

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO:

AP19/37

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL -
6 SEPTEMBER 2019**

SUBJECT: BODY WORN VIDEO EVALUATION REPORT

SUMMARY:

1. This report summarises the findings from the evaluation of the roll out of Body Worn Video (BWV) conducted by the Strategic, Business and Operational Services (SBOS) department.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to consider the contents of the report.

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Introduction

- 1.1 This evaluation report was commissioned to measure the impact that the introduction of BWV is having on Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies. Where possible it has compared quantitative and qualitative data for a 12-month period before BWV with a 12-month period after BWV.
- 1.2 Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVCs) were deployed to frontline officers between 22nd August 2017 and 5th January 2018, and data for most measures was obtained for one year before and after that roll out
- 1.3 The evaluation describes what changes have occurred across a number of factors since the roll out of BWV, including:
 - Assaults on police;
 - Use of force by police;
 - Number of complaints against police received;
 - Time taken to process complaints in PSD;
 - Police Officer morale.
- 1.4 The data used in this evaluation is a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence. Qualitative evidence was captured through both survey and semi-structured interview. Quantitative data was collected from a variety of courses including:
 - Athena (the Constabulary Crime Recording and Management System);
 - Home Office Annual Data Returns (ADRs);
 - Complaints data from Professional Standards Department (PSD).
- 1.5 The below findings should be considered in line with two key limitations:
 - a) It was not possible to use a control group methodology to evaluate the impact of BWV. Therefore, it has not been possible for other external factors that may have contributed to any of the changes seen;
 - b) It has not been possible to identify specific crimes and incidents where BWV was activated and/or used for evidential purposes. The ability to do so would greatly enhance any future evaluation of BWV.

Findings

- 1.6 The overall number of reported assaults on police officers since the introduction of body worn video has increased by 18% in Suffolk. However, as this is such a complex area it is not possible to attribute a single reason for this increase. It may have been influenced by a number of factors including societal changes, BWVCs being seen as confrontational and thus exacerbating the situation, officer's self-awareness of the BWVC, officers being encouraged to report assaults or simply an increase in the confidence of officers in reporting assaults.
- 1.7 Suffolk has seen no change in reported use of force by police officers since the roll out of BWV. This finding is reinforced through consultation and benchmarking where

on the whole participants did not feel that BWV would see a change in officer's use of force.

- 1.8 Since the roll out of BWV, there has been a 10% reduction in complaints recorded against police in Suffolk. All of the stakeholders questioned during the semi-structured interviews, in relation to the complaints section of the report, emphasised their belief that the BWVC footage makes it more difficult for the facts of a case to be disputed.
- 1.9 The average time it takes for a complaint to be dealt with, from the time it was received to the time it was finalised has reduced by 10% (or 12 days) in Suffolk, since the roll out of BWV. It should be noted that only 13% of complaints used BWVC footage as part of the investigation in the post roll out period, and it is likely that there are other factors contributing to this reduction.
- 1.10 Qualitative work with the Professional Standards Department (PSD) identified a number of unquantifiable benefits of BWV, including the ability to see the event as it happened, the ability to review the footage to form part of a learning process and additional clarification provided by BWV footage if there are inconsistencies in written statements.
- 1.11 Some issues were also identified, including a concern that officers may submit BWV footage in lieu of a detailed written statement, and that there is currently no standard format for labelling BWV footage, which can make searches of the Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) difficult.
- 1.12 Suffolk officers responding to the survey on the whole believed that the use of BWVCs would protect them against malicious complaints, and where such complaints are made, the BWV footage can be made available as part of an investigation into the complaint.
- 1.13 Officers views on the use of BWV were sought through the survey and via semi-structured interviews. A quarter of respondents to the survey in Suffolk felt that the roll out of BWV has made them feel more satisfied in their role.
- 1.14 General feedback from officers using BWV has largely been positive – particularly in the areas of evidence gathering and providing supporting evidence in the case of complaints against officers, and making them feel safer in conducting their duties.
- 1.15 Overall feedback collated from interviews and the 'free text' section of the survey has shown that staff are positive regarding the impact that BWVs has had on their daily work. Anecdotally the main benefits discussed are the following:
 - Discouraging or deescalating situations;
 - Invaluable for gathering evidence;
 - Recognising good work;
 - Providing learning opportunities;
 - Supporting evidence led domestic prosecutions;
 - Contributing to guilty pleas.
- 1.16 Some areas identified as requiring improvement are:
 - Remembering to switch BWV on and off in accordance with force policy;
 - Frontline functionality of some devices; ineffective docking stations, batteries & poor clarity of footage;

- Issues regarding back end processes; incorrect recording of images, unsolicited comments and redaction of evidence, ineffective exhibit labelling, cloaking and poor editing (clipping).

Recommendations

1.17 The evaluation has identified a number of recommendations, and areas for further work to be considered:

- Communications to all staff to remind them of when it is appropriate to switch BWV on and off in accordance with Force policy, and to remind them of the level of detail required in written statements, regardless of the availability of BWV footage;
- Consider what can be done to address a small number of concerns regarding frontline functionality of devices, including docking stations, battery life and clarity of footage;
- Consider what improvements can be made to back end processes, including exhibit labelling;
- It should be noted the lead for Body Worn Video has communicated a number of messages to staff regarding use of Body Worn Video through the Learning Times, but more work is still required in this area. A joint working group has also been set up for Body Worn Video which meets quarterly, and will also consider the findings of the evaluation report;

1.18 There is a necessity for these areas of improvement to be resolved before the introduction of the Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) in December 2020. At this time the Ministry of Justice will only accept digital evidence through the Digital Transfer Service (DETS). This accentuates the need for BWV footage to be captured, reported and exhibited in accordance with Force Policy to ensure it meets the required standard to support charging decisions and prosecution.

1.19 In addition, there are a number of areas where it is recommended further research or tracking should be considered:

- Use of Force: How many police complaints originate from UOF and how many of these are resolved more effectively with the BWVC footage present;
- Complaints: ongoing tracking of the numbers of BWVC footage utilised in complaint investigations with a view to establishing the effect on the length of time the complaint investigation took and the outcome of the complaint now with the footage;
- Domestic Abuse: a more detailed review of the use of BWVC in relation to DA incidents-
 - Are officers making the right decisions in terms of turning the cameras on or off as per guidance;
 - If the footage is captured, is it saved correctly and retrievable;
 - Ensure the footage is used as supplementary evidence to comprehensive statements from victims, witnesses and the officers account;
 - Measuring the effect of BWVC in any positive action cases.
- A programme of continuous monitoring of the use of BWVC and its evidential qualities, to ensure the optimum return on the investment made is captured.

- 1.20 For any further research in this area, the organisations should consider how best the use of Body Worn Video or otherwise can be captured on Athena (and other systems) to allow for bulk analysis of those cases where it was used and where it was not to better understand both patterns of usage, and the impact of the use of the cameras across a wide range of measures.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

3. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 3.1 There are no implications and 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?	No
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
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

In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.