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Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
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14th April 2021

Dear *Priti*

Response to HMICFRS report: “Disproportionate Use of Police Powers: A spotlight on Stop and Search and the Use of the Use of Force”

Under Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, as Acting Police and Crime Commissioner I am pleased to provide my formal response to HMICFRS’s report entitled “**Disproportionate Use of Police Powers: A spotlight on Stop and Search and the Use of the Use of Force**”.

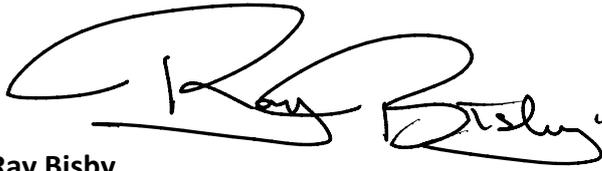
Both the Chief Constable and I welcome the publication of HMICFRS’ report looking at these significant police powers and any actual or perceived disproportionate use of these. It is essential that these powers are exercised in a fair, lawful and appropriate way in order for the community to have confidence in its use and as a consequence, wider policing.

I note there are some elements of the report that require a local response and for the Constabulary to implement themselves. One of my priorities as Acting Commissioner has been to enhance the independent scrutiny in place regarding Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s use of these powers, to ensure that there is greater transparency and community involvement in order to gain an understanding of the extent of local concern. I am pleased to report that this is happening and something I know the Chief Constable is fully supportive of.

Following the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May, I have no doubt that my successor will wish to continue to seek reassurance from the Chief Constable regarding the progress in respect of the recommendations within the HMICFRS report.

The HMICFRS recommendations and Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s response are attached in Appendix 1.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Bisby', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Ray Bisby

Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

cc PCC@hmic.gsi.gov.uk

HMICFRS recommendations and constabulary response

1. By July 2022, forces should ensure that officers and staff have effective communication skills, in line with the National Policing Guidelines on Conflict Management. This should be in addition to existing training on conflict management and de-escalation.

Force Response: The Constabulary recognises the importance of effective communication to resolve conflict situations safely and is committed to ensuring that all officers and staff are provided with the correct training to develop and maintain these skills. The Continuous Professional Development Unit, whose focus is on providing ongoing continuous professional development for all frontline officers and staff, will be delivering additional training inputs on effective communication, conflict management and de-escalation from June 2021 to reinforce these skills.

2. By July 2021, forces should ensure that communication skills are reinforced as part of the programme of continuing professional development for officers and staff, and that supervisors are supported to routinely and frequently debrief officers on these skills using body-worn video footage.

Force Response: The Continuous Professional Development Unit will be delivering additional training inputs to all frontline officers and staff on effective communication, conflict management and de-escalation from June 2021 to reinforce these skills. The Constabulary will review its use of body worn video as a professional development tool to ensure that we are making best use of this to debrief officers and identify areas where practice may need to improve.

3. By September 2021, forces should: 1) ensure that officers record on body-worn video (when this is available) the entirety of all stop and search encounters, including traffic stops and use of force incidents; 2) have a structured process for regularly reviewing and monitoring internally a sufficient sample of body-worn video footage to identify and disseminate learning and hold officers to account when behaviour falls below acceptable standards; and 3) provide external scrutiny panel members with access to samples of body-worn video footage showing stop and search encounters and use of force incidents, taking account of the safeguards in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice.

Force Response: The Constabulary mandates the use of body worn video for stop and search and use of force encounters. A working group is being established to improve the extent to which the body worn video footage is subsequently used as part of our internal monitoring processes. With regard to external scrutiny, the existing community scrutiny panel model is currently being revised. As part of the new model, the scrutiny panel will review a randomly selected sample of stop and search and use of force encounters. Members will be given appropriate training and be supplied with the related reports and body worn video footage, with the appropriate safeguards in place.

4. The Home Office and the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) should take steps to ensure that the quality of the data collected on the number of incidents where

force has been used to effect a stop and search is sufficient for publication. The Home Office should publish this data as soon as possible.

Force Response: This recommendation is addressed to the Home Office and the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.

5. By July 2021, forces should ensure they have effective internal monitoring processes on the use of force, to help them to identify and understand disproportionate use, explain the reasons and implement any necessary improvement action.

Force Response: The Constabulary is developing its internal monitoring processes on the use of force. Work is in progress to improve the analysis of data to better identify and understand any unfair or inappropriate use as well as good practice.

6. By July 2021, forces should ensure they have effective external scrutiny processes in place in relation to the use of force. Forces should take account of feedback and update the scrutiny panel and the community on the action taken.

Force Response: The Constabulary is committed to ensuring that there is sufficient and robust community scrutiny around the use of stop and search, and use of force powers. The existing scrutiny panel model is currently being revised. As part of the new model, an independent panel of community representatives will review randomly selected stop and search and use of force encounters. Members will be given appropriate training and be supplied with the related reports and body worn video footage, with the appropriate safeguards in place. The findings will be fed back into force in order to learn from the community about how practices may need to improve. The launch of the new model has been postponed due to Covid 19 restrictions however will be progressed as soon as practicable.

7. With immediate effect, forces should ensure that all stop and search records include detail of the self-defined ethnicity of the subject. When this information is refused by the subject, the officer-defined ethnicity code should be recorded.

Force Response: The Constabulary's Stop and Search Procedure states that officers must immediately complete an accurate record for every stop and search. Where the subject refuses to provide their details, the officer should record a full description including the officer-defined ethnicity on the stop and search form. There are some flaws in the data that the force is aware of. This is subject to ongoing scrutiny at both the Force Performance Board and the Ethics, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Groups to ensure this is addressed.

8. By December 2021, the Home Office should agree, nationally, a minimum standard for monitoring stop and search powers. HMICFRS commits to working on this with the Home Office and other interested parties, such as the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Force Response: This recommendation is addressed to the Home Office. The Constabulary will await further information.