

Officer and Staff Safety Review

A review of the arrangements to secure the safety of police officers and police staff engaged in frontline policing



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Executive summary

National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Chair Martin Hewitt commissioned the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) in September 2019. The work was completed and reported back to chief officers in November 2019 and January 2020, before the COVID-19 outbreak. Publication of this report has been delayed from planned publication in March 2020 while the police responded to the pandemic. In the intervening time, the NPCC has been working to agree and implement the OSSR's recommendations. The purpose of the OSSR was to assess the existing arrangements governing police officer and staff safety in England and Wales, drawing on available evidence. Its key objective was to present the NPCC with a set of recommendations designed to reduce the risk of police officers and staff being injured, assaulted or killed in the line of duty. It has not specifically considered officer and staff safety or health risks related to COVID-19.

The OSSR was carried out by a nine-member project team, which was overseen by a Chief Officer Steering Group.

To explore the existing base of evidence around officer and staff safety nationwide, researchers from the College of Policing carried out the largest ever survey of police officers, staff and volunteers in England and Wales (40,268 respondents). They also commissioned a study

from University College London exploring public perceptions about the police's use of force, and they critically reviewed the available national data and social research evidence.

In the early stages of gathering and analysing data, a number of roadblocks were identified. For example, current statistics do not record assaults against frontline police staff (such as PCSOs or detention officers). This led to a recommendation for a full review of the existing processes by which national data on police and staff assaults is gathered.

Between 2008 and 2019, 92 police officers lost their lives on duty, 15 as a direct result of a criminal act. Overall, 88% of officers who responded to the survey said they had been assaulted at some point during their careers, and 39% reported that they had been assaulted in the last 12 months. In 2018/19, there were 30,977 recorded assaults on police officers. Assaults without injury increased by 13% on the previous year to 20,578, and assaults with injury increased by 15% to 10,399. In this period, the College of Policing estimates that the total number of assaults, including unrecorded assaults, will have exceeded 45,000. The human cost of these assaults will be high. The College of Policing estimates that officers needed to take a total of 71,308 days as sick leave as a direct result of assaults on duty.

The project team looked at ways to improve this situation. The provision of personal safety training (PST) was key. The allotted time for PST can vary from five hours per annum in some forces to 16 hours per annum in others. The content, delivery and course composition are also sporadic and inconsistent, often including unrelated activities such as first aid training and fitness testing. When responding to the national survey, 34% of respondents said they were 'very dissatisfied' or 'fairly dissatisfied', or 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with their PST training. At the heart of this review is a recommendation for the College of Policing and NPCC to review and update the existing guidance on PST, with a view to producing a consistent national curriculum with specified learning outcomes, protected training time with students and an agreed number of core mandatory modules, as well as optional supplementary modules.



Strategic threat and risk assessments (STRAs) are undertaken by all forces and they inform chief constables' decisions about deployment, equipment and other operational issues within their forces. While local circumstances lead to individual decisions taken by chief constables, the process for conducting a STRA should be consistent. A recommendation has therefore been made for the creation of a national framework to ensure consistency of approach, if not outcome.

In addition to best standards of training, equipment and technology are key to enhancing officer and staff safety. There was strong support in the officer and staff survey for more frontline officers deploying with Taser (85%). There was less strong support for the idea that all frontline officers need a Taser (61%). There is some tentative evidence to suggest that aiming or red-dotting with a Taser may resolve conflict and that officers might be more inclined to use a Taser to manage conflict rather than their non-physical skills to de-escalate. There is also growing evidence to suggest that Tasers are being used disproportionately on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. To counter this risk the OSSR recommends that the NPCC and the College commission an independent programme of social research to explore the nature, causes and consequences of racial disparities in the police use of Taser, with a view to identifying changes aimed at minimising the problem and mitigating its impact.

Supported by the ongoing safety assurances provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (SACMILL) and the current evidence base, the project team recommend that decisions made by chief constables about any increase to the number of Tasers available to frontline police officers should be supported by their STRAs. This should take into account the findings of this review and, in particular, the importance of police officer safety training and non-physical conflict management skills.

In the same vein, the project team recommends that chief constables consider their deployment of: needle-stick resistant gloves, to reduce the risk of officers and staff being pricked with contaminated needles; spit and bite guards (SBGs), to protect officers and staff from spitting assaults; and self-application tourniquets (SATs), to manage catastrophic bleeds on one's self, colleagues or the public. The project team also recommends that the NPCC closely monitors the progress of an encouraging concept currently being trialled by the Metropolitan Police Service, the personal safety shield (PSS), which could save lives in the event of an edged-weapon attack.

This review seeks to reduce the risk of officers and staff being assaulted within a police vehicle by recommending that the NPCC work with the National Association of Police Fleet Managers to find a cost-effective screen solution, protecting the driver from a potentially combative rear-seat passenger. It also seeks to protect officers and staff from corrosive substance attacks (CSAs) by recommending: a comprehensive learning package to raise enhanced awareness of the risk; new legislation making it an offence to possess ammonia, and other similar substances, without good reason; and the expedited trials of a promising neutralising solution.

A surprising statistic arising from the OSSR was the number of officers and staff killed on duty as a result of road traffic collisions (RTCs). Of the 92 officers killed between 2008 and 2019, 49 of them (53%) were killed in an RTC. Of these, 39 were commuting to or from work. While the primary focus of the OSSR was to reduce the number and severity of assaults faced by our officers and staff, this finding could not be ignored. To that end, this review recommends a number of measures intended to reduce the number of road-related fatalities. These include: the commissioning of research to examine the link between shift work

and safe driving practices; proposed legislation to make it an offence to deliberately target a police employee with a vehicle; expedited testing of remotely operated immobilisation devices; and the creation of a bespoke learning package to educate officers and staff as to the dangers of working on the roads.

To ensure that officer and staff safety and wellbeing remains an ongoing priority for all forces, the project team recommend that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) include this area as part of their ongoing inspection regime. The findings of the OSSR should also be used to inform the creation and implementation of the forthcoming Police Covenant.

Likewise, to ensure that officer and staff safety remains at the forefront of mind when it comes to the wider criminal justice system (CJS), the project team recommend that each chief constable ensures that they have a robust strategic plan in place to manage assaults on their workforce. The 'seven-point plan' developed by Hampshire Constabulary is to be the minimum required standard. The NPCC should review the results of a local trial that uses body-worn video cameras (BWVCs) to record the victim personal statements (VPSs) of officers and staff who have been assaulted. The project team also recommend that the NPCC consider the benefits of any BWVC footage of assaults on officers and staff being played at court, regardless of the defendant's plea. The project team recommend a consistently robust approach to assaults, with lawful arrest always being the preferred outcome.

In conclusion, police officers and staff come to work every day to serve the public, protect vulnerable people, minimise harm, prevent and detect crime, and bring offenders to justice. They do not come to work to be abused, kicked, punched, spat at, attacked with a weapon or assaulted in any other way. This is not acceptable, it is not 'part of the job' and it must not be tolerated or condoned. To minimise the risk that officers and staff face in the line of duty, this review has made a total of **28 evidence-based recommendations** for organisational improvement. Collectively, this package of measures should enhance the safety and wellbeing of all police officers and staff across England and Wales.



Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter opens the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) by briefly discussing the moral, ethical and statutory reasons for its commission. The strategic direction set for this review is also addressed, as are the Terms of Reference, scope and engagement strategy. The chapter finishes with a brief description of the composition of the steering group and project team, as well as the methodology that was used.

Background to the Officer and Staff Safety Review

In our liberal democracy, there exists a delicate unwritten social contract between society and law enforcement. This fundamental principle has roots dating back to the 18th century and has been coined 'policing by consent'. The effective operationalisation of this historic doctrine is one of the many reasons why the British policing model is both envied and revered around the world.

Consent-oriented law enforcement relies on the police service maintaining law and order while using the least intrusive methods possible. Conversely, there is a reciprocal expectation that society adheres to legislation and supports the police service, facilitating its function in the manner preferred by both parties.

'Function' in this sense is manifested by a predominantly unarmed police 'service', as opposed to 'force', consciously allowing every member of society to live freely provided they do not break the law. At the same time, there is a firm expectation that the organisation retains an effective capacity to expediently, safely and humanely apprehend those citizens who do break the law, before bringing them swiftly to a civilised system of justice.

For the most part, this sophisticated social equilibrium functions both as intended and as expected. However, on some occasions it is

“ Ensuring the safety of police officers and staff members is not only a moral and ethical duty for chief officers, but also a statutory one.”

necessary to reflect upon and review the current landscape, in order to ascertain whether existing arrangements remain fit for purpose, or whether organisational change is required.

In response to an increase in recorded assaults against officers in 2018/19 and the

concerns raised by officers and staff about their perception that violence towards them is increasing, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) commissioned this report, which comprises a top-to-bottom review of the current arrangements governing police officer and staff safety in England and Wales.

Ensuring the safety of police officers and staff members is not only a moral and ethical duty for chief officers, but also a statutory one. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) applies to all activities of the Constabulary. The HSWA (1974) requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees, and to ensure that their activities do not adversely affect the health and safety of other people. These duties are not absolute and each is qualified by the test of what is reasonably practicable. The HSWA (1974) does not, therefore, require all risks to be eliminated and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which regulates and enforces against the police, recognise this. Even when all reasonably practicable precautions have been taken to deal with foreseeable risks, injuries and deaths could still occur. It may be necessary to take some risks to secure the wider benefit of public safety.

The HSWA (1974) also places duties on employees to take reasonable care of themselves and others, and to cooperate with their employer. In essence, this means that police officers and staff should act sensibly and responsibly within the command and control of their employer, and should not act recklessly. However, the Constabulary and the HSE recognise that in protecting the public, individuals may, very occasionally and in extreme cases, decide to put themselves at risk in acts of true heroism. In these rare

circumstances, the HSE takes the view that the HSWA (1974) has not been breached by the Constabulary and that it would not be in the public interest to take action against the individual. Equally, the HSE and the Constabulary recognise that, in such extreme cases, everyone has the right to make personal choices and that individuals may choose not to put themselves at unreasonable risk.¹

Policing is a dangerous job. In recognition of the challenges faced by both officers and staff, police forces have a duty to achieve excellent standards of health and safety management, and to promote occupational health, safety and welfare. The application of, and compliance with, health and safety law can be challenging for any constabulary in relation to many of our operational activities, for the following reasons:

- The policing mission requires chief constables to send police officers and staff into potentially dangerous situations, in circumstances where the public would be advised to get away from the danger.
- In fighting crime, policing is reducing the overall risk to the public but, in doing so, police activities may create other risks.
- Many incidents occur without warning and individual police officers may occasionally be confronted with situations outside their experience and training.
- Police officers may need to take actions that put the public and themselves at risk, which is appropriate when the benefits from taking these risks outweigh the sum of all other risks.
- Some of the incidents develop and change at speed.
- Individual police officers and staff have to be able to make tough and complex decisions in unforeseeable situations that may be dangerous, fast-moving, emotionally charged and pressurised, even if there is incomplete or inaccurate information about the incident.
- Police officers and staff sometimes find themselves responding to dangerous situations that are not of their own making, which differs

¹ With thanks to the Association of Police Health and Safety Advisers for contributing to this section.



from most other sectors, where it is the employer's own business that creates the risks.

- Policing cannot control or mitigate all aspects of risk in its working environment.

Given the challenges that chief officers face when seeking to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their workforce, their autonomy could be greatly supported and heavily reinforced by this review. This review provides a concise and consistent set of evidence-based guidelines intended not only to assist with chief officers' decision making, but also to promote national consistency where appropriate.

Strategic intention, aims and objectives

The strategic intention of the OSSR was to use an evidence-based approach to complete an in-depth assessment of the existing arrangements governing police officer and staff safety throughout England and Wales. This will be achieved by critical analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and through a campaign of close engagement with key internal and external stakeholders. This report, along with its associated recommendations for organisation improvement, were presented for consideration at an extraordinary meeting of the NPCC on 27 November 2019, and again on 15 January 2020.

Aims

The OSSR has a number of key strategic aims:

- To achieve a greater understanding, through scanning and analysing contemporary problems, of the threats and risks posed to the safety of frontline police officers and staff, which will inform future options and possible solutions.
- To better understand the current suitability of the training and equipment provided to police officers and staff, in terms of individuals' ability to deal safely and effectively with the threats and risks they face in the operational environment.
- To ensure that police officer and staff safety arrangements not only minimise risks, but also give our officers and staff the confidence they need to perform their policing roles effectively, thereby maintaining public confidence and police legitimacy.
- To ensure that appropriate and consistent welfare provisions are in place to support and protect personnel who have been assaulted while on duty.
- To make proportionate and necessary recommendations, including high-level cost implications, for improvements that will better protect officers and staff, and/or will reduce the likelihood of them being assaulted in the execution of their duty.

- To propose a nationally consistent procedural framework for the protection of officers and staff, which will be informed by a developed understanding of the strategic threats and risks they face.

Objectives

The overarching strategic objective of the OSSR is to use an evidence-based approach to formulate and deliver a set of recommendations, which are designed to reduce the risk of police officers and staff being injured, assaulted, seriously assaulted and/or killed in the execution of their duty.

Other key objectives of this review include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- increasing the confidence of police officers, staff and the public in the service's capacity to keep them safe in the operational environment
- listening to the voices of officers and staff, and using this data to inform recommendations
- ensuring that all officers and staff are provided with the best-quality training and safety equipment available to market
- promoting nationally consistent measures to support officers and staff who have been assaulted
- ensuring a robust response from our strategic partners in the criminal justice system (CJS) when officers and staff have been assaulted

Methodology

Each of the project team's nine members was responsible for a specific workstream aligned to the Terms of Reference. Workstreams were allocated according to their particular area of expertise. Each member was expected to attend regular group meetings, respond to administrative requests, conduct bespoke research, and submit a brief report detailing their findings and recommendations. Where the evidence base was lacking, or where data sets were insufficient to achieve this purpose, requests to fill these gaps were made by the group.



The project team used a mixed methods approach when designing and carrying out the review.² For example, in order to explore officer and staff perceptions, the College of Policing surveyed all police officers, staff and volunteers. With a total of 40,268 responses, the College of Policing's National Police Safety Survey is likely to be the largest ever survey to have been carried out in the police service in England and Wales. A total of 40,268 officers, staff and volunteers responded to the survey. Overall, 20% of all police officers and over 25% of all PCSOs submitted responses.

The College of Policing also commissioned University College London (UCL) to survey 1,500 members of the public to assess the perceived public legitimacy of different use-of-force options. The results and associated recommendations of these two bespoke research projects are explored in detail in **Chapter 2**.

² A survey request was sent to everyone in policing with a pnn email address on the Managed Learning Environment (MLE).

Various sets of quantitative data were also requested from 47 UK forces, including Police Scotland, British Transport Police (BTP), the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.³ In all, 25 forces responded to this request.⁴ The predominately statistical information obtained from this request is discussed at various points throughout this report. The information has been used to highlight specific areas of heightened concern and to justify certain recommendations for organisational reform.

As well as quantitative data, qualitative data is used throughout this report in the form of case studies and personal reflections from individual officers and staff members. These are used not only to justify recommendations, but also to personalise certain aspects of the operational policing environment. The inclusion of case studies and qualitative observations is an important part of this project for two main reasons. Firstly, the NPCC was clear that they wanted to hear the views of frontline officers and staff. The project team considered that first-hand reflections and true operational recounts were an effective means to achieve this objective. Secondly, the project team considered that the analysis of purely statistical information would not always provide the real-world context that befits the more descriptive, qualitative approach.

3 The data request letter was sent via the National Police Chiefs' Council Corporate Communications office to the ChiefsNet platform, which chief officers access to share, request and/or disseminate information. The support of chief officers was vital given the short timeframe for completion, and proved instrumental in maximising the rates of return.

4 Not all forces that responded were able to supply complete data, presumably due to the tight timescales involved in the project.

Chapter 2

The existing evidence base

This chapter, written by researchers at the College of Policing, provides an overview of the existing evidence base on officer and staff safety. The chapter is structured to follow the main themes of the review, with separate sections on assaults against the police, use of force, police equipment, training, welfare support and criminal justice (CJ) processes. Each section summarises any available national data, relevant headline findings from the National Police Safety Survey, and results from social research that help to describe the threats and risks or potential solutions. In producing this chapter, College of Policing researchers have:

- carried out what is likely to be the largest ever survey of police officers, staff and volunteers in England and Wales (40,268 respondents), the results of which have been published separately⁵
- commissioned a study from University College London (UCL) on the perceived legitimacy of different use-of-force tactics
- searched for relevant research evidence, with a focus on recent studies from the UK

The chapter shows that national data is only available on some aspects of officer and staff safety, and that which is available has some limitations. The one-off National Police Safety Survey carried out by the College of Policing for this review helps to fill some of these data gaps. There is an emerging research base on assaults against the police and use-of-force incidents, though findings are often tentative. Little is known about some high-risk issues, such as the effect of Taser on vulnerable people and how personal safety training (PST) can reduce the risk of assaults, which precludes strong recommendations.

5 Clark-Darby and Quinton 2020.

Assaults against police officers and staff

Overview

National data on police officer assaults is available, but not on related sickness absence or costs. A high proportion of officers and staff have been assaulted, with some roles experiencing relatively high rates of repeat victimisation. Around one-third of assaults may not be recorded. The total salary cost of sickness absence resulting from assaults was estimated to be £4.7 million. There was also some tentative evidence to suggest Taser may reduce the chances of officers being assaulted.

National data

Number of incidents

Police-recorded data on assaults against police officers is published quarterly by the Office of National Statistics⁶ and annually by the Home Office.⁷ The latest annual report contained figures for two crime classifications:

- Assault without injury on a constable – data is available from 2002/03.
- Assault with injury on a constable – data is available from 2017/18, when this crime classification was introduced. This data does not include more serious assaults, which should be recorded under the different classifications – for example, attempted murder – where victims who are officers are not specifically identified. Before 2017/18, unreliable and non-comparable estimates were published based on health and safety data from a small number of forces.

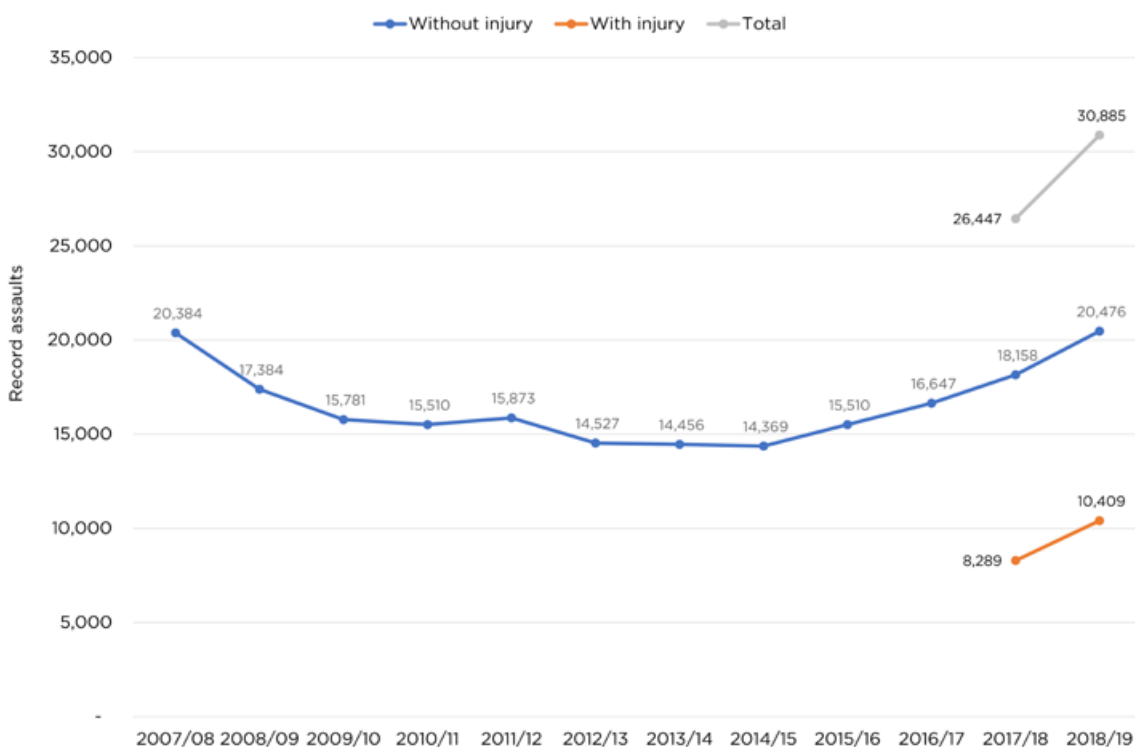
6 Office of National Statistics 2020.

7 Home Office 2019c.

Data for assault on police staff and volunteers is not currently available. This gap should be addressed by **Recommendation 1(2)**.

In 2018/19, a total of 30,885 assaults were recorded in England and Wales and in the British Transport Police.⁸ Assaults without injury increased by 13% on the previous year to 20,476, while assaults with injury increased by 26% to 10,409. Figure 2.1 shows an upward trend over the past five years. Using police workforce data⁹, the College of Policing has estimated there were 328 recorded assaults per 1,000 constables in 2018/19 – roughly one offence for every three constables – up from 284 per 1,000 in the previous year.

Figure 2.1 – Trends in recorded assaults in England and Wales from 2007/08 to 2018/19



⁸ Home Office 2019c, updated by Home Office 2020.

⁹ Home Office 2019b.

The Home Office data on assaults are not currently labelled as ‘official statistics’ because of reporting and recording issues. The data, for example, does not allow comparisons between forces, is likely to underestimate the number of assaults in some forces, and does not distinguish between assaults on officers when they were on-duty and those when they were off-duty.

The Association of Police Health and Safety Advisers (APHSA) also gathers data from forces on assaults in broad categories, which precludes detailed scanning and analysis. The data is reportedly very similar to the Home Office’s and is also likely to underestimate the scale of the problem.¹⁰

Sickness absence

Data on long-term sickness absence and restricted duties for police officers is published annually by the Home Office. These figures do not, however, present the reasons for absences (for example, assaults).

Costs

No national data is available on the cost of assaults. Forces do gather data on pay awards to officers and staff that result from injuries at work caused by assaults, but this data is not gathered routinely enough to provide a national picture.

National Police Safety Survey

Over four in every five police officers who responded to the survey (88%) said they had been assaulted at some point during their career. Overall, 39% of police officers reported having been assaulted in the previous 12 months. Repeat victimisation was relatively common. Of those who had been assaulted in the previous 12 months, 50% of custody officers and 46% of response officers have been assaulted at least three times during their career. Some high-risk police staff roles were also identified, particularly custody and detention roles.

¹⁰ The Association of Police Health and Safety Advisers report that officers and staff tended not to complete separate incident, accident, or near-miss records if they have already completed a use-of-force record, depending on the severity of any injury.

The survey provided an estimate of the proportion of assaults that are not recorded as crimes. About one-third of officers (32%) who had been assaulted in the past 12 months said their most recent assault went unrecorded. This figure varied by the severity of the assault. Assaults without injury were less likely to be recorded than assaults with injury (37% unrecorded compared with 19%).

Assuming that these recording rates are accurate and applying them to the Home Office data, there were estimated to be 32,768 assaults without injury and 12,806 assaults with injury in 2018/19 (a total of 45,574).

Most officers and PCSOs who were assaulted said they took no sick leave (85%), while most of those who did take sick leave took one week or less (8%). Unsurprisingly, the severity of assault appeared to be associated with levels of sickness absence.

Research evidence

Factors associated with assaults

A rapid evidence assessment (REA) on conflict management by the College of Policing identified factors from the international literature associated with officers being assaulted during use-of-force incidents.¹¹ The demeanour of the suspect appeared to be most consistently associated with assaults, rather than characteristics of the officer, suspect or situation. Force against officers was most likely when suspects were hostile, resisting arrest or intoxicated.

Analysis of use-of-force data for 2017/18 from 16 forces by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter¹² identified factors associated with officers being assaulted or injured. The odds of assault and injury were both increased when:

- officers:
 - were single-crewed¹³
 - drew, but did not use, irritant spray

11 Dryer-Beers and others 2020.

12 The analysis was based on 45,661 recorded incidents in which only one officer used force on a person: Quinton and others 2020.

13 Compared to officers crewed with colleagues who did not use force.

- physically used baton, irritant spray, limb restraints or unarmed force, or discharged Taser
- used force to protect themselves or others
- the person subjected to force was:
 - actively or aggressively resisting
 - described as 'Black or Black British'

The odds of assault were significantly reduced when officers drew their Tasers,¹⁴ which might suggest a deterrent effect.

The above factors were statistically associated with reported assaults and injuries, meaning causal relationships should not be assumed. Some factors will be proxies for other things (for example, the quality of the police-public interaction or the nature of the threat). It was also not possible to determine the order of events during use-of-force incidents, as the data did not specify whether officers were assaulted or injured before, during or after they used force.

Analysis carried out by Hampshire Constabulary and funded by the College of Policing identified potential risk factors for assaults.¹⁵ In 2015, over one-third of assaults (39%) had alcohol as an aggravating factor, while 40% of assaulted officers felt that colleagues with poor communication skills were more likely to be assaulted.

Trauma

A survey of almost 17,000 officers and staff for Police Care UK reported that 89% of respondents had experienced traumatic events, although it was not known what proportion of these were assaults.¹⁶ Of the respondents who had experienced traumatic events, 8% reported symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the preceding four weeks, with an additional 12% reporting symptoms consistent with complex PTSD in that time period. Around one-quarter of these officers and staff had not previously been told they had PTSD.

14 Compared to officers who used only handcuffs. Assault and injury were both more likely when officers discharged their Tasers.

15 Payne 2017

16 University of Cambridge 2018.

Many of those who did not have PTSD were, nevertheless, moderately or severely affected by their experiences (for example, avoidance or sense of threat).

Costs

The College of Policing has estimated that 71,308 days were taken as sick leave in 2018/19 as a result of assaults against police officers, at a total estimated salary cost of £4.7 million. This figure was based on Home Office assaults data, weighted by the average number of sick leave days reportedly taken by officers following different types of assault. The resulting number of days was multiplied by the salary costs of a constable on pay point one. This is likely to be a conservative estimate because minimum values were used (sick leave, salary and no London weighting).

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) estimated that the total social and economic cost of assaults against the police in 2018/19 was £363 million.¹⁷ This figure is based on Home Office data on assaults, estimates of under-recorded crime, and unit costs for the economic and social costs of violence.

Police use of force

Overview

National data on use-of-force incidents is available but has significant limitations. There was some tentative evidence to suggest the chances of force being used may be increased when officers deal with people who are aggressive, are described as 'Black or Black British', or have mental health issues. Pre-existing trust in the police has been found to predict public acceptability of different use-of-force tactics. While the police use of force could have a detrimental impact on legitimacy, fair decision making and respectful treatment may reduce the need for officers to use force by fostering greater public cooperation. By treating officers and staff fairly, supervisors and senior leaders may also encourage them to follow suit.

¹⁷ Elliott-Davies 2019a

National data

Number of incidents

Police-recorded data on the use of force was published for the first time by the Home Office in 2018,¹⁸ following the introduction of standardised incident recording by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in 2017/18. Data is to be published annually by the Home Office.

A total of 427,727 use-of-force records were made in 2018/19.¹⁹ During these incidents, 632,185 physical tactics were recorded as having been used. Tactical communications were recorded as having been used in just under half of all incidents.

Officers reported injuries in 5% of all incidents. Of those who were injured, 2% reported receiving 'severe' injuries and half said their injuries resulted from an 'intentional assault'. The people subjected to police force were reportedly injured in 6% of recorded incidents.

The Home Office data is currently labelled as 'experimental statistics' because it is new and is known to have data quality issues.²⁰ The Home Office have noted that, due to under-recording, the data does not provide an accurate representation of all use-of-force incidents. Many forces were also unable to record all the required variables and/or submit data in a standardised format.

Public confidence

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) includes measures of overall public confidence in the police. In 2017/18, 62% of people thought the police in their local area did a 'good' or 'excellent' job, which has been stable for the past five years. None of the measures in the CSEW

18 Home Office 2019a.

19 An individual use-of-force record accounts for one officer's use of force against one member of the public. Multiple records would be required in situations involving one officer using force on multiple people, or multiple officers using force on one person. It follows that the resulting data refers to the number of recorded use-of-force interactions that take place between officers and the public, rather than the absolute number of people who have been subjected to force.

20 Home Office 2019d.

refer to use of force, though some may be introduced from 2020/21 following consultation with College of Policing researchers.

National Police Safety Survey

The survey did not specifically cover use of force.

Research evidence

Factors associated with use of force

An REA on conflict management by the College of Policing identified factors from the international literature associated with police officers using force.²¹ Force was found to be more likely when subjects were male, were disrespectful or abusive towards officers, possessed weapons, appeared intoxicated or resisted arrest. There were inconsistent findings for other personal characteristics, such as ethnicity.

The use-of-force analysis by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter²² looked at the factors associated with officers drawing equipment or weapons, physically using them, or using unarmed force.²³ The research found the odds of these outcomes were increased when:

- officers:
 - were male
 - had more than five years' service
 - were single-crewed²⁴
- the person subjected to force was:
 - actively or aggressively resisting
 - described as 'Black or Black British'
 - described as 'mentally disabled'²⁵

21 Dryer-Beers and others 2020.

22 Quinton and others 2020.

23 Compared to officers using only handcuffs.

24 Compared to officers crewed with colleagues who did not use force.

25 This term was used on the NPCC monitoring form, and is to be changed to a more appropriate term from 2020/21.

- ‘mental health’ was recorded as an impact factor

As before, while these factors increased the likelihood of these outcomes, it does not follow that they caused the outcomes.

Quantitative research based on data from three US police departments suggested that officers used force less readily and less often when more restrictive use-of-force policies were in place.²⁶

Legitimacy

Public acceptability of different force tactics

Research by UCL commissioned by the College of Policing examined the public acceptability of different use-of-force tactics.²⁷ The study involved asking 1,500 members of the public about a short vignette involving an encounter with a police officer and a person suspected of concealing a weapon. Overall, handcuffs were significantly more likely to be seen as justified and acceptable than Taser, baton and irritant spray. Use of any one of these items of equipment were considered to be no more or less acceptable than any other. Pre-existing trust seemed to matter too. People who trusted the police more were more likely to think the officer’s use of force in the vignette was justified and acceptable. No evidence was found on the acceptability of force among those social groups most likely to be subjected to police force.

Procedural justice

There is a large and growing international evidence base to suggest that public perceptions of police procedural justice are critical for police legitimacy.²⁸ When people perceive that the police make decisions fairly and treat them with respect, they are more likely to see the police as legitimate and, in turn, are more likely to obey the law and cooperate with the police, including following officer instructions. It follows that the police use of force could have a detrimental impact on legitimacy, particularly if it is perceived by the public to be used unfairly or

26 Terrill and Paoline III 2017.

27 Yesberg and others 2019

28 Nagin and Telep 2017.

disproportionately against particular social and ethnic groups.²⁹ Fair decision making and respectful treatment should also reduce the need for officers to use force in some situations, as it can lead to greater public cooperation.

A range of interventions, such as training and scripts, have been shown to be effective in encouraging officers to be fairer and more respectful during interactions with the public.³⁰ None have been tested in their effect on officer safety or use of force.

Perceptions of procedural justice among officers may also be important to their use of force. A study carried out by the College of Policing in Durham showed that when officers thought that supervisors and senior leaders made decisions fairly and treated them respectfully, they were more likely to identify with the force and its values and, in turn, were less likely to support the police using greater force.^{31,32}

Taser

Overview

National data on Taser use is available in the annual use-of-force statistics. The survey showed strong support for more frontline officers deploying with Taser and for all frontline officers having the option to deploy with Taser. There was less strong support for the idea that all frontline officers need a Taser and, among officers, for personally being deployed with one. While few adverse medical outcomes have been reported with Taser use, there is limited evidence on Taser's health effects in the longer term or on vulnerable people. There is some tentative evidence to suggest that aiming or red-dotting may resolve conflict. In a vignette involving a person

29 There is evidence that experiences of being stopped and searched have a large detrimental effect on people's perceptions of the police if contact is perceived as being unfair, and no effect if the contact is perceived to be fair (Bradford 2016).

30 Nagin and Telep 2017.

31 Myhill and Quinton 2011.

32 Bradford and Quinton 2014

suspected of carrying a weapon, the threat or use of Taser has been found to be no more or less acceptable to the public than other items of protective equipment.

National data

Police-recorded data on the use of Taser is published annually by the Home Office. The most recent figures are included in its annual use-of-force statistics,³³ and are considered by the Home Office to be an accurate reflection of Taser use. In 2018/19, there were 23,451 recorded incidents in which Taser was used (drawn, aimed, arced, red-dotted or discharged). Of these, Taser was discharged 11% of the time (2,693 incidents), a similar proportion to previous years.

National Police Safety Survey

The police officers and staff who responded were strongly of the opinion that more frontline officers should deploy with Taser (85%), and that all frontline officers should have the option to deploy with Taser (87%). They were less strong in their view that all frontline police officers needed a Taser (61%). Three-quarters of police officers and over four in five special constables said that they personally wanted to deploy with Taser.

Recent PFEW membership surveys found that, in 2017,³⁴ 82% wanted Taser to be issued to a wider group of frontline officers and, in 2018,³⁵ 58% wanted access to Taser at all times on duty.

33 Home Office 2019a

34 van Mechelen 2017.

35 Elliott-Davies 2019b.

Research evidence

Public safety

Health

Overall, while the evidence generally points to a low risk of death or serious injury with appropriate Taser use, there are significant gaps around longer-term risks and the risks to vulnerable people.

The Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (NIVEL) carried out a systematic review of the highest-quality international research literature.³⁶ The results of 12 studies of sufficient methodological quality were summarised:

- Effect of Taser on human health – the studies showed few or no short-term ('acute') health effects, apart from the wounds caused by the Taser barbs. None examined longer-term ('chronic') health effects, so no conclusions could be reached.
- Risk of serious injuries and complications due to Taser exposure – the studies suggested the risk was low for the health measures used (stress response, heart rate, blood pressure, arrhythmias, blood acidity or cognitive performance). No clear evidence of adverse health outcomes was found. None of the studies looked at health effects among vulnerable people or high-risk groups (for example, pregnant woman, people who were intoxicated or people with mental health conditions), so no conclusions could be reached.³⁷

NIVEL identified a number of limitations with the existing literature:³⁸

- Most studies involved fit and healthy volunteers who were unrepresentative of the people on whom Taser was most likely to be used.
- Studies did not look at longer-term effects, or at effects on vulnerable or high-risk groups.

36 Dückers and others 2019.

37 A panel of medical experts convened by the US National Institute for Justice in 2011 reached a similar conclusion (Neuscheler and Freidlin 2015).

38 See also: Jauchem 2015.

- Studies were unable to determine what part, if any, Taser played in fatalities because multiple causes of death were usually reported.
- The included studies were all from the USA, so their findings may not translate elsewhere.
- Many of the studies were funded by, or carried out in association with, Axon or Taser International, with small sample sizes.³⁹

Injury

Studies have also examined the extent to which Taser use and subject injuries are linked, but found it difficult to reach conclusions because of recording issues.

The use-of-force analysis by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter⁴⁰ found that the odds of a person being injured as a result of police force were reduced when officers drew Taser.⁴¹ The odds of injury and subsequent hospitalisation both increased when officers actually discharged it.

However, it was not possible to tell from the data whether these outcomes included puncture wounds from Taser barbs, or resulted from other types of force that were used during incidents. Forces will also have policies on officers calling for medical attention following Taser discharge.

Similar issues were reported in a non-systematic review of US studies.⁴² Individual small-scale studies have also pointed to specific injury risks associated with Taser, which the authors suggested were issues for training (for example, falls, flammable substances and faces).⁴³

39 While NIVEL did not find these studies to have materially different results from independent studies, an earlier review suggested that research funded by manufacturers was more likely to conclude Taser was safe (Azadani and others 2011).

40 Quinton and others 2020.

41 Compared to when officers used only handcuffs.

42 Neuscheler and Freidlin 2015.

43 Various: Clarke and Andrews 2014; Gerber and others 2014; Kroll and others 2016; Kroll and others 2017; Kroll and others 2018.

Effectiveness

Resolving conflict

Analysis by Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) has examined how effective the X2 Taser was in ‘subduing’ subjects.⁴⁴ Overall, 90% of Taser uses reportedly did not involve officers discharging the device, which might support the idea that aiming and red-dotting can be effective at resolving conflict. The success rate in subduing subjects when the Taser was discharged averaged 55% across all the different methods of discharge.⁴⁵ This figure may be artificially deflated, however, as it would include subjects who were not subdued by the first discharge but were by the second. The context in which Taser was successful in subduing subjects was not known, and nor was how successful other equipment would have been in similar circumstances. The authors also noted that the analysis was based on officers’ subjective accounts of dynamic and stressful situations, so may not be accurate. A NPCC review based on 2017 data from 20 forces found that officers thought Taser was effective in achieving its tactical aim in 68% of incidents.⁴⁶

A randomised controlled trial (RCT) testing the impact of Taser deployment in the City of London showed that officers were generally more likely to use force when deployed with Taser, compared with when they were deployed without Taser.⁴⁷ The study did not, however, appear to control for the types of incident attended by officers when they were deployed with and without Taser. It is conceivable that officers were sent to more serious incidents – with a higher risk of violence – when they deployed with Taser.

44 Sheridan and Hepper 2020.

45 Published comparisons of the success rate of different pieces of equipment have not been identified. One US study which reviewed the evidence on Taser and oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray (which is not used in England and Wales), found that most studies pointed to Taser being more effective than OC spray at incapacitating subjects, even though in aggregate their success rates overlapped (Brandl and Stroshine 2017).

46 Drummond-Smith and others 2019.

47 Ariel and others 2019.

Reducing assaults against police

The use-of-force analysis by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter⁴⁸ found that the odds of officers being assaulted were lowered when Taser was drawn, but increased when it was discharged. While strong conclusions are not possible, these findings might suggest that drawing Taser can act as a deterrent, while discharging it may reflect its use in higher-risk situations. The analysis suggested that assaults and injury were no more or less likely when officers carried Taser.

These findings were broadly consistent with a non-systematic review of US studies, which found some evidence in support of Taser reducing officer injuries.⁴⁹ The evidence was not unequivocal. The effect on injury frequency varied, and there was little evidence about its effect on injury severity.

The City of London RCT testing the impact of Taser deployment showed that officers were more likely to be assaulted when they deployed with Taser than when they did not, though the study did not appear to control for types of incident attended.

Legitimacy

Public experience

The use-of-force analysis by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter⁵⁰ suggested that the odds of Taser-carrying officers discharging their Tasers, and just drawing them, were increased⁵¹ when:

- the officer used force for protection
- the person subjected to police force was
 - actively or aggressively resisting
 - male
- 'mental health' was a reported impact factor⁵²

48 Quinton and others 2020.

49 Neuscheler and Freidlin 2015.

50 Analysis based on a subsample of 11,176 incidents (Quinton and others 2020).

51 Compared to Taser carrying officers not drawing or discharging their Tasers.

52 The odds of Taser being drawn but not discharged were increased in incidents where the person subjected to force was described as 'Black or Black British'.

The odds of both Taser outcomes were lowered when:

- the person in the incident was
 - perceived to be under 18 years of age
 - described as 'Asian or Asian British'
- the incident took place in a police or medical setting
- 'alcohol' or 'crowd' were reported as impact factors

Public support

Several surveys and opinion polls have been carried out to gauge public understanding of, and support for, Taser. The most recent published results of an Ipsos Mori online survey commissioned by the Police Federation found that 71% of the people surveyed considered it 'fairly acceptable' or 'completely acceptable' for police officers to carry a Taser, and that 60% agreed all officers should have the option of being equipped with a Taser.⁵³

Public acceptability

Research by UCL for the College of Policing on public acceptability of the use of force found that Taser was considered no more or less justified or acceptable than other weapons (baton or irritant spray) in a vignette involving police contact with a person suspected of concealing a weapon.⁵⁴ The view of those people most likely to be subjected to police force is not known.

Officer decision making

Qualitative research has highlighted the potential for Taser to affect how officers decide to manage conflict⁵⁵ Interviews with seven Taser trainers from three forces suggested officers might be more inclined to use Taser to manage conflict rather than use their non-physical skills to de-escalate.

53 Sampling methods unknown (Ipsos MORI 2016).

54 Yesberg and others 2019.

55 Dymond 2019.

Other police equipment

Overview

National data on the use of other equipment is available in the annual use-of-force statistics. Over two-thirds of PCSOs felt that the equipment provided to them was inadequate, and there was wide support for PCSOs being provided with irritant spray and handcuffs. There was a general lack of research on police equipment, with the exception of body-worn video cameras (BWVCs), which have been shown to increase assaults on the police and have no effect on the use of force.

National data

Police-recorded data on the use of other types of equipment, such as baton and irritant spray, is published annually by the Home Office in the annual use-of-force statistics.⁵⁶

National Police Safety Survey

The police officers and staff who responded were asked how effective they thought different types of equipment were at reducing assaults against police officers and staff. Almost all officers thought that Taser was 'very effective' or 'fairly effective' (99%). Handcuffs and limb restraints were seen as the next most effective, with 91% and 87% respectively thinking they were 'very effective' or 'fairly effective'.

Over two-thirds of PCSOs who responded (69%) did not think that the standard equipment they were provided with was adequate (for example, stab vest and radio). The majority of those who said their equipment was inadequate thought that irritant spray and handcuffs would help to ensure their safety.

⁵⁶ Home Office 2019a.

Research evidence

Body-worn video camera

A meta-analysis of 10 multi-site RCTs showed that, on average, BWVCs had no effect on the police use of force.⁵⁷ Similarly, a separate RCT by the College of Policing and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in London found no effect of BWVCs on self-reported uses of force in an officer survey.⁵⁸ There is some evidence to suggest, however, that use of force might reduce when use of BWVC is more tightly controlled.⁵⁹

The meta-analysis did, however, find that BWVCs increased the risk of assaults against officers. The authors speculated that this may have been due to increased self-awareness when officers deployed with BWVCs, which may have been interpreted by suspects as a sign of weakness.⁶⁰

Other equipment

The use-of-force analysis by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter⁶¹ looked at which tactics were associated with reports of the person subjected to force being injured, and of them being hospitalisation as a result. The odds of both injury subsequent hospitalisation were increased when:

- officers:
 - deployed dogs, discharged their Tasers or physically used batons, limb restraints, dogs or unarmed force
 - faced active resistance
- the person in the incident was male

Both outcomes was less likely when:

- the person subjected to force was described as 'Black or Black British'
- 'crowd' was a reported impact factor

57 Ariel and others 2016b.

58 Grossmith and others 2015.

59 Ariel and others 2016a.

60 Ariel and others 2016a.

61 Quinton and others 2020.

Training

Overview

No national data on training is available, apart from data gathered by the NPCC and the College of Policing for internal monitoring purposes. A notable proportion of police officers were not satisfied with the PST they received. Research has tentatively suggested that PST delivery can be disjointed and unrealistic, and can lead to officer disinterest. There was some evidence to suggest that training in the non-physical aspects of conflict management may help officers and staff to resolve conflict safely without using force.

National data

No national data is available on PST, though the NPCC and the College of Policing do sometimes gather information from forces on the content, length and frequency of training.

National Police Safety Survey

Most, but not all, police officers, special constables and PCSOs who responded to the survey had received PST in the past 12 months (81% overall). A notable proportion were not satisfied with the training they had received, with one-third of respondents (34%) saying they were 'very dissatisfied', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.

Officers were asked which tactics they used regularly that may have been taught during PST. Officers were most likely to say that they used non-physical conflict management skills on a regular basis (between 73% and 91% of officers), rather than physical skills. Restraints and takedowns were the physical skills most likely to be reported (63% and 44% respectively).

Despite relatively high proportions of officers reportedly using non-physical skills on a regular basis, officers were mixed in their views about the training in these skills:

- only half (52%) said their training had taught them how to defuse confrontation
- under half (44%) said they had opportunities to practise de-escalation skills in training
- one-quarter (26%) said that not enough time was spent training essential communication skills

Research evidence

Training in general

An REA by the College of Policing on the effectiveness of training in general has shown that training integrated into routine practice is more likely to change behaviour, compared with traditional classroom training.⁶²

Personal safety training

A qualitative study of PST in one force showed that officers spent over half of their training time passively observing or listening.⁶³ The curriculum was also seen to be delivered in an unrealistic and disjointed way, which led to officers becoming disinterested. The author speculated that officers might be less able to put their training into practice in real-life situations as a result. Evidence was also found of delivery methods that may have limited the opportunity for female officers to develop their skills (for example, pairing smaller female officers with much larger male officers).

Conflict management training

The REA by the College of Policing on conflict management considered international evidence, drawn from a range of sectors, on the effectiveness of interventions in minimising the need to use force

62 Wheller and Morris 2010.

63 Cushion 2018.

in conflict situations.^{64, 65} Conflict management training appeared to be the most effective intervention, in terms of increasing participants' knowledge and confidence in dealing with aggression. Less evidence was found regarding the impact of such training on behaviour, assaults and use of force in real-world situations, rather than in scenarios. The training that was found to have some positive impact on behaviour or violence focused on emotional control and how to remain calm, specific interpersonal communication skills, and building rapport and empathy. All used elements of scenario-based role-play or live simulation.

Procedural justice training

There is also a growing international evidence base that police training in procedural justice – fair decision making and respectful treatment – can have a positive impact on officer attitudes and behaviour, and on public perceptions of policing.⁶⁶ An RCT carried out by the College of Policing in Greater Manchester highlighted the importance of officers practising communication skills in realistic role-play scenarios and receiving personalised feedback.⁶⁷ While closely related to conflict management training, no examples were found of procedural justice training being used in the context of personal safety.

Welfare support

Overview

No national data was available. Just over half of officers and PCSOs were satisfied with support they received from supervisors following a recent assault. Satisfaction appeared to be associated with the actions taken by supervisors. Research highlights perceived inconsistencies and limitations with current support provisions following assault.

64 Dryer-Beers and others 2020.

65 See also: Giacomantonio and others 2019.

66 Nagin and Telep 2017.

67 Wheller and others 2013.

National data

No national data was identified on officer and staff welfare support in respect of assaults.

National Police Safety Survey

Officers and PCSOs who had been assaulted on duty were asked about the supervisory support they received the last time they were assaulted. Around half (50% of officers, 46% of PCSOs) said their supervisors had completed an injury on duty or safety incident form. Only 17% of officers and 22% of PCSOs said their supervisors had discussed or developed welfare plans.

Officers and staff who responded were also asked how satisfied they were with the support they received. Overall, 54% of officers and PCSOs said that they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied'. A relatively high proportion were neutral in their assessment. Just over one in 10 were 'very dissatisfied' or 'fairly dissatisfied' (11%). Satisfaction and supervisory actions appeared to be correlated, although satisfaction may not improve if supervisors are required to take these actions. Whether a supervisor completed a form or discussed a welfare plan may not have been important in itself, but could be related to the overall quality of supervision.

Research evidence

Support following injury

A mixed methods study for the Police Dependents' Trust explored experiences of support, drawing on 59 interviews and 10,987 survey responses with officers and staff who had been injured.^{68, 69} Most survey respondents sought support from outside the police, mainly their general practitioners, a finding that was echoed in the survey about trauma for Police Care UK.⁷⁰ In-force support, for example from

68 Fielding and others 2016.

69 Bullock and Garland 2019.

70 University of Cambridge 2018.

occupational health, received lower ratings than support outside the police. Those officers and staff who experienced psychological injuries were less satisfied than those who experienced physical injuries. Of those who reported experiencing traumatic events in the Police Care UK survey, 65% felt that trauma impact was not well managed in their force.⁷¹

Interviews for the Police Dependents' Trust revealed concerns about disclosing injuries due to the perception that doing so would affect their careers, would be met with a punitive response or would carry a stigma, or that supervisors and peers would not believe them. Respondents often felt unsupported, misunderstood or under pressure to return to work by supervisors. It was reportedly common for supervisors to be cynical and propose inappropriate solutions. These issues were thought to be exacerbated by forces devolving responsibility for the recovery of injuries to supervisors.

The study identified factors that seemed to influence the experience of support following injury. These included:

- the proactivity, consistency and sensitivity of occupational health departments
- the accuracy and speed of the diagnosis and referral to specialist services
- the availability and timeliness of treatment
- senior management awareness and their ability to balance the needs of the organisation with those of injured officers
- the relationship between supervisors and injured officers – for example, the extent to which supervisors proactively provide support or push officers back to work as quickly as possible

Debriefing

A Cochrane systematic review has examined whether delivery of single-session psychological debriefings can reduce distress and prevent PTSD after people have recently experienced traumatic events.⁷² In terms of

71 University of Cambridge 2018.

72 Rose and others 2002.

preventing or reducing the severity of mental health issues, the review found that the effect of debriefing was the same as, or worse than, doing nothing or delivering educational interventions. There was some evidence that debriefing may increase the risk of PTSD and depression.

A more recent systematic review carried out in partnership by the College of Policing, which considered a range of debriefing interventions, found that members of uniformed services tended to benefit from discussing with peers their experiences of, and reactions to, traumatic incidents.⁷³

Criminal justice processes and outcomes

Overview

National data on prosecutions and sentencing is gathered, but does not appear to be published. Less than half of survey respondents who had been assaulted recently said that the offenders went to court for the assault. Of these respondents, most said that the accused was found or pleaded guilty. According to nearly three-quarters of respondents who said offenders were found or pleaded guilty, these offenders were given non-custodial sentences. Respondents were generally more satisfied with the way their cases were handled by criminal justice agencies than with the outcome of their cases. The overall quality of the police response appeared to be correlated with satisfaction.

National data

National data in prosecutions and sentencing related to assaults will be available from the Ministry of Justice, though it is not included in its annual CJ statistics.⁷⁴

73 Richins and others 2019.

74 Ministry of Justice 2019.

National Police Safety Survey

Officers and staff whose assaults were recorded as crimes in the past two years were asked about the police investigation and any criminal proceedings. Overall, 44% of respondents said that the offenders went to court for assaulting them. Of these respondents, most (94%) said that the accused was found or pleaded guilty. According to nearly three-quarters (70%) of respondents who said offenders were found or pleaded guilty, these offenders were given non-custodial sentences.

Respondents were also asked how satisfied they were with the police investigation and any criminal proceedings. They were generally more satisfied with the process than the outcome (58% and 45% were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied', respectively). The overall quality of the police response – for example, the thoroughness of the investigation, being kept informed – appeared to be correlated with satisfaction. A relatively high proportion of respondents (41%) said that they were given no reason why, or did not know why, their cases had not progressed further than they did.

Research evidence

No research evidence was found on CJ processes.

Chapter recommendations

Recommendation 1

Data collection and oversight

1 **The NPCC** should identify its priorities for further data collection and research on officer and staff safety, and on the police use of force. The NPCC should share these priorities with the College of Policing, the Home Office and academia to inform their ongoing work programmes.

2 **The NPCC** should appoint a chief officer lead for officer and staff safety.



Chapter 3

Analysis on the threat to frontline officers and staff

This chapter explores the threat to frontline officers and staff, beginning with an analysis of the circumstances that led to the tragic and untimely death of serving officers between 2008 and 2019. There follows an examination of national assault data, before the risk posed by moving vehicles and shift work commuting is evaluated. The chapter finishes with a section on sexual assault, hate crime and corrosive substance attacks (CSAs).

Officers and PCSOs who died while on duty between 2008 and 2019

The following section comprises a detailed analysis of data obtained from the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Roll of Honour, which records cases where police officers have tragically lost their life in the line of duty. All of these officers, as well as their families and loved ones, remain in our thoughts.

Unfortunately, the source data does not include wider police staff,⁷⁵ such as detention officers, scenes of crime officers (SOCOs) and investigators, because this data is not currently available. To address this shortfall, the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) requests a more logical and better-structured system of reporting, which will allow for the collation and auditable recording of the details of each and every workforce death in the future. It is hoped and anticipated that this database will be created quickly and then managed and maintained through the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

⁷⁵ The project team used open source web material to access data on the deaths of PCSOs. No such data exists for other police staff.

In carrying out data analysis, the project team sought to ascertain whether a correlation exists between officers and PCSOs being killed in the line of duty and the overall safety and security provisions for the front line.

The analysis is based on data from 2008 to October 2019; the last officer was tragically killed in August 2019. The data set includes information such as year, force, incident type, circumstances and whether the officer was single-crewed, double-crewed or alone. This information is then further divided into subcategories of criminal act, accidents on duty and natural causes.

The findings were:

- 92 police officers were identified as having lost their lives in the line of duty
- 15 officers (16%) lost their lives as a direct result of a criminal act/intent
- 56 officers (61%) lost their lives as a result of an accident on duty, including conducting general patrol, commuting to and from work, and other hazards
- 21 officers (23%) died of natural causes, such as illness on duty
- A disproportionate number of officers, 49 (53%), were killed in a road traffic collision (RTC)
- 39 officers lost their lives during the commute to or from work
- four PCSOs lost their lives:
 - two died of suspected heart attacks
 - one was killed in an RTC
 - one died as the result of an assault

Death due to criminal intent⁷⁶

This section focuses on the cause and circumstances of officer deaths, and whether there were any safety provisions in place that could have potentially prevented the death. A total of 15 deaths were analysed and the data set showed a wide variety of circumstances where officers have been killed in the line of duty.

- One was killed by a bomb, three were shot, two were shot and attacked with hand grenade(s), six were killed by vehicles/RTCs, two were assaulted and one was stabbed.
- Out of the 15 officers, it is known that six were double-crewed at the time of the incident. There is no further data available about the other incidents, as this would involve further research that is beyond the scope and tight timescales of this review.
- At least one mainland officer, who was hit by a moving vehicle, was armed with a firearm at the time of their death. It is assumed that both Police Service of Northern Ireland officers were armed at the time of the incident.
- From the available data, it is inconclusive whether any of the officers were carrying a Taser device.
- In the light of this information, it cannot be confirmed whether or not the presence of a Taser or firearm would have assisted these officers or prevented their deaths.

National data on serious assaults between January and October 2019

The project team asked each force to supply details of all recorded crimes of grievous bodily harm (GBH), as well as more serious offences, such as attempted murder, against police officers and staff

⁷⁶ Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) figures are included in this data analysis. It is recognised that officers from the PSNI face a different threat to officers from England and Wales, which could affect the validity of the overall data set. Of the 15 deaths examined, two were officers from PSNI. One was killed by a bomb and the other was shot when responding to an incident. In the opinion of the project team, this does not have a marked effect on the analysis and findings.

between January and October 2019. Thirteen forces were able to share meaningful data within the timeframe required, from either crime records or use-of-force data. The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) for recording both section 20 and section 18 GBH is set far below the charging standard for these offences. Furthermore, some forces appear to follow the NCRS more robustly than others. These factors somewhat confound analysis of the data. Data from Scotland refers to offences of 'serious assault'.

From the 13 forces who shared data, 192 offences of GBH against our workforce were recorded in the first 10 months of 2019 alone. Of these, 70 were the more serious offence of intentional GBH (Offences Against the Person Act 1861, section 18), which carries a potential sentence of up to life imprisonment.

In addition, seven offences were attempts to commit GBH, which included offenders driving at officers and attempting to stab them. The force reporting the highest number of offences in the sample was West Midlands, with 71 GBH offences against their workforce.

Of the offences shared, the injury to the officer was described on 123 crimes, including dislocated joints, ingestion of toxic liquid, fractures, burns and bites. Three offences specifically mentioned stab wounds, although this is inconclusive, as other injuries described could have been caused by knives.

Some of these forces were able to provide information concerning carriage of Taser and firearm by the victim; this was identified in 132 crimes. Of these, in 124 cases (94%), the victim was not carrying a Taser or firearm. In total, one victim (who was hit by a moving vehicle) carried a firearm and seven carried a Taser.

The project team was able to identify the crewing mode of the officer in 116 of the offences. A total of 103 victims were double-crewed at the time (89% of this sample). Two officers were recorded as 'alone', which might indicate that they were double-crewed at the time but had become separated.

Crewing

In the federated ranks of the police service, there is a commonly held conception that officers and staff who are single-crewed are more likely to be assaulted on duty, and that the likelihood increases during the evenings and at night-time, particularly on weekend shifts.

The National Police Safety Survey showed that, of the officers assaulted to GBH level, 38% were 'single-crewed' or 'alone' at the time of the assault, while 62% were 'double-crewed'. Analysis of police national use-of-force data from 16 forces by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter⁷⁷ showed that the likelihood of officers being assaulted, and of officers being injured, increased when they were single-crewed, compared to when they were crewed with an officer who did not use force.

No firm conclusions can be drawn from these analyses. Before any firm recommendations around crewing can be made, further research is needed to assess, more comprehensively, the impact of single-crewing or lone working on the likelihood of assault. This research should include potential risk factors, such as shift time and length, day of the week and duty type.

Notwithstanding this assertion, the project team suggest that chief constables carefully review their current crewing arrangements as an integral part of their annual strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA). If forces do not have a specific policy in place then one should be created, taking into account the unique threat, harm and risk present in each individual force area. In the future, a consistent national approach to crewing policy decision making could also be beneficial.

In order to better inform future officer and staff safety reviews, the project team recommend that the NPCC, with the College of Policing and Home Office, should review the processes for collecting, analysing and publishing data on officers and staff safety. Understanding the landscape of serious assaults against our workforce will enable informed decisions to be made around equipment and training, and better support them in the future.

77 Quinton and others 2020.



Road safety

When asked about the main risk to their personal safety while on duty, many police officers and staff members would highlight the risk of being seriously assaulted as their primary concern. The current base of evidence, however, suggests that officers and staff members are more likely to be killed or seriously injured in road-related incidents.

Data gathered by the project team for the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) shows that a disproportionate number of police officers and PCSOs have died as a result of a car or motorcycle accident while responding to incidents, conducting routine patrol, or driving to and from work. These incidents equated to 53% of the total deaths recorded over the time period. This finding challenges the commonly held belief that officers and staff are at a greater risk of being killed by homicide than in a road-related incident.

There was insufficient data available to fully explore each encounter in isolation. However, it stands to reason that officers and frontline staff are at heightened risk of being struck by a vehicle when they are engaged in particular preventative activities, such as deploying a Stinger or Hollow Spike Tyre Deflation System (HOSTYDS) device, or when they are dealing with a situation at the roadside. This risk is exacerbated

if the encounter takes place on a busy road, an arterial road or, most significantly, a motorway. Recently, there has also been a concerning rise in the number of times that officers have been struck by moving vehicles, whether accidentally, recklessly or deliberately. In Sussex, three such instances were recorded in the month of October 2019 alone.

Case studies

- Two uniformed officers (one tutor and one recruit) were carrying out a routine check on a vehicle linked by intelligence to drug supply. They had made two arrests when a vehicle approached the scene at speed, struck the two officers, one of the detained suspects and a marked police vehicle. As a result of this incident, one officer suffered a broken shoulder, arm and leg. The other officer suffered two fractures and extensive bruising.⁷⁸
 - Less than a week later, a traffic officer in full uniform was assisting at the scene of a broken-down lorry on the A27 near Brighton when he was struck by a vehicle travelling at speed. The officer suffered a broken leg and needed extensive skin grafts.⁷⁹
-

The OSSR concludes that the risk that moving vehicles pose to frontline officers and staff could be reduced by a combination of education, tactical awareness (built through peer-to-peer support) and basic uniform provision. The Association of Police Health and Safety Advisers (APHSA) have advised the project team that any officer or staff member working on fast roads must wear high-visibility clothing that meets the highest safety standards⁸⁰ and suggests that the police service could use the Department for Transport (DfT) expectations for street works as a baseline for policing matters such as fending and coning off.⁸¹ Some forces

78 The driver of the vehicle pleaded guilty to seven offences, including three counts of causing serious injury by driving dangerously, and was given a lengthy custodial sentence.

79 The driver of this vehicle is still under investigation.

80 Class 3 (EN ISO 20471).

81 Department for Transport 2013.

apparently already do this as a minimum standard, though national consistency in this area could be beneficial.

In addition, chiefs should consider how they upskill frontline officers and staff members who are expected to conduct duties on the roads. Chiefs should consider how they could use peer-to-peer support from roads policing specialists. Possible options could include a structured attachment period, practical demonstrations of best practice in safe roads policing, and initial training for officers and appropriate staff. In addition, these officers should be issued with the same high-visibility clothing, kit and safety equipment usually issued to traffic officers, if supported by the local STRA.

Police officers and certain frontline staff could also benefit from a comprehensive learning package that is designed to enhance their current understanding around the risks of road policing. This learning package should include, but need not be restricted to, the following topics:

- the safest tactics(s) to stop a vehicle, both on foot and from a police vehicle
- the safest and least safe places to pull a vehicle over to
- the safest way to approach a vehicle on foot
- how a police officer or staff member could increase their personal safety by tactically positioning themselves and/or a police vehicle when conducting a roadside inquiry
- how one police vehicle, or ideally two, can be positioned tactically to provide a relatively safe 'sterile area' for officers to operate within if they need to conduct inquiries or make arrests at the roadside (for example, by positioning the vehicles in a 'V' formation and working close to the engine blocks⁸²)
- tactics for arresting an offender who is within a vehicle
- the importance of maintaining situational awareness at all times when working on roads

This review also highlights the need for new legislation that makes

82 The project team understand that work on the topic of tactical vehicle positioning is currently being undertaken within the Metropolitan Police Service. Certain aspects of this work could perhaps be rolled out to the front line.

it a specific indictable criminal offence for anyone to use, threaten or attempt to use a vehicle to deliberately target a police officer or frontline staff member.

Vehicle immobilisation devices (Stinger/HOSTYDS)

Using a vehicle immobilisation device, such as Stinger or HOSTYDS, is a high-risk area of policing that was historically the sole remit of specialist roads policing officers, but is now increasingly conducted by non-specialist response officers. The project team understands that the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) is currently investigating a device that can be laid in advance and deployed remotely from a safe distance. This tactical option has the potential to significantly reduce the operational risk to officers and staff who are expected to carry out this particular function. As such, the project team encourage the testing, procurement and rollout of remotely activated vehicle immobilisation devices to be expedited.

The legal vulnerability of police drivers

On 2 May 2019, the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, issued a written ministerial statement promising to correct an existing legal unfairness that leaves police drivers vulnerable to prosecution whenever they drive outside of the 'careful and competent driver' common legal standard. The PFEW has been campaigning for eight years to highlight the inappropriateness of officers being taken to court for following their training, and sometimes even being held to account for the reckless actions of the criminals they pursue.

The Home Office held a public consultation in summer 2018 around the idea of introducing a new legislative driving standard for police officers, which would assess blue-light responders against their training. The project team fully support this proposal as a legitimate means to protect the psychological and legal welfare of officers and staff.

Commuting

Police data showing that 80% of recorded vehicular deaths occurred during the officer's commute to and from work in their personal car or motorcycle is a great concern. Commuting was perhaps the greatest threat to officer and staff safety identified by the OSSR, which is surprising given the roots and intended strategic direction of the review.

This organisational risk was acknowledged by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in 2009 when they commissioned research under the heading 'Shiftwork and Driving Safety in the British Police Service'. Unfortunately, this research was not completed due to significant changes in the policing landscape, which included the loss of the ACPO lead for the portfolio and the closing down of the NPIA and ACPO. The project team suggest that more could be done not only to build the base of evidence in this area, but also to raise general awareness of this risk to police officers and staff, especially those doing shift work. As such, the project team strongly encourage the resumption of this vital piece of research. The project team also encourage each chief officer to liaise with their respective federation and staff association leads, who have been raising awareness of this risk for some time and, as such, are in a good position provide advice and guidance and to enhance organisational awareness among the workforce.

The project team consider it of great significance that during the period analysed, the majority of officers were killed in RTCs, or struck by vehicles through criminal intent, while on foot. Generally, officer and staff safety is associated with the risk of physical assaults conducted by a combative assailant, as opposed to the risk of road-related injuries or death. In this vein, a culture change is required, so that officers and staff of all ranks understand that they are at greater risk of losing their life when driving home from shift work, than they are from being violently attacked.

The project team also urge chief constables to remain mindful of this ongoing business risk when formulating or reviewing any organisational policies around staffing levels, shift times, working hours, night duties and overtime, and to consider this issue when completing their annual STRA.

Sexual assault and hate crime

There are a number of examples of sexual assault on members of the police workforce. This area requires further work as it is not fully understood but is of great importance, particularly to female officers and staff, who are typically, but not exclusively, the victims.

Case studies

- A female officer arrested a violent offender. He was presented to custody, where he made lewd comments and exposed himself during a custody search. He later grabbed the female officer's buttocks, deriving sexual gratification. This incident has had an impact on this young student officer and her desire to remain in the police. The suspect was remanded in custody, pleaded guilty to all charges and was released for a pre-sentence report the next day.
 - At a football match, a female football spotter was groped in the groin by a drunken football supporter. The offender is arrested. This offence caused considerable distress to the officer.
-

Racist, religious, homophobic, transphobic, disablist or other hate abuse against our workforce is also of great concern. It is all too common for protected groups in our workforce to experience hate abuse, which can have a significant impact on them. The National Police Safety Survey shows that White officers (62%) were much less likely than Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers (38%) to report never having been subjected to hate crime. To build and retain a diverse workforce, this area must be addressed.

Sexual assault and hate crime against officers and staff are likely to be under-reported and under-investigated, so the project team strongly encourage chief constables to ensure that the most robust approach possible is taken to their recording, investigation and disposal of sexual and hate offences against our workforce. The project team also encourage chief constables to provide the best possible initial and ongoing support to victims. The police service must remain hostile to

anyone who discriminates against any person on the grounds of sex, race, gender or any other protected characteristic.

It is difficult to identify this type of abuse because, while the offences are recorded as hate crime, there is no standard way to specifically identify those offences that occur against the police workforce. It is recommended that the NCRS is updated to allow easy identification of these offences.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 (AEWA) provides that a number of offences are aggravated when they are committed against an 'emergency worker'. The common aggravated public order offences are also omitted from this act, possibly because they are already considered aggravated.

Corrosive substances

Although acid attacks and CSAs on police officers and staff are relatively rare, they can have a devastating effect on the victim, as well as their family, loved ones and friends. Acid attacks and CSAs can potentially result in life-changing injuries, such as blindness, permanent burns and disfigurement.

The project team is aware that significant work in this area remains underway with the Corrosive Substance Working Group. This section is intended to complement this excellent ongoing work.

For the purposes of this review, the project team was unable to gather satisfactory data from every force on the number of officers and staff attacked with corrosive substances. There were also evident inconsistencies in recording practices. For example, some forces recorded incidents as a serious assault (section 18 or section 20 GBH), common assault or actual bodily harm (ABH), while other forces recorded them as administering a noxious substance. Some forces specifically flag the use of a corrosive substance against a police officer or employee, while others will not.

Regarding the type of substances used in such attacks, this is again difficult to pinpoint nationally. It may be surprising to note that one

of the more common corrosive substances used is ammonia, a non-flammable substance that is widely available to the public, as it is a core ingredient of many household cleaning products. If not treated immediately, the criminal use of ammonia can cause life-changing injuries, as can be seen in the below case study.

Case study

On 16 April 2019, a response sergeant from Lancashire Constabulary was attending an emergency call for service at a residential address. During this incident, he was deliberately sprayed in the face with ammonia by the offender.

The substance was inadvertently ingested by the officer and the chemical immediately began to affect his eyes, nose and throat. The officer describes how paramedics were called but did not attend as it was not assessed as a priority incident. The officer was deprived of crucial timely first aid and was rushed to the nearest hospital in a police car.

Despite numerous medical interventions, the officer is currently blind in one eye and his eyelid has been sewn shut. Doctors are hopeful that there might be a cure in terms of specialist surgery that could restore his vision, but this cannot be guaranteed. The officer describes the incident as distressing and life-changing, not only to him, but also to his family, friends and colleagues.

In order to raise awareness of the risk of CSAs, Lancashire Constabulary have published an online video that shows body-worn video camera (BWVC) footage from the scene and provides the first-hand account of the officer concerned, which clearly demonstrates the horrifying impact of a CSA. The project team strongly encourage anyone who has not yet viewed this video to do so, in order to fully appreciate the risk and devastating impact of such attacks.

In reflecting on this harrowing case study, the project team has identified a number of areas where service improvements could be made and overall risk to officers and staff could be reduced. For example, the

police officer in this case should have received an emergency response from the ambulance service. It is also apparent that a more robust approach in terms of legislation and criminal justice processes could help to reduce the risk of harm to officers and staff.⁸³

Awareness treatment and prevention

In terms of awareness, the project team recommend a national learning package highlighting the risk of CSAs and providing vital information on the suggested response, in terms of initial treatment and first aid.

In terms of prevention, the project team expect that, in cases where there is prior intelligence to suggest that officers or staff may be attacked with corrosive substances, the most appropriate unit with the most appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE, such as safety glasses) would be assigned to deal with that incident. As such, this does not in itself require a recommendation.

The OSSR highlights two products that are at various stages of accessibility but could, in the near future, be a crucial addition to the fleet, or even be considered for PPE to officers and staff.

It is considered that such products would prove far more practical than carrying large quantities of sterilised water in the vehicles (which some forces, such as Hertfordshire, currently do),⁸⁴ or having to find a source of fresh water to decontaminate the affected area, in the event of a CSA.

The most commonly cited substance is Diphoterine. This treats acid or alkaline attacks by drawing the chemical out. It works within 60 seconds and costs around £100 per canister. It does not, however, work on certain substances, such as hydrofluoric acid. This product is currently used by certain specialist units within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), as well as various other external bodies, but has not yet been made widely available.

83 Lancashire Police 2019.

84 The problem with storing water in such a way is that it needs to be replenished every few months, even if not used, after which it requires appropriate management. Corrosive substances require a large quantity of water to have any realistic benefit. Some forces call out the Fire & Rescue Services to assist with corrosive substance incidents.

Another promising near-market solution can be carried in small quantities (200ml) and can treat a number of victims by acting as a neutralising agent for acid, alkaline and oxidants. It is a plant-based solution that is water soluble and acts as a wetting agent. This neutralising solution has been used in a different formula as a fire extinguisher and flame retardant in the motor sports industry. The product is designed to neutralise without heat, and can therefore stop further burning or heat once applied. The product is designed to be a preventative application as a barrier. It is claimed that the solution effervesces in contact with acid, thereby acting as a partial identifier as well.

The appropriate deployment of firearms officers to protect unarmed officers and staff

While recent debates about the deployment of armed officers have primarily focused on public protection, the OSSR focuses on the protection of other frontline police officers and staff. This section considers whether officers are properly equipped to perform their primary functions and, in so doing, are able to protect themselves.

Anecdotally, unarmed officers have raised concerns in a number of forums that they are sometimes despatched to incidents that they perceive would be more suitable for armed colleagues. During other research,⁸⁵ armed officers expressed frustration that unarmed colleagues are despatched to edged-weapon calls, which they feel are more appropriate for an armed response vehicle (ARV). While Taser is suitable to resolve many incidents and is a vital tool for officer, staff and community safety, it must be noted that a recent NPCC study found it was effective on 68% of occasions and can be defeated by specialist, heavy or loose clothing.⁸⁶ Firearms officers equipped with less lethal weapons have a firearms contingency to deal with offenders armed with potentially lethal weapons, to which Taser-only officers do not have access.

85 Clark-Darby 2020.

86 Drummond-Smith and others 2019.

Authorisation for deployment of armed officers is made by firearms commanders and requires them only to have 'reason to suppose officers may need to protect themselves or others'. Furthermore, the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum contains large sections on dealing with individuals with bladed articles. Chiefs might consider that armed officers are often the best trained and equipped to deal with offenders armed with knives and other edged weapons, and may wish to ensure that their commanders are making the most appropriate decisions.

The project team examined the number of officers who died in the line of duty in the previous decade (see the **Officers and PCSOs who died while on duty between 2008 and 2019** section of this chapter). While most were killed by natural causes or accidents, 15 were killed by criminal act. Of these 15, one was killed by a bomb, three were shot, two were shot and attacked with hand grenade(s), six were killed by vehicles or RTCs, two were assaulted and one was stabbed.

The review of GBH data provided by forces for January to October 2019 (see the **National data on serious assaults between January and October 2019** section of this chapter) was unable to identify the number of officers stabbed. However, within just 13 forces, 193 offences of GBH were identified in the first 10 months of 2019. Of this sample, the equipment carried by victims was identified in 132 cases. Of these 132 cases, just one officer was carrying a firearm and seven officers were carrying a Taser.

Furthermore, the project team asked forces to supply their average and longest ARV response times. Several forces were unable to provide this data. Of those who did, one force achieved an impressive 14-minute average response time,⁸⁷ while most reported an average of between 20 and 30 minutes. This statistic should be contextualised by the difference in armed policing coverage within urban and rural locations, as well as the stringent criteria for declaring a spontaneous firearms incident under the current armed policing guidelines. Armed response units can also often be deployed to a 'holding' location (while, for example, initial intelligence or information is being gathered and/or assessed), prior to actually being deployed to, and arriving at, the actual scene.

87 This was a northern urban force.



Availability of armed officers

A stark statistic from the 2017 PFEW officer survey was that nationally, of 32,366 officers who responded, only 6% thought the number of officers trained to carry firearms was 'about right'. Overall, 93% thought that more officers should be trained, and 51% thought that all officers should be trained in firearms. This sample only covers around one-quarter of our officers, and it is not possible to determine how many of these officers already carry firearms or Taser.

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris of November 2015, the NPCC and the Armed Policing portfolio lead considered the issue of arming all police officers in the early stages of the National Armed Policing Uplift Programme. At that stage, they discounted a routine arming option, in favour of increasing the capability and capacity of immediately available armed officers capable of mitigating the threat from such an attack. In essence, focus has remained on increasing the number of ARVs in London and in eight other force areas within England and Wales, and on increasing the Counter Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officer (CTSFO) network outside of London.

The debate on routine arming resurfaces periodically. However, recent events have generated a great deal of commentary regarding the ability of first responders to mitigate the threat. In 2010, Derek Bird was confronted by unarmed officers who could not contain him, after which he continued on to murder nine further victims. After the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich in 2013, commentators reflected on the inability of the police to tackle the assailants until the ARV arrived. More recently, the 2017 Westminster attacker was neutralised within 80 seconds owing to the presence of an armed protection officer with a handgun. The 2017 London Bridge attackers were neutralised within eight minutes, but during this period unarmed officers and members of the public were seriously injured while trying to prevent further casualties.

While Taser may have been of use during the 2017 Westminster attack against a man armed only with a knife, arguably it would have done little to mitigate the threat posed by Derek Bird or by the Woolwich attackers, one of whom was carrying a handgun. During the 2017 London Bridge attack, Taser would arguably have been little use to the unarmed officer who confronted three attackers, who were wearing suspected improvised explosive devices (IEDs), with his baton. You can only Taser two people at once with the X2 if both cartridges hit their target first time, and the merits of discharging electricity into an IED remain untested. It is sometimes suggested that an attack may have been stopped earlier, and the number of casualties reduced, if the first officers on the scene had been armed. This argument might be strongest in areas unable to match the swift armed response times demonstrated recently by the ARVs in London.

Armed capability has been previously based on threat, harm and risk. However, the NPCC accepted in July 2017 that individual chiefs should also consider the vulnerability of more remote locations or crowded places.

In the light of the concerns raised above, the project team suggest that chief constables should, through the STRA process, continue to ensure that their armed capability provides an effective level of protection within their respective force areas.

Chapter recommendations

Recommendation 2

Data on officer and staff safety

The NPCC, with the College of Policing and Home Office, should review the processes for collecting, analysing and publishing data on officers and staff safety, including serious and aggravated offences (for example, murder, attempted murder, GBH, sexual assault and hate crimes). Where appropriate, offences against the police should be identifiable within recorded crime figures.

Recommendation 3

Road safety

1 Chief constables should adopt the current safety standards from the DfT as the common minimum standard for the police service. Chief constables should nominate a lead to integrate these standards into working practice.

2 Chief constables should review the support offered to appropriate frontline staff conducting roads policing activities, including considering use of peer-to-peer support from specialist roads policing officers.

3 Chief constables should review whether any high-visibility clothing, kit or safety equipment made available to specialist traffic units should also be issued to frontline officers and certain staff members who are expected to work on the roads.

4 The College of Policing should work with the NPCC to produce a learning package for officers and appropriate staff to reduce the risks associated with roads policing.

Recommendation 3

Road safety

5 The NPCC to approach the Home Office regarding a change in legislation to prohibit an offender from deliberately using, threatening to use or attempting to use a vehicle to target a police employee. This legislative amendment could form part of the forthcoming Police Powers and Protection Bill.

6 DSTL should work with partners and industry to expedite the testing, procurement and rollout of remotely operated vehicle immobilisation devices with the aim of reducing risks to officers.

7 The NPCC should recommission social research on the link between shift work and safe driving practices in consultation with staff associations and trade unions. The results should be used to raise awareness and mitigate risk within every force.

Recommendation 4

Crime recording standards

1 The NPCC should work with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice to examine the extent to which sexual and hate offences against emergency workers are treated as aggravated offences under the AEWA (2018).

2 The NPCC should propose to the Home Office that the NCRS is updated to allow easy identification of sexual offences and hate crime offences against emergency workers.

Recommendation 5

Corrosive substances

- 1 **The NPCC and the Ambulance Service** scope the development of a joint Memorandum of Understanding so that all emergency service responders that are victims of confirmed or suspected CSAs receive an appropriate emergency response.
- 2 **The NPCC should work with the Home Office** to explore the potential impact of legislative changes to make it an offence to possess ammonia and other corrosive substances without good reason, as well as the use or threat to use such products as weapons.
- 3 **The College of Policing** should produce a learning package for officers and staff to raise awareness of the risks of a CSA, and should advise on response.
- 4 **The NPCC** should liaise the Home Office Commissioning Hub to further explore a possible solution for neutralising corrosive substances. Consideration should then be given for its deployment.



Chapter 4

Suitability and distribution of police equipment

This chapter considers the suitability and availability of safety equipment, including spit and bite guards (SBGs), personal safety shields (PSSs) and self-application tourniquets (SATs). This chapter also discusses in-vehicle protection, the deployment of firearms officers and Tasers. Where appropriate to each solution, case studies and/or statistical data are used to support recommendations.

The personal protective equipment provided to PCSOs

Two-thirds of PCSOs who responded to the National Police Safety Survey felt that the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by their force was inadequate. There was also widespread support among PCSOs for them to be issued with irritant spray and handcuffs.

These concerns should be explored further, but it should be noted that the common addition of enhanced PPE to PCSOs, such as irritant spray and handcuffs, has wider implications for police legitimacy and the fundamental principles of policing by consent. With this equipment, PCSOs may move closer to presenting an image of coercion, rather than their traditional and intended image of approachability to the public.

In the operational environment, PCSOs are not expected to engage in any form of confrontation. They are expected to stand back, report and, if necessary, request support from warranted officers. Equipping PCSOs with additional protective equipment will therefore not only have personal safety training (PST) and cost implications, but could also be seen as somewhat contradictory to their intended role. In addition, such a move could have the unintended consequence of increasing the likelihood that PCSOs will engage in confrontational situations and, because of this,

could potentially increase the likelihood that they will be injured or assaulted in the course of their duty.

Finally, the decision on whether or not to equip PCSOs with a wider array of equipment should not be made in an isolated context, as other police staff roles could benefit from such an approach. For example, custody detention officers often report being assaulted in the course of their duties, and staff investigators face similar operational risks. As such, the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) recommends that further consultation is needed to inform chief constables' local decisions.

Body-worn video cameras

Many forces provide body-worn video cameras (BWVCs) as personal issue to frontline officers and certain staff members, such as PCSOs. At the time of writing, there is a significant policy variance between forces in terms of the brand and type of model used, which roles and functions are allocated a camera, and whether this is done on a personal or pool issue basis. There is also national inconsistency when it comes to brand specification and procurement.

The link between BWVCs and officer and staff safety has been explored as part of the review. The evidence base is developing and there is currently little empirical research to suggest that BWVCs have the capacity to reduce the risk of harm to officers and staff. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that BWVCs could increase assaults against the police, and have no effect on the use of force, unless their use is tightly controlled.^{88, 89}

BWVC use has been shown to reduce the number of complaints made by the public against police officers⁹⁰ and improve criminal justice (CJ) outcomes, including conviction rates for domestic violence.^{91,92}

88 Ariel and others 2017.

89 Ariel and others 2016a.

90 Lum and others 2019.

91 Grossmith and others 2015.

92 Owens and others 2014.

On balance, given the current state of the evidence base, chief officers should not consider BWVCs as tools to reduce the risk of harm to officers and staff. Instead, BWVCs should be viewed as tools to increase the efficiency of criminal justice processes and reduce complaints against the police.

Body armour

The specification, suitability and procurement of body armour is discussed further in **Chapter 5** of this report, so will not be duplicated here. The project team recognise the operational value of suitable body armour in reducing the risk of harm to police officers and certain staff members, such as PCSOs. The project team conclude that following a strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA), this same degree of protection should be considered for all frontline roles, including, but not necessarily restricted to, scenes of crime officers (SOCOs), detention officers, investigators and front office staff.

Spit and bite guards

The specification, suitability, and procurement of SBGs is discussed further in **Chapter 5** of this report, so this information will not be duplicated here. In terms of the actual risk to officers and staff, the chances of being infected by communicable diseases through the deliberate or accidental transfer of bodily fluids, such as spit and blood, have been shown to be very low.⁹³ It is acknowledged that this is not the primary reason why SBGs were introduced and continue to be used by the police service. Instead, SBGs were introduced because spitting or biting is an unpleasant form of assault, and because people should be afforded a sufficient level of protection from such acts if the technology is available. This point is particularly important given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic as officers and staff face an increased risk of contracting this potentially deadly virus if they are coughed at or spat on by offenders who are infected. It is also worthy of note that SBGs provide a level of protection from biting by

93 NHS 2018.

reducing fluid transfer and making penetration of the skin less likely, although they have no effect in reducing blunt trauma.

Between January and October 2019, there were 98 recorded incidents where offenders either spat at or bit officers in South Wales police alone. In most of these cases, the assault was deliberate and bodily fluids, often from offenders with communicable diseases such as hepatitis or HIV, landed in the mouth or eyes of the victim.

The project team recognise that SBGs have received a heightened level of media attention and have been viewed by some as controversial, especially when they are used on children or protected groups.^{94, 95} Forces adopt varying policies with regards to the procurement, issue and deployment of SBGs. For example, a small number of forces restrict their use to the custody environment only.

The use of SBGs is supported by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and the vast majority of police officers in England and Wales are currently issued with SBGs as part of their standard PPE. In a 2018 speech to the PFEW, the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, expressed government support for officers wanting to be issued with SBGs.⁹⁶ In light of this, the project team conclude that every serving officer in England and Wales should be afforded the same level of personal and organisational protection from these extremely unpleasant assaults, if supported by force STRAs.

As part of the engagement strategy for this review, the project team worked closely with the PFEW on certain issues linked intrinsically to officer and staff safety. In particular, the project team discussed the PFEW's two-year Protect the Protectors campaign, which was instrumental in the creation of the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 (AEWA). One of the issues that arose during this campaign was the issue of spitting. During the consultation on AEWA (2018), the PFEW argued for the offence of spitting to become an aggravating factor in law, and for offenders to be compelled by law to provide a blood sample after spitting on an emergency worker.

94 Taylor 2016.

95 Merrifield 2019.

96 Home Secretary 2018.

To support its argument, the PFEW highlighted a case involving two West Midlands officers, who were spat on during arrest. In the aftermath, one officer had a false positive diagnosis for hepatitis, and his wife and young baby also needed to be tested. The other officer was unable to visit his brother, who was undergoing chemotherapy, for six weeks.⁹⁷

The PFEW's argument was rejected, however. The review points to a need for this decision to be revisited, as spitting does not currently attract the robust penalties afforded by the AEW (2018) and because the medical needs of police victims are not prioritised.

Personal safety shields

There is little empirical evidence on the operational benefits of frontline officers having access to shields. In addition, there is national inconsistency in this area. A small number of forces allow shields to be carried in vehicles, some allow emergency access via a store, and others do not allow officers to use them at all unless they are Police Support Unit trained. It has also become clear that some of the forces who use shields are doing so to combat the risk of edged-weapon attacks. However, they are using Public Order shields, which are not specifically designed for this purpose.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Officer Safety Unit (OSU),⁹⁸ with the assistance of the Physical Protection Group (PPG), have carried out considerable work intended to protect frontline officers and staff from the danger posed by edged-weapon attacks. The need for this work is reflected by the increased risk to officers and staff, event-driven circumstances and crime data patterns.

In London alone, police recorded data shows a 24% year-on-year increase in knife crime, and a 20% increase in crimes that result in injury to the victim.

The general threat to officer and staff safety has also been increasing over the past few years due to a combination of factors. This threat

⁹⁷ Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) 2018.

⁹⁸ Certain other forces, such as Northumbria Police, have also carried out work on this subject.

is illustrated by the horrific terrorist attacks at Westminster and near London Bridge in 2017, which resulted in the tragic murder of PC Keith Palmer and serious injuries to other officers, as well as numerous public fatalities and casualties. Often, the first officers to respond to these incidents are unarmed.

To address the risk posed by edged weapons, the MPS are examining and evaluating a three-stranded approach: the positive lock baton, which is slightly longer than the current gravity friction lock baton; the PSS; and slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves. The PSS identified for trial is 12” in diameter, with a raised boss front and a single handle position. The design allows sufficient space to rotate the grip and PSS in the hand. The PSS has a system in place to prevent chops cleaving the surface (whether through metal edging or back plates), to stop bladed thrusts and chops, and to maintain handle integrity on impact.

Between April 2018 and May 2019, approximately 12,500 MPS officers attended PST, which included an input on the use of the PSS in defending against a knife-armed attacker. Feedback has yet to be analysed for the MPS’s Officer Safety Board and Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint (SDAR), but the early indications are reported to be positive.

Figure 4.1 – Personal safety shield



In light of these initial results, the MPS OSU have requested that the PSS project be progressed through deployed evaluation of concept, equipment and tactics trial with a view to establishing whether they should be introduced into the MPS for carriage in fleet vehicles. This will need to be completed alongside stakeholder engagement, as well as community and equality impact assessments.

The OSSR supports the initial work done by the MPS OSU and the project team suggest that the PSS trial should be expedited and expanded to include a larger number of forces. Crucially, consideration could also be given to the inclusion of frontline police staff, such as PCSOs, in the trial. If the results prove to be generally positive, then findings should be brought to Chief Constables Council, where consideration should be given to adopting the PSS concept on a national scale.

Slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves

As is the case with shields, there is little evidence on the benefits of slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves. All forces issue some form of glove as standard uniform to officers and certain police staff members, such as PCSOs. However, outside of specialist units, such items are primarily intended to provide warmth to the officer or staff member, rather than protection.

The data gathered for the OSSR suggests that accidental or deliberate needlestick injuries pose a considerable and ongoing risk to operational officers and staff. For example, between February 2017 and October 2019, Derbyshire Constabulary alone recorded nine uncapped needlestick injuries, which occurred when officers were searching detainees or property. In most of these cases, the person in possession of the needle was known to have a serious and contagious disease, such as hepatitis or HIV. As such, the injured officer was required to undergo extensive testing, medical treatment and follow-up, often taking weeks or even months to receive final medical clearance.

Reflection

“I suffered a needlestick injury from an uncapped, used needle. I had to attend A&E and was put on anti-viral medication for 28 days. I also received a hepatitis B booster jab. I had to have a HIV and hepatitis C test every four weeks. After that, a six-week follow-up test with the Occupational Health Unit. I will not get the all-clear until 12 weeks after the exposure.”

Needlestick injuries clearly have an adverse impact on the officer or staff member concerned. This impact is not only physical, due to the risk of contracting a serious illness or disease, but also psychological, due to having to wait for a long period before medical clearance. This adverse impact can also extend to family members, who will naturally bear this worry on behalf of their loved one.

At this time of increasing risk to officers and staff, it seems appropriate for police forces to invest in this area, in order to ensure that the gloves they provide as standard uniform are robust enough to withstand slash and needlestick incidents. This could help to alleviate the risk of officers and staff being lacerated with a knife or pricked with a contaminated needle, either accidentally (in the course of searching people or property) or purposefully. Although being pricked with a contaminated needle could have fatal consequences, the actual risk of such an adverse outcome is reportedly very low, and officers should be reminded of this at the earliest opportunity in order to alleviate their concerns.⁹⁹

The project team recommend that chief constables decide, through their STRA process, whether to issue police officers and certain frontline police staff with slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves. Police staff roles should include, but need not necessarily be restricted to, PCSOs, SOCOs, front office staff (who may be called on to search or take possession of property), detention officers and investigators.

99 Public Health England 2019.

In making this recommendation, the project team recognise that certain roles and functions, such as specialist searching by Police Search Advisers (PoISA), could be significantly inhibited by thicker gloves. The project team suggest that while wearing such gloves should not be mandatory, they should be available to all officers to wear when they choose to do so, depending on their own personal risk assessment and the particular duty they are carrying out.

In-car protection

Violent prisoners are well contained in secure vans, available throughout the UK. However, compliant prisoners who are detained or conveyed in patrol cars sometimes turn violent without warning. This has led to serious injury of officers and at least one officer death.

The Perspex screens in many buses and taxis, arguably, provide their drivers with more protection than is currently provided to many officers conveying compliant prisoners. The OSSR seeks a solution to prevent compliant detainees accessing the driver or controls of the police vehicle, in doing so mitigating the risk to both officers and the public, who may be injured or killed if a police car crashes. Many forces have expressed to this review an interest in procuring such protection. Other forces transport all prisoners using police vans, although this is challenging in rural areas.

Some forces record assaults that occur within police vehicles, although this data does not specify the type or build of vehicle. The highest return was from a force where 94 officers were assaulted in police vehicles in the past 12 months alone. Most forces returned fewer than 20 assaults in vehicles in the past year.

Case studies

- A PC from Northumberland was killed on 13 April 2006 when a previously compliant prisoner, who was not handcuffed, leant forward and pulled up the hand break at approximately 70mph. The offender was jailed for manslaughter, for five and a half years.

- In Cheshire, a previously compliant prisoner attacked two detectives as they were driving in the fast lane of the M62. He was handcuffed but used the cuffs to hit the driver. The second DC, who had been sat in the rear, assisted in the restraint. The driver was able to navigate onto the hard shoulder but received grievous bodily harm (GBH) level injuries from significant bites. Both DCs were off work for some time. The offender was jailed for 14 years for a number of offences.
- In Cornwall, two officers were transporting a drink driver to custody in an approved manner. The car was travelling at around 70mph when the prisoner unclipped his seat belt, threw himself headfirst through the gap in the seats and landed on the driver's lap. He was facing the driver and took control of the steering wheel with his handcuffed hands, trying to crash the car. The car swerved over both lanes of the A30 several times, but luckily it was night-time and the road was quiet. The driver managed to brake and no one was injured.
- In Devon, an officer was dealing with a suicidal female who was sat, unrestrained, in the rear of a parked patrol car for her own welfare. The female reached around the seat, grabbed the officer with both hands around his neck, pulling him into the seat as if to strangle him. The officer was wearing a pair of scissors in his utility vest, which the female grabbed and stabbed towards his face. The officer raised his hands in defence, and was stabbed three times in the hand. She then bit another officer on the arm. The stabbed officer was hospitalised.

Potential risk management solutions

There are suitable, commercially available solutions with a plastic 'bubble' around the rear seat, plastic seat, door trim and roof. These are approximately £2,000 per vehicle, which has, to-date, proved to be prohibitively expensive for many forces. Concerns have also been raised around the heat within the 'bubble'.

Figure 4.2 - Bubble car solution

North Wales Police deploy these bubble cars as its entire fleet of patrol cars, and has done so for many years. Other forces, such as Hertfordshire or Avon and Somerset, deploy some bubble cars as part of a mixed fleet of patrol cars.

Some might argue this solution is over-engineered. To mitigate the risk of detained people accessing the driver or the controls of any police car, a simple screen between the front and rear of the vehicle is all that is required. However, this is a complex area that impacts on emissions and crash testing, and is affected by the commercial leverage that the police service has with car manufacturers.

It remains national guidance that non-compliant prisoners should not be transported in cars, even those with a screen, and the OSSR does not seek to change this.

Tourniquets

The rise in knife crime and threat of terrorism leads to a risk of catastrophic bleeding to injured officers, staff and members of the public. SATs were developed by the military during the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, and are designed to provide a simple tourniquet that can be self-applied with a single hand. In policing, their role is two-fold: firstly, for application to casualties who are experiencing catastrophic bleeding in a limb; and secondly, for officers to self-apply to their own limbs, if they are experiencing a catastrophic bleed (self-aid).

Figure 4.3 – Self-application tourniquet



Case studies

- Firearms officers attended a stabbing in Cornwall and provided first aid to a male stabbed in the leg, experiencing a catastrophic bleed. They applied an SAT and a Celox haemostatic gauze, which brought the bleeding under control. The consultant at hospital credited this action with saving the man's life.
- In West Yorkshire, an armed response vehicle (ARV) attended a road traffic collision (RTC) where the injured male had an arterial bleed from the arm. An SAT was applied, together with a haemostatic dressing, and the arm was saved. If this intervention had not been made, it is thought that the victim would have died.

- In Devon (prior to the issue of SATs to all officers), a patrol officer was attacked with a power tool, leading to an arterial bleed in his arm. The officer was trapped, alone and isolated within the building. Eventually, a second officer located the injured officer and fashioned a tourniquet, saving the officer's life. An SAT could have been applied by either officer had it been carried. This case demonstrates why SATs stored in a vehicle is of limited value. In part, this incident led to the carrying of SATs by all officers and PCSOs in Devon, Cornwall and Dorset.
- In Thames Valley, a PC who was out of his car speaking with a member of the public was struck by an out-of-control vehicle, lost a limb and suffered a catastrophic bleed. An improvised tourniquet saved his life and an SAT was applied shortly afterwards. As a result, the then Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police (TVP), Francis Habgood, wrote to all forces in November 2018 encouraging them to issue tourniquets to all officers.

Nationally, police medics, such as firearms officers and Police Support Units, are trained to use tourniquets. All firearms officers should have access to SATs and carry them, as well as haemostatic dressings, when appropriate.¹⁰⁰ Several forces carry tourniquets in cars, including Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Merseyside and MPS. Some forces issue them on a personal-issue basis. In Devon and Cornwall Police, and in Dorset Police, they are considered PPE to be carried at all times by patrolling officers and PCSOs. Other forces around the world routinely carry tourniquets, including Delta Police, Abbotsford Police and Ontario Police.

Potential risk management solutions

Several different types of SAT are available and forces should consider procuring a device that can be self-applied (with a single hand) by a lone officer or PCSO. One such solution costs around £20.

SATs only provide mitigation against injury to limbs, not injuries to

¹⁰⁰ National Armed Policing circular 14AP/2018.

the torso or head, which may require alternative equipment, such as haemostatic dressings. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) First Aid forum¹⁰¹ is currently reviewing whether SATs should be mandatory, alongside other alternative equipment such as haemostatic dressings. This review is due to report back to NPCC Health Safety and Welfare portfolio lead, Assistant Chief Constable Tim Jacques, via the National Clinical Panel in April 2020. This will explore current trauma data available to make evidence-based recommendations on what equipment officers should be trained to use and carry.

Risk¹⁰²

While SATs are potentially life-saving items of equipment, they are not without risk, especially when applied in the pre-hospital environment by non-medically trained personnel. SATs are intended to prevent arterial blood flow to a catastrophically damaged limb. Doing so will result in a condition known as ischaemia.¹⁰³ If the SAT is applied for longer than two hours then permanent nerve injury, vascular injury and skin necrosis could occur. If the SAT is applied for longer than six hours, then permanent muscle damage will occur and the affected limb is likely to require amputation. Reperfusion injury¹⁰⁴ could also result from SAT use, which could affect tissue and vital organs. An incorrectly applied SAT could cause increased bleeding and exacerbate the existing condition. Even when the SAT is correctly applied, it is incredibly painful for the patient and will require strong analgesia in the hospital environment. If the SAT is loosened to account for this in the field, then this could lead to gradual exsanguination (blood loss), which could lead to the death of the patient.

It is essential, therefore, that if SATs are to be issued to more police officers and staff members, then they must first receive an

101 Chair Sue Warner, Senior First Aid Advisor. National Police Chiefs' Council Health, Safety and Welfare Portfolio lead Assistant Chief Constable Tim Jacques.

102 Lee and others 2007.

103 Ischaemia is a restriction of blood supply that leads to a lack of oxygen, which is needed to keep tissue alive.

104 The tissue damage caused when blood supply returns to the tissue after a period of ischaemia.

appropriate level of training. This training should be commensurate with that given to specialist officers who already carry tourniquets routinely, such as firearms officers. Officers and staff members should also be informed of the true medical and operational risks that could be associated with SAT use, such as the danger of civil suits and/or internal misconduct procedures, before this equipment is issued to them.

Tasers

When considering the appropriateness and extent of any proposed increase in the availability of Taser to frontline police officers, it is important for chief officers to remain mindful of the social, moral and ethical implications of any increase.

There is the concern that any increase in the availability and use of Taser, or indeed any other weapon, represents an erosion of the fundamental principles of consent-oriented policing, which has far-reaching implications for our democracy and our society. There are concerns that:

- an officer 'armed' with a Taser presents an image of coercion and force, as opposed to consent and service¹⁰⁵
- an officer with a Taser is more likely to use force
- there is evidence of race disproportionality in Taser use¹⁰⁶
- a suspect is more likely to resist arrest¹⁰⁷
- a member of the public is less likely to approach a police officer for help if he or she is carrying a Taser¹⁰⁸
- the common addition of a Taser is viewed, by some commentators, as the next step towards the inevitability of a fully armed police force

While Taser raises important questions about public trust and police legitimacy, there does appear to be broad public support for

105 Doherty 2018.

106 Home Office 2019a.

107 Ariel and others 2019.

108 Siddique 2018.

Taser. For example, a recent poll conducted by Ipsos MORI showed that 97% of the public were now aware of Tasers. Four out of five members of the public said either that they would be more likely to approach a police officer for assistance if they had a Taser, or that this would make no difference to their decision. In all, 89% supported an increase in Tasers if the encounter was automatically recorded on a BWVC. Only 17% of the sample disagreed with the premise that all officers should be given the option to carry Taser.¹⁰⁹

Stakeholder perspectives

Taser attracts a heightened level of scrutiny from a number of interested organisations, such as Amnesty International, the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE), the medical profession, academics, the media, police partners and stakeholders. In a liberal democracy, such scrutiny should be welcomed, encouraged and engaged with, and the views expressed should ultimately be used to help inform our decision making.

To assist in this regard, the Less-Lethal Weapons Working Group (LLWWG) have created a national advisory group comprising a number of representatives from various organisations (such as Amnesty UK, academics and medical professionals). These representatives meet on a regular basis to discuss their positions, and to air their concerns around a number of issues relating to the police use of less lethal weapons, including Taser.

At the time of writing, Amnesty UK recognises the potential value of Taser when used appropriately, but argues for it to be restricted to specially trained units and deployed on a limited basis. It does not want Taser to be classified as PPE.¹¹⁰ CRAE calls for Tasers, as well as SBGs, to be used on the general public only in exceptional circumstances, and not be used on children under any circumstances.^{111, 112}

109 Ipsos MORI 2016.

110 Amnesty International UK 2018.

111 Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) 2017.

112 Gayle 2019.

Through experience and regular engagement, police have benefitted from close relationships with groups from within their communities, especially in relation to Taser. The LLWWG have consulted police forces and communities abroad and within the UK. It has been established that no matter how positive a relationship a local police force has with their community, constant engagement, even when it may feel like it is not needed, is absolutely essential.

One problematic or questionable deployment of this controversial device can test even the strongest of relationships. If a death or serious injury were to occur, then engagement at that point could be viewed as unsatisfactory or even 'too little too late'. The National Lead for Less Lethal Weapons has always promoted the need for full engagement. This is also supported by section 34 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011), which states that chief constables are accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of engagement with local people.

In 2014, the National Less Lethal Weapons Secretariat published 'Top ten Taser tips for forces' as part of a national circular. This guidance outlines that each force should, as a minimum:

- have a well identified and experienced single point of contact within the force who can represent the force at national meetings
- have a credible, well-informed Taser lead, who may be the force's chief officer lead with responsibility for less lethal weapons
- have knowledge of the force position relative to the national picture
- have protocols to quality-assure all Taser forms and uses
- have knowledge of statistics and be able to probe anomalies
- be prepared to respond to Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests regarding Taser
- anticipate media interest and have a prepared media strategy that reflects the national position
- have a comprehensive engagement programme to inform communities (it is essential that communities are involved)
- record complaints correctly and appropriately

- have a flow of information with the National Less Lethal Weapons Secretariat (LLWS) as a critical friend for support, guidance and expertise

This guidance is still relevant today.

While there is an increased risk with any use of force, Taser has the potential to be less injurious than other forms of force. As per the most recent medical statement by the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (SACMILL),¹¹³ there may be an increased risk in people of small stature and juveniles, although this risk should be mitigated with first aid training. Officers are also trained to assess individuals who have had Taser used on them.

In order to provide complete transparency and directly address some of the many concerns the public and stakeholders may have about Taser, the NPCC has published a comprehensive Q&A document. The project team strongly encourage anyone concerned about an increase in the police deployment of Taser to refer to this Q&A document in the first instance.¹¹⁴

Taser training

To carry a Taser, an officer must complete the nationally accredited training course which is widely considered to be both robust and comprehensive.^{115, 116} Unlike many overseas jurisdictions, officers in the UK are not routinely taught to use Taser at any stage during their career and there is no automatic right to carry the device. Prospective Taser officers, which now include student officers (probationers), must undergo an application and selection process. If they meet all the set criteria, then they may be selected for Taser training.

The training curriculum is developed by a small group of specialist instructors from the College of Policing and the Less Lethal Weapons

113 Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (SACMILL) 2017.

114 National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) 2020.

115 Dymond 2014.

116 Keating-Jones 2017



Secretariat. The content is delivered to a lead instructor from each individual police force, who will then instruct in-force trainers. Not every officer who undertakes the training course will necessarily be successful. Forces report a failure rate of between 5% and 15%. The minimum contact time for Taser training is 18 hours over three days, with six hours of continuation training per year. An initial course will cost £1,513 to deliver and the refresher course will cost £483.¹¹⁷ This takes into account the instructor costs, as well as cartridges, kit and equipment used during training, but does not include utility costs, as these are multi-use facilities that form part of the wider national picture.

The course comprises a mixture of classroom-based input, dexterity exercises, live firing exercises and scenario-based role-play simulations. Officers generally report finding the course intense and very challenging, but say they come out of it competent in the safe use of Taser.^{118, 119}

117 These figures are from the Metropolitan Police Service.

118 Dymond 2018.

119 Keating-Jones 2017.

Availability and use patterns

In March 2019, the NPCC published a report intended to assist chief officers in their decision making around any uplift of Taser within their own forces.¹²⁰ A total of 42 forces contributed to this study.

The text box below provides a summary the key findings of the internal report. The project team strongly recommend that all chief officers read the full report before conducting their annual STRA and consider any uplift.

Key findings from the internal 2019 NPCC Taser report

Taser was found to have been deployed differently across the country, but always in accordance with national guidance. Six forces offered training to all suitable frontline officers, most forces trained a finite number and four forces trained only armed officers.

- The context of Taser use was explored, with 27 forces reporting that they drew Taser from the holster at just 0.06% of the 35 million incidents they attended between 2014 and 2016. Taser was fired at only 0.01% of incidents.
- An analysis of 38,000 uses of force found Taser was associated with fewer injuries to both officers and subjects than police dogs, baton, irritant spray or physical confrontation.
- Forces supplied examples of incidents requiring a Taser but where no trained officers were available. In these cases, either the police response was delayed or non-Taser officers were despatched, potentially placing the public, officers and subjects at greater risk.
- The number of officers to train is a matter for individual chief constables, based on their STRA.
- All overtly armed officers carried Taser. Some forces only operated Taser as part of their armed policing, such as Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

¹²⁰ Drummond-Smith and others 2019.

- Six forces were identified as having essentially committed to offering Taser training to all suitable frontline officers. At the time of writing, their uplift programmes are ongoing.
 - Across the 34 forces who shared training data, on average, 14% of officers were trained to carry and use Taser.
 - Three questionnaires responded to by 9,000 members of the public revealed broad support (79%) for more officers carrying Taser. Three internal surveys received responses from 8,000 officers, and in excess of 90% felt that more officers should be equipped with Taser.
-

Death and serious injury associated with Taser use¹²¹

While the review cannot comment on any live investigations, it does recognise that Taser use, particularly when it involves the administration or discharge to a subject, is not risk-free. To date, UK coroners' courts have concluded that two deaths, both of which were in 2013, have been associated with Taser use, while a small number of more recent deaths remain under investigation. Firstly, the death of Andrew Pimlott in Plymouth, who was soaked in petrol and said to be holding a lit match, when he was subjected to Taser discharge. The petrol ignited and he died a few days later from severe burns.

Secondly, the death of Jordan Begley in Manchester. While the inquest found that the Taser did not cause his heart to stop, the jury concluded that the use of the Taser and the subsequent restraint 'more than materially contributed' to a 'package' of stressful factors leading to Mr Begley's cardiac arrest. Another factor, they concluded, was Mr Begley's intoxication at the time of the incident and confrontation with police. It also concluded that the officer 'inappropriately and unreasonably' used the Taser for longer than was necessary.

At the time of writing, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC, formerly the Independent Police Complaints Commission – IPCC) are

121 This section is replicated from an internal NPCC Taser Report, March 2019.

is investigating seven deaths during which Taser was recorded as a factor.¹²² This means that Taser has been recorded as a factor in the IOPC investigation, not necessarily that it has contributed to a death. In contrast, since 1 April 2006, the IOPC have investigated 1,674 deaths relating to police contact.¹²³ Over the period examined, between 2006/07 and 2016/17, only two of the 1,674 deaths investigated by the IOPC have resulted in a coroner concluding that Taser contributed to the death. It appears that more people die in contact with the police through road incidents, custody, police shootings or restraint than through Taser.

Concerns around disproportionate use on protected groups

A current and ongoing concern about the police use of Taser is its disproportionate use on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and vulnerable members of society. Such concerns have been raised internationally in respect of Minority Ethnic groups,¹²⁴ indigenous peoples,^{125, 126} people with mental health issues¹²⁷ and homeless people.¹²⁸

In England and Wales, national use-of-force data has shown that people perceived to be 'Black or Black British' were involved in a higher of proportion of incidents where less lethal weapons (principally Tasers) were used compared to people perceived to be 'White'.¹²⁹ Analysis data from 16 forces by the College of Policing and the University of Exeter suggested people identified as 'Black or Black British' were more likely than people identified as 'White' to be involved in an incident where a

122 Covering the following forces: Staffordshire Police; West Mercia Police; Dyfed-Powys Police; Wiltshire Police; North Wales Police; Devon and Cornwall Police; Warwickshire Police.

123 Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) 2017.

124 Gau and others 2010.

125 Cornege 2011.

126 Ryan 2008.

127 O'Brien and others 2011.

128 Oriola and others 2012.

129 Home Office 2019a.

Taser was drawn, but not when one was discharged.¹³⁰ Concerns have also been expressed in the media and by stakeholders, such as Amnesty International and CRAE.^{131, 132}

Concerns about race disproportionality in Taser use must be at the forefront of our mind when deciding to increase the number of specially trained officers (STOs). Given the lack of evidence on its causes, these legitimate concerns should be investigated in an open and transparent manner and efforts made to minimise disproportionality and its impacts where possible. This will help to maintain public confidence in the police service's ability to manage an increase in the number of Taser-trained officers appropriately, while ensuring that these devices continue to be used ethically.

Taser 'authorities'

The project team is aware that certain forces still 'deploy' or 'authorise' Taser officers to attend particular calls for service after a Control Room Supervisor or Force Incident Manager has conducted a National Decision Model (NDM) review and decided that the threat, harm and risk associated with the call requires the deployment of a Taser officer.

As a result, there have been instances where officers have used Taser in controversial circumstances and stated, in subsequent reviews or investigations that they were effectively 'ordered' to use the device because the decision to do so had already been made by a supervising officer.

While the project team fully support forces deploying the most appropriately trained and equipped resources to each call for service, the practice of granting 'Taser authorities' should cease. The decision on whether or not to use Taser should be made by the carrying officer using the NDM and taking into account the threat, harm and risk that he or she is faced with at the scene. This is in line with current Taser training and is supported by the LLWWG and College of Policing lead instructors.

130 Quinton and others 2020.

131 Shaw 2015.

132 Gayle 2019.



The role of the strategic threat and risk assessment

Forces are expected to complete STRAs on an annual basis. During this review, the project team has been made aware of various inconsistencies with force processes, including when, how and by whom the STRAs are completed, as well as the format used. There will naturally be a marked variation in STRAs between forces due to differences in their size, population density and diversity, position and strategic priorities. However, it has been suggested that a degree of national consistency with the STRA process could nevertheless be beneficial.

Regarding Taser and the STRA process, the Armed Policing portfolio lead has overseen Taser since its introduction into policing in the UK in 2003. In 2013, Taser migrated away from direct control under the then Assistant Chief Constable, Simon Chesterman, and was placed under the control of the then Commander, Neil Basu. The Less Lethal Weapons portfolio became an NPCC business group in its own right. This allowed greater command and control of the tactical option. However, the annual Armed Policing STRA continues to require forces to complete a section

for less lethal weapons, including Taser. There is also control from Chief Firearms Instructors (CFIs), who own the training policy for forces.

The Armed Policing portfolio lead has suggested the need for a standalone Taser STRA – within the Armed Policing STRA – because of the increased number of Taser officers. While the Armed Policing secretariat considers the feasibility of this proposition, ownership of the Taser STRA would need to be agreed.

Summary

Having assessed the available evidence base on Taser, it is clear that the devices have passed stringent medical and safety testing, and have been cleared for operational use. As such, they are as safe as they can be given their intended purpose. The current initial training package has been proven to be both comprehensive and robust, and there is growing evidence that suggests that these devices have the capacity to increase the safety of police officers, staff and the wider public, including suspects and offenders.¹³³¹³⁴ From the National Police Safety Survey, there was strong support from respondents about a wider availability of Taser to the front line, but less so for personal deployment and routine availability. This indicates that increasing the number of devices available to frontline officers is appropriate, if supported by the force's STRA.

Empirically, there are evidence gaps relating to the effect of Taser use on vulnerable population groups, such as people with mental health conditions and/or learning differences, as well as people from BAME backgrounds. More research to address these shortfalls is needed.

Tasers are not without drawbacks. They are fallible, in that they can – and often do – fail to achieve their intended objective of securing the safe arrest of a combative subject without incurring injury to officers, staff, the public and/or the subject themselves. At the time of writing, reported success rates fluctuate between 55% and 68%. As such, Tasers should not be viewed as a guarantee of operational safety, and officers should not become overly reliant on them. PST skills remain vitally important whether or not an officer has access to a Taser.

133 Dymond 2014.

134 Keating-Jones 2017.

Chapter recommendations

Recommendation 6

Personal protective equipment for PCSOs

NPCC to consult with UNISON and other trade unions on further measures that could be taken to address concerns raised by PCSOs in the National Staff Safety Survey, in order to inform chief constables' local decisions on training, deployment and equipment for PCSOs.

Recommendation 7

Body-worn video cameras

Chief constables to carefully consider the findings of the OSSR when making decisions about deployment of BWVCs within their force areas.

Recommendation 8

Body armour

Chief constables should consider issuing body armour to certain frontline roles, if supported by evidence gathered through their force STRAs. Chief constables should review their STRAs to ensure they have the appropriate level of provision of body armour to frontline roles.

Recommendation 9

Spitting and biting assaults

- 1 **Chief constables** should issue SBGs to all police officers if supported by evidence gathered through forces' STRAs.
- 2 **The NPCC** should support a proposed amendment to the AEWA (2018), which would make spitting an aggravating factor and would compel offenders to provide a blood sample if they do spit on an emergency worker.

Recommendation 10

Personal safety shields

NPCC to work with the MPS to expedite and expand their trial of the personal safety shield by including a number of other forces and then bring back the findings for consideration by Chief Constables Council.

Recommendation 11

Slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves

- 1 **Chief constables** should issue slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves to all police officers and certain frontline staff roles, if supported by evidence gathered through forces' STRAs.
- 2 **Chief constables** should ensure any officer or staff member who receives a needlestick injury is informed of the actual risk of being affected with a communicable disease by providing them immediate access to the Public Health England (PHE) document 'Guidance on management of potential exposure to blood-borne viruses in emergency workers.'

Recommendation 12

In-car protection

The NPCC should work with the National Association of Police Fleet Managers (NAPFM) to identify a solution to reduce the risk of assault with a police vehicle, with the intention of bringing it in within the life of the next vehicle contract.

Recommendation 13

Self-application tourniquets

Chief constables should consider providing officers and frontline staff, such as PCSOs, access to SATs, taking into account any evidence gathered through local forces' STRAs and the evidence contained within this review. Appropriate training must be given to all officers and staff before they are issued.

Recommendation 14

Taser deployment and use

1 The NPCC and the College commission an independent programme of social research to explore the nature, causes and consequences of racial disparities in the police use of Taser, with a view to identifying changes aimed at minimising the problem and mitigating its impact.

2 Chief constables should end the practice of Control Room Supervisors or Force Incident Managers granting 'Taser authorities'. The decision on whether or not to use Taser should be made by the carrying officer using the NDM and taking into account the threat, harm and risk that he or she is faced with at the scene. This does not prevent control rooms having a role in determining whether Taser-trained officers should be deployed to particular incidents.

Recommendation 14

Taser deployment and use

3 The **NPCC** should review current processes for completing STRAs that help to inform chief constables' decisions about deployment, equipment and other operational issues within their forces. A best-practice framework should be adopted to ensure consistency of approach across police forces. This will include consideration of the benefits of having a standalone Taser STRA.

4 Decisions about any increase in the number of Tasers to be made available in police forces should continue to be made by **chief constables** through their STRA of local circumstances, while taking into account the findings of this review.



Chapter 5

Personal safety training and the job-related fitness test

This chapter will explore the current standards of personal safety training (PST)¹³⁵ that must be achieved and maintained by operational officers and certain staff members,¹³⁶ before discussing the job-related fitness test (JRFT). It will address the content of the PST curriculum, taking into account 'contact time', suitability and duration. It will also consider the specification and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE). Under the overarching banner of legitimacy and transparency, this chapter will also pay due regard to the various processes, bodies and organisations that work together to provide a suitable level of governance and oversight to this area of police work, which attracts significant public and media scrutiny.

Personal safety training policy

Since its inception in the mid-1990s, PST has been mandatory for all officers below the rank of superintendent, although all ranks are encouraged to participate. The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) 2009 guidance is the most relevant, albeit dated, document in this respect. This publication followed the 'Safety Matters' report by the then Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, which, among other things, reinforced the recommendation made by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) for a minimum 12 hours' PST each year.

The College of Policing did not adopt the 12 hours guidance, which had

¹³⁵ The term 'personal safety training' can be, and often is, used interchangeably with the term 'officer safety training'. For the purpose of this report, the former term is preferred because this review focuses on frontline police staff as well as warranted officers.

¹³⁶ In general terms, officer safety training is equipment-based – for example, batons and handcuffs – but both officers and staff receive shared modules of training, such as unarmed skills, de-escalation techniques, and the medical and legal implications of using force.

stood for many years previously, because it considered the achievement of 'learning outcomes' to be a better method to quality-assure training delivery. The unintended consequence of the position was, however, an easier erosion of the recommended minimum 12 hours' contact time with students. This was further exacerbated by a period of organisational budget restrictions, when overall officer numbers were falling. This meant that abstracting officers for core training became more difficult for many forces. At the time of writing, the available Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint (SDAR) group records suggest that on a national level, training delivery across England and Wales, which now often includes unrelated activities such as fitness testing and first aid, is both inconsistent and sporadic. Training delivery ranges from five hours per annum in some forces (such as Norfolk and Suffolk) to 16 hours per annum in others (such as Cheshire).

Sufficient contact time allows for appropriate scenario-based training sessions, rather than the minimum refresher standards, which, by necessity, tend to focus heavily on equipment skills and classification exercises. Increasing contact time for initial and continuation training would allow for de-escalation and tactical communication packages to be woven into the scenarios rather than 'feeding' a result to the candidate, which is currently needed in order to obtain an assessment standard quickly, due to the short time spans involved.

Training in empty-hand Self-Defence, Arrest and Restraint (SDAR) must remain at the heart of PST, as national data shows that use of unarmed skills as the most used tactic after handcuffing.¹³⁷ Importantly, the equipment issued to officers can malfunction or be lost, but every officer and staff member should be effectively trained and competent in using core empty-hand skills to defend themselves and others.

In the past, the SDAR working group quality-assured PST programmes throughout England and Wales via NPIA's Quality Assurance Management (QAM) process. However, this system proved too costly and was not adopted by the College of Policing. Current quality assurance for PST amounts to asking chief officers if the learning outcomes are being met. It appears, anecdotally, that some trainers reply in the affirmative,

¹³⁷ Home Office 2019a.

not wishing to raise concerns, while privately raising concerns about the reality of the significant reductions in contact time with students, via the National Practitioners' Committee, which supports SDAR.

De-escalation is an element of a much wider suite of interpersonal communication skills. A comprehensive module on tactical communication (Module 6) has always featured in the National Personal Safety Manual (NPSM). The project team welcome the publication of the College of Policing's conflict management guidelines, which highlight the importance of officers and staff having non-physical conflict skills.¹³⁸ The project team also support College of Policing plans to evaluate pilots of conflict management training in 2020.

Personal safety trainers have tended to focus on training physical skills because of gradual erosion of contact time and the need for them to certify officers' competencies to use PPE. This focus has been to the detriment of training essential non-physical conflict management skills.

Personal protective equipment

The provision of certain items of PPE, issued based on the operational role of an officer or staff member, plays a significant role in helping to mitigate the threats identified in general patrol activities. However, the holistic safety of our personnel is clearly much wider, spanning from basic good practice, such as routinely updating control rooms with incident locations and situation reports, through to the appropriate deployment of specialist support, such as Taser and firearms officers. Therefore, ensuring that training is suitable and consistent, including the appropriate provision of PPE, will undoubtedly involve the review and collaboration of each of the national portfolios and workstreams.

All officers in England and Wales are equipped with personal issue body armour, a baton, handcuffs and a canister of irritant spray. However, SDAR records suggest variation not only in the allotted contact time for initial and ongoing training, but also in the manufacturer and type of equipment issued to staff. For example:

¹³⁸ College of Policing 2020.

- Warwickshire provide 52.5 and eight hours for initial and ongoing PST, respectively. They issue PAVA irritant spray, positive-lock batons, folding handcuffs and the soft restraint belt.
- Greater Manchester Police (GMP) provide 60 and 12 hours for initial and ongoing PST, respectively. They issue CS irritant spray, positive-lock batons, rigid handcuffs and the body cuff restraint system.

A summary of the current issues relating to the main items of personal safety equipment, along with associated recommendations for organisational improvement, can be found below.

Body armour

Police armours are categorised as General Purpose (GP), Authorised Firearms Officer (AFO) and Concealable. All existing armours meet or exceed the industry standards, as laid out by the Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) in 2007,¹³⁹ and remain fit for purpose, provided the users follow SDAR's guidance regarding the care and physical inspection of their armours.¹⁴⁰

Samples of all approved armours in England and Wales are subject to extended life analysis (ELA), which is undertaken by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to monitor the ongoing performance of armours throughout their service. To date, all armours tested since the inception of the ELA in 2005 continue to meet national standards. Should an armour fail, SDAR would notify chief officers immediately and would provide advice regarding the implementation of safety protocols. SDAR has comprehensive records for national GP and Concealable armours, but improvements could be made to the central records of AFO armours.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) set the current national standard for all police issue body armour. Each item of equipment must meet or exceed the DSTL 2017 standard,¹⁴¹ and any prospective supplier must be certified by DSTL before a current or

139 Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) 2017.

140 Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint (SDAR) 2017

141 Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint (SDAR) 2017.

future procurement contract can be awarded. It is agreed that bidders may achieve certification once they are identified as 'preferred bidders' to encourage their research and development, which is often a challenge in this relatively small part of the global armour market.

Procurement processes are currently undertaken by the logistics organisation DHL via the National Uniform Management System (NUMS), and have commenced for GP, AFO and Concealable armours, which must meet the DSTL standards:

Handcuffs

SDAR records suggest that all Home Office forces now use rigid cuffs as their standard personal issue, although approximately five forces use a folding design for ease of carriage. The basic design of the cuffs is similar, so there is little difference in their performance and training delivery, which is outlined in the NPSM.

The Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) notes that some forces still issue chain link handcuffs for concealability. There are safety risks related to using chain link handcuffs, and concealability can be achieved to a similar level with folding rigid handcuffs, which allow greater control of a violent or potentially violent subject.

Batons

SDAR records suggest that most constabularies in England and Wales issue either the 21" gravity friction lock baton or the 21" autolock baton.

The MPS has recently concluded an extensive review of batons following safety concerns raised by staff. The review involved subject matter experts (SMEs) from SDAR, academics from the University of Greenwich, and frontline officers. The Bonowi 24" positive lock baton (and a carriage solution) has been selected, with 16" and 26" variants to meet role-specific and diversity needs. For example, mounted officers will receive a 26" baton, while officers who require greater concealment will receive the 16". This information has been shared with chief officers and the SDAR communities.

Irritant spray

SDAR records suggest that 38 of the 43 Home Office forces use PAVA irritant spray, with the remainder considering its adoption and moving away from CS irritant spray. SDAR continues to horizon-scan in partnership with DSTL and the Committee on Toxicity to help identify emerging irritant technologies, which remain in their infancy at this time.

Limb restraints

Several different limb restraint systems are employed in England and Wales. Each has been medically and operationally assessed, and each features in the NPSM. Prone restraint remains one of the highest-risk areas of policing, often owing to the personal vulnerabilities of those in crisis who officers are sometimes called on to restrain, either to protect themselves or others. The project team is acutely aware of these challenges and encourage a close partnership between SDAR, the College of Policing and independent medical partners to ensure that officers' training remains at the forefront of developments. This includes those associated with acute behavioural disturbance, and those with positional and restraint asphyxia.

Spit and bite guards

Almost all Home Office forces have spit and bite guard (SBG) capability,¹⁴² although a very small number restrict their use solely to the custody environment. The majority of forces use the black Spit Guard Pro. This device has been the subject of additional medical testing by the MPS, as this was the version the MPS procured, which showed that oxygen saturation remained within safe levels when this type of SBG was worn during exertion. Forces have been updated with the results.

¹⁴² Cumbria Constabulary is currently scoping their initial training programme.

Governance and review

National Personal Safety Manual

The NPSM is a long document that, while comprehensive and continually reviewed, does not give forces clear instruction regarding the most effective techniques to teach, and does not take the form of a core curriculum for skills that all officers would need to be taught.

The NPSM does provide training guidance and good practice in all aspects of personal safety instruction. Its modules include wide-ranging and contextualised medical and legal advice in addition to tactical communication, including de-escalation, and techniques and tactics relating to PPE.

The NPSM was first published in the early 2000s. Due to a culture of continual and systematic updating, it is now approaching 1,000 pages of content because forces have sought to include local variations to tactics.

The clear view of the SDAR lead is that the NPSM position is no longer tenable, and that a much shorter core curriculum of the most effective techniques is needed to provide greater national consistency and effectiveness. SDAR is working with the College of Policing and independent medical experts to assess the feasibility of streamlining the NPSM, with a view to agreeing a more cohesive national curriculum. This will be a significant piece of work that will require funding and significant College of Policing support. The aspiration would be to bring officer PST in line (in terms of approach) with other national training programmes, such as firearms, public order and Taser.

Subject matter experts

SDAR is working with the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and the College of Policing to help address the significant shortage of SMEs for PST throughout England and Wales. This important role, which

previously has not been formally supported, relies on the goodwill of the few who, in addition to their day jobs, are often unable to meet the demand of an increasingly accountable and litigious 'use of force' environment (in support of force, IOPC, judicial and coronial requirements).

The shortage of SMEs sometimes results in the court appearances of inexperienced police personnel and members of the public who present themselves as 'SMEs'. This can result in misleading evidence being provided, additional stress for the officers and families affected, and unnecessary legal argument. The evidence from one such individual was recently expunged from the court record in a high-profile inquest in London, after police challenges to the appropriateness of her appointment by the family's counsel were upheld.¹⁴³

Independent Medical Science Advisory Panel

The Independent Medical Science Advisory Panel (IMSAP) was convened by SDAR 18 years ago to provide independent medical advice in all matters relating to the 'use of force', and especially in relation to the ongoing development of the NPSM.

IMSAP is a group of leading healthcare professionals who voluntarily come together, when required, to provide advice or to undertake more in-depth studies. Recent examples include the development of SBGs, the latest medical advances in prone restraint and the management of those with drugs secreted into their mouths. IMSAP consists of an elected chairman, a secretary, a lay member and a cadre of approximately 20 leading healthcare professionals from wide-ranging medical backgrounds.

Training and guidance across the policing spectrum, including PST, would undoubtedly be informed by an enhanced understanding of how our communities and vulnerable people may be influenced by officers and staff actions. SDAR has access to a limited body of community

¹⁴³ Inquest of Mr Edir Da Costa, Walthamstow, 2019.

advice and engagement via IMSAP's lay member, who is an established community leader in the East End of London, with excellent links with young people and local communities as a whole.

The job-related fitness test

The JRFT is a critical component of the recruitment and deployment of police officers and currently comprises an aerobic shuttle run test, which is a 15m Multi Stage Fitness Test (MSFT). The JRFT does not currently address the needs of police staff, such as PCSOs. The JRFT is not based on the broad role profile of the police constable. The JRFT is benchmarked against the aerobic demands of PST that operational officers, especially below the rank of superintendent, and some operational staff members must achieve and maintain if they require PST.

The Chester Treadmill Police Walk Test (CTPWT) has also been developed as an alternative test for officers who struggle with the turning component of the 15m MSFT. This was validated by research conducted the University of Chester and published in 2016. There is no longer a strength component to the JRFT.

It should be recognised that it is now a number of years since the evidence base to establish the link between PST and the JRFT was developed. While work is ongoing to develop a better understanding of the physiological demands of the JRFT, there are concerns that the ongoing development of PST means that:

- the tactics and equipment used in PST have developed significantly since the evidence base that underpins the JRFT was developed
- there is inconsistency in terms of delivery curriculum intensity and duration of PST across all forces

As such, while the JRFT can be used to demonstrate and ensure a baseline level of fitness across forces, it is not possible to say with a high degree of confidence that this fitness level accurately reflects the actual physiological and aerobic requirements to complete PST successfully in all forces.

Similarly, the JRFT is used to inform risk assessments to ensure that officers are sufficiently fit to meet the rigors of PST. It is possible that the demands of some forces' PST curriculums may exceed the previously established aerobic requirements and, as such, cannot realistically be considered an effective control measure.

In addition, the evidence base to evaluate the test standards was developed prior to the JRFT becoming a condition of service, as recommended by the Winsor review. In the event that an individual is unable to pass the fitness test, and is subsequently subject to unsatisfactory performance procedures and possibly sanction, there is the potential that the current standards are vulnerable to challenge.

Developing the national curriculum for personal safety training

If PST is to remain the job-related comparator for the JRFT, the appropriateness of the standards and testing mechanism will therefore be influenced significantly by the development of a consistent national PST curriculum. Ultimately, the JRFT is a screening tool through which officer competence is assessed and safety processes are managed. The 'appropriateness' of the test requirements should always reflect the operational and safety requirements of the role. As such, the outcomes of the OSSR will inform the future work of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) fitness group.

The project team recognise that the issues outlined support a business need to revise the national PST curriculum, as these exacting standards can then be used as a baseline to inform a suitable threshold and effective delivery mechanism for the JRFT. Such consistency in national approach could make the process fairer, more reliable and, crucially, more defensible in the event of challenge by staff associations and/or employment tribunals.

The project team recognise that revising the national curriculum for PST is a considerable project that will take a significant amount of time to achieve. In addition, the work to benchmark the JRFT to the curriculum cannot commence until this work is fully completed.



While the curriculum is being developed, chief officers will be asked for views on how to administer the JRFT in a collective and consistent manner in order to mitigate the short-term impact of the present variance in approach. This will include consideration of:

- the appropriateness of the testing mechanism (15m MSFT) for the fitness test
- the appropriateness of the use of PST as the job-related comparator for the fitness test
- the appropriateness of continuing to link fitness testing with unsatisfactory performance procedures
- the broader issue of the need and standards for fitness tests for specialist roles

However, until a decision has been made on how PST will be trained, it is not possible to articulate pertinent issues or provide a clear steer on the cost and timescale of any future work.

Chapter recommendations

Recommendation 15

Personal safety training

1 The College of Policing with the NPCC should revise the national curriculum and related guidance on personal safety training to improve officer and staff safety and satisfaction, and to ensure greater consistency. The curriculum should focus on the most effective techniques and recommend contact time and training methods.

2 Chief constables should implement the College of Policing's guidelines on conflict management to ensure officers and staff are sufficiently well skilled in the non-physical aspects of conflict management, and should support trials testing the impact of related conflict management training.

Recommendation 16

Guidance on equipment

1 NPCC should review existing guidance on:

- care and inspection of armours, reinforcing that this process should form part of local health and safety risk management protocols
- use of handcuffs
- use of irritant spray

2 NPCC should update national records of AFO armour to help ensure the completeness of ELA data across England and Wales.

Recommendation 16

Guidance on equipment

3 Chief constables should ensure that chain link handcuffs are only used in very specialist roles where a detailed risk assessment has been completed outlining the operational benefit and requirement of these less effective control measures.

Recommendation 17

Procurement of equipment

1 NPCC should lead a practitioners and independent medical assessment to establish if it is practical to nationally procure one model of handcuffs and limb restraints.

2 NPCC to engage with the Home Office Science Commissioning Hub to help avoid bottlenecks in the future procurement of handcuffs.

Recommendation 18

Subject matter experts

Chief constables should support efforts by the NPCC, the College of Policing, PFEW and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) to continue working towards the sustainable appointment of nationally qualified and certificated subject matter experts to help ensure public and officers' confidence in civil and criminal proceedings when 'use of force' is in question.

Recommendation 19

The Independent Medical Science Advisory Panel

NPCC, working with the College of Policing and the IOPC, should seek to formalise the position of IMSAP and consider how to formally sustain the future of this currently voluntary body.

Chapter 6

Welfare support

This chapter provides an overview of the existing provisions to secure the welfare of police officers and staff, including a description of the newly formed National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS). Deficiencies in the level of support provided to the families of injured officers and staff are highlighted, and the forthcoming Police Covenant is briefly discussed.

Overview

In 2012, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) established a new working group to address emerging issues in relation to workforce wellbeing. The group began by reviewing and commissioning research into the unique 'lived experience' of the law enforcement community. In 2017, a Police Transformation Fund (PTF) grant was awarded to establish a national wellbeing service, which accelerated the growth in provision and involved a deep-dive landscape review. This review resulted in a 'model of care', which comprised eight live services and numerous projects with longer delivery timescales.

Oscar Kilo was initially launched in 2017 and became the online home of the NPWS in April 2019. The NPWS does not replace the employer's responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA). It seeks to provide specialist support, advice and capability to enable employers to provide world-class wellbeing support for their people.

This chapter addresses each key area of police and staff welfare support, as framed by the Terms of Reference. Each heading is evaluated using the following three subheadings:

- What is currently provided as part of the NPWS live service?
 - What is, or should be, provided by the police service?
 - What gaps have been identified?
-

Support after assaults

What is currently provided as part of the NPWS live service?

The NPWS provides no direct support to officers and staff who are physically assaulted by way of a criminal act. However, it does provide 6,000 psychological screenings a year for identified high-risk roles, with assessment and referral provision included. Screening high-risk roles aim to prevent escalation.

NPWS has established relationships with NHS providers through the Armed Forces NHS team and have, in exceptional cases, supported forces to access specialist provision for prosthetics.

What is, or should be, provided by the police service?

Forces are able to screen any officer or staff member who has been assaulted, but this is not mandated. NPWS has a project to establish national standards for occupational health provision. This project will include specific requirements to create the necessary capacity and capability to provide emotional and psychological support for any member of staff that is suffering poor mental health following assault or injury.

The NPWS and Occupational Health Nurse Advisers to the Police Service (OHNAPS) have identified gaps in provision for psychological services that are resulting in longer than acceptable waiting times. Occupational health standards and NPWS support will seek to address this problem. Standards are due for publication early in 2020.

What gaps have been identified?

There is currently no consistent, nationally agreed service-level agreement (SLA) with the NHS to provide timely, high-quality support for officers and staff who are subjected to physical assault or to blood-borne virus (BBV) risks from spitting or needlestick injuries. The Health and Safety

Executive (HSE) also recently drew attention to the number of road traffic collisions (RTCs) our staff are involved in. This point is included here to highlight that assaults are often not the main reason why staff report injuries, but should be addressed with the same commitment.

Impact on families

What is currently provided as part of the NPWS live service?

NPWS has no provision for families in the scope of its agreed PTF grant. Some police charities provide support for family members on an ad hoc basis.

What is, or should be, provided by the police service?

Chief constables have ultimate responsibility for the provision of support services post-assault. However, there is currently no nationally consistent procedural framework for the support of the victim's family. Interestingly, the Welfare Coordinator for exposed staff is ensuring that, as part of an ongoing support package, partners of staff are allowed to accompany them to some of the interventions should they wish to do so. This is very promising.

There is no statutory duty to provide family support and it does not feature in the occupational health standards, as there is insufficient evidence about what works for families at this time. As a result, NPWS cannot advocate what would add most value.

What gaps have been identified?

This is a gap that needs to be addressed in terms of both prevention – by raising awareness among the families of new joiners of the lived experience, so they are able to support their loved ones and also cope better themselves – and reactive support (following an assault or injury).

Consistency of services between forces

What is currently provided as part of the NPWS live service?

Live services

The NPWS provides the following consistent, high-quality, evidence-based services to forces:

- **Leadership for Wellbeing:** develop executive leaders and line managers who can lead and manage their organisations in a way that facilitates wellbeing and improves performance.¹⁴⁴
- **Individual Resilience:** build individual resilience of officers and staff by developing their understanding and use of positive psychology, alongside other techniques, to enhance personal wellbeing and improve their ability to support others. This is currently being delivered across all 43 forces.
- **Peer Support for Wellbeing:** deliver a national peer support model and network in order to provide the best care and support to officers and staff. Fourteen forces have already trained personnel.
- **Psychological Risk Management:** high-risk roles are screened for potential psychological trauma and wellbeing screening is available for all. A total of 6,000 sessions have been provided for the highest-risk roles.
- **Trauma Management:** provide a police-specific post-incident support and disaster management model of care for officers and staff that provides clear strategic and tactical direction for wellbeing when dealing with major incidents.
- **Wellbeing at Work:** support policing organisations to embed cultures and practices that facilitate positive wellbeing for all police personnel.

144 The second round of workshops took place in November 2019.

- **Wellbeing Outreach Service:** provide access to wellbeing services at the place of work, in order to increase the opportunity to access wellbeing services. A fleet of 10 vehicles circulated between forces via NPWS capturing under-reported welfare needs. Hugely popular so far, with over 7,000 clients provided for. NPWS aim to provide forward command presence at major incidents, should forces wish to have a physical presence for diffusion and debrief post-tour.

Projects

- **NHS trauma-informed:** the Royal College of General Practitioners has been commissioned to roll out police lived experience awareness training to all clinical commissioning groups. Some officers and staff can be reluctant to approach their employers and may access primary care instead. Raising awareness through training way may enrich and inform the treatment provision and decisions made by general practitioners and their staff.
- **Occupational health standards:** due to be published early 2020. At an NPCC meeting in October 2019, Chief Constable Ian Hopkins and Chief Constable Andy Rhodes proposed that chief constables should support the first National Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Survey. This data will enable the service to see for the first time what officers and staff say about our efforts to support their wellbeing, and will report in April 2020.

What is, or should be, provided by the police service?

There is a wide variation in provision across forces, which has been highlighted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Occupational health standards will provide a consistent core offer, but outstanding forces will need to demonstrate that they are developing the right leadership behaviours, culture and line manager skills to support their people.

The HSWA (1974) requires employers to take steps to mitigate known risks. Although policing is generally good at physical risk

assessment, improvements could be made in terms of addressing psychological risk.

Supervisory arrangements and support

What is currently provided as part of the NPWS live service?

Line managers can play a vital role in staff welfare. NPWS is providing training to line managers through a ‘train the trainer’ package, which is available to all 43 forces. The College of Policing is currently developing guidelines on first line supervision, which will inform all the College of Policing’s Leadership Programmes.

What is, or should be, provided by employers?

Line manager training is included as a priority in the Oscar Kilo Blue Light self-assessment framework, against which all forces have assessed themselves. HMICFRS includes line manager awareness in the legitimacy pillar of PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy), but as yet not in any great depth.

Line managers consistently report that they have insufficient time to provide high-quality wellbeing support to their staff. In a 2018 Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) survey, 83% of line managers stated they felt ‘confident to deal with staff welfare issues’, yet under 30% reported having had any formal training.¹⁴⁵

The Police Covenant

The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has announced her commitment to establishing a Police Covenant, which will contain many elements of the

¹⁴⁵ Boag-Munroe 2018.

NPWS and some areas that are currently not covered. NPWS Service Director, Chief Constable Andy Rhodes, has been involved in early talks with Home Office officials regarding what is in scope. The national Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) presents an opportunity to construct a Police Covenant that is grounded not only in evidence of what works, but also in what our people tell us is important.

Conclusions

The NPWS is part of an international network and has constructed its live service 'model of care' by drawing on expertise, practice and research from law enforcement environments where officer and staff assaults and fatalities are significantly higher. The same activities work in UK policing but what makes the biggest difference is leadership, culture and resilience.

Improving the support provided to those who place themselves in harm's way requires energy and commitment through all leadership levels, from the executive to the line manager. Although capability, capacity and clinical intervention are also needed, human intervention is often the deciding factor. Creating a psychologically safe culture will improve resilience and enable our people to cope with assaults and injuries better.

At the Chief Constables' Council (CCC) in October 2019, CC Ian Hopkins and CC Andy Rhodes proposed that chief constables would support the first National Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Staff Survey, which is live at the time of writing. This is funded by the NPWS and has been designed by Dr Les Graham at Durham University. This presents a valuable opportunity for the police service to capture the thoughts, feelings and expectations of the people who work across policing. The findings of this crucial bespoke piece of research should be afforded appropriate attention when they are released.

Chapter recommendations

Recommendation 20

Consistency between forces

HMICFRS should incorporate officer and staff safety and wellbeing into their ongoing inspection through the legitimacy pillar of PEEL.

Recommendation 21

Supervisory arrangements

Chief constables should ensure all line managers understand their responsibilities in providing support to their staff should they become a victim of assault.

Recommendation 22

The Police Covenant

The NPCC and the College of Policing should engage with the Home Office to consider how the findings of the OSSR on the support to officers, staff and families could be addressed within the Police Covenant. This should include a review of the role of the current NPWS in providing appropriate support. Models of care should be fully evaluated and costed prior to being rolled out. The potential role of police charities should be considered.

Chapter 7

Criminal justice outcomes

This chapter explores the criminal justice system (CJS), from the point that an officer or staff member becomes a victim of assault through to outcomes at court. The CJS plays a significant role in providing adequate support to police victims and dealing with offenders accordingly. There are some significant challenges, both real and perceived, with how all agencies of the CJS manage assaults on police. Whether it is the initial police investigation, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) charging decisions or the experience at court, these issues occur both within police forces and across wider criminal justice (CJ) partners.

Overview

With regards to this thematic area, there are a number of positive pieces of work underway nationally to address existing concerns. For example, the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 (AEWA) introduced the offence of assault on emergency service workers. A review of the sentencing guidelines¹⁴⁶ for these offences is underway, with a public consultation now taking place. Furthermore, on the back of this legislation, a multi-agency working group led by Hampshire Deputy Chief Constable Sara Glen QPM has already developed the Joint Agreement on Offences against Emergency Workers Protocol (hereafter called the '2019 Joint Agreement'), which went live nationally on 13 November 2019, the anniversary of the new Act. Therefore, the project team are fully supportive of this pre-existing work and is not intended to duplicate or contradict any of these outcomes.

One key theme that is explored relates to the expectations placed on partners to better deal with, manage and support police victims of assault. However, this is frequently contradicted by evidence that police officers and staff themselves frequently do not consider themselves

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victims. This makes it a significant challenge to get the buy-in needed across all agencies to make effective change. If improvement is to be made in the cultural norms of the wider CJS, it is critical that police forces embed that culture first and truly believe that being assaulted is not 'part of the job'.

To investigate this area, the team focused on the following activities:

- questions sent out to forces via the project team
 - data requests to CPS HQ, who provided some early (embargoed) data
 - engagement with regional CPS and courts colleagues to consider pilots for various approaches
 - regional (Southwest) face-to-face surveying of, and conversations with, staff
 - local (Avon and Somerset Constabulary) dip sampling of crime reports
 - contributions to the review of sentencing guidelines¹⁴⁷ on assault, and development of the 2019 Joint Agreement
-

Local force plans

As an overarching piece of research, the project team wanted to understand what support plans or promises forces had in place, and how this relates to the CJ response to assaults. It was encouraging that virtually all forces who responded to the national data request indicated that they either had a plan in place or were working towards one. A very small number of forces indicated they did not have anything formal in place, which is a concern. There is some variety in the approach and implementation of these plans. For example, the project team were informed of six-, seven-, eight- and nine-point plans or promises, as well as more general procedural guides. Some forces, such as the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), had taken this

¹⁴⁷ Sentencing Council 2018.

one step further by creating a team to oversee and support their plan, and to ensure it was rigorously enforced.

The project team could never recommend all forces to adopt the approach taken by the MPS, due to the size and scale of that force. However, due to the range of plans in existence, the project team would recommend all forces implement the seven-point plan developed by Hampshire as a minimum standard. This would improve consistency of approach and expectations of officers and staff within forces, and would also help partners who cover multiple force boundaries to understand what is expected of them. A simple baseline plan would not remove the potential for certain forces, such as the MPS, to build on and expand their support further in response to local force requirements.

In addition, the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) would recommend all forces to set up some form of monitoring and improvement elements to their plans, to ensure these remain live and dynamic rather than static and forgotten. When factoring in the recommendations below, the project team believe that this should be implemented as a force or multi-agency level scrutiny panel, which can scrutinise the police and wider CJS response and approach to assaults against police. These panels would need to monitor the overall volume of offences and any trends, and be able to dip sample relevant cases in more detail to check and test the application of local plans or promises, as well as CJ partners' contributions. The project team would recommend forces to include police leads and local Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) representatives in these panels as a minimum, with the CPS and court representatives potentially included as and when the need arises. Some forces have already introduced this or similar structures, and they could be included in other performance management arrangements, such as Prosecution Team Performance Meetings (PTPMs) or existing Police and Crime Commissioner Scrutiny Panels, to reduce duplication.

The rigour of investigations and evidence collection

As part of the OSSR, the project team wanted to check and test the quality of investigations, and assess whether those investigations met the standards agreed as part of the various six- to nine-point plans in existence. In the National Police Safety Survey, only 61% of the respondents said that they were treated fairly and with respect across the entire police investigation and CJ process. A higher proportion of the respondents said that the police took the matter seriously and carried out a thorough investigation (75% and 76% respectively). This suggests that there is significant room for organisational improvement when it comes to investigating assaults on police.

However, caution is required when interpreting the survey results, as an assault on police will normally be tied into other primary offences or disorder being investigated at the same time. Anecdotal evidence from dip sampling and interviews would suggest that the actual offences against officers and staff tend to be taken less seriously unless it was at the upper end of the assault spectrum, or was more serious than the original offending.

An example of this relates to statement taking. Local force dip sampling indicated that statement taking in relation to assaults on officers and staff was generally of poor quality, with all of the statements sampled being carried out by the assaulted officer themselves. This was supported by the National Police Safety Survey, which showed that 82% of victim statements were taken by the assaulted officer or staff member. There was a view expressed that the level of severity of assault would dictate whether this statement would be taken by another investigator, but this is infrequent. Most statements focused on the other offences being committed by the offender, downplaying the assault on the officer or providing a lack of detail. Similarly, there were few statements taken about the assault on the officer from others at the scene. Much of this could potentially be because body-worn video camera

(BWVC) footage was available, but this should not be relied on to replace good-quality statement taking. Interestingly, police staff who had been assaulted did not generally take their own statements, and dip sampling indicated that the quality of these statements was better than those taken by the assaulted officer, with more evidence gathered and the overall experience of the staff member being better.

It is an understandable position to downplay an assault on an officer or staff member, particularly if it is a low-level offence with no visible injury. However, as mentioned above, to truly embed a culture where assaults are not 'part of the job', this issue needs to be addressed. The 2019 Joint Agreement references that assaulted officers must never be the officer in case (OIC) for their own case, but does not go into further detail relating to statement taking. The project team therefore recommend that chief constables should obtain statements from police victims of assault. The project team recommend a tiered approach, already reflected in some forces' plans or promises. For example, the ability for a victim to take their own statement should be based on the severity of the offence, if and when convenience can override the need for independence, and taking into account the victims wishes. As a starting point, the project team suggest that statements can only be taken by victims where there is explicit agreement from supervisors in the following circumstances:

Figure 7.1 – Proposed tier system

Tier 1 (statement can be completed by victim)

Type of assault	Level of injury - minor
Push	No injuries
Grab	No pain
Minor scuffle during arrest	No medical attention required
Hit or kick with no marks	No mental trauma

Tier 2 (statement must be taken by officer in case)

Type of assault	Level of injury – moderate
Strikes to the head	Cuts
Strike to the face	Minor puncture wound
Bites	Medical attention required
Spitting	Minimal time off work
Deliberate attack – no during arrest or restraint	Emotional or physiological distress
Racial, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist or gender-based verbal abuse	

Tier 3 (statement taken by detective constable with consideration of Achieving Best Evidence guidance)

Type of assault	Level of injury – major
Stabbing	Loss of consciousness
Major bone break	Hospitalisation
Attack with weapon	Significant time off work
Multiple offenders	
Prolonged or repeated attack	

The agreed stance should be embedded in the relevant ‘minimum standards’ plan referenced above.

The project team support the sentiment expressed in the 2019 Joint Agreement and the Victim’s Codes of Practice (VCOP) that VCOP applies to all victims, and the offering and taking of a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) equally applies. The National Police Safety Survey suggests that the volume of VPS statements could significantly improve. Only 34% of police victims said they

completed one, while 51% said they were not asked to provide one or did not know. If most victims take their own statements, this is perhaps an inevitable consequence. Through our dip sampling, many officers suggested they would have liked to have been offered one and, if they wanted to complete one, would have liked it to have been taken by someone else.

Because of this, the project team has been exploring the possibility of taking VPS via BWVC footage. Having surveyed officers and forces, there is broad support to give this additional perspective on the VPS, enabling the victim to truly convey the emotion of the incident for partners to consider. This approach also has support by all the CJ partners in getting across the impact of assaults on police.

There have been some concerns expressed about some practicalities of this approach, including:

- making sure the footage is taken in a professional way
- how and when more than one VPS can be taken
- how to ensure the footage gets attached to overnight remand files
- any live-time redaction of footage needed at court

Because of these concerns, a pathfinder project is running in the Avon and Somerset policing area, fully supported by the CPS and the courts, to work through these issues and determine a path forward. Once the findings of this pathfinder are available, they can be released to other forces and regions to implement.

Another slight concern raised by forces surveyed about this option related to potential favourable support being offered to police victims that would not be offered to public victims. This ethical question will need to be resolved. The project team suggest that, if this proves to be successful for police victims, then the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) should work with partners to apply a similar approach to public victims of crime. Naturally, the volumes and types of crime would need to be taken into account.

The supervision of investigations on assaults on officers and staff

Feedback from officers and staff suggest that forces seem to be getting it right when it comes to first line supervisor support to a victim after the event, with wider organisational support, such as direct contact from senior leaders, being very positively received. The timing of this contact seems to be about right, as does the level of support offered and provided. There was, however, some concern that the care plans developed to support victims were not always being adhered to by supervisors, or at least not being recorded appropriately. In addition, the National Police Safety Survey highlighted scope for improvements to be made with officer and staff satisfaction with supervisory support.

Local dip sampling and interviews with victims also suggested there is still room for improvement in the management and gatekeeping of crimes and updates being provided on the investigation. As mentioned above, the 2019 Joint Agreement already defines that the victim should never be the OIC for the case, which is a positive step forward. Our findings suggested:

- supervisor reviews need to be more in-depth and show greater consideration of outstanding actions for the assault itself
- care plans are frequently not being adhered to or recorded
- evidence of mistakes being made around charging using the new legislation
- supervisor updates not recorded and passed on to their staff

The National Police Safety Survey showed relatively low levels of officer and staff satisfaction with the process and outcome of their cases, and highlighted particular issues about keeping victims informed of progress. Part of the challenge is to ensure that assaults against officers get the recognition they deserve in investigations. As such, supervision will likely improve as a result. It is felt that the additional work taking place, such as the 2019 Joint Agreement, will improve this position.

Forces have generally been trying to improve the quality of gatekeeping and file supervision. Therefore, there does not need to be any specific emphasis on police assaults in that work. However, using a minimum standard plan or promise, forces should put additional focus in ensuring that supervisors are better able to quality-assure statements, offer VPS to their staff and improve their understanding of, and categorisation under, the emergency services legislation. The project team recommend that this is something included in the scrutiny panel arrangements.

The approach by criminal justice partners

A common view shared by officers who assisted the OSSR is that they do not often get treated like victims across the CJS (primarily the CPS, Victim and Witness Care services, and court staff). The view is that the CJS is a long process, that the CPS do not take these cases seriously, and that officers do not get the support needed at court. In the National Police Safety Survey, 61% of the respondents say they were treated fairly and with respect across the entire police investigation and CJ process, with a higher proportion saying that the police took the matter seriously and carried out a thorough investigation (75% and 76% respectively). However, only 29% agreed they were treated like a victim. Relatively small proportions also agreed that the courts and the CPS took the matter seriously (36% and 42% respectively). Local dip samples and interviews support the survey findings.

These findings are challenging because, anecdotally, it is common for officers to say that they feel like victims, or that they should not feel like victims, particularly for low-level assaults. Despite a concerted campaign to the contrary, there is still a culture among officers and staff that it is 'part of the job'. This makes the expectations of partners more difficult to manage. It is particularly challenging for partners to decipher if and when to treat someone like a 'victim' with some level of vulnerability, rather than just an officer attending court to give evidence. It is therefore difficult to make recommendations for other agencies to change cultural practices without those changes being implemented at a force level.

An example of this dichotomy is that, in general, officers attend court in uniform as a victim. Being visible as police officers and giving evidence in a professional capacity are seen as important aspects of the role. However, a drawback to this is that other agencies will be perceiving those officers in the same light. In one example given to the project team, the police victim was used by the prosecution as a 'runner' for the case, as usual, although in this instance they were actually the victim. Other police victims told the project team that they were told to wait in the main waiting area rather than the dedicated victim waiting area, or were put in close proximity to the offender. Further examples suggested that Witness Care and Victim Support functions at court also do not take account of the officer's needs, as they have been to court and given evidence numerous times so 'should be used to it'. Many of these likely informal practices have built up around the existing culture and are undoubtedly being carried out without any intent to cause offence or ignore vulnerability. Furthermore, because the offence and offender are most likely linked to other – and probably primary – offences being dealt with at the same time, it is difficult to divorce the two.

Being a police officer, or other emergency worker, will undeniably be different to being a public victim in terms of the impacts and vulnerabilities. The support arrangements, needs and expectations are therefore also likely to be different. Some police victims felt that support from a supervisor or colleague would be enough, rather than the more structured support offered to others, or by partners.

It is therefore recommended that the NPCC should work with CJ partners to determine the expected levels of support an officer will receive at each stage of the CJ process, depending on the severity of the offence and the level of vulnerability. This may be outside of the normal VCOP or the technical agreements expressed in the 2019 Joint Agreement, and should cover real-world experiences. These include, for example, whether there are circumstances where police victims of assault should not be in uniform when attending court, and whether officers should be allowed to wait in the victims waiting area, rather than with the public or the offender.

The project team has been exploring how BWVCs, by providing partners a more visceral presentation of the police officer or staff member as a victim, could break down some of these barriers.

Two pieces of work are under development in Avon and Somerset, working in partnership with the CPS and courts. One relates to the use of BWVCs for VPS, as referenced above. With the VPS statement being shown in this way, the hope is that this increases take-up of the VPS more generally. It also means that partners are more able to see the human side of the officer or staff member who has been assaulted, and better understand the impact that assaults can have.

The second piece of work being developed relates to showing relevant BWVC footage in court, regardless of the plea. The rationale for this is to show, where available, the actions of the offender against the officer or staff member. This visual account of the incident would then have an impact on court proceedings and any potential sentence. The recently released 2019 Joint Agreement states:

“Body worn video footage which shows the assault will be central to the investigation. It should also be played at trial and at sentence.”

The project team support this statement but suggest it should be strengthened, and that this footage should be shown regardless of plea. Agreement has been reached on this with the CPS and courts locally and, as with the VPS pathfinder, the project team recommend the NPCC to endorse this approach. To ensure that the police do not have favourable treatment over members of the public, the project team suggest that, should this trial be successful, this should be explored further in relation to offences against the public more generally.

In summary, it is difficult to make effective change across the wider CJ partnership without a truly held belief across policing that assaults are not part of the job. It is hoped that this review, the 2019 Joint Agreement, strengthened legislation, sentencing guidelines and introducing standardised plans or promises will go a long way to achieving the cultural change needed.

How the justice system can become a more effective deterrent

Another common concern expressed by officers and staff is that the outcomes of their cases are disproportionately lower than for similar offences against a member of the public. Cases are thought to be frequently dropped, either before court ('no further action' – NFA) or during court ('put aside'). It is also felt that these sentencing practices do not have any real deterrent effect on offenders, with some offenders even wearing this charge as a badge of honour.

Police and other emergency service workers often argued that offences against them should attract additional outcomes to act as a deterrent, because they are routinely put in dangerous and vulnerable situations.

The introduction of the AEWA (2018), and the current ongoing review of the sentencing guidelines,¹⁴⁸ are very welcome in this regard. The project team is not able to add further recommendations due to this work already taking place and in anticipation of perceptions beginning to change. The project team does recommend, however, that the NPCC, under the leadership of the NPCC Criminal Justice Lead, work with partners to monitor the impact of the AEWA (2018) and the review of relevant sentencing guidelines with aim of ensuring legislation, prosecution and sentencing acts as a deterrent.

In general, court and CPS data are only available at a national level, as identified by the project team, which has been privy to early data provided by the CPS on the impact of the new Act. The data is currently embargoed and, as such, cannot be shared in detail here. However, this data, combined with force surveys, shows a slightly different picture to the perceptions expressed above.

Proportionally, data provided by forces shows that very few offences were being dealt with by NFA in the past year, which might suggest robust policies are in place. Respondents to the National Police Safety Survey, however, suggested 11% of cases against them were NFA by police, and

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30% were discontinued before court. Of these, 21% were discontinued because of insufficient evidence or because they were not deemed to be in the public interest, with remaining respondents either not knowing or not receiving a reason for this discontinuation, or responding with 'other'. Although at times slightly contradictory, the data suggests that there is still much to do in communicating outcomes to police victims. It is therefore recommended that the 'minimum standards' plans or promises should include communication of outcomes to officers (VCOP compliant), which should be monitored at relevant scrutiny panels.

Early headlines from embargoed CPS data (which are subject to change because full analysis has yet to be carried out) point to some differences from the above picture. For police assault outcomes, compared with public assault outcomes:

- immediate custody rates for offenders are virtually the same
- offenders seem to receive a higher average sentence length for assaulting police officers and staff than for assaulting members of the public
- for non-custodial outcomes, offences against the police are more likely result in a fine, while those against the public are more likely to result in conditional discharge, community sentence or suspended prison sentence

Since the new legislation has been introduced, it seems that there has been a drop in fines and conditional discharges, with a comparable increase in community sentences and suspended prison sentences for assaults on police. This would suggest a strengthening of sentencing practices.

As mentioned, the data needs further analysis once formally released. However, an inference can be drawn that sentencing practices are being applied, with the intention of acting as a deterrent to assaults against police officers and staff. Although further exploration is needed to confirm these findings, the initial picture seems to differ from the anecdotal evidence.

The project team used the range of sources to consider whether the greater use of out-of-court disposals (OOCs) could act as some



form of deterrent. Very few officers spoken to in local surveys and interviews were offered the opportunity of restorative justice. Some said they would have liked the opportunity to speak to the offender to establish why they had acted as they did. This potentially would have had a two-fold effect in making the offender consider their actions in the future, while potentially offering some closure for the victim. However, the majority of officers said that even if they were offered restorative justice, they would have declined. This was largely because there is a high chance of officers engaging with the suspect in the future, potentially making a future situation more volatile. For these officers and staff, they felt there would be little benefit for taking part in the process.

Around 50% of forces surveyed for the review indicated they did not support use of OOCs and had a positive charging policy in place for these offences. This is also the position of the PFEW, UNISON and the Home Office. The results of the National Police Safety Survey echoed this level of support, as only 7% of respondents reported their cases were concluded in this way.

Chapter recommendations

Recommendation 23

Local force plans

1 Chief constables should implement, as a minimum standard, the seven-point plan developed by Hampshire Constabulary, which sets out what officers and staff should expect from their force if they have been a victim of an assault. The plan should be subject to frequent performance review using a scrutiny panel arrangement.

2 All chief constables should take a robust approach to assaults on police officers and staff. If legal, arrest should always be the preferred outcome including in cases where assaults occur within the custody environment.

Recommendation 24

Rigour of investigations

Chief constables should implement a policy for obtaining statements from police victims of assault in line with the three-tiered approach identified in this review.

Recommendation 25

Body-worn video camera footage

1 The NPCC should review the findings of a trial from Avon and Somerset Police on using BWVC footage to capture a VPS and consider its use in police assaults and for victims of crime.

Recommendation 25

Body-worn video camera footage

2 **The NPCC** should review the findings of another trial from Avon and Somerset Police on the benefits of BWVC footage of assaults being shown at court, with the intention of chief constables taking a nationally consistent approach of showing the footage regardless of plea, if the evaluation shows it to be effective and practical.

Recommendation 26

Criminal justice partners

The NPCC should work with CJ partners to determine the expected levels of support that an officer, or member of staff, will receive at each stage of the CJ process.

Recommendation 27

Communications

The NPCC and the College of Policing should jointly consider how communications can contribute to improving officer and staff safety and confidence.

Recommendation 28

Deterrent effect

The NPCC should work with partners to monitor the impact of the AEWA (2018) and the review of relevant sentencing guidelines with the aim of ensuring that legislation, prosecution and sentencing act as a deterrent.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This is the final chapter of the review. It begins with an open and frank discussion about its limitations, before highlighting a number of potential avenues for further research that emerged during the course of this project. There follows a brief outline of the various considerations for legislative change highlighted at various points in this report. After this, the review is then brought to a close.

The project team recognise there are limitations with this review, both in scope and time. The review was not intended to provide comprehensive examination of every aspect of officer and staff safety. The review was also delivered within a tight timeframe. It was commissioned at the start of September 2019, with a first draft for review by chief constables at the end of November 2019. Within the timescales, it was not possible for the project team to identify and make use of all the expertise, data and other resources that exist in every force. Many forces will have continued to carry out local analysis, trial innovations or implement new items of equipment and training. The review is, therefore, a snapshot in time. Its findings and recommendations remain relevant, even though the work was carried out before and the report's publication delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Police officers and staff carry out a unique and crucial function within our society. They come to work every day to serve the public, protect vulnerable people, minimise harm, prevent and detect crime and bring offenders to justice. This list is by no means exhaustive. Police officers and staff do not come to work to be abused, kicked, punched, spat at, attacked with a weapon or assaulted in any other way. This is not acceptable, it is not 'part of the job' and it must not be tolerated or condoned.

This unique and challenging line of work is naturally associated with an element of danger and risk. In this regard, society must do all that it feasibly can to manage and minimise this risk, on behalf of those who serve it. In return, police officers and staff must ensure that they

treat every member of society with tolerance, compassion and respect regardless of any perceived social differences. Officers and staff should only resort to force when it is absolutely necessary to do so, and when it is, they should apply only the minimum level possible, for the minimum amount of time needed to achieve the intended objective. Maintaining this social cohesion, is not just the remit of individuals, chief officers or the Government, it is a collective responsibility bestowed upon us all. Without the vital infrastructure of safe and effective law enforcement in place, the delicate social balance will begin to tip towards a landscape of disorder. By natural consequence, the quality of life for the majority of law-abiding citizens will diminish.

The ultimate and leading objective of the OSSR has been to reduce the risk of harm to police officers and staff in England and Wales. In seeking to achieve this end, the project team have used an evidence-based approach to consider a broad range of topics, as framed by the Terms of Reference. These have included, but have not been restricted to, ascertaining the views of frontline officers and staff in terms of their own personal safety, reflecting on the standards of training, equipment and institutional governance presently in place, the level of care provided to staff when they become victims of crime, and the robustness of the criminal justice system after the fact.

From the research and analysis conducted, a total of 28 evidence-based recommendations for organisational improvement have been made. The project team accept that a number of these recommendations will take longer to implement. The recommendations will also require oversight of implementation.

Appendix A

Full list of recommendations

Recommendation 1

Data collection and oversight

1 **The NPCC** should identify its priorities for further data collection and research on officer and staff safety, and on the police use of force. The NPCC should share these priorities with the College of Policing, the Home Office and academia to inform their ongoing work programmes.

2 **The NPCC** should appoint a chief officer lead for officer and staff safety.

Recommendation 2

Data on officer and staff safety

The NPCC, with the College of Policing and Home Office, should review the processes for collecting, analysing and publishing data on officers and staff safety, including serious and aggravated offences (for example, murder, attempted murder, GBH, sexual assault and hate crimes). Where appropriate, offences against the police should be identifiable within recorded crime figures.

Recommendation 3

Road safety

- 1 **Chief constables** should adopt the current safety standards from the DfT as the common minimum standard for the police service. Chief constables should nominate a lead to integrate these standards into working practice.
- 2 **Chief constables** should review the support offered to appropriate frontline staff conducting roads policing activities, including considering use of peer-to-peer support from specialist roads policing officers.
- 3 **Chief constables** should review whether any high-visibility clothing, kit or safety equipment made available to specialist traffic units should also be issued to frontline officers and certain staff members who are expected to work on the roads.
- 4 **The College of Policing should work with the NPCC** to produce a learning package for officers and appropriate staff to reduce the risks associated with roads policing.
- 5 **The NPCC to approach the Home Office** regarding a change in legislation to prohibit an offender from deliberately using, threatening to use or attempting to use a vehicle to target a police employee. This legislative amendment could form part of the forthcoming Police Powers and Protection Bill.
- 6 **DSTL should work with partners and industry** to expedite the testing, procurement and rollout of remotely operated vehicle immobilisation devices with the aim of reducing risks to officers.
- 7 **The NPCC** should recommission social research on the link between shift work and safe driving practices in consultation with staff associations and trade unions. The results should be used to raise awareness and mitigate risk within every force.

Recommendation 4

Crime recording standards

- 1 The NPCC should work with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice** to examine the extent to which sexual and hate offences against emergency workers are treated as aggravated offences under the AEWA (2018).
- 2 The NPCC should propose to the Home Office** that the NCRS is updated to allow easy identification of sexual offences and hate crime offences against emergency workers.

Recommendation 5

Corrosive substances

- 1 The NPCC and the Ambulance Service** scope the development of a joint Memorandum of Understanding so that all emergency service responders that are victims of confirmed or suspected CSAs receive an appropriate emergency response.
- 2 The NPCC should work with the Home Office** to explore the potential impact of legislative changes to make it an offence to possess ammonia and other corrosive substances without good reason, as well as the use or threat to use such products as weapons.
- 3 The College of Policing** should produce a learning package for officers and staff to raise awareness of the risks of a CSA, and should advise on response.
- 4 The NPCC** should liaise the Home Office Commissioning Hub to further explore a possible solution for neutralising corrosive substances. Consideration should then be given for its deployment.

Recommendation 6

Personal protective equipment for PCSOs

NPCC to consult with UNISON and other trade unions on further measures that could be taken to address concerns raised by PCSOs in the National Staff Safety Survey, in order to inform chief constables' local decisions on training, deployment and equipment for PCSOs.

Recommendation 7

Body-worn video cameras

Chief constables to carefully consider the findings of the OSSR when making decisions about deployment of BWVCs within their force areas.

Recommendation 8

Body armour

Chief constables should consider issuing body armour to certain frontline roles, if supported by evidence gathered through their force STRAs. Chief constables should review their STRAs to ensure they have the appropriate level of provision of body armour to frontline roles.

Recommendation 9

Spitting and biting assaults

1 **Chief constables** should issue SBGs to all police officers if supported by evidence gathered through forces' STRAs.

2 **The NPCC** should support a proposed amendment to the AEWA (2018), which would make spitting an aggravating factor and would compel offenders to provide a blood sample if they do spit on an emergency worker.

Recommendation 10

Personal safety shields

NPCC to work with the MPS to expedite and expand their trial of the personal safety shield by including a number of other forces and then bring back the findings for consideration by Chief Constables Council.

Recommendation 11

Slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves

1 **Chief constables** should issue slash- and needlestick-resistant gloves to all police officers and certain frontline staff roles, if supported by evidence gathered through forces' STRAs.

2 **Chief constables** should ensure any officer or staff member who receives a needlestick injury is informed of the actual risk of being affected with a communicable disease by providing them immediate access to the Public Health England (PHE) document 'Guidance on management of potential exposure to blood-borne viruses in emergency workers.'

Recommendation 12

In-car protection

The NPCC should work with the National Association of Police Fleet Managers (NAPFM) to identify a solution to reduce the risk of assault with a police vehicle, with the intention of bringing it in within the life of the next vehicle contract.

Recommendation 13

Self-application tourniquets

Chief constables should consider providing officers and frontline staff, such as PCSOs, access to SATs, taking into account any evidence gathered through local forces' STRAs and the evidence contained within this review. Appropriate training must be given to all officers and staff before they are issued.

Recommendation 14

Taser deployment and use

1 The NPCC and the College commission an independent programme of social research to explore the nature, causes and consequences of racial disparities in the police use of Taser, with a view to identifying changes aimed at minimising the problem and mitigating its impact.

2 Chief constables should end the practice of Control Room Supervisors or Force Incident Managers granting 'Taser authorities'. The decision on whether or not to use Taser should be made by the carrying officer using the NDM and taking into account the threat, harm and risk that he or she is faced with at the scene. This does not prevent control rooms having a role in determining whether Taser-trained officers should be deployed to particular incidents.

Recommendation 14

Taser deployment and use

3 **The NPCC** should review current processes for completing STRAs that help to inform chief constables' decisions about deployment, equipment and other operational issues within their forces. A best-practice framework should be adopted to ensure consistency of approach across police forces. This will include consideration of the benefits of having a standalone Taser STRA.

4 Decisions about any increase in the number of Tasers to be made available in police forces should continue to be made by **chief constables** through their STRA of local circumstances, while taking into account the findings of this review.

Recommendation 15

Personal safety training

1 **The College of Policing with the NPCC** should revise the national curriculum and related guidance on personal safety training to improve officer and staff safety and satisfaction, and to ensure greater consistency. The curriculum should focus on the most effective techniques and recommend contact time and training methods.

2 **Chief constables** should implement the College of Policing's guidelines on conflict management to ensure officers and staff are sufficiently well skilled in the non-physical aspects of conflict management, and should support trials testing the impact of related conflict management training.

Recommendation 16

Guidance on equipment

- 1 **NPCC** should review existing guidance on:
 - care and inspection of armours, reinforcing that this process should form part of local health and safety risk management protocols
 - use of handcuffs
 - use of irritant spray
- 2 **NPCC** should update national records of AFO armour to help ensure the completeness of ELA data across England and Wales.
- 3 **Chief constables** should ensure that chain link handcuffs are only used in very specialist roles where a detailed risk assessment has been completed outlining the operational benefit and requirement of these less effective control measures.

Recommendation 17

Procurement of equipment

- 1 **NPCC** should lead a practitioners and independent medical assessment to establish if it is practical to nationally procure one model of handcuffs and limb restraints.
- 2 **NPCC** to engage with the Home Office Science Commissioning Hub to help avoid bottlenecks in the future procurement of handcuffs.

Recommendation 18

Subject matter experts

Chief constables should support efforts by the NPCC, the College of Policing, PFEW and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) to continue working towards the sustainable appointment of nationally qualified and certificated subject matter experts to help ensure public and officers' confidence in civil and criminal proceedings when 'use of force' is in question.

Recommendation 19

The Independent Medical Science Advisory Panel

NPCC, working with the College of Policing and the IOPC, should seek to formalise the position of IMSAP and consider how to formally sustain the future of this currently voluntary body.

Recommendation 20

Consistency between forces

HMICFRS should incorporate officer and staff safety and wellbeing into their ongoing inspection through the legitimacy pillar of PEEL.

Recommendation 21

Supervisory arrangements

Chief constables should ensure all line managers understand their responsibilities in providing support to their staff should they become a victim of assault.

Recommendation 22

The Police Covenant

The NPCC and the College of Policing should engage with the Home Office to consider how the findings of the OSSR on the support to officers, staff and families could be addressed within the Police Covenant. This should include a review of the role of the current NPWS in providing appropriate support. Models of care should be fully evaluated and costed prior to being rolled out. The potential role of police charities should be considered.

Recommendation 23

Local force plans

1 Chief constables should implement, as a minimum standard, the seven-point plan developed by Hampshire Constabulary, which sets out what officers and staff should expect from their force if they have been a victim of an assault. The plan should be subject to frequent performance review using a scrutiny panel arrangement.

2 All chief constables should take a robust approach to assaults on police officers and staff. If legal, arrest should always be the preferred outcome including in cases where assaults occur within the custody environment.

Recommendation 24

Rigour of investigations

Chief constables should implement a policy for obtaining statements from police victims of assault in line with the three-tiered approach identified in this review.

Recommendation 25

Body-worn video camera footage

1 The NPCC should review the findings of a trial from Avon and Somerset Police on using BWVC footage to capture a VPS and consider its use in police assaults and for victims of crime.

2 The NPCC should review the findings of another trial from Avon and Somerset Police on the benefits of BWVC footage of assaults being shown at court, with the intention of chief constables taking a nationally consistent approach of showing the footage regardless of plea, if the evaluation shows it to be effective and practical.

Recommendation 26

Criminal justice partners

The NPCC should work with CJ partners to determine the expected levels of support that an officer, or member of staff, will receive at each stage of the CJ process.

Recommendation 27

Communications

The NPCC and the College of Policing should jointly consider how communications can contribute to improving officer and staff safety and confidence.

Recommendation 28

Deterrent effect

The NPCC should work with partners to monitor the impact of the AEWA (2018) and the review of relevant sentencing guidelines with the aim of ensuring that legislation, prosecution and sentencing act as a deterrent.

Appendix B

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers (replaced by NPCC)
AEWA	Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018
AFO	Authorised Firearms Officer
APHSA	Association of Police Health and Safety Advisers
ARV	armed response vehicle
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BBV	blood-borne virus
BWVC	body-worn video camera
CAST	Centre for Applied Science and Technology (replaced by DSTL)
CCC	Chief Constables' Council
CFI	Chief Firearms Instructor
CJ	criminal justice
CJS	criminal justice system
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRAE	Children's Rights Alliance for England
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
CTPWT	Chester Treadmill Police Walk Test
CTSFO	Counter Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officer
DfT	Department for Transport

DOMILL	Defence Scientific Advisory Council on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (replaced by SACMILL)
DSTL	Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (replaced CAST)
ELA	extended life analysis
GBH	grievous bodily harm
GMP	Greater Manchester Police
GP	General Purpose
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
HOSTYDS	Hollow Spike Tyre Deflation System
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HSWA	Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
IED	improvised explosive device
IMSAP	Independent Medical Science Advisory Panel
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Conduct (replaced IPCC)
IPCC	Independent Police Complaints Commission (replaced by IOPC)
JRFT	job-related fitness test
LLWWG	Less-Lethal Weapons Working Group
MDP	Ministry of Defence Police
MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
MSFT	Multi Stage Fitness Test
NAPFM	National Association of Police Fleet Managers
NCRS	National Crime Recording Standard

NDM	National Decision Model
NFA	no further action
NIVEL	Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council (replaced ACPO)
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency (replaced by the College of Policing)
NPSM	National Personal Safety Manual
NPWS	National Police Wellbeing Service
NUMS	National Uniform Management System
OHNAPS	Occupational Health Nurse Advisers to the Police Service
OIC	officer in case
OOCD	out-of-court disposal
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
OSSR	Officer and Staff Safety Review
OSU	Officer Safety Unit
PEEL	police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy
PFEW	Police Federation of England and Wales
PHE	Public Health England
PolSA	Police Search Adviser
PPE	personal protective equipment
PPG	Physical Protection Group
PST	personal safety training
PTF	Police Transformation Fund
PTPM	Prosecution Team Performance Meeting
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder

QAM	Quality Assurance Management
RCT	randomised controlled trial
REA	rapid evidence assessment
RTC	road traffic collision
SACMILL	Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (replaced DOMILL)
SAT	self-application tourniquets
SBG	spit and bite guard
SDAR	Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint
SLA	service-level agreement
SME	subject matter expert
SOCO	scenes of crime officer
STO	specially trained officer
STRA	strategic threat and risk assessment
UCL	University College London
VCOP	Victim Codes of Practice
VPS	Victim Personal Statement

Appendix C

Terms of reference

The Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR) was commissioned by the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Martin Hewitt, on 2 September 2019.¹⁴⁹ The Terms of Reference, which were set on 5 September 2019 by the NPCC Operations lead, Chief Constable Charlie Hall, are as follows:

- Review the existing evidence base on officer and staff safety, including:
 - views of frontline officers and staff concerning their personal safety
 - national data concerning assaults on officers and staff
 - available data on police use of force
 - analysis of the threats posed to frontline officers and staff
 - relevant academic evidence
 - recent NPCC analysis and products relevant to officer and staff safety
- Understanding how officer and staff safety arrangements may impact police legitimacy and public confidence, including:
 - how this may vary between communities
 - the equality impact of such arrangements
 - how this may influence police effectiveness
 - how deployment practices affect actual and perceived officer and staff safety
 - the confidence that police officers and staff have in these arrangements
- Suitability and distribution of the equipment issued to officers and staff for their personal safety, including:
 - personal protective equipment (PPE)

149 National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) 2019.

- Tasers
- body-worn video cameras (BWVCs)
- the role and relevance of a strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA) to inform measures that forces put in place for officer and staff safety
- Training provided to officers and staff concerning their own safety, including:
 - the suitability of the technical training provided to use the equipment issued safely and effectively
 - the consistency and sufficiency of training delivery across forces
 - training for prevention and/or de-escalation of situations that may otherwise lead to violent behaviour
 - recognising how communities and vulnerable people may be influenced by officer and staff behaviour and actions that may then affect personal safety
- Welfare support for officers and staff, including:
 - the availability of suitable health and welfare support provision for those who have been assaulted
 - the impact on families
 - the consistency of these services between forces
 - the supervisory arrangements and practice in place to ensure that suitable support is engaged in all relevant cases
 - the support provided where cases are progressing to court
- Criminal justice (CJ) outcomes, including:
 - the rigour of investigations and evidence collection following assaults on officers and staff
 - supervision of investigations
 - approach taken by CJ partners to cases involving assaults on police officers and staff
 - how the CJS can become a more effective deterrent against people assaulting police officers and staff

Scope

This review focuses primarily on the safety of officers and staff deployed in general frontline policing roles that involve direct contact with the public. This includes, but is not limited to, response officers, neighbourhood officers, detectives, roads policing officers, custody officers and staff, PCSOs and special constables. It will not examine the safety of officers and staff who are deployed in specialist roles or functions where particular arrangements are already in place to counter threats of violence. This includes firearms officers and the deployment of Police Support Units.

The OSSR does not examine policing in Northern Ireland or Scotland, as they have legal systems, processes and policies that are vastly different to those in England and Wales. However, the project team is aware that Police Scotland are currently in the process of conducting their own internal review of the provisions governing officer and staff safety, the terms of which bear marked similarities to this current report. The project team has maintained close ties with our Scottish counterparts, ensuring a mutually beneficial and joined-up approach by sharing contacts, information and data as requested. This strategic partnership will continue until both reports are published and, if the need arises, well beyond.

Engagement strategy

The OSSR has been of considerable interest to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. These groups have been involved throughout the review process, and have been afforded the opportunity to contribute in various areas aligned to the Terms of Reference.

Throughout this review, the steering group and project team have engaged closely with the NPCC Less Lethal Weapons portfolio,¹⁵⁰ the NPCC Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint (SDAR) portfolio¹⁵¹ and

150 Portfolio owned by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Lucy D'Orsi (Metropolitan Police Service).

151 Portfolio owned by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist (Metropolitan Police Service).

the College of Policing, where much relevant work has already been undertaken to support and inform the review findings.

The steering group and project team have also maintained close engagement with staff associations, unions and other stakeholder organisations. This has been achieved by co-opting members onto the steering group and providing representatives with full oversight and visibility of the project team's progress.

Stakeholders that have been involved in this review include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
- Association of Police Health and Safety Advisers
- Association of Special Constabulary Officers
- Civil liberty organisations and community representatives
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Home Office
- Independent Office for Police Conduct
- Ministry of Justice
- National Health Service
- Police Federation of England and Wales
- Police Scotland
- Police Superintendents Association
- UNISON

Governance and oversight

To fulfil the Terms of Reference for the OSSR, a chief officer steering group was created, which was chaired by Kent Chief Constable Alan Pughsley. A number of other chief officers volunteered to provide executive oversight and support the work of the project team with their influence, expertise and experience.¹⁵² Each chief officer from

¹⁵² Chief Constable Charlie Hall, Chief Constable Andy Marsh, Deputy Chief Constable Bernie O'Reilly, Chief Constable Andy Rhodes and Chief Constable Giles York.

the steering group provided at least one subject matter expert (SME) from their own organisation to assist in the research and review process. These personnel form the project team, which came together on a regular basis to share findings and report on progress.

Each member of the project team was allocated a workstream relevant to their particular area of expertise and as defined by the Terms of Reference. The project team then produced a series of short reports outlining their research findings and associated recommendations. These reports were cleared by the relevant steering group lead, prior to dissemination to the report's lead author for editing and inclusion in the final submission.

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We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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