

LCU Community Scrutiny Panel BWV Review – Quick Reference Checklist



APPENDIX A.

Use of Force

Police may use force to carry out their duties, but only where it is **necessary**, **proportionate** and **reasonable in all the circumstances**. Officers should use the **minimum force needed**, explain their actions, and adjust as the situation changes. Panels should consider clarity of explanation, de-escalation attempts, dignity, welfare and accountability.

Good Practice Indicators

- ☐ Clear explanation of why force was needed
- ☐ Attempt made to calm / talk through situation
- ☐ Steps taken to reduce tension or create space/time
- ☐ Officer stayed calm, professional and in control
- ☐ Communication clear, respectful, easy to understand
- ☐ Force proportionate and safely applied
- ☐ Officers coordinated effectively
- ☐ Good empathy and respectful tone and language
- ☐ Vulnerability or distress recognised and considered
- ☐ Person's dignity maintained
- ☐ Reassurance or aftercare provided afterwards
- ☐ Use of force decision clearly recorded

Learning Indicators

- ☐ Reason for force not clearly explained
- ☐ Missed opportunity to de-escalate
- ☐ Officer's tone escalated situation
- ☐ Officer appeared stressed or emotionally reactive
- ☐ Instructions unclear or confusing
- ☐ Force stronger than needed
- ☐ Force unsafe or poorly coordinated
- ☐ Vulnerability or distress not considered
- ☐ Dignity or respect not maintained
- ☐ Reassurance or explanation lacking
- ☐ Recording of decisions unclear

Stop & Search

Stop and search is a lawful but **intrusive power** that must be clearly explained and fairly applied. Officers should explain **why the person is stopped, what power is used**, and **what they are looking for**. Panels should consider how clearly the encounter was explained, how respectful it was, and how fair it would feel to the person.

Good Practice Indicators

- ☐ Clear explanation of legal power and reason
- ☐ Specific behaviour/information explained clearly
- ☐ Object of the search stated simply
- ☐ Detention clearly explained
- ☐ Officer identified themselves (warrant card if required)
- ☐ Understanding checked; instructions easy to follow
- ☐ Clearly informed of their entitlement to a copy of the search record
- ☐ Communication clear, respectful, easy to understand
- ☐ Person treated with dignity
- ☐ Good empathy and respectful tone and language
- ☐ Vulnerability or distress recognised
- ☐ Reassurance or aftercare provided
- ☐ Outcome of search clearly explained
- ☐ Verbal and written grounds aligned

Learning Indicators

- ☐ Reason for search not clearly explained
- ☐ Behaviour not linked to suspected offence
- ☐ Over-reliance on smell or vague intelligence
- ☐ Object of search unclear
- ☐ GOWISELY incomplete
- ☐ Understanding not checked
- ☐ Communication unclear
- ☐ Vulnerability/distress not considered
- ☐ Dignity/respect not maintained
- ☐ Officer appeared stressed or emotionally reactive
- ☐ Outcome not explained
- ☐ Verbal and written grounds inconsistent

Understanding Police Powers (for panel reference only)

**Powers which
require officers to**

Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE Code A), relating to searches for weapons, stolen property, something made

have reasonable grounds to conduct the search	or adapted for use in crime or fireworks Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, relating to searches for controlled drugs Section 47 Firearms Act 1968 – relating to searches for firearms and ammunition	
Powers which allow officers in uniform to search without reasonable grounds (suspicion-less)	Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, relating to searches for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments which might be used, or might have been used in incidents of serious violence	
Reasonable Grounds	Seen Heard Actions Conversation Knowledge Smell	Reasonable grounds for suspicion is the legal test that officers must satisfy before they can stop and detain an individual or vehicle in order to search. Firstly – Officers must have formed a genuine suspicion in their own mind that they will find the object for which the powers being exercised allows them to search. Secondly – the suspicion that the object will be found must be reasonable Does the officer suspect <i>this</i> person is in possession of <i>this</i> article at <i>this</i> time
Limitations of powers	There is no power to require a person to remove any clothing in public other than a jacket, outer coat, or gloves, (JOG) Any search involving the removal of more than JOG may only be made by an officer of the same sex as the person searched and may not be made in the presence of anyone of the opposite sex unless the person being searched specifically requests it. It must be done out of public view. Searches involving exposure of intimate parts may be carried out only at a nearby police station or other nearby location which is out of public view (but not a police vehicle) and supervisor authority may be required.	
GOWISELY	Grounds for the search Object/purpose of the search Warrant card if in plain clothes Intity of the officer Station to which attached Entitlement to a copy of the search record Legal power used	

	You are detained for the purposes of the search.
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When can Police use force?

Their common law powers provide them with authority to use force.

Section 3, Criminal Law Act 1967 authorises the use of reasonable force to prevent crime, such as protecting themselves and others from assault, or assist a lawful arrest.

Section 117, PACE authorises police officers to use reasonable force when exercising their PACE powers.

Officers should not routinely handcuff people in order to carry out a stop and search. They must judge each case on its merits in line with conflict management principles and be able to justify any use of force, including the use of handcuffs. Any force used should be proportionate to the aim of preventing crime.

PACE Code A (paragraph 3.2) states that an officer can use reasonable force to detain a person or vehicle for a search and/or to carry out a search, but only as a last resort. An officer may also carry out a forcible search when they have established that the person resists or is unwilling to cooperate.

Where practicable, the officer should explain to the person they are stopping and searching why it is necessary for them to be handcuffed, for example because the officer reasonably believes the person may escape, attempt to escape or cause harm to themselves or others.

Power of Arrest

Police may arrest a person where they reasonably suspect an offence and where arrest is necessary (for example, to prevent harm, allow prompt investigation or prevent escape).

Force may be used if necessary and proportionate to carry out a lawful arrest.

Power to detain

Officers may lawfully detain a person in certain circumstances (such as during a search or prior to arrest). The person should be told when they are not free to leave and why.