



ORIGINATOR: ACC TIM NEWCOMB

PAPER NO. AP13/24

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
7 JUNE 2013**

SUBJECT: USE OF STOP SEARCH IN SUFFOLK 2012/13

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides analysis of stop and search for the twelve month period April 2012 to March 2013.
2. The report also includes a brief update on the Constabulary Stop and Search Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to take account of the steps that the Constabulary is taking to ensure stop search legislation is used fairly and effectively.

1. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1 This report provides analysis of stop and search for the twelve month period April 2012 to March 2013.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

3. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

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

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	No
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	No
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	Yes

Use of Stop/Search in Suffolk 2012/13

This analysis is based on the 12-month period from April 2012 to March 2013.

1. Overall Trends

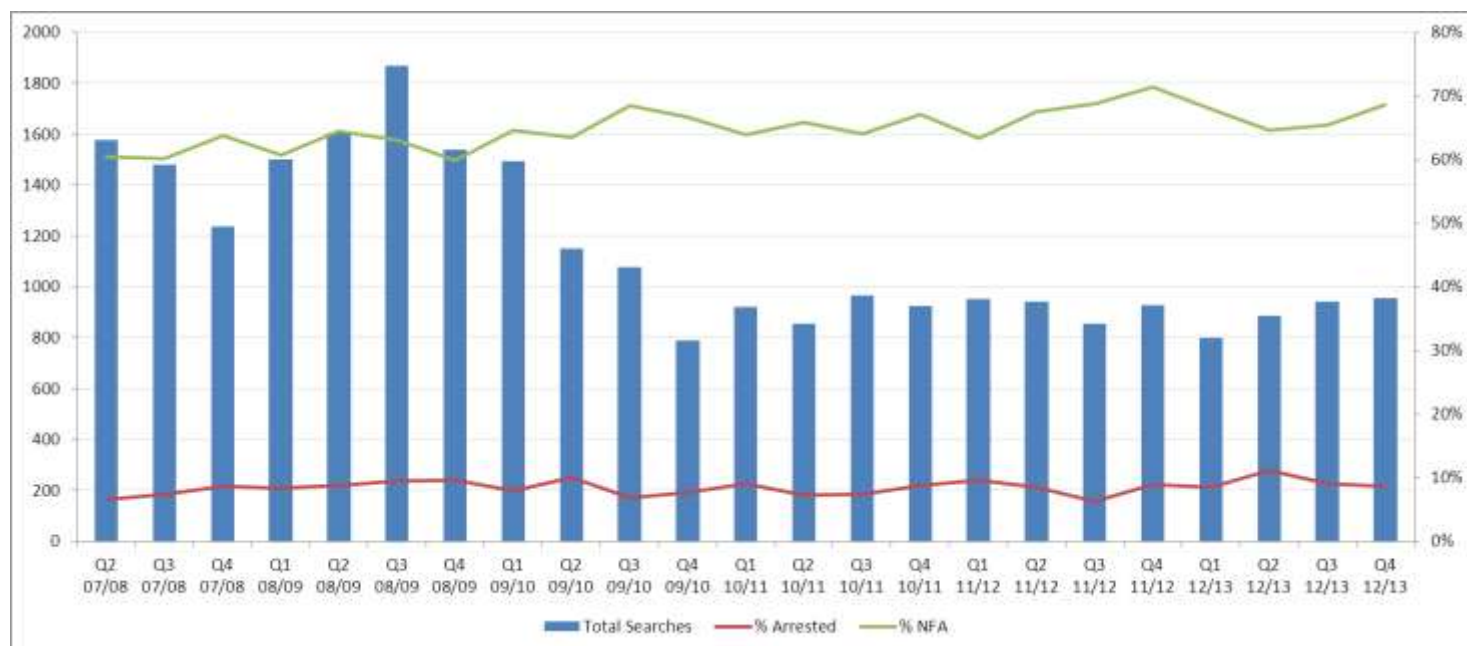


Figure 1: Suffolk - Long Term Trends in Stop/Search Use and Outcomes (2008 – 2013)

1.1 Suffolk has seen a significant drop in the use of stop/search over the past 5 years with a sharp decline in 2009/10, levelling from 2010/2011 onwards. Currently around 300 stop/searches are carried out per month across the county, resulting in around 25 arrests per month. Arrest rates are generally around 8%, although there is some variation. In contrast, “No Further Action” rates increased up to the end of 2011/12, peaking at 70% in quarter 4. After dropping during the early half of the 2012/13 the rate has climbed again for the last quarter and this may be related to the drive to increase the use of the powers.

1.2 The latest national data, published in April 2013, is for the financial year 2011/12. This shows Suffolk with the second lowest volume of stop/search in the country and the 3rd lowest rate with 4.7 searches per 1,000 population compared to a national average (excluding London) of 13.9. This is almost identical to the data seen in 2010/11, with no real change in national rates either.

1.3 Suffolk has above average levels of searches for drugs, with 58% of searches compared to a national average of 50%, with both figures up from the previous year. 8% of searches in Suffolk were for going equipped, compared to 14% nationally.

1.4 In terms of stop searches by ethnicity, Suffolk recorded 9% from a BME background, and a further 4% unstated. This compares to a national average, excluding London, of 13% and 4% respectively, although the figures are highly variable with large metropolitan areas skewing the numbers.

1.5 In 2012/13 the BME community in Suffolk saw 8.4 stop searches per 1,000 resident population, down from 9.1 in the previous year. This progress was driven in Ipswich - where the 2012/13 rate was 8.4 compared with 11 the previous year - and in St Edmundsbury - with 8.2, down from 12.5. By comparison, people in Suffolk with a self-defined ethnicity of ‘White’ saw 4.5 stop searches per 1,000 resident population, down slightly from 4.6 on the previous year.

- 1.6 Arrest rates are slightly below the national average at 8.4% compared to 9.1%. Nationally arrest rates have been declining over the past 10 years, in part due to the introduction of Cannabis Warnings in 2004 which saw the arrest rate for drugs searches drop by 4%. There is likely to be a link between the lower arrest rate for Suffolk and the higher use of drugs searches. Unfortunately the national data does not currently present other outcomes so it is not possible to compare these figures.
- 1.7 It should be noted that there can be other positive outcomes from stop/search including cautions and fixed penalties. Stop/search also eliminates suspects as well as providing opportunities to gain intelligence from potential witnesses.
- 1.8 "Quality of service" questions were introduced within the revised stop/search forms during 2009:
- Overall, 3101 people (98.5%) said that they understood the reason for the search. In respect of the BME community, 96.3% understood, with 10 respondents stating they did not understand.
 - A total of 3093 people said that they were treated with respect during the search (99.2%). Of those who stated they felt they were not treated with respect, 21 were from a "White" background, 5 from a BME background and 9 did not state a background.

2 Constabulary Action Plan

- 2.1 The force was inspected as part of the HMIC national review of Stop Search. The inspection was positive, with areas for improvement forming part of the 'Stop Search Action Plan'. The plan has been divided into three core areas, namely:
- Use of stop search powers effectively as a crime fighting tool
 - Train officers to use stop and search confidently while being sensitive to the impact on individuals and the community
 - Inspire public confidence that stop search is being used fairly and effectively.
- 2.2 The plan is regularly reviewed by the Stop Search Improvement Partnership (SSIP), which last met on 25 April 2013. As a result:
- The Force training package has been revised with Force champions being appointed
 - Student officers are assessed on their understanding of the legislation and its use
 - A new performance monitoring structure for each Local Policing Command has been developed.
- 2.3 Quality assurance of the Force's approach to Stop Search and its recording is conducted through quarterly dip sampling undertaken by ACC Tim Newcomb (Chair of the SSIP).
- 2.4 The Stop Search Reference Group (SSRG) meets quarterly, with ISCRE and other local interested parties scrutinising stop search data and reviewing individual cases to ensure that the power is used fairly and proportionately.