the context, training, and legal justification behind it, ISCRE can more accurately assess whether an officer's actions were necessary, proportionate, and lawful. Watching these videos and having discussions with the police allowed ISCRE to better understand the complexities of human factors in high-stress situations.

While valuable, BWV footage can be subject to hindsight bias. Understanding how things like tunnel vision, attention focus, and the stress of a situation can affect an officer's perception is essential for fair scrutiny. This allows ISCRE to avoid oversimplified judgments and provide accountability that is grounded in the realities of frontline policing. Furthermore, we can balance this with the identification of potential biases or disproportionality in how Tasers are used, especially against minority ethnic groups, which is a key focus for ISCRE.

Public Scrutiny Meeting held November 26th

Attendance: - 14

Venue: - Online via Microsoft Teams

Stop & Search	There was a total of 434 stop and search forms, and out of that we selected the following, to audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• W1 – 21 out of 213 forms• BAME – 23 out of 71 forms• White Other – 5 out of 50 forms• Ethnicity Not Stated – 14 out of 144
Use of Force	173 Samples – Reviewed down to 10 samples with more detailed analysis, 2 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
Taser	59 Samples – Reviewed down to 3 samples with more detailed analysis, 1 taken to panel for further scrutiny.

Public Scrutiny Meeting held September 11th

Attendance: - 15

Venue: - ISCRE Hub

Stop & Search	There was a total of 445 stop and search forms, and out of that we selected the following, to audit: W1 – 24 out of 237 forms BAME – 14 out of 43 forms White Other – 6 out of 61 forms Ethnicity Not Stated – 10 out of 104 forms
Use of Force	59 Samples – Reviewed down to 10 samples with more detailed analysis, 2 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
Taser	47 Samples – Reviewed down to 3 samples with more detailed analysis, 1 taken to panel for further scrutiny.

Public Scrutiny Meeting held July 30th 2025

Attendance: - 19

Venue: - Held online via Microsoft teams

Stop & Search	There was a total of 434 stop and search forms, and out of that we selected the following, to audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• W1 – 23 out of 227 forms• BAME – 14 out of 43 forms• White Other – 6 out of 61 forms• Ethnicity Not Stated – 10 out of 103
Use of Force	61 Samples – Reviewed down to 10 samples with more detailed analysis, 2 taken to panel for further scrutiny.
Taser	55 Samples – Reviewed down to 3 samples with more detailed analysis, 1 taken to panel for further scrutiny.

Key Concerns:

Further to the concerns raised at the July panel relating to:

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 pretense 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.

We have reviewed additional incidents of poor interventions and inappropriate language used by officers toward members of the public. During our November scrutiny, we discussed how officers again displayed unprofessional language and a lack of courtesy. Within this particular case, we also questioned whether racial profiling was the initial reason for stopping the individual. Furthermore, we questioned the dignity of the search when the individual had his belt and trouser zipper undone to pull his trousers down to his hips for a further search, in public view. Although the individual was wearing shorts (which the scrutiny panel noted some people wear as underwear), the officers' actions were undignified, and we believe fell outside of Suffolk Police procedure.

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.

There have also 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 emphasised the importance of having clear and reasonable grounds for suspicion before conducting stops, to avoid stopping innocent people based on vague descriptions. Highlighting the impact on individuals wrongly stopped. This was identified where the officer stopped a suspect from a "partial match". A later review of store CCTV confirmed the stopped male was not the suspect.
- The grounds and recording of such by a Special Constable being very poor. Possible training issues were discussed.
- Handcuffs remained on a suspect for a lengthy period of time after the search, where there was full compliance.

The panel has challenged 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.

We continue to have difficulty with the initial Taser samples by way of not giving us enough information to make informative initial selections.

Body Worn Video Review

On 14 July, 28th August and 19th November ISCRE reviewed body worn videos on the use of stop and search, Taser Incidents and Use of Force.

Responding to Community Needs:

ISCRE was contacted by Murrayside Youth Club regarding the frequency of stop and searches officers were conducting on the youths attending the club. They wanted the young people to have more awareness of their rights during a police stop and search situation. Below is an account from one of the youth workers.

"Today was the second time in a matter of weeks. I have pulled over my car because I have seen a youth being detained by the police, that I know from youth club. Today it was a very aggressive task force from out of Ipswich conducting an exercise for county lines. The youth they detained was known to me and looked terrified. They held onto his bike restricting his movements. The officers were shouting at him. They did not identify what station they came from rather just flashed their ID. I managed to get the police number of the aggressive officer. The other two were being reasonable and agreed their colleague was aggressive. They were telling the youth he is an adult (he's 17) and he should join the army. I'm not sure what agenda that is".

It is important that the police understand what the public are seeing and their perception of how officers conduct themselves.

21st November, ISCRE along with Suffolk Police, spoke with young people at Murrayside Youth Club, to include information on their rights in a stop/search situation.

The youth club provides the police with potential to understand the concerns of young minoritised communities and build positive relationships with them. We hope that more work can be done with them.



ISCRE and the Police at Murrayside Youth Club

Know Your Rights Workshop - Northgate High School:

On 17th November, ISCRE along with Suffolk Police delivered a Know Your Rights Workshop to Sixth form pupils at Northgate High School.



ISCRE and the police delivered "Know Your Rights" Workshop. 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.

APP Attendance – 11 July 2025:

ISCRE attended and participated at the SPCC's Accountability and Performance panel where a number of issues were raised, including public concerns on the increase in disproportionality of people from Black and minoritised backgrounds and young people under the age of 18, in the use of stop and search.

Exceptional Partnership Working Award:

November 2025 Phanuel Mutumburi and Sharon Lee were pleased to accept an award, at Suffolk Constabulary's Exceptional Policing Awards, on behalf of ISCRE for Exceptional Partnership Working, for the work carried out to enhance the scrutiny of police powers in Suffolk. This award was given in recognition of how the team continues to manage a potentially challenging relationship in an exceptionally professional manner, delivering positive outcomes for both the local communities and the Suffolk Police.

Police Powers Public Suffolk Scrutiny Dates in 2026:

January – Wednesday 28th - Via Teams
March – Wednesday 25th - In person West Suffolk (venue tbc)
May – Wednesday 27th
July – Wednesday 29th
September – Wednesday 30th
November – Wednesday 25th

Sharon Lee - ISCRE