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OPERATIONAL SAFETY USE OF FORCE

Quarter 3 Performance Report

April 2023 to December 2023



SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY

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Part One – Introduction

What is in this Report?

This report makes management information about Police Scotland available to the public. The management information presented here relates mainly to manual completion of ‘Use of Force’ forms and “Taser Deployment” forms by officers and staff, but some information about incidents is also included.

All data used in this report are provisional management information and not official statistics. This report covers the period 01 April 2023 to 31 December 2023. All data are correct at the published date and were extracted at the start of January 2023.

Information in relation to Armed Policing deployments, including Taser use by armed policing, are published in the Armed Policing Quarterly Report.

What is the purpose of this Report?

This report is intended to provide answers about when Police Scotland officers and staff have deemed it proportionate, legal and absolutely necessary to use force during the course of their duties. This data is extracted from Police Scotland internal systems which are dynamic and continuously updated. This data is extracted from the “Use of Force” and “Taser Deployment” forms which are manually completed by officers/staff following an incident where officers have determined that use of force was necessary.

About “Use of Force” Forms

“Use of Force”, for the purpose of recording, is defined as “any physical use of force, except compliant handcuffing” and ‘come along hold / escort hold’ and includes: Empty Hand Techniques, Batons, Irritant Sprays (including draws), Leg Restraints and Spit Hoods. Separate forms are completed for the use of Taser.

The level of force used must be proportionate, legal, absolutely necessary and officers are individually accountable in law for the amount of force they use. The use of force in any situation will involve a unique set of circumstances and deploying use of force tactics will be based on a

variety of factors. A police officer's priority will always be ensuring wider public safety as well as that of the individual(s) they are dealing with.

If force is utilised during an incident staff must complete the electronic Use of Force Form, on internal systems, prior to the end of their shift. One form per incident is required and must include all force used.

A single "Use of Force" form can be used to record more than one use of force during an incident, for example an officer may utilise an empty hand restraint before applying handcuffs to a subject. This would show as two instances of use of force on one form.

A single "Use of Force" form can be used to record details of multiple subjects.

Police Scotland utilise "Use of Force" forms to record data and collate information in relation to the techniques and use of Personal Protective Equipment utilised by officers and staff. This assists with the continual review and improvement of the Operational Safety Training syllabus. It is imperative that this information is captured to ensure a true reflection of operational policing and allow any trends/issues to be identified. Police Scotland is required to report every PAVA discharge and Taser deployment to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) within 24 hours of the incident.

Subjects are asked to provide their ethnicity. Where this information is not provided at the time of completion, officers have the option to record "not known".

About Taser

Taser is the brand name of the conducted energy device that the Home Office has approved for UK police forces.

In June 2018, Police Scotland Officers were first deployed into our communities with Taser. These officers are known as Specially Trained Officers or STOs. A Taser is a bright yellow, hand-held, electronic device. It is only used by officers who have received specialised training and in situations where they need to deal with violent or dangerous individuals at a distance. STOs are trained to assess and continually re-assess a situation and must decide on the most reasonable and necessary use of force in the circumstances.

Tasers use an electrical current to temporarily incapacitate a person. Extensive medical and scientific tests were carried out before Taser was approved for use.

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When an officer considers there to be an imminent use or threat of violence they can consider using Taser in a number of ways:

- Drawn - The officer removes the Taser device from its holster when justified in law to do so.
- Aim - The Taser is aimed at a suspect due to the circumstances and their behaviour. This may act as a deterrent or it may lead to Taser being discharged.
- Arc/arcing - To deter a suspect an officer may activate the device so the electric current flows between the two contacts at the end of the Taser. This is when you may hear or see electricity crackling.
- Red dot - The Taser has a laser which allows the officer to mark the suspect with a red dot. This lets the officer know they are on target whilst warning the suspect they have been targeted.
- Application and discharge of a Taser in direct contact mode (including three-point contact) - Following Taser being discharged there may be circumstances where it has not been fully effective. The officer will place the end of the Taser onto the suspect approximately nine inches away from the nearest probe to mitigate the threat posed.
- Fire - An officer pulls the trigger firing two probes which are attached by copper wire to the device. When the probes attach to a person an electric circuit is completed which temporarily incapacitates a suspect.

It should be noted that:

- Multiple Officers can use Taser at a single Incident.
- Drawn, Aimed, Red Dot and Arced are considered non-discharges.
- Fired is when probes have been deployed from the device.

Part Two – Management Information

“Use of Force” forms recorded by Police Scotland

Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24

Count	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
Total number of incidents recorded by Police Scotland	1,188,376
Number of “Use of Force” forms submitted	5,622
Percentage of incidents recorded where a “Use of Force” form was submitted. (Number of ‘Use of Force’ forms divided by number of incidents)	0.47%

The following information is presented in the above table:

The total number of incidents recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24 is 1,188,376. The total number of “Use of Force” forms submitted for the same period is 5,622. The percentage of incidents recorded where a “Use of Force” form was submitted (the total number of “Use of Force” forms submitted divided by the total number of incidents) for the same period is 0.47%.

Instances of specific use recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms

Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24

Use of force applied	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
Handcuffs used	5,563
Empty hand restraint / hold used (Empty hand restraints and holds include; pushes, fend offs, arm locks, strikes, blocks and the placing and restraining of a subject on the ground).	5,808
Spit Hood used	787
Fast straps (leg restraint) used	1,298
Baton drawn only	195
Baton strike	113
Baton restraint	129
PAVA drawn only	100
PAVA discharged (All PAVA Discharges are automatically referred to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC))	108

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table shows the number of times the named use of force was recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24:

- Handcuffs were used 5,563 times
- Empty hand restraint/hold (Empty hand restraints and holds include; pushes, fend offs, arm locks, strikes, blocks and the placing and restraining of a subject on the ground) was used 5,808 times.
- Spit hoods were used 787 times
- Fast straps (leg restraints) were used 1,298 times.
- Baton (drawn only) was used 195 times, a baton strike was used 113 times and a baton restraint was used 129 times.

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- PAVA (drawn only) was used 100 times and PAVA was discharged 108 times - all PAVA Discharges are automatically referred to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC)

It is important to note the below:

- A single “Use of Force” form can be used to record more than one use of force during an incident, for example an officer may utilise an empty hand restraint before applying handcuffs to a subject.
- A single “Use of Force” form can be used to record details of multiple subjects.

Number of incidents recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms breakdown for Subject

Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24

Subject detail	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
Subject is under 18	844
Subject is Male	4,459
Subject is Female	1,250

The following information is presented in the above table:

- The total number of incidents recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24 where the subject was under 18 is 844.
- The total number of incidents recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24 where the subject was male is 4,459. The number of incidents where the subject was female recorded for the same period was 1,250.

Ethnicity breakdown from “Use of Force” forms for Subject

Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24

Subject Ethnicity	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24	Subject Ethnicity	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
African, African Scottish or African British	45	Other Ethnic Group	36
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	21	Other white British	245
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	4	Other white ethnic group	73
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	34	Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	33
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	4	Unknown	66
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	8	White English	127
Choose not to disclose	5	White Gypsy/Traveller	9
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	6	White Irish	20
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	41	White Northern Irish	19
Other African Background	10	White Polish	84
Other Asian Background	22	White Scottish	4,715
Other Caribbean or Black background	7	White Welsh	7

The table above shows the breakdown of subjects ethnicity recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms for the period Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24 as follows:

- African, African Scottish or African British – 45 reports
- Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British – 21 reports
- Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British – 4 reports
- Black, Black Scottish or Black British – 34 reports
- Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British – 4 reports
- Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British – 8 reports
- Subject who chose not to disclose their ethnicity – 5 reports

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- Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British – 6 reports
- Mixed or multiple Ethnic Group – 41 reports
- Other African background – 10 reports
- Other Asian background – 22 reports
- Other Caribbean or Black background – 7 reports
- Other Ethnic Group – 36 reports
- Other White British – 245 reports
- Other White Ethnic Group – 73 reports
- Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British – 33 reports
- Unknown Ethnic Group – 66 reports
- White English – 127 reports
- White Gypsy/Traveller – 9 reports
- White Irish – 20 reports
- White Northern Irish – 19 reports
- White Polish – 84 reports
- White Scottish – 4,715 reports
- White Welsh – 7 reports

It is important to note the below:

- A single “Use of Force” form can be used to record more than one use of force during an incident, for example an officer may utilise an empty hand restraint before applying handcuffs to a subject.
- A single “Use of Force” form can be used to record details of multiple subjects.

Ethnicity	% of Population (2011 census)	% of UOF forms submitted Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD
White	96.4	93.9
Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities	3.6	4.8
Unknown	-	1.3

The table above shows the breakdown of subjects ethnicity recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms for the period Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24 as follows:

- 96.4% of the population (according to the 2011 census data) was of white ethnicity, of the “Use of Force” forms submitted during the recording period 93.9% had a subject of white ethnicity.

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- 3.6% of the population (according to the 2011 census data) was from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, of the “Use of Force” forms submitted during the recording period 4.8% had a subject from BME communities
- From the “Use of Force” forms submitted during the recording period 1.0% had a subject with unknown ethnicity, no comparison is provided to the 2011 census data

Taser Data

Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24

Types of Taser Use	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
Drawn	211
Aimed	104
Red Dot	248
Arced	10
Fired	69
Total Number of Uses	642

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of the total number of different types of Taser Use recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24. For this period Taser was drawn 211 times, aimed 103 times, red dotted 248 times, arced 10 times and fired 69 times. There is a total of 642 uses of Taser for this period.

In Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24 on 2 occasions Taser was pointed at an animal and on 6 occasions no person was traced.

Gender / Total Number of Uses	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
Male	575
Female	49

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of Taser Use by gender recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24. For this period Taser was used on a male subject 575 times and a female subject 49 times.

Age / Total Number of Uses	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
Under 18	36
18 - 30	233
31 - 64	353

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Age / Total Number of Uses	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
65 +	2

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of Taser Use by age recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24. For this period Taser was used 36 times on a subject under the age of 18, 233 times on a subject between 18 to 30 years of age, 353 times on a subject between 31 and 64 years of age and 2 times on a subject 65 or over. Age was not stated in 17 uses.

Ethnicity / Total Number of Uses	Quarter 3 YTD 2023/24
W1 – White British	587
B2 – African	4
B9 – Any other Black background	1
W9 – Any other White background	18
O1 – Chinese	2
O9 – Any other ethnic group	3
A1 – Asian Indian	0
A2 – Asian Pakistani	2
A9 – Any other Asian background	2
M2 – White and Black African	1
M9 – Any other Mixed background	1

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of the total number of Taser Use by ethnicity recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 3 year-to-date 2023/24. For this period Taser was used 587 times on a subject who was White British, four times on a subject who selected African, once on a subject who selected any other Black background, 18 times on a subject who selected any other White background, two on a subject who selected Chinese, three times on a subject who selected any other ethnic group, twice on a subject who selected Asian Pakistani, once on a subject who selected any other Asian background and once on a subject who selected any other Mixed background. Ethnicity was not stated or not applicable for 20 uses.

Ethnicity Classifications used for Taser are Home Office Self Defined Ethnicity codes.

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For all the tables above, it should be noted that, on occasion, more than one Specially Trained Officer can be using a Taser for the same subject.

Useful Links

[Police Investigation and Review Commissioner](#)