

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO. AP14/43

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
18 JUNE 2014**

**SUBJECT: USE OF STOP SEARCH IN SUFFOLK – APRIL 2013 TO MARCH
2014**

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides analysis of stop and search for the twelve month period April 2013 to March 2014.
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. USE OF STOP/SEARCH IN SUFFOLK, APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014

1.1 This report provides analysis of stop and search for the twelve month period April 2013 to March 2014.

Overall Trends¹

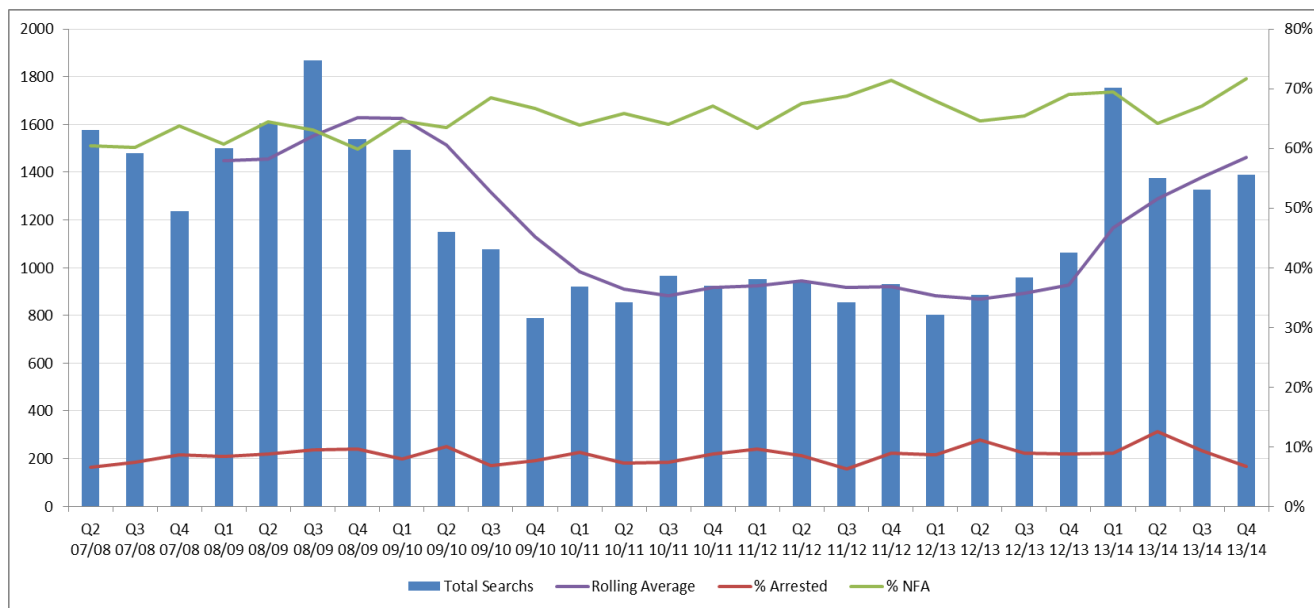


Figure 1: Suffolk - Long Term Trends in Stop/Search Use and Outcomes 2008 – 2014

1.2 The latest national data, published in April 2014, is for the financial year 2012/13². This shows Suffolk with the 4th lowest volume of stop/search in the country and the 4th lowest rate with 5 searches per 1,000 population compared to a national average (excluding London) of 14.1.

1.3 Between 2009/10 and 2012/13 Suffolk has seen a monthly average of 330 stop and searches a month, down from the previous levels of around 510 per month. In 2013/14 usage of stop search is approaching historic levels of usage with 5846 searches carried out over the year, an average of 487 a month. Alongside this, arrest rates have reduced somewhat, with quarter four showing 7% of searches resulting arrests.

1.4 The current data still shows Suffolk at levels lower than the national average, at 14.1 per 1,000 population. The breakdown of drugs searches is also still above the national average of 51%, at 62% for the past 12 months. In terms of the ethnic breakdown of all searches, 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, and is the same breakdown as seen in 2011/12

1.5 During April 2013 to March 2014 the BME population in Suffolk saw 17.2 stop searches per 1,000 resident population, up from 8.7 in the previous period. All districts showed increases in the rate of BME searches compared to the previous period, with the largest increase seen in Waveney, Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk.

1.6 During Q4 of 2013/14 the ratio of BME to White stop searches is at 1.5:1, indicating that someone from a BME background is one and a half times more likely to be stopped and searched than someone from a White background.

¹ Rolling average based on a 12 month period
² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-powers-and-procedures-in-england-and-wales-201213/police-powers-and-procedures-in-england-and-wales-2012-13>

- 1.7 Quarter 2 2013/14 showed the highest level of disproportionality, based on the BME to White search ratio, since 2007/08. This is after a period of over a year where disproportionality was relatively consistent across the county at 1.2:1. In the last two quarters of 2013/14 the level of disproportionality dropped, but is still at its highest level since Q4 2011/12.
- 1.8 This overall figure is driven by searches of people from both a Black and Mixed ethnic background, with countywide ratios compared to each stop search from the "White" population of 5.7:1 for persons of a Black background and 2.6:1 for persons of a Mixed ethnic background. Suffolk Coastal, Waveney and Ipswich are the areas with highest levels of disproportionality for both groups, and this is in part linked to a number of operations as detailed from paragraph 1.11 where intelligence information has identified suspects from these ethnic backgrounds. The ratio of persons from an Asian background and Chinese or other background compared to each stop search from the "White" population are 1.0:1 and 0.2:1 respectively.
- 1.9 Arrest rates are currently at 9.7% for the twelve months period and NFA rates stand at 71%. Over the past four years the arrest rate has been maintained between 8% to 10%. However the NFA rate has seen a long term increase, up from 63% in 2009/10 to 68% in 2011/12, and to 70% in 2013/14.
- 1.10 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. It can also provide a potential 'deterrent' effect to active criminals.
- 1.11 There are currently a number of targeted operations which include stop and search as a distinct tactic, and these are set with specific aims and objectives. The operations are built from a strong intelligence and evidence base to ensure that resources are targeted in the right areas and at the right subjects. This is both to reduce the impact on the communities who may be involved and ensure the efficient uses of policing resources.
- 1.12 The following sets out brief details of a number of operations where stop and search are specific tactics. It should be noted that the Stop and Search Reference Group are regularly consulted about operations which have an impact on community relations.
- 1.13 Operation Volcanic in Ipswich, targeting class A drug dealing in the town, therefore reducing related violent and acquisitive crime. The operation also aims to help divert 'at risk' individuals from offending. The operation has seen a significant amount of police resources, enforcement activity, and intelligence gathering. Tactics used by the drug businesses have involved using young or vulnerable people from London as well as locally to be 'mules' for the distribution of drugs in Ipswich. It is recognised from the start of this operation that a significant proportion of individuals from these London businesses are predominantly from non-white ethnic backgrounds which have impacted on proportionality rates with stop search. A number of tactics have been applied by the police to manage this situation including stop and search.
- 1.14 Operation Dupont predominantly targeted drug dealing in the Bury St. Edmunds area, but did reach further afield. This was a multi-pronged operation and included significant numbers of persons dealt with through the execution of warrants, with properties and persons searched under the power of such warrants. Stop searches were also carried out and linked to this operation.
- 1.15 Other operations include: Operation Madeleine in Newmarket which focusses on drug gangs based in areas outside of Suffolk entering the county to supply Class A drugs,

with intelligence used to identify specific areas of the town for targeting. Operaton Utan in Lowestoft, which is an operation targeting Burglary dwelling, with intelligence used to identify patrol routes and target suspects. Operation Objectify, also in Lowestoft which focussed on a London based drug gang operating in the town, and used intelligence to identify specific area of the town where they were working and individuals linked to the supply. Operation Bursty in Leiston targeted the supply of Class A in the town, again using intelligence to identify where dealers were operating from and who was involved in the drug supply.

1.16 “Quality of service” questions were introduced within the revised stop/search forms during 2009. The data below is based on those who provided a response to the questions as issues such as public order risks may stop the questions being asked.

- Overall, 5169 people (88.4%) said that they understood the reason for the search. In respect of the BME community, 90% understood, with 20 respondents stating they did not understand. In 2012/13, 86% of all people stop / searched said they understood the reason for the search, and 87.5% of people from the BME community understood, with 11 respondents stating they did not understand.
- A total of 5163 people said that they were treated with respect during the search (88.3%). Of those who stated they felt they were not treated with respect, 55 were from a “White” background, 16 from a BME background and seven did not state a background. In 2012/13, 86.3% of all people stated they were treated with respect during the search. Of those who stated they were not treated with respect, 22 were from a “White” background, five from a BME background and nine 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 in 2012. The inspection identified areas for improvement which have formed part of the ‘Stop Search Action Plan’ in Suffolk. The plan has been divided into three core areas, namely:

- Use of stop and search powers effectively as a crime fighting tool;
- Training officers to use stop and search confidently while being sensitive to the impact on individuals and the community;
- Inspire public confidence that stop and search is being used fairly and effectively.

2.2 Planned activity forming part of the updated action plan includes:

- A pilot of the paperless recording of stop / searches in West Suffolk (in June 2014);
- The rolling out of paperless recording of encounters across Suffolk (in next period);
- Ongoing work with inspectors to improve young people’s understanding of stop search powers.

2.3 Single Points of Contacts (SPOC) for Stop and Search have been identified in the three Strategic Policing Commands in Suffolk.

2.4 The Stop Search Reference Group (SSRG) meets bi-monthly, with the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) and other local interested parties scrutinising stop search data and reviewing individual cases to ensure that the power is used fairly and proportionately.

2.5 The recent letter from the Home Secretary regarding Police use of Stop and Search powers may lead to further amendments to the Stop Search Action Plan.

3 HOME SECRETARY ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE USE OF STOP AND SEARCH

3.1 The Home Secretary wrote to all forces in April 2014 following the findings of a recent HMIC inspection of how stop and search powers are used. Two main concerns raised in that letter are that:

- a) the HMIC found that fewer than half of police Forces in England and Wales complied with PACE 1984 requirements that arrangements are in place for stop and search records to be scrutinised by the communities they serve;
- b) some forces have set officer targets in relation to stop and search.

3.2 In Suffolk, the Stop and Search Reference Group is comprised of members of the community to scrutinise forms. Targets for stop and search are not in place in Suffolk.

3.3 The letter introduces the new Home Office and College of Policing 'Best Use of Stop and Search' scheme. Participating Forces will record the use of stop and search in more detail to show the link (or otherwise) between the object of the search and the outcome. The scheme will also introduce lay observation policies to enable members of the public to accompany officers on patrol and a 'community trigger' whereby police must explain to the public how powers are being used when there is a large volume of complaints

3.4 The College of Policing have been commissioned to review the national training of stop and search with a view to developing robust professional standards, and to introduce an assessment of officers' fitness to use stop and search powers, which must be passed in order for them to be allowed to use the powers.

3.5 Stop and Search data will be added to the crime maps at www.police.uk and the use of stop and search will be included in the HMIC's new annual general inspections, beginning towards the end of this year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

5.1 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?	N/A
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	N/A
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	N/A
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
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes