

Custody Scrutiny Panel

Date: Wednesday 5th November 2025

Time: 18:00 - 20:30

Location: Perry Barr Custody Suite

Panel Members: Dawn Dance (DD - Chair), Alison Walker, Stassi Chilas, Shahida Raza, Jane Edgington, Alison Walker

Guests: N/A

WMP: Custody Lead Andy Edwards (AE), Custody Inspector Luke Loftus (LL).

OPCC: Natalie Cox (NC)

Apologies: Joanna Camille-St. Marie Mohammed Nadeem, Gary Williams, Rebecca Torr, Jacqui Peterkin, Adil Bashir, Supt Emma Spencer.

	Item Discussed	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome and introduction by NC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspector Luke Loftus has taken over the role from Inspector Chris Doody. This is the Chair's last Panel. NC thanked chair for the time, passion and dedication to the role. Reminded Panel Members to speak to her if they are interested in taking over the role and for the position of Vice Chair. This will ensure impartiality. Recruitment drive for new Panel Members has been delayed but NC is planning to begin the process. 	<p>Panel Members to contact NC if interested in the role.</p>



	<p>DD Minutes of the last meeting, update on any actions taken from last meeting.</p> <p>Action 1 Panel had requested Record 6 (SS) to be brought back to Panel with further information about the grounds for the decision to strip search as understanding is that it was based on previous conviction. Information not available - CCTV to be provided for November 2025 Panel.</p> <p>Action 2 UoF record 1- Panel asked for deep dive into use of discreet mode BWV within CJ.</p> <p>Action 3 Update and discussion on the work WMP are doing to assure Panel members about concerns raised on the BBC Panorama programme regarding conduct of officers in Custody.</p>	<p>Record 6 has not been brought back to Panel due to CCTV not being 'viewable'. This is due to CCTV system being updated.</p> <p>At the moment, LL would have to be physically present at a custody site but still may not be able to view CCTV if it was already being used, e.g., if a PiC was being monitored.</p> <p>Additional terminals are being installed to allow for remote access. This was supposed to be completed this month; however, date had to be pushed back.</p> <p>Internal discussions have been had around the use of discreet BWV mode. There have been 20 responses, with most Sergeants appearing to be unaware of the feature. The officer who had used it reports that this was an accidental activation, but that they had used it in previous operational roles</p> <p>AE commented on the BBC Panorama programme. WMP has a wider footprint of management across custody sites. They use a PACE Rota of two Inspectors, to ensure coverage across the seven custody blocks. This offers some protection against unwanted team cultures becoming embedded</p>
2.	<p>UPDATE: AE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">National guidance around suicide prevention has been made available.	



- Absenteeism has fallen from 18% in 2023 to 8% for 2024.
- 80% of all Annual Leave requests are approved. If an officer wants any refused leave to be considered, this is sent to Chief Inspector.

However, examples of flexibility to support wellbeing of officers, include standing down some officers during early or late shifts if impact is minimal.

- More availability of Chief Inspectors (2 more). There are five on duty at Oldbury and five at Perry Barr.
 - Bloxwich Custody is being refurbished and Wolverhampton will have a one day closure.

Arrests

- Child arrests have dropped slightly.
- Disproportionality sits at:
Asian – 0.8%
Black – 0.98%

CCTV

- Updating CCTV in Custody Blocks. Some CCTV footage is not fit for purpose due to issues with sound quality.

Strip Searches (SS)

Overall SS down slightly

Child SS

- AA present for four SSs, one was conducted without an AA being present – urgency was recorded.
- 4 children were recorded as black, 1 was white.



- 100% of authorisations at Chief Inspector level.

UoF (Use of Force)

- 7,938 UoF forms completed and of those which triggered a review, 96.2% have been reviewed.
- UoF is rising across all departments, except Criminal Justice, Where it has remained stable for past 2 months.
- Disproportionality for UoF against children is below the baseline

UoF by Custody Block

- Perry Barr has highest UoF with more than 80% of the arrests being booked at Perry Barr.

Body Worn Video (BWV)

- 82.6% of UoF are being captured on BWV. In some instances, recordings are taking place but are not being saved by officers. Where this happens, officers are reminded as 25% of footage is not available.
- Inspector Chris Thomas is UoF Lead. If BWV is not being used, the officer is contacted and a record made, which informs performance process around non-compliance.
- BWV isn't needed for SS authorisation at the custody desk as this is captured on CCTV.

Body Worn Armour

- Due to national change in guidance, Only officers who are wearing stab vests should be searching PiC when they arrive in



	<p>custody, which is impacting staff resources. New guidance has been made available regarding the use of Body Worn Armour. This will be reflected in the data and is to be monitored.</p> <p>Force Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unarmed skills are still the most used method of UoF. • 15.0% of UoF records are related to Custody. <p>QR codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR codes provided for individual feedback on BWV for UoF and CCTV records of SS booking in and authorisations. 																
	<p>Dip sample of Use of Force records:</p> <p>All Dip sampled records were selected at random by Chair at pre-meeting with NC and LL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 BWV records selected • BWV - records 1 & 2 viewed by all Panel Members <p>BWV data – records 1 and 2</p> <p>From observing the BWV, Do you feel the Use of Force was necessary and proportionate?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answers</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>5</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>5</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>After watching the BWV, Do you feel the rationale given on the paper record clearly justify' s why that Use of Force was used?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answers</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>4</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Answers	Count	Percentage	Yes	5	50%	No	5	50%	Answers	Count	Percentage	Yes	4	40%	<p>Record 1 – Negative</p> <p>Panel felt that PiC (person in custody) asked to be left alone. No verbal threats but visibly distressed. No details written up, BWV not started soon enough to capture everything in the lead up so don't know what was going prior to the cuffs were on, don't know why the legs were held, so they were holding him before video was switched on</p> <p>The panel felt the number of officers involved escalated, Asking could another officer have stepped in as female officer was causing PiC to become more dysregulated</p> <p>Record 2 – Positive</p> <p>Panel felt Initially officer seemed to lack empathy. Tone, body language (standing over PiC). Officers became more empathic and. Tone changed and crouching next to PiC and trying to engage and reason</p>
Answers	Count	Percentage															
Yes	5	50%															
No	5	50%															
Answers	Count	Percentage															
Yes	4	40%															



No	4	40%	
Not sure	2	20%	
What is your overall feedback after watching the BWV?			
Answers	Count	Percentage	
Positive	5	50%	
Negative	4	40%	
Neutral	1	10%	
For written records			
Do the panel feel the Use of force was necessary and proportionate?			
Answers	Count	Percentage	
Yes	11	100%	
Do you feel the rationale gives clear justification of why that Use of Force was used?			
Answers	Count	Percentage	
Yes	10	90.91%	
Unsure	1	9.09%	
Overall scrutiny panel feedback:			
Answers	Count	Percentage	
Positive	7	63.64%	
Neutral	4	36.36%	
			with what was a very distressed child. Other officer protecting head in case she banged her head. Overall was quite gentle. Continued patience and care from staff. Offered her distraction objects.
			Written records:
			Record 3 – Positive
			Good, detailed narrative explaining the UoF and context. Shows that UoF was planned and briefed among staff and that minimum force was used. Force level was even lessened as threat reduced. Good consideration of aftercare for PIC and care for police personnel.
			Record 4 Positive
			From record details Very detailed rationale, clearly explained, recorded justification and planning done well. Assessment of threat was done, and risks to further injury were noted so a good record of the need for use of force.
			Record 5- Positive
			Narrative gives reasonable justification for UoF. Appears to have been necessary and proportionate. Appropriate aftercare provided listed.
			Record 6- Neutral
			Panel felt confused with this record Using an item to self-harm is a positive rationale however the language to describe a religious item of clothing being removed could be explained more sensitively Then after 10mins was released



		<p>anyway after rationale states trying to kill himself.</p> <p>Panel expressed concerns that not mention of after care provided.</p>																																	
4.	<p>Dip sample record Strip Search - All dip sampled records were selected at random by Chair at pre-meet with NC and LL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 SS records selected • Record 2 CCTV viewed by all Panel Members <p>Do the panel feel the reason for the strip search was necessary and reasonable?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answers</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>15</td> <td>93.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.25%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Do you feel the rationale gives clear justification of why a strip search was authorised?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answers</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>10</td> <td>62.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>4</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unsure</td> <td>2</td> <td>12.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Overall panel feedback?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Answers</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>10</td> <td>62.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>4</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unsure</td> <td>2</td> <td>12.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Answers	Count	Percentage	Yes	15	93.75%	No	1	6.25%	Answers	Count	Percentage	Yes	10	62.5%	No	4	25%	Unsure	2	12.5%	Answers	Count	Percentage	Yes	10	62.5%	No	4	25%	Unsure	2	12.5%	<p>Record 1 Neutral</p> <p>No detail on written record to justify, BWV was hard to hear and follow. Required further update from officer at panel to understand better. From what could be heard seemed positive good questions asked to ensure sign off</p> <p>Record 2 Negative</p> <p>Again issuing hearing the video due to way of recording off CCTV on to BWV and background noise.</p> <p>Overall lacked detail on written justification which was needed to support hearing issues.</p> <p>Record 3- Positive</p> <p>Clear details were provided to cover why strip search was needed, authorised by Insp. Panel felt was necessary to remove concealed items which were found.</p> <p>Record 4- Positive</p> <p>Panel felt needs stronger justification written up but Good details covering what had happened prior to requesting strip search, authorised by Insp</p> <p>Record 5 – Negative</p> <p>No clear justification for actual strip search. No mention of how relevant conceal markers were to this decision. Panel confused as to why</p>
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		<p>the result of search was not recorded.</p> <p>Record 6- Positive</p> <p>Good rationale, PIC also stated drugs hidden in underwear. C I authorisation obtained and documented.</p> <p>Record 7 -Neutral</p> <p>Strip search had been based on similar circumstances to previous arrest but no indicating behaviours that indicate items hidden on person this time in custody. Although it was a positive search, this was based on previous outcomes rather than actual behaviours</p> <p>Record 8 Neutral</p> <p>Panel felt more detail in the rationale for strip search was required, felt weak justification documented and needed more detail.</p>
4.	Action noted from discussions for update at next panel	<p>Actions</p> <p>Panel members to consider role available</p> <p>NC to start recruiting new panel members to join</p> <p>Force</p> <p>To bring back an update on the issues for the CCTV recordings and video quality for the next panel.</p>
5.	Date and location of next Panel	<p>Next Panel to be held; Wednesday 14th January 2026 at Perry Barr Custody Suite.</p> <p>Please arrive on time - tea and coffee will be served at 5:45pm to allow us to start promptly.</p>



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

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