

Thematic Briefing

Use & Uplift of Taser

May 2022

Chief Inspector Coates

ACC Kerrin Wilson



1.0 Background / Context

- 1.1 Taser is an invaluable tool for Frontline Officers that equips them to deal with confrontation and the threats that a modern Police Officer now faces on a regular occasion. What is evidenced in our deployments is that just the presence of Taser by drawing it without firing de-escalates many confrontational incidents meaning physical use of Force is not required.
- 1.2 As a Force we had seen an increase in the number of assaults that Police Officers were experiencing and equipping Officers with Taser provides not only an effective piece of equipment to deal with subjects and the threat posed but also protects our Officers increasing the safety of them and the public.
- 1.3 In 2020 the Force made a decision that it would uplift the number of Frontline Officers equipped with Taser. The aspirational number was to uplift to 350 Officers (not including Firearms Officers) which was an increase of over 100 Officers at that time.

2.0 Developments over last 6-12 months

- 2.1 To facilitate the uplift in Officers the Force submitted an application for a Home Office grant to purchase additional Tasers in 2020, which was successful. In addition, the Force recruited 3 Taser Trainers to specifically deliver the additional training required and a training plan developed to deliver the uplift.

3.0 Current Position / Performance (where applicable)

- 3.1 During Q1-Q3 of 2021/22 (Q4 figures unavailable at time of writing) taser had been used on 309 occasions, which includes drawing, red-dotting and/or firing. A taser was fired on 18 occasions. Compared to the same period in 2020/21, this is a 11% decrease in the use of taser.
- 3.2 At the time of the employment of the trainers in April/May 2021 we had approximately 220 Taser Officers trained. On the 1st April 2022 we now have 301 Officers trained (not including Firearms Officers).

4.0 Forward look 6-12 months

- 4.1 The training plan is to deliver sufficient courses to achieve the aspiration of 350 frontline Taser Trained Officers by 1st September 2022 which we are on course to deliver.

5.0 Issues of Exception – Opportunities / Risks

5.1 None

6.0 Key Public Messages

6.1 Taser is an invaluable tried and tested piece of equipment that is essential in equipping our officers with the right tools to tackle the threats they face. It safeguards our Officers from assaults and safeguards the public because we have a more effective response to incidents we respond to. Taser is also a safer option for offenders as this is less likely to result in more serious injuries when restraining violent offenders to those potentially received by using batons.

6.2 Overview of Taser usage is covered by the Forces Legitimacy Board. This board examines the use, circumstances and any disproportionality of use against certain groups, i.e. children and young people; ethnic minority populations; vulnerable adults. There are no concerns raised over the use of Taser from this board.