

London Policing Ethics Panel Minutes of Meeting

Monday, 13 June 2022

Membership

Professor Suzanne Shale (Chair)
Dr Jyoti Belur (apologies)
Professor Jennifer Brown
Abdul Hye Miah
Professor Bryan Edwards

Research Adviser

Professor Ben Bradford, Institute of Global City Policing

Observer

James Bottomley, MOPAC

MPS Openness and Transparency Project

Review of Progress

1. The Panel considered the progress they had made on the project, against the aims they had agreed for the project in February 2022. In summary, the aims were:
 - Developing an ethical narrative clarifying how openness and transparency in policing were of importance to individuals subject to the exercise of police powers, and to partner organisations where police powers will be exercised in order to achieve shared aims.
 - Using two case studies of police action to exemplify the benefits and challenges of openness and transparency. Those case studies being information and data policy and practice in relation to strip searching and in relation to local government partners in localised police operations.
2. They agreed that the research and deliberation the Panel had undertaken so far, along with the further research planned, was enabling them to develop the report in line with the agreed terms of reference.

Interim Report on Strip Search Case Study¹

3. There was a discussion of whether the Panel should produce an interim report which focussed on the strip search case study. Consideration was given to the current topicality of this subject for the public in light of the recent cases that were being or had recently been investigated by Independent Office of Police Complaints (IOPC).
4. It was agreed that an interim report on focussing on More Thorough Intimate Parts Searches (MTIPS) would be a useful resource to support the MPS and MOPAC to address the issues arising from the IOPC recommendations. Given the profound impact a search exposing intimate parts can have on individuals, there would be benefit in producing a report on this as soon as possible. The interim report would

¹ The term 'strip search' is used in this context to include strip searches that occur in police custody, as well as More Thorough Intimate Parts Searches that occur outside of police custody.

be restricted to MTIPS with strip searching in custody deferred until further investigation of custody practice was complete.

5. The Panel discussed issues that they wanted to reflect on further. Including:
 - Officers' understanding of the impact being strip searched has on individuals, and also the impact on police officers of undertaking MTIPS and custody strip searches.
 - The role of supervising officers and group think when decisions are taken to undertake a MTIPS search.
 - The impact of on attitudes to MTIPS & strip search when it is described as 'a tactic'.
 - Relevant issues that can be drawn out from case studies on strip search from the USA and Australia.
 - Success criteria used to evaluate MTIPS justifiability.
 - Disproportionality.
 - MPS collection of data.
 - Potential use of technology in place of strip searches.
6. The Panel identified three key considerations that they want to reflect in the interim report – justification; minimisation of harm; and fair and proportionate use of the power.

Research

7. The Panel discussed the further work they need to undertake to inform their deliberations, including interviews with custody officers, public sector partners, and visits to custody suites.

The Panel's next meeting will be on 11 July 2022.