

## **Justice Sub-Committee on Policing**

### **Stop and Search**

#### **Letter from the Convener to Police Scotland**

At its meeting on 19 June, the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing took evidence on the use of stop and search from Police Scotland and the SPA and agreed to write to you requesting further information on issues raised during discussion.

Police Scotland submitted a briefing paper to the Sub-Committee on the morning of the meeting. The Sub-Committee found this paper helpful and informative and requests that in future, similar briefing papers are submitted timeously and include a publication date.

The paper outlined the launch of a stop and search pilot scheme in Fife which will comprise of four phases to be rolled out between May 2014 and February 2015. The Sub-Committee is aware that the pilot is just beginning its second phase and requests that you keep it updated on the progress and outcomes of the pilot by providing written updates in December 2014 and March 2015 or as soon as practicable on completion of each phase. In addition, the Sub-Committee requests further information on the improving accountability theme, one of the three main themes of the pilot, and the extent to which this theme will explore whether the practice of stop and search is proportionate and represents an effective use of Police Scotland's resources, particularly given that the SPA estimates that 250,000 police hours are spent on stop and search each year.

The briefing paper also acknowledged the need to provide a clear definition and interpretation of stop and search and included separate definitions of what a consensual search is and what a legislative search is<sup>1</sup>. The Sub-Committee would welcome further information regarding how these different types of searches vary in process and practice.

Related to this issue, the Sub-Committee would like clarification in relation to the SPA recommendation that 'Police Scotland should ensure that its use of stop and search is proportionate across Scotland, focussed on successful outcomes, targeted at the right people, right place and right time.'<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Sub-Committee requests further information on how Police Scotland determines what criteria is used when defining successful outcomes and clarification as to what constitutes successful searches. For example, where one person in a group of 15 is found to have alcohol or an offensive weapon during a search, that would be recorded as one successful search or 15 successful searches.

---

<sup>1</sup> Police Scotland (2014). Stop and search briefing paper for Justice Committee and SPA, page 3.

<sup>2</sup> SPA (2014). *Scrutiny Review – Police Scotland's stop and search policy and practice. Final report and recommendations*. Recommendation 5, page 25. Available at <http://www.spa.police.uk/assets/126884/230479/scrutinytaskgroupreport>

For information, the Sub-Committee have made a similar request for further information from SPA following this evidence session. I attach a link to the transcript from the meeting for information and would be grateful for your response by 21 July.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9281&mode=pdf>

Christine Grahame MSP  
Convener, Justice Sub-Committee on Policing  
26 June 2014