

A qualitative study of the impact of Stop and Search on individuals and communities in Scotland

Scottish Police Authority

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Executive Summary

The study

In May 2014, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) completed a review of stop and search. Part of the work to address these recommendations included commissioning Blake Stevenson Ltd to undertake qualitative research to identify the impact of stop and search in five selected communities with high rates of stop and search. The research took place during a time of considerable media and public interest in stop and search policy and practice with questions being asked about whether and when stop and search was justified, and the appropriateness of consensual stop and search. The findings of this research, contained within this report will inform development of a new Code of Practice related to stop and search.

Study Design

The study methodology was based on interviews and focus group discussions with members of the public and key local stakeholders (such as community leaders) in five selected areas – Glasgow East, Glasgow South, Edinburgh North, Edinburgh South and Dundee. The areas were selected on the basis of geographical spread and prevalence of stop and search.

Recruiting participants to the research proved more challenging than had been anticipated at the outset, as a result of a number of factors, but adapting our methodology to include offering a small incentive in the form of a £10–£15 shopping voucher to participants, and recruiting people directly at key locations had an immediate positive impact and by the end of the research we had consulted 169 people, of whom 128 had been stopped and searched.

Experiences of Stop and Search

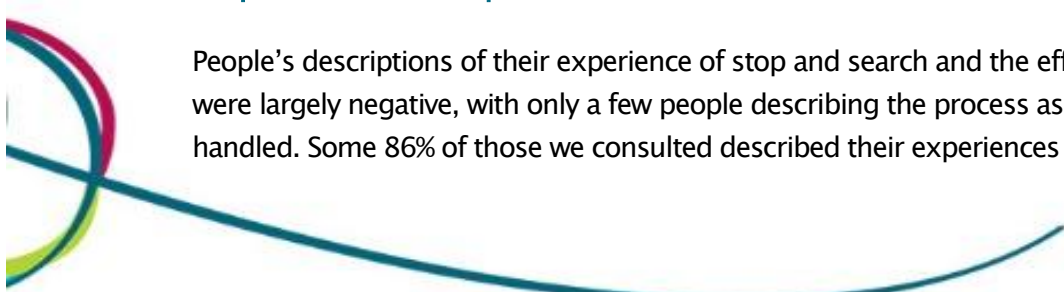
Many of those we consulted raised serious concerns about the levels of stops and searches taking place, the manner in which it is conducted by many police officers, and the lack of engagement of police with the communities in more positive ways.

Consent/compliance

Intelligence-led policing, and policing by consent are central to policing principles in the UK. Our research with the public raised serious concerns that the ways in which stop and search have been conducted conflict with this important principle. Many people raised concerns about the grounds used to justify stop and search being unclear, unreasonable, not based on sufficient evidence and insufficiently well communicated (if at all).

People's short term experiences

People's descriptions of their experience of stop and search and the effect on them afterwards were largely negative, with only a few people describing the process as reasonable and well-handled. Some 86% of those we consulted described their experiences negatively and



descriptions of the process included: “embarrassing”, “aggressive”, “too heavy handed”, “rude and disrespectful”, “frightening” and “intimidating”. Only a very small number described their search as having been undertaken in a fair and positive manner, reflecting practice promoted in police guidance.

The short-term impacts of experiencing stop and search included affecting people’s attitudes towards the police and entrenching negative views of them – particularly young people’s views; affecting their freedom of movement, with examples of people changing the routes they would normally take to work, the shops etc., avoiding certain areas altogether, and affecting how often they felt comfortable going out of their home; perceptions that young people’s behaviour had worsened in reaction to extensive stop and search activity in their area; and impacting on people’s reputations when they are regularly stopped and searched in front of family and friends.

A minority reported positive changes to their own and others’ behaviours including improving their behaviour, stopping carrying drugs, and stopping carrying weapons due to an increased likelihood of the being stopped and searched.

Long-term experiences and impact on communities

There is clear evidence that the frequent application of stop and search in an area is affecting the way that people view the police, and their willingness to engage with them in a positive or supportive manner. Many people we consulted said that their experiences of dealing with the police had changed their attitudes towards them and they would be unlikely to co-operate with them in future. There is evidence that community cohesion has also been affected – setting groups against one another due to perceptions related to targeting or non-targeting of certain groups of people.

Others felt that the wellbeing of their community had been affected – with local people reporting a sense of living in a “police state” rather than living in a community where they felt empowered to take part in decision making processes.

A minority of people did report feeling safer as a result of stop and search taking place regularly in their area.

People raised concerns about the lack of local knowledge demonstrated by police officers undertaking stop and search, and emphasised the need for police to develop much stronger local links and knowledge, and involve communities in positive activity to build their trust and improve their understanding of, and buy-in to any future initiatives of policies being applied in their areas.

Participant views on improvements

Whilst a minority of research participants were satisfied with the way stop and search is currently conducted, the vast majority felt that it was inadequate and made suggestions for improvements including police being more polite and respectful; police conducting stop and search in uniform, not in plain clothes; police being less aggressive in their approach; stops and searches not being conducted in front of children; stops and searches being conducted by officers of the same sex

as the person being searched; grounds for searches being made much clearer and described in plain English; searches being carried out more discretely; police developing positive relationships within communities and deepening their local knowledge.

Conclusions

There is much room for improvement in the manner in which stop and search activities are conducted, and the practices we heard about confirmed the importance of the development of a code of practice, and the need for refresher training on existing guidance. In addition, our specific recommendations included action being taken to set out more clearly, and in further depth, the expectations of police in relation to the manner in which stop and search should be conducted in order to ensure that a protective framework is in place in relation to this policy implementation; and the need for police to embed themselves more extensively in local community life, developing their local knowledge, relationships and influence.



1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 In May 2014, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) completed a review of stop and search¹ and published 12 recommendations to improve its targeting, effectiveness and transparency – ten for Police Scotland and two for the SPA. Following on from this, SPA commissioned Blake Stevenson Ltd to undertake qualitative research to enhance quantitative survey results that were being gathered separately. The research was intended to help identify the impact of stop and search with baseline evidence gathering and follow-up, two years later, to establish the longer-term impact of the practice.
- 1.2 Our research team was very familiar with the context for this work, having conducted initial research to support the SPA's review of stop and search earlier that year. That research involved consultation with police officers and provided insight into the practice and perceived effectiveness of stop and search. It informed the SPA's recommendations to improve the targeting, effectiveness and transparency of the use of stop and search tactics by Police Scotland.
- 1.3 We were aware that there were a number of different impacts that stop and search tactics may contribute to over the long-term, such as confidence in the police service, fear of crime, sense of personal safety and deterrence from illegal behaviour. This follow-up research sought to establish these impacts through baseline and follow-up data gathering, and inform police considerations about effective deployment of the tactic.
- 1.4 Very early in the process, the research brief was amended to be limited to a one-stage approach to the research with no follow-up in future years. The methodology was revised to include the piloting of the tools through two focus groups, and development of a sampling framework based on data provided by the SPA. At the time of commissioning (in February/March 2015), the SPA was intending to use Police Scotland Stop and Search data over the period 2013–March 2015 as a means of identifying potential fieldwork study areas for Blake Stevenson (i.e. areas with relatively high levels of stop and search over a sustained period).

Context

- 1.5 This research took place during a time of considerable media and public interest in stop and search policy and practice. Questions were being asked by leading authorities and

¹ Scrutiny review: Police Scotland's stop and search policy and practice – final report and recommendations, Police Scotland/Scottish Police Authority, May 2014

organisations about whether and when stop and search was justified, and the appropriateness of consensual stop and search.

1.6 The debate relies on understanding of the two distinct types of stop search: **statutory search** and **non-statutory or consensual search**. The full descriptions of these provided in the SPA's formal scrutiny review² are summarised below:

- **Statutory search** is based on legislation on the grounds of reasonable suspicion, and thus can take place without the consent of the person being searched. Specific legislation means that searches can take place on suspicion of: drugs, offensive weapons, bladed/pointed items, firearms, sporting events (alcohol, sealed containers, bottles, fireworks, flares), or stolen property; and
- **Non-statutory search or consensual search**: has no legislative grounds, thus relying on the consent of the person being searched. As a result, officers must inform suspects of their rights to refuse search (or meet a particular standard of consent).

Public debate regarding stop and search

1.7 SPA led and informed public debate on stop and search during 2013/14, culminating in publication of its own review in May 2014². This was the first formal scrutiny of use of the tactic in Scotland. By examining stop and search activity across Scotland – which includes assessing key data – the review's recommendations suggested the SPA should commission research to establish the impact of stop and search, as well as regularly publish stop and search data. It also makes key recommendations to Police Scotland, including that they should ensure suspects searched on a non-statutory basis are aware of their right to refuse.

1.8 Discussion around stop and search continued in February 2015, when the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing members raised a number of concerns regarding Police Scotland's handling of the situation, including the credibility and interpretation of the data. At the SPA Exceptional Board Meeting³, and then at the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing⁴ (both in February) Police Scotland had described their data as not being 100% accurate or fit for public consumption.

1.9 Further criticism of the data was published in March 2015, when HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) released its Assurance and Audit Review of Stop and Search⁵. In the review, HMICS stated that "we do not have confidence in the stop and

² Scrutiny Review: Police Scotland's Stop and Search Policy and Practice – Final Report and Recommendations, Police Scotland/Scottish Police Authority, May 2014

³ Minute of Scottish Police Authority Board Meeting, Scottish Police Authority, February 2015

⁴ Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, The Scottish Parliament (note by the Clerk), February 2015

⁵ Audit and Assurance Review of Stop and Search: Phase 1, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, 2015

search data currently held by Police Scotland”. HMICS further added that “we do not consider it viable or a good use of limited resources for Police Scotland to retrospectively improve the data quality of existing records”.

- 1.10 In June 2015, Dr. Kath Murray of University of Edinburgh followed up her earlier evaluation of stop and search police practice⁶, with a post reform overview of activity⁷. In this review, she looked at police stop and search across the first two operational years of Police Scotland, examining why stop and search rates were comparatively high in Scotland compared to England and Wales and discussing questions around non-statutory stop and search. Among her key recommendations, she suggested that the use of stop and search among children required review, and that relevant data should be made more transparent and routinely assessed. Additionally, she called for more in-depth qualitative research to assess the impact of stop and search practices.
- 1.11 In July 2015, Police Scotland's use of consensual stop-and-search was criticised in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A report by Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)⁸ – an organisation advocating full implementation of UNCRC in Scotland – reflected on legislative and policy developments in relation to children's rights, following their earlier progress review in 2014⁹. The examination of research around stop and search found its use to be disproportionate among children, and the report made notable recommendations in response to this: there should be legislation to abolish the use of non-statutory stop and search among children; statutory stop and search should only be used as a last resort and be more effectively regulated; stop and search should be proportion to the age-distribution of related offending; and, Police Scotland and SPA should improve transparency and accountability around stop and search practices.
- 1.12 In August 2015, Police Scotland responded to criticism by publishing historic (pre-Improvement Plan) and current (post-Improvement Plan) stop and search data on its website. The data can be filtered by Local Authority Area and Multimember Ward.
- 1.13 In that same month, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice published the report of the independent advisory group on stop and search policy in Scotland, chaired by John Scott QC¹⁰. This report considered stop and search related to adults and young people over 12 years of age, based on consultation with both experts and members of the public, and

⁶ Stop and Search in Scotland: an Evaluation of Police Practice, K. Murray, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, 2014

⁷ Stop and Search in Scotland: a Post Reform Overview – Scrutiny and Accountability, K. Murray, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, 2015

⁸ Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Scotland (UK), J. Harris and E. Grindulis, 2015

⁹ State of Children's Rights in Scotland 2014, Together, 2014

¹⁰ The report of the Advisory Group on Stop and Search, Advisory Group on Stop and Search, 2015

found non-statutory stop and search to lack a protective legal framework. On this basis, it recommended the development of a Code of Practice and consultation on whether police should have the ability to search children under 18 for alcohol. Ministers agreed to set up a new statutory code on police search powers and to discuss the need for specific powers to search children for alcohol. Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said the practice of consensual stop and search would stop as soon as the code of practice came into being.

- 1.14 The results of our qualitative research contained within this report will inform the development of this code of practice, and at the time of finalising this report the Scottish Government is running a public consultation on stop and search (<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/organised-crime-and-police-powers-unit/stop-and-search/>).

Prevalence of stop and search in the selected areas

- 1.15 Prior to undertaking our research we discussed the prevalence of stop and search in Scotland, and in discussion with the SPA, agreed that we would focus our research on areas where there had been a relatively high level of stop and search.
- 1.16 The figures in Table 1.1, available in the public domain on the Police Scotland website¹¹, demonstrate the varying levels of stop and search activity in the selected areas over the last few years. They also give a sense of prevalence rates among local populations (although it should be noted that most people are not searched at all, and that those who are searched are often repeat-searched, which must be factored in to any interpretation of these figures).

Table 1.1: Stop and search statistics

	Edinburgh North (Wards include Forth, Inverleith, Leith and Leith Walk)	Edinburgh South (Wards include Portobello/Craig-millar and Liberton/Gilmerton)	Glasgow South (Wards include Govan and Southside Central)	Glasgow East (Wards include Calton and East Centre)	Dundee (Lochee)
Recorded Stop and Search levels over the two financial years, 2013-14 and 2014-15	12,980	5,710	54,146	42,663	2,042

- 1.17 The recorded stop and search figures show that the two areas in Glasgow have had a much higher level of stop and search activity than the two Edinburgh study sites, and even more so than Dundee.

¹¹ Police Scotland website (data source): <http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/police-scotland/stop-and-search/stop-and-search-data-publication/>

1.18 This understanding, combined with our appreciation of the context of public debate, informed our approach to evidence gathering as detailed in the following section.



2. Methodology and participants' profile

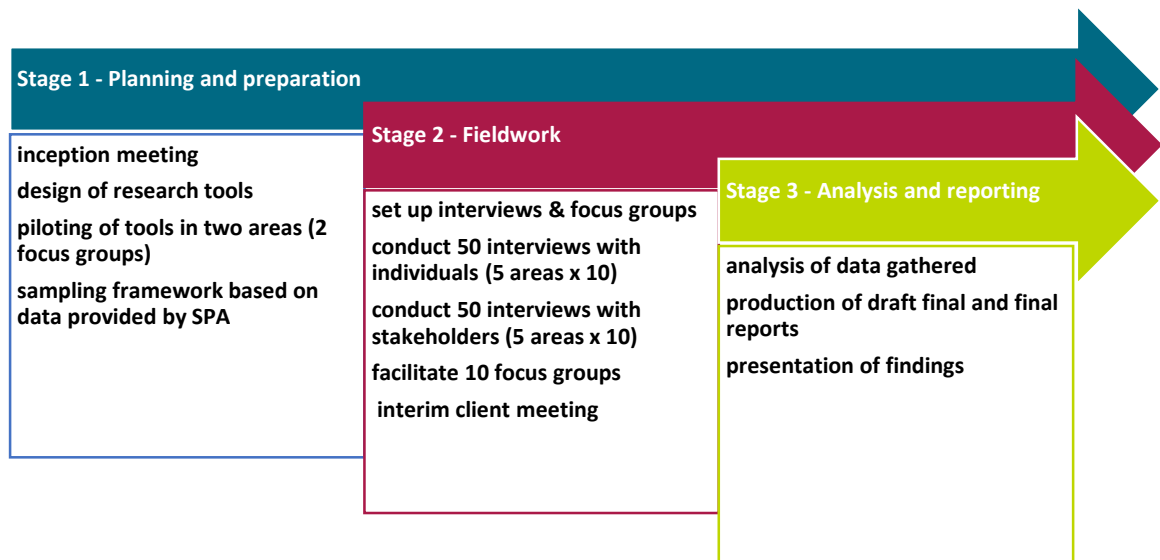
Methodological context

- 2.1 Our proposed methodology was based around a mix of interviews and focus groups in five key locations across Scotland. As this was qualitative research, our proposed methodology did not seek to be statistically representative, rather the aim was to ensure that a sufficient breadth of people were consulted to give assurance that what people told us reflected the wider population's experiences in the areas selected. The size and scale of the research group was not defined in the brief, we therefore made judgements about the numbers of individuals to involve in the fieldwork to ensure the desired impact.
- 2.2 At the inception meeting it was agreed that the interviews and focus groups should take place in areas where stop and search has featured more prominently and where members of the community were likely to have views on the impact of the policy. It was also agreed that not all participants would necessarily have been stopped and searched themselves but may have had experience of family members, friends, or members of their community having experienced it.
- 2.3 The risks involved with applying this methodology were considered, including the initial time-period for the research – which included July and August which are notoriously difficult times to recruit participants for research; attitudes to police potentially affecting people's willingness to take part; and lack of willingness to take part without an incentive being offered. These risks were accepted by SPA.
- 2.4 In practice, we encountered a number of difficulties in recruiting in this first stage and the approach taken was consequently revised to enable us to offer an incentive to participants. An extended time period for delivering the research combined with the incentives proved to be fundamental to our successful recruitment of the target numbers.

Proposed methodology

- 2.5 The proposed methodology comprised three stages – planning, fieldwork, and analysis and reporting. The planning stage involved a short period initially to develop a sampling framework, design research tools and pilot these. This was to be followed by fieldwork comprising approximately ten interviews with individuals, ten interviews with community stakeholders, and two focus groups with members of the public who had some experience of stop and search, in each of the five geographical areas.

2.6 This is outlined in more detail in the diagram below:



2.7 Following the inception meeting, a sampling framework was developed identifying the fieldwork areas and number of participants to be interviewed.

2.8 The selected areas were:

- Glasgow East (focusing in particular on Calton, Shettleston, Baillieston, Easterhouse);
- Glasgow South (focusing in particular on Castlemilk, Govan, Govanhill);
- Edinburgh North (focusing in particular on West Pilton, Leith and Leith Walk);
- Edinburgh South (focusing in particular on Craigmillar); and
- Dundee (focusing in particular on Lochee and Menzieshill).

2.9 We selected these areas on the basis of a range of criteria including: geographical spread and prevalence of incidences of stop and search.

2.10 At this early stage we indicated that we would recruit participants through a range of means including:

- contact data held by the police (of persons stopped and searched);
- relevant Third Sector organisations;
- social media;
- through local advertising; and
- through the research team's contacts.

2.11 For a number of reasons outlined below, the SPA advised us at an early stage that they would no longer be able to provide contact details of persons stopped and searched in the study areas, largely due to a set of issues that prevailed between April and June 2015:

- given the HMICS finding on 30th March 2015 of ‘no confidence’ in Police Scotland’s data; and
- for reasons of maintaining objectivity and independence; and
- because Police Scotland were implementing a revised Stop and Search database in June 2015; and
- because SPA were waiting for Police Scotland’s Fife Pilot to be published – which it eventually was on 19 June 2015. The Fife Pilot explored the issue of personal data collection, including the gathering of phone numbers.

2.12 As a result, we proceeded with the other routes for recruitment.

2.13 We know from our own experience that using incentives when undertaking research with members of the public can be an important way of encouraging people to take part, without necessarily influencing their views on the research topic. This is particularly the case when potential participants are disaffected or hard-to-reach. Our suggestion to offer participants an incentive (in the form of a shop voucher) to the value of around £10–15 was carefully considered by SPA at the initial stage but they decided instead to offer to cover people’s expenses (travel expenses up to £5) to ensure that they would not be out of pocket for taking part. We noted that our recent experience of covering expenses in this way on another contract had been challenging to administer and whilst it ensured that there was no disincentive to take part, it did not work as an incentive.

Methodological challenges

2.14 At the outset, and based on the research team’s previous experience of undertaking work on equally sensitive subject areas and with potentially disengaged individuals, there was confidence that the desired number of participants could be recruited even with the concerns about the timing of the research.

2.15 However, in practice we faced a number of difficulties in attracting the number of participants we had hoped. We reflected on the reasons for these difficulties and concluded that there were a variety of reasons which were affecting our success. These included:

- sensitivity of the subject area;
- timing of the fieldwork – during the summer months;
- lack of incentives;
- online registration form;
- numbers of stop and search in the areas selected being lower in practice than statistics suggested; and
- national context affecting response rates.

- 2.16 These issues, and the mitigating actions we took to address them were reported on in depth in our interim report and we have not re-visited these issues in this report.
- 2.17 Following submission of the interim report we had a comprehensive discussion with the SPA about the challenges we were facing. At this stage they agreed to extend fieldwork phase until January 2016, and for a small incentive in the form of a £10–£15 shopping voucher to be offered to potential participants. In addition, we increased our direct recruitment of participants at key locations in the areas selected, in addition to going through third parties as we had done previously.
- 2.18 This proved to be instrumental in changing our ability to recruit participants and as can be seen from the participant profile data in the next section, target numbers were subsequently met.

Profile of research participants

- 2.19 The table below provides an overview of the number of people we consulted in each of the selected areas, broken down by gender, age, whether they are a member of the public or a stakeholder, and whether they have ever been stopped and searched.
- 2.20 Table 2.1 shows that we consulted with a good range of both men and women of varying ages; stakeholders; a mix of participants who have and have not been stopped and searched personally; and a balance of participants across the selected areas. This manifested in a good range of experiences and opinions being shared with us.
- 2.21 Whilst the research was qualitative in nature, and therefore not intended to be statistically robust, speaking to this number and range of participants has enabled us to gain a strong sense of the issues affecting these areas. We cannot be certain that these participants' views reflect people's experiences in all areas but we are confident that they are reflective of people's experiences in areas where stop and search has been undertaken regularly over a period of years.

Table 2.1: Details of research participants

	Parti- pants	Male	Female	Not known	Age 16– 24	Age 25– 34	Age 35+	Not known	Member of public	Stake- holder	Stopped & Searched
Edinburgh North	49	32	14	3	8	9	20	12	45	4	42
Edinburgh South	24	14	10		20	2	2		23	1	12
Glasgow South	44	22	22		7	4	27	6	25	19	32
Glasgow East	20	9	11		17	3	0		19	1	19
Dundee	30	24	6		12	6	12		28	2	23
National stake- holders	2									2	
Total	169	101	63	3	64	24	61	18	140	29	128

- 2.22 It could be argued that the views contained within the next sections of this report are historic and therefore no longer relevant, since recent changes to stop and search practice should fundamentally change people's experiences in future. However, we believe there are important lessons to be learned from these experiences which can inform the development of the proposed Code of Practice, and should be re-visited if consensual stop and search is re-introduced at any point in the future.

3. People's experiences of stop and search practices

Introduction

- 3.1 In this chapter we describe the grounds and circumstances in which a search may be conducted, and consider the guidelines issued to police officers about the manner in which it must be conducted. We provide an overview of feedback we received from members of the public and community stakeholders about their experiences of the process in practice and explore the differences between this and the guidelines issued to police officers and members of the public.

Overview of guidelines for conducting stop and search

Stop and Search Standard Operating Procedures

- 3.2 The Stop and Search Standard Operating Procedures issued to police officers are written in a concise and clear way and are described as having been “developed and adopted to support police officers in the lawful, proportionate and effective use of stop and search as an operational tactic”. A number of key points were of particular relevance to our research questions and we have summarised these below:
- “Officers must be sensitive to all protected characteristic groups and treat every person with fairness, dignity and respect”.
 - “If no statutory power exists, or no consent is given; officers must only undertake a search if it is deemed necessary to ensure the immediate safety of that individual or any other person”.
 - Officers will complete and issue a police stop and search advice slip to every person they stop and search (not applicable to seizures).
 - The following points must be communicated to the person in a manner that they will understand:
 - the reason for the search;
 - that their consent is required and that they have the right to refuse;
 - that their consent is required for their personal details to be obtained and that they have the right to refuse; and
 - that their details will be held on a police database for up to 3 years.
 - “Consensual search must be conducted in a positive, amiable and professional manner”.
 - “To protect the dignity of the subject, searches should be conducted in private, and if the search has to be conducted within a public place then, where possible, the subject should be taken to a more discreet location”.

Police Scotland's Aide Memoire

- 3.3 Police Scotland's Aide Memoire, which is provided to police officers, clearly outlines the grounds and circumstances in which a statutory or consensual search may be conducted.
- 3.4 In addition, it specifies what to do in the case of a person stopped having a protected characteristic; what to record (including highlighting in bold that the officer must remember to complete and issue an advice slip); what constitutes a seizure; and reminds officers that they should utilise the SHACKS (Seen, Heard, Actions, Conversation, Knowledge, Smell) to satisfy themselves that reasonable grounds and circumstances exist to carry out the search.

Police Scotland's "Know Your Rights" Guidance

- 3.5 We also examined Police Scotland's "Know Your Rights" guidance which is made available to young people. This document gives clear information about what a young person needs to know in relation to stop and search practice including the following:
- If you do get stopped by police officers, you are entitled to know their name, identification number, police station and the reason for which you were stopped.
 - If you have been stopped and you are under 16, it is important that you tell the officer this as they may have to follow different procedures.
 - They will ask if you agree to be searched, which you can refuse to allow. This is called a consensual search – done in order to prevent crime and to help keep people and communities safe.
 - You can be searched without your consent, provided certain requirements are met. You cannot refuse to allow a statutory search.
 - The reason for a statutory stop and search, which could happen to you or any member of the public, is usually that the police officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that the person being searched is in unlawful possession of something such as controlled drugs, an offensive weapon or stolen property.
 - Police have the power to arrest people who are found to be in possession of knives and other types of weapons in public places when they don't have either a reasonable excuse or lawful authority.
 - Police also have powers to stop and search anyone they believe is a terrorist, or to prevent an act of terrorism.
 - If the police want to search you, you're entitled to find out why. The following reasons are not good enough reasons to be searched: the officer knows that a person has previous convictions, the age of the person, the race of the person, the sex of the person.

- The police can search your outer clothing and ‘pat’ you down in public. If the police want to search beneath your outer clothing it must be done out of public view by an officer of your own sex.
 - You can refuse to allow a consensual search, but if the police are searching you or your property under a statutory power, and you do not cooperate, you may be arrested and charged for obstructing the search.
 - The police have to detain a person for the purpose of a statutory search, but once it’s conducted the police will either release the person if nothing is found, or if they find evidence of an offence they may charge the person and let them go, or they may arrest the person and take them to a police station.
- 3.6 In all cases, we found the guidance to be very clear and leaving no doubt about the way in which a stop and search should be conducted.
- 3.7 In the next section we explore the extent to which people’s experiences of stop and search reflect this range of guidance and whether there were any variations in people’s experiences depending on where they live, their age, their gender or other factors.

Frequency of stop and search

Perceptions of frequency

- 3.8 We know from the most recent statistics available (and summarised in Chapter 1 of this report), that stop and search is more prevalent in some areas than others. We undertook our research in areas of higher prevalence and wished to establish the extent to which this was visible to the local community, and whether their perceptions of the levels of stop and search being conducted matched recorded incidences.
- 3.9 This was of interest because research shows that people’s perceptions of the application of a practice can affect their behaviour, and their sense of wellbeing as much as actual experiences. In these areas, it was possible that people’s perceptions of the rate of stop and search being conducted was lower than in practice – which could have been perceived positively (if they considered stop and search to be a detrimental practice) or negatively (manifesting in a higher fear for personal safety).
- 3.10 In practice, as Table 3.1 shows, some 56% of people in the selected areas told us that they thought that stop and search was quite or very common, which tallies with the statistics on recorded stops and searches.

Table 3.1: Perceptions of frequency of stop and search in the area

	Total	Gla S	Gla E	Ed N	Ed S	Dun	Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35+	Public	Stakeholder
Not very common	15	5	2	3	1	4	12	3	3	4	8	13	2
Quite common	12	4	1	2	1	4	8	4	0	5	7	9	3
Very common	40	13	7	10	2	8	15	25	12	6	22	35	5
Unknown	26	8	10	3	1	4	17	9	9	4	13	24	2
TOTAL	93												

Reported frequency of being stopped and searched

- 3.11 We asked research participants to tell us how often they had been stopped and searched (if at all).
- 3.12 As with all qualitative research, the accuracy of the response relies on an individual's ability to recall accurately and the data should be read with this caveat in mind.
- 3.13 It should be noted that responses such as "hundreds" or "thousands" have been grouped together as "very frequently".
- 3.14 The data in Table 3.2 provides an interesting contrast to the prevalence data provided in Chapter 1, and seems to confirm previous assertions that it is often a minority of people in an area with higher instances of stop and search recorded who are searched multiple times.
- 3.15 The numerous instances of people having been searched multiple times also meant that people we spoke with were able to draw on multiple experiences of the practice being undertaken by different police officers, on different dates (often months and years apart), and on occasion in different areas.

Table 3.2: Frequency of being stopped and searched

	Total	Gla S	Gla E	Ed N	Ed S	Dun	Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35+	Public	Stakeholder
Unknown	7	2	2	1	1	1	2	5	3	1	3	5	2
Never	14	7	1	1	4	1	5	9	2	4	8	7	7
Once or twice	12	2	6	2		2	6	6	6	2	4	11	1
A few (3-5 times)	20	4	7	3		6	11	9	5	4	11	20	
6-9 times	2					2	1	1		1	1	2	
10-49 times	6	1	2	1		2	4	2	2	1	3	6	
50-99 times	1	1					1				1	1	
Frequently in the past but not now	5	2		1		2	4	1		3	2	4	1
Very frequently	26	11	2	9		4	18	8	6	3	17	25	1

- 3.16 During our research we heard numerous accounts from people who had been searched multiple times and some people had real concerns about the high number of times they had been searched.
- 3.17 Some said they are searched so often that they feel “harassed” (40 year old male, Glasgow South) or “victimised” (37 year old male, Dundee):
- “People can’t walk down the street without getting stopped and searched” (44 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - “If I go out at the weekend I guarantee I’ll get stopped in the town” (male focus group participant, 19, Dundee).
 - “Hundreds of times, every second day” (33 year old male, Dundee).
 - “Constantly (searched)... harassed” (41 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - “Hundreds of times... beyond a joke” (38 year old female, Glasgow South).
 - “It was like the police had “a vendetta” against me” (57 year old female, Glasgow South).

People’s experiences of stop and search

- 3.18 In conducting interviews with the public we asked them specifically to describe to us what happened when they were searched. Specifically, we asked:
- whether the police officers explained why they were being searched
 - whether they were given the option to say no in the case of consensual searches, and if they said no, how the police responded to this
 - whether they felt they were treated fairly; and
 - how the search made them feel.
- 3.19 In addition, in the focus groups we conducted, we displayed Police Scotland’s quote – “Stop and Search should be lawful, proportionate, intelligence-led and respectful to the member of the public involved” – and asked participants to reflect on whether this described their experience of being stopped and searched. In these groups we also asked people:
- how they felt they had been treated;
 - whether the police officer had taken care to search them in as private a location as possible; and
 - whether they were polite. We also asked them whether the police officers who stopped them were in plain clothes or uniform.

- 3.20 The full set of issues discussed in interviews and in the focus groups are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.
- 3.21 The nature of people's observations about the way the stop and search was conducted can be grouped into a number of key issues:
- manner in which the search is conducted;
 - grounds for the search; and
 - over-targeting.

Manner in which the search is conducted

- 3.22 As would be expected, people reported significant variations in their experiences depending on the officer undertaking the stop and search procedure. Whilst some were able to describe a search that was undertaken in a fair and positive manner reflecting the range of guidance we have quoted from earlier in this chapter, the majority of those we consulted described their experiences negatively. Of the total number we spoke to, we have calculated that at least 86% described their experience as being negative, and in some areas the level of negativity was higher (e.g. 100% in Glasgow South).
- 3.23 Clearly, individual experiences depended on the behaviour of the officer conducting the stop and search: some officers are perceived to treat people fairly and politely, but others appear to be more heavy-handed, unfair and "on a power trip" (40 year old male, Dundee).
- "Some officers are alright but some are "jobsworths" who can be really harsh" (41 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - "Some officers have a Hitler complex" (50 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - "They just do it for the badness" (44 year old female, Glasgow South).
- 3.24 Many of the people we consulted had complaints about the process. Some felt they were harassed, others were unhappy about the way that police officers had treated them and/or the way in which the stop and search was carried out. People used various words to describe their experience of stop and search including:
- "humiliated" (eg 28 year old male, Glasgow South; 39 year old male, Glasgow South; 33 year old male, Dundee; 57 year old female, Glasgow South);
 - "embarrassing" (eg 44 year old female, Glasgow South; 57 year old female, Glasgow South; 54 year old male, Edinburgh North; 33 year old male Dundee);
 - "degrading" (eg 38 year old female, Glasgow South; 52 year old female, Glasgow South; 29 year old male, Edinburgh North);
 - "mortified" (44 year old female, Glasgow South);

- “aggressive” (18 year old male, Glasgow East);
- “intimidating” (16–24 year old, Glasgow East);
- “scared” (16–24 year old, Glasgow East);
- “nervous” in case they got into trouble (16–24 year old, Glasgow East);
- “not treated with respect” (16–24 year old male, Glasgow South focus group);
- “too heavy handed” (49 year old female, Edinburgh North);
- “rude and disrespectful” (21 year old female, Edinburgh South);
- “like they are stripping my humanity” (39 year old female, Dundee);
- “ridiculous, horrible, not fair” (40 year old female, Dundee);
- “angry” (33 year old male, Dundee);
- makes you “feel really small” (46 year old male, Dundee);
- “violated” (29 year old female, Dundee);
- “treated like a criminal” (35 year old male, Dundee);
- “we’re treated like animals” (44 year old male, Glasgow South); and
- “guilty until proven innocent” (24 year old male, Glasgow East).

3.25 We heard from a number of people who had been asked to remove shoes and socks to be searched (eg a 16 year old male, Glasgow South; 51 year old female, Glasgow South; 40 year old male, Glasgow South). One person told us he was asked to remove his trousers in the middle of the street (a 36 year old male, Dundee), and a focus group participant in Edinburgh North said the police forcibly removed his trousers while he was taking his child to school.

3.26 None of these experiences suggest an approach which treats people with “dignity and respect” and seems to go against the clear guidance to conduct searches in private or in a more discreet location.

3.27 We were also given examples of people being searched by police officers of the opposite sex. A 19 year old female in Glasgow East told us she was searched by a male officer when she was 14. This made her uncomfortable. A 31 year old woman in Edinburgh North also said that a male officer searched her and her 14 year old daughter. A 39 year old female in Dundee told us that a male police officer pushed her down four stairs during a stop and search while she was pregnant.

- 3.28 A number of the accounts we heard involved police officers in plain clothes and unmarked cars which people found alarming and frightening. One person said that plain clothed police officers don't always show their badge: "I thought I was being robbed at first".
- 3.29 An example of this was provided by a 31 year old female: She was stopped mid-afternoon whilst walking through the area with her daughter. Undercover police approached and searched them both. They told her they were looking for someone in a grey hoody (which her daughter was wearing). A male officer searched her daughter. Mum was told not to speak and shut up when questioning them. She was physically held away from her daughter. Both were searched and patted down. Police took property from them. Neither were offered a female officer to undertake the search.
- 3.30 A 47 year old male in Edinburgh North said that plain clothes officers do not always show their identification and he sometimes has to ask for proof that they are police officers.
- 3.31 A focus group participant in Edinburgh South gave an example of walking along the street on his way to a GP appointment. A car "screched" up behind him, plain clothes officers jumped out and made him prove where he was going. He found this experience disrespectful.
- 3.32 Although many of those we spoke to had negative experiences and opinions of stop and search, other people thought that if conducted in the right way and if there is a genuine reason to stop someone, rather than targeting them for the way they look or dress, and if the police treat people politely, stop and search can be a good thing:
- "I approve of it... it's a good idea if done properly [ie politely]" (33 year old male, Dundee).
 - One interviewee reported having been stopped and searched "hundreds" of times. Although he says that some officers, especially younger ones, are quite heavy-handed, he agrees with the use of stop and search and he described his treatment as "amicable".
 - The officer was "pleasant" – the interviewee understood they're "just doing their job" (44 year old female, Glasgow South).
 - A 22 year old female in Glasgow East who has been searched "hundreds of times" feels that she has been treated fairly.
 - The officers were "pleasant enough" (37 year old male Edinburgh North).
 - "Police are amazing" (36 year old male, Edinburgh North).
 - "The police were really good... polite. At first I was a bit embarrassed but the police took me into a doorway so it was not in full view" (33 year old male, Dundee).

Grounds for the search

- 3.33 We sought to establish whether research participants had been subject to statutory or non-statutory searches; and then to establish whether the grounds for searches were made clear to those being targeted.
- 3.34 Twelve people told us themselves, or we were able to establish from their description, that they had been subject to a statutory search. Either they had been told this by the police officers involved, or they had interpreted this from what was being said – for example the police officer made reference to legislation to justify the search.
- 3.35 In Table 3.3 we break down the reasons why the people we interviewed believed they had been stopped and searched (where people knew or could remember).

Table 3.3: Reasons for being stopped and searched

	Total	16–24	25–34	35+
<i>Base</i>	75	24	17	34
Reasons given by police				
Match a description	20 27%	4 17%	7 41%	9 26%
No clear reason given	16 21%	8 33%	3 18%	5 15%
Drugs – suspicion of possessing or dealing	11 15%	4 17%	2 12%	5 15%
'Look suspicious', ie unfamiliar/out of place, 'what are you doing in this part of town?'	7 9%	4 17%	1 6%	2 6%
Suspicious behaviour	7 9%	1 4%	–	6 18%
Routine search/clampdown in area	6 8%	2 8%	1 6%	3 9%
Disruptive/antisocial behaviour	6 8%	6 25%	–	–
'Under the influence' of drugs or alcohol	5 7%	–	2 12%	3 9%
Alcohol – drinking in street	3 4%	1 4%	–	2 6%
Warrant check	1 1%	–	–	1 3%
Suspicion of carrying 'something'	1 1%	–	1 6%	–

- 3.36 Many people we spoke to did not know if the search(es) had been non-statutory or statutory – due usually to a lack of information being provided; or the information being provided in a way that they found difficult to understand. A few people complained that police officers justified the search by referring to legislation which they were unfamiliar with.
- 3.37 From our own interpretation of what people were telling us, it appears that the vast majority of searches they described to us were non-statutory, and therefore required consent from the person who had been stopped.
- 3.38 We know from Police Scotland guidance that in the case of a non-statutory search the person being asked to consent to the search has the right to know why they are being searched, however many people told us that the police do not always explain why they are searching somebody: “always just tell you what they’re doing” rather than ask consent or explain (26 year old male, Glasgow South).

‘Henry’, 50, male, Edinburgh North

Henry has been stopped and searched many times, he estimates approximately once every quarter. He says the police do not always explain why they stop him but he suspects it is because of his pale appearance. This is caused by a health condition but makes him look like a drug user. He describes this as an “untrue and unjust” reason for stopping him.

Henry says he has never been asked to consent to a search, but would not refuse anyway because he believes this would give the police a reason to arrest him.

While he feels the police do a good job overall, he believes that stop and search gives them “a licence to do what they want”.

He thinks that being stopped and searched affects other people’s view of him in that they assume he has broken the law. It has also affected his view of the police: “I wouldn’t go out my way to help them because of my experience”.

- 3.39 Others had had similar experiences and noted the importance of police explaining the reason(s) for a search (eg 28 year old male, Glasgow South; 22 year old female, Glasgow East; 37 year old male, Edinburgh North; 50 year old male, Edinburgh North; 18 year old male, Glasgow East):
- One person said that ‘matching a description’ is not a good reason (38 year old female, Glasgow South).
 - “Tell you why they’re doing it” (18 year old male, Edinburgh North).
 - “You can’t just stop and search anyone you like” (25 year old male, Edinburgh South).

- 3.40 Several said that police should ask permission before searching someone (eg 46 year old male, Glasgow South; 16 year old female, Glasgow East; 19 year old female, Glasgow East). An 18 year old male in Dundee gave an example of refusing to give consent to being searched, but the police patted his pockets anyway.

'Bill', male, 46, Glasgow South

Bill has been stopped and searched once, four or five years ago. He was walking home, drunk after a night out, when a police officer pinned him up against a wall and said he "looked like someone we're looking for". The officer then emptied his pockets.

Bill feels that the officer failed to give him a good explanation for the search and suspects that the officer was just looking for something to do. He feels he was treated unfairly because he was pinned against a wall and he would have preferred to have been asked to empty his pockets himself. In general, he feels the use of stop and search is fair but he feels that the police should take a more polite approach and avoid "manhandling" the people they are searching.

- 3.41 Many we spoke to felt there was no reason for stop and search, that it was unfair and that it diverts police time away from catching 'the real criminals' ("they're stopping the wrong people... letting the real criminals go" (49 year old female Edinburgh North). Some felt police do it when they have nothing else to do and as part of a "power trip" (40 year old male Dundee). "Not fair at all... a police state" (54 year old male, Edinburgh North)
- 3.42 Most people said they had never been given the option to refuse the search and there was a widespread belief that "If you say no then they cuff you and do you for resisting arrest" (57 year old male, Glasgow South). One 40 year old, female Glasgow South resident who has been regularly stopped since she was 29 years old said that she is rarely asked to consent and that "if you say no you are taken to the station for a strip search". This is similar to an incident described to us by a Dundee resident who did not give consent and so was taken to a police station and strip searched.
- 3.43 Some people felt unfairly targeted because of their previous behaviour or historical criminal records:
- "When is my past going to be left in peace?" (48 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - "I don't feel like I can move on in my life because the police are always on my shoulder" (33 year old male, Dundee).
- 3.44 If people are being targeted in this way, this conflicts with the guidance issued to police officers which clearly states that knowledge of a person's previous convictions does not constitute legitimate grounds for a search.

- 3.45 A stakeholder in Glasgow South observed that everyone she knows just goes along with the search – “they might be able to say no but they don’t know their rights”.
- 3.46 These experiences conflict entirely with the processes outlined in guidance issued to police officers.

Over-targeting

- 3.47 A high number of the people we consulted felt that young people were targeted much more than other age groups, in their view often unreasonably.
- 3.48 Others thought that the police deliberately avoided targeting people from a black or ethnic minority background because of fear that they would be accused of being racist. One community worker in Govanhill was convinced that the police “target groups they shouldn’t... the big groups of Romanians are never searched and they’re the ones that should be” because police officers are afraid of being “accused of racism”. Another participant in Glasgow South told us that the police are “too scared to search the ethnic minorities” because they stand in “huge teams of 40 to 50 people on street corners”. In Govan, somebody said “definitely not fair – foreigners are treated better”.
- 3.49 A few, conversely, told us that they felt that they were more targeted because they were black.

Suggested changes to implementation processes – participants’ views

- 3.50 We asked research participants if they thought that any changes should be made to the way in which stop and search is conducted.
- 3.51 Some people told us that they think the process is adequate as it is – “if you’re not an offender then you won’t be annoyed” (46 year old male, Glasgow South), but many people gave suggestions for improving stop and search:
- Police should be more polite and respectful, and would get more cooperation from people if they were (eg 46 year old male, Glasgow South; 16 year old male, Glasgow East; 19 year old female, Glasgow East; 22 year old female, Glasgow East; 21 year old female, Edinburgh South; 25 year old male, Edinburgh South; 16–24 year olds in Edinburgh South focus group).
 - “Doesn’t cost much to be nice to people” (26 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - “Treat people with a bit more respect” (32 year old male, Edinburgh North).
 - “If they spoke to the young ones and adults better, they’d get more respect” (56 year old female, Dundee).
 - Police should be wearing uniform (eg 19 year old female, Glasgow East; 16 year old male, Edinburgh North). A 35 year old male in Dundee said he thought he was being robbed when stopped by plain clothes police officers.

- Police should not be too aggressive – a 46 year old man in Glasgow South gave an example of being “pinned against the wall” by the police who emptied his pockets. He would have preferred it if they had asked him to empty his pockets himself.
- Searches should be carried out more discreetly (44 year old female, Glasgow South, 51 year old female, Glasgow South, 19 year old female Glasgow East, 48 year old male, Edinburgh North, 47 year old male, Edinburgh North, 31 year old male Dundee, 39 year old female Dundee, 33 year old male Dundee, 35 year old male Dundee). Rather than searching people in the street in full view of passers-by, participants felt that officers should take people to one side, into a doorway or close, or even to a police van or station to be searched, so they have more privacy. “Make it as private as possible” (33 year old male Dundee).

4. Short and long term impact of stop and search on individuals

- 4.1 In addition to gathering information about people's experiences of the stop and search process, we discussed with them the impact of the policy's application on them as individuals. The impact on their communities is discussed in the next chapter.
- 4.2 We sought to establish what the short and longer term impact of stop and search was on individuals – discussing with them the way that they felt during and shortly after a search had happened and any longer term effect on their behaviour or the way others behaved towards them.

Impact on people's behaviour/future behaviour

- 4.3 There is no doubt that the regular and sustained implementation of stop and search is having an impact on people's behaviour. For most, this impact is negative, but a small number of people we spoke with believed that stop and search had had a positive impact on some people's behaviour.

Impact on attitudes and behaviour

- 4.4 We found substantive evidence that being regularly stopped and searched affects people's views of and attitudes towards the police. For example, one interviewee said that being stopped by the police "makes me hate the police more".
- 4.5 Other interviewees spoke about the impact of being regularly stopped and searched on people's behaviour.
- 4.6 A project worker in Edinburgh North told us that stop and search was encouraging "macho-ism" amongst his clients and that his clients revel in the identity that multiple experiences of stop and search gave them.
- 4.7 Some said there's no point in changing their behaviour because they'll get searched anyway. A 26 year old man in Glasgow South said the police judge people on appearance and people with certain appearances will be searched anyway.
- 4.8 A few said that stop and search had stopped them from carrying things, even if it was for innocent reasons. A 46 year old man in Dundee said he used to carry a pen knife but does not anymore, and he would not carry tools with him, even if he was going to fix something for someone. An 18 year old in Glasgow East said he does not carry scissors to rugby matches (which he needs to cut tape).
- 4.9 A stakeholder in Glasgow South feels that stop and search makes criminals more "secretive and devious" by, for example, hiding weapons in drains and bins to avoid having them on their person.

- 4.10 A 19 year old female in Glasgow East explained that stop and search had not changed her behaviour but her view was “just don’t get caught... run if they (police) come”.
- 4.11 The example below further illustrates the impact that the practice can have on individuals:

A middle-aged man, with a history of criminal behaviour but who described himself as having “stepped back from criminal activity”, having been searched “hundreds of times” (from age 9 years to now).

This particular individual was supportive of the stop and search policy – “they have a job to do”, “people who would otherwise carry hammers, axes and crossbows leave them at home so they don’t get searched”.

However, he explained that stop and search had impacted on him negatively. He told us that in his most recent experience of it he was “rushed by six policemen”. They grabbed him and he got “awfy angry”. He was found with £1500 cash, which he claims was back-dated benefits payments, which was confiscated and has not been returned to him since. He was taken to a police station miles away from where he lived. He was strip searched at the police station and felt “humiliated...violated”.

He says he is “scared to go out” as a result of how often the police stop him – “why should I take the risk of walking up the road and getting pulled and getting searched”.

He does not like that the police stop him in full view of passers-by who often stop and stare. He says it changes the way other people in the community look at him. He says he does not mind speaking to the police but that their approach is rude – they say “you – stay there”, instead of asking politely and explaining why they want him to stop – “the way they talk to people – if they changed their tone I think they’d find a lot more people co-operating”.

Impact on young people

- 4.12 We know from the statistics on stop and search, and from our own sample, that young people are more frequently targeted by stop and search than other groups within the community.
- 4.13 A consistent theme raised by community stakeholders throughout the research was the impact that persistent stop and search activity was having on young people’s views of the police force. They noted that a stop and search incident was often a young person’s only interaction with the police and where this had been a negative experience it had the potential to taint that young person’s views of the police more widely. They noted the serious lack of other opportunities for young people to engage with the police in any positive way.

- 4.14 One example, provided by a staff member in a Glasgow-based youth organisation explained that following a local incident, police had entered the premises during an event and searched the young people. There were very negative feelings amongst staff and service users at the project about this action, particularly when the young people were in a neutral setting attending an organised event.
- 4.15 In another example, A Youth Worker in Glasgow South told us about an incident when police officers entered the youth group's premises to search young people. The officers explained they were looking for a young man wearing a hoody and would not let anyone in or out until they had searched everyone. The young people and workers were unhappy about this incident. They complained to and received an apology from a senior police officer, but the Worker feels that incidents like this have fostered resentment and hatred among young people towards the police.
- 4.16 Staff at another organisation expressed their concerns at the treatment of young people and the behaviour of the police, particularly when young people were not made aware of their rights in respect of the stop and search procedure.
- 4.17 Many research participants felt that young people are more likely to be stopped and searched than others – “no wonder the young people get annoyed – (they) get harassed by the police for no reason” (56 year old female, Dundee) – and many commented on the negative impact of stop and search on young people's behaviour:
- An interviewee in Edinburgh North (36, Female) said that stop and search has made young people “ten times worse” than they used to be. Being stopped and searched makes the young people feel targeted by the police which makes them feel labelled as ‘bad’ so their behaviour changes negatively.
 - A young person (18, male) who lives in Edinburgh North said “it makes you worse if anything”.
 - A focus group participant (male, 16–24) in Dundee said that being stopped makes him feel like doing something illegal.
 - A focus group participant in Edinburgh South (male, 16–24) said “some police are worth going to jail for”.
 - A 54 year old man in Edinburgh North said his grandson had not been in trouble before being stopped and searched, but now “he's never out of trouble” – being stopped and searched gave him “the notion he's a troublemaker”.
 - A 49 year old female in Edinburgh North said that young people can feel victimised if they are searched frequently and this can “make the laddies go out of control”.
 - Focus group participants in Edinburgh North commented that young people are not scared of the police so stop and search does not act as a deterrent to crime or antisocial behaviour.

4.18 Specific concerns were raised with regards to young people in care, or who had left care. Stakeholders working with these young people raised a number of particular concerns about their experiences of stop and search:

- A young person in care's first contact with the police is likely to have been a positive one – with police being the authority figures who helped them out of a dangerous home-situation. They believed that poor (or lack of) experiences of police engaging with residential units (which are people's homes), and negative experiences of being stopped and searched completely eliminated the goodwill built up with these young people.
- There is a perception that they are treated with greater scrutiny than other groups in the community and perceive the police to be making judgements about them that they may not make about other young people. One stakeholder spoke of the police needing to "see beyond the presenting issue".
- There is concern that the police are not yet sufficiently aware of their relatively new responsibilities as "corporate parents" and the focus shifting from dealing with a young person's immediate welfare to their longer-term wellbeing, and what this means in practice. In particular, one stakeholder emphasised the need for the police involved in stop and search to be more aware of their responsibilities as "role models" to young people – exhibiting good behaviours (respectful, controlled, appropriate language etc).

Impact on freedom of movement

4.19 We understand from consultees that stop and search is regularly being undertaken in the same places in local areas, which become familiar to local residents. If these locations happen to be on a route that people use regularly, those people seem to be far more likely to be stopped and searched than others in the area. This, combined with the high instances of stop and search in the selected areas more widely, is impacting on people's choices about routes they use, times of day that they are comfortable moving around in the area, and the frequency with which they leave their home. In effect, their freedom of movement is being hindered.

4.20 We heard several examples of people who now avoid going to certain areas to avoid being stopped and searched – an 18 year old male in Glasgow East said his mum used to stop him going out in order to avoid being stopped and searched. A 39 year old male in Glasgow South says he only goes out with his wife now because he is likely to be stopped by the police if he is on his own. A 51 year old female in Glasgow South avoids certain areas to avoid being stopped.

4.21 One interviewee said that he had changed his route to work because he had been targeted for stop and search so frequently on his way home that it had become really

intrusive. Some people said they avoid the police – a 64 year old male in Dundee said he does not want to go out in case the police see him and search him.

4.22 A 32 year old male in Edinburgh North said that it “makes bairns want to hide away”.

4.23 We also heard of an employee in a voluntary organisation being stopped and searched whilst on his “smoke break” outside his place of work – which the project worker considered to be “extreme intrusiveness”. When his colleague, the project manager, tried to intervene, the police officers involved told her she would get in to trouble if she tried to get involved. She felt very intimidated by this encounter. Staff at this project told us that they could look out of the window any day and see stops and searches being conducted on the street corner and that is significantly impact on morale, and attitudes towards the police in the area.

Positive effect of stop and search

4.24 Whilst they were in the minority, we did hear a number of accounts of stop and search having a positive effect on people: a 24 year old man in Dundee said he used to be “a wee rascal” but he started to behave better after being stopped and searched; a 44 year old woman in Glasgow South said she does not carry any drugs any more after being stopped and searched; a 40 year old man in Dundee said he used to carry a knife but no longer does so because he knows he is likely to be stopped and searched.

Impact on people’s reputation

4.25 We heard regularly from people that stop and search is a negative experience for them. For some people, this extended to having a detrimental impact on their reputation:

- Some people were worried that if they were seen talking to the police, other people might think they were “singing” (57 year old female, Glasgow South).
- A 28 year old man in Govan said that some people assumed he was a drug dealer because they had seen him being searched, and some started asking him for drugs.
- “People think I’m a criminal or something... makes you feel like a criminal, makes you feel that small” (44 year old male, Glasgow South).
- “People probably think you’re a wee ned” (18 year old female, Glasgow East).
- “People think you’re scum” (38 year old female, Glasgow South).
- “People look at you differently” (26 year old male, Glasgow South).
- “People think you’re up to no good” (40 year old male, Glasgow South).
- It can “tar people’s opinion of you” (32 year old male, Edinburgh North).
- “People think you’re a junkie, shop lifter, house breaker or sex offender” (37 year old male, Dundee).

- “Everybody stares” (16 year old male, Glasgow South).
 - “Young people’s reputation is being tarnished” (16–24 year old Edinburgh South focus group participant).
 - “People think you’re scum – bad for your reputation, bad for your family’s reputation” (32 year old male in Edinburgh North).
 - “It definitely impacts on how people view you – neighbours got a different impression after they saw what happened. Was respected in the community before.” (46 year old male community worker in Lochee).
- 4.26 We were also told of the negative effect it can have on young people’s relationships with their parents – a 16 year old male in Govan told us that “your parents think you’re in the wrong if you are stopped”.
- 4.27 The vignette below gives a more detailed example of the impact the practice has had on people’s place in the community:

‘James’, male, 28, Glasgow South

James told us he has been stopped and searched many times. Police officers normally quote legislation as a reason for searching him, but he feels that he does not receive a clear explanation of why he is stopped and searched.

He feels “humiliated” by stop and search and feels that the police target him because of “the way I look, the way I dress”, which he thinks make police officers suspect he is carrying drugs or weapons. He also felt that “people of my background” (he is black) are more likely to be searched than others.

Being stopped and searched has had an impact on how other people in the community think about James. He said that people who saw him being stopped and searched assumed he was a drug dealer. Some even approached him and asked him for drugs.

Impact of stop and search on the children of people being stopped

- 4.28 An unexpected finding from this research was the impact of stop and search on children of people being searched. A number of people we spoke to in Glasgow South, Edinburgh North, and Dundee spoke with concern about the impact it has on children when stop and search is conducted on a parent in front of them.

In Glasgow South:

- A 40 year old female was stopped outside school when with kids.

- A 44 year old female was once strip searched in the subway and was stopped with partner and child present.
- A 38 year old female felt that stop and search is not fair if you're with your children because they find it so upsetting.
- A 44 year old female was stopped two years ago with her partner taking their daughter to school. Her daughter witnessed it. They were asked to empty pockets and a warrant check was done on them. They were not taken to a quiet area so everyone in the area witnessed it.

In Edinburgh North:

- Focus group participants in Muirhouse: Some participants described being pinned against walls by police while taking their children to or from school. One gave an example of having his trousers pulled down while taking his child to school. There was general agreement that the police did not care if children were present or not and this is having a negative impact on their children. The parents spoke of wanting to teach their children that the police are there to protect them but the children are seeing police officers treat their parents badly and parents have concerns that the children may put themselves at risk in future by asking a stranger for help rather than the police who they have learned not to trust.
- Police in plain clothes, jumping out of an unmarked car, not introducing themselves or explaining who they were, and asking an individual what he was smoking (it was a roll-up cigarette). The individual was walking along with a project worker, and had his child with him. No account seemed to be taken of this (and the effect it may have on the child) in their behaviour. The project worker queried who the men were and what their enquiry was about – they did not volunteer this information. The project worker's perception of the procedure was that the police officers seemed nervous and that the encounter was "messy". In addition to a lack of procedure being followed, the project worker's view was that the lack of context given made the incident seem more targeted at the individual. They suggested that if the police had introduced themselves saying, for example, that they were working in the area as they were trying to reduce the level of drugs on the streets in response to requests from the community and that what this encounter was about, this would have been a very different starting point and set a different tone for the search. He felt this entrenched the "them and us" attitude, and reinforced the belief that this sort of approach was normal for the area.

In Dundee:

- 56 year old female: Stopped in a street in Forfar with her son and his two friends. She had McKays shopping bags in her hand and the police went into the shop to check she had paid for her shopping.

- 33 year old male: Believes he gets stopped because of his previous record. He tends to get stopped in busy places, eg Lochee High Street, Wellgate Shopping Centre, at any time of day. Sometimes his kids and/or mum have been with him when he has been stopped. He said that their approach depends on the officer – and that some are “ok”. He told us that his children and his mum have been embarrassed by it when they have been with him.

4.29 There was a strong sense from those that had experience of their children witnessing stop and search that this was inappropriate, and should be stopped. They were particularly concerned about the impact it would have on their children’s views of the police in future, particularly since up until that point they had encouraged their children to be respectful of the police.

5. Impact of stop and search on communities

5.1 We know that stop and search has been more regularly undertaken in some communities than others, and our research sought to establish the effect that undertaking stop and search regularly in an area has on the wellbeing of the community.

5.2 In addition to interviewing and facilitating focus group discussions with members of the public, we consulted community representatives. This was an effective way of testing whether what members of the public were telling us reflected staff in community-based organisations' own experiences. We asked both of these groups of consultees about the impact they thought the policy had had on their communities. Their feedback is outlined below.

Impact on perceptions of the police

5.3 There is clear evidence from our research that the frequent application of stop and search is affecting the way that people view the police, and their willingness to engage with them in a positive or supportive way.

5.4 Many people we consulted said their experiences of dealing with the police had affected their attitudes towards them and that they would be unlikely to co-operate with the police in future:

- A 41 year old male from Glasgow South said he would not co-operate with the police now because they “harass” him.
- “Hate them” (18 year old female, Glasgow East).
- “Wouldn’t go out my way to help them because of my experience” (50 year old male, Edinburgh North).
- “Makes you resent the police... it makes you not want to cooperate if you’re getting stopped and searched for no reason” (25 year old male, Edinburgh South).
- A 40 year old male in Edinburgh North gave an example of his 17 year old son. He has always stayed out of trouble but hates the police because he has been stopped and searched.
- “Certainly not, go and be a witness for them, definitely not” (Edinburgh South focus group participant, male, 16–24 years old).
- Young men in a focus group in Dundee described the police as “beasts” who “do what they want”.
- “Young boys resent the police. Complete hatred. There has been a total breakdown between parties”.

5.5 The vignette below explains Billy's change in attitude:

Billy', male, 16, Glasgow South

Billy has been searched "hundreds" of times. He gave us examples of being searched in the street in full view of passers-by, being asked to remove his socks and shoes and being handcuffed, which left bruises. He said he has never been told specific reasons for being stopped. He feels he was treated unfairly. He "does not like" the police and is less likely to cooperate with them as a result.

Impact on community cohesion

- 5.6 Whilst some believed that stop and search was arbitrary – "Everyone is criminalised. Blanket stop and search is rubbish" – others believed that the policy had affected the way different groups of people within the community viewed each other.
- 5.7 Some people felt that particular ethnic groups were being targeted more by the police than others. This has had the effect of creating resentment within those groups towards others. For example:
- a 41 year old male in Glasgow South felt that white people were more likely to be stopped and searched because the police are scared of large groups of ethnic minorities who stand on street corners;
 - "police don't search ethnic minorities for fear of being accused of racism" (female, Glasgow South);
 - a 50 year old female in Glasgow South thinks that Asians are targeted more than Eastern Europeans;
 - a black interviewee (28 year old male in Glasgow South) said that "people of my background" are more likely to be stopped than others; and
 - people in certain types of dress, eg tracksuits (26 year old male Glasgow South) and Marilyn Manson type clothes.

Impact on perceptions of safety

- 5.8 Although many people disliked the way in which certain police officers carry out stop and search, some noted that stop and search could have a positive impact:
- "It helps detecting crime – eg knife crime" (52 year old female Glasgow South).
 - "It deters people" (43 year old male Glasgow South).
 - It can help to keep drugs and knives off the streets so might stop people getting hurt (22 year old female Glasgow East).

- It makes people in the community feel safer – it makes the place safer (22 year old female Glasgow East), “reassuring for some” (37 year old male Edinburgh North), “makes you feel a wee bit safer when the police are out and about” (20 year old female, Edinburgh South).
 - “Good to have police on patrol to make people feel safer, but not to the extent that people feel they are going to be searched whenever they go out”.
- 5.9 Some interviewees were sceptical about the impact of stop and search on communities’ sense of safety – with some believing it had had the opposite effect and that more people were wary about going out because of the risk of being stopped and searched (which reflects some of the experiences we reported on earlier in this report).

Local area knowledge and community engagement

- 5.10 A number of people raised concerns about stop and search being conducted by police with no local knowledge of the area, for example searches being conducted in Pilton in Edinburgh by police from Glasgow. They emphasised that local people were much more accepting of police undertaking work in their area who knew the local area, understood the issues affecting it, and also knew local people by name.
- 5.11 However, in speaking with representatives of community organisations in the areas targeted by the research people said that their clients’ only experience of the police in their area was through policies such as stop and search which were alienating the community.
- 5.12 A number spoke passionately about the need for the police to engage in positive activity with communities and community-based organisations to build their trust, gain in-depth understanding of the issues affecting those communities, and to develop relationships with the public to ensure that if they implement policies such as stop and search in future communities are on board, and understand why policies are being applied and have some say in the best ways for this to happen. Equally, they spoke of their keenness to have police involved in discussions about preventative actions:

“There is a huge cultural change needed in order for people to accept and work with the police – the community is not easily going to change so the system must change. If the police find themselves grinding against the community, it’s them who need to change the way they are doing things. The community has an unconscious and perverse bias to maintaining the ‘them and us’ situation in order to retain its identity. They are unified in their hatred of the police (‘we’re not them’) and so are inclined to perpetuate this”.

Impact on communities

- 5.13 Stakeholders from areas where high levels of stop and search were happening visibly on a regular basis felt strongly that this impacted on the individuals directly involved, but also impacted on the wellbeing of the community. One interviewee spoke of members of the

community feeling like they were living in a “police state” and gave an example of a scenario she had been involved in: “some local boys came home on the mini bus from their weekly game of football, and two police officers who had just come out of a shop as the mini bus parked lined the boys up along the wall and searched them without telling any of them why.” Her strong feeling was that “local people need to feel more empowered in decision making processes” and spoke warmly of a new initiative in Govan where local young people are working together with police, fire services and the local housing association.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The research has provided a wide variety of views from members of the public and community workers in the five areas of Dundee, Edinburgh North and South and Glasgow South and East. Whilst some can see that stop and search being conducted in their communities may have a positive benefit in the form of reduction in crime and as a preventative measure, the majority of those interviewed raised serious concerns about the levels of stops and searches taking place; the manner in which stop and search is conducted by many police officers; and the lack of engagement of police with the communities in more positive ways.
- 6.2 Much of their feedback suggests that stop and search is not being conducted in the manner that is laid out in guidelines provided to police officers and members of the public.
- 6.3 We know that there will be many police officers undertaking stop and search in the way that is intended, and in line with guidelines issued. This research has highlighted however, that there continue to be many examples of where the practice is being undertaken in ways which are not acceptable, nor having the impact that is intended.
- 6.4 We know from the previous research that Blake Stevenson undertook with police officers that the police believe that stop and search continues to be an effective means of detecting and preventing crime. If it is to continue as common practice in the areas we visited, and in other areas across the country, it is clear that improvements need to be made to both the way in which stops and searches are conducted and in the way police engage more widely with the affected communities.
- 6.5 Our research emphasises how important it is for the police to continue to develop in-depth knowledge of local areas, and build strong relationships with local organisations to ensure that there is a good understanding of how and why new policies are being implemented, and that communities feel buy-in to these. There is a strong sense from those we spoke with that any community engagement efforts to date have been insufficient. Again, we recognise that this has been more effective in some areas than others and we would not wish to detract from the positive work that has gone on but are being told clearly that much more of this community engagement work needs to happen.
- 6.6 It confirms the importance of the pending Code of Practice – and the need for police officers to ensure that they are transparent about their reasons for stopping and searching someone, and that when they do, that person is treated politely and respectfully. We were left with a strong sense that if this happens, the reaction from the public is likely to be far more responsive.

- 6.7 It confirms the importance of accurate recording of data – to ensure that more is understood about who is being searched and how often, to avoid repeats of situations such as those we heard about with individuals with no record of any criminal activity being stopped and searched on multiple occasions, and the consequent effect on their freedom of movement and day-to-day behaviours.

Policing by consent/intelligence-led policing

- 6.8 In our previous research, conducted with 60 police officers in 2014, most of the police officers consulted generally felt that the approach to stop and search in their area (we consulted police from across the country) was intelligence-led and that this principle had remained despite the increased numbers of stops and searches being undertaken. Our research with the public does not concur with this point of view. The majority of people we spoke to during this research raised concerns about the grounds used to justify stop and search being unclear, unreasonable, not based on sufficient evidence, and sometimes not communicated at all.
- 6.9 Most of the examples of this that we heard related to non-statutory searches. This may not be the case with statutory searches – in the 12 cases of statutory searches that we were able to identify, the grounds for the search seemed to be clear and sufficiently well communicated – but we heard insufficient examples of statutory search experiences to know whether this was the case more widely.

Application of guidelines/toolkit

- 6.10 We know from our previous research with police officers that the stop and search toolkit is widely issued to police officers. The consensus amongst participants in that research was that they were already familiar with the content of the toolkit from their basic training and from experience gathered on the job. Many used it to refresh their knowledge when necessary, but some did not think that it taught them anything new.
- 6.11 Most had not had training related specifically to the toolkit and reported that their only formal training on stop and search was during their basic training at the Scottish Police College. Most of those consulted felt they had had enough training and that in addition, experience gathered in practice was valuable. We know that new guidance, and a compulsory e-learning module has been issued subsequent to that research being conducted. However, feedback gathered during our research with the public highlighted many examples of stop and search still not being conducted in the manner that is outlined in guidelines or the toolkit.
- 6.12 We heard many examples of people being treated rudely, without respect, and not being given sufficient information about why the search is being conducted in the first place. Whilst we are confident that there are many police officers conducting stop and search in an appropriate manner, in line with guidelines, some are not and a more consistently respectful and responsible approach is essential if the public's faith in stop and search

(and consequently in the police force more widely), particular in these areas where it has been undertaken at higher levels, is to be regained.

- 6.13 This suggests to us that further refresher training is needed to ensure consistency of approach across the police force, following development of the new code of practice.

Role of police as corporate parent

- 6.14 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, came into effect on the 1st of April 2015. Part 9 of this act sets out the duties of 24 public bodies named as Corporate Parents and “the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers”. Police Scotland is one of these named public bodies.

- 6.15 The responsibility which comes with this is enormous, and stakeholders we consulted during this research were concerned that behaviours exhibited during stop and search procedures did not reflect these responsibilities. They emphasised to us the importance of police officers behaving as role models towards young people in particular, but also others in the community, and the need for this to be understood, and practiced by all police officers in all capacities.

Community relations

- 6.16 It is difficult to over-state the extent to which community workers emphasised the need for police officers to develop stronger positive relationships with communities affected by stop and search and their belief that efforts in this respect, however well intended, had to date been inadequate. Community representatives we spoke with referred to adults in their communities having a complete loss of faith in the police because of their experiences of stop and search, and, even more concerning, of children and young people witnessing the effects of stop and search and growing up without the respect for the police force that ensures policing by consent can continue to be effective.

- 6.17 Consultees emphasised how important it is for the police to continue to develop depth knowledge of local areas, and build strong relationships with local organisations to ensure that there is a good understanding of how and why new policies are being implemented, and ensuring that communities feel buy-in to these. We feel this is especially important in the context of policing in Scotland having transitioned to a single national service and where officers can be deployed for operational reasons more dynamically into geographically distant areas.

Code of practice

- 6.18 Based on feedback from members of the public and community representatives we consulted during this research there are a number of key points of good practice which many believed should form part of any stop and search practice going forward. These are:

- that stop and search is conducted in a respectful and responsible manner;
- that police officers are more conscious of their importance as role models to young people in communities;
- stop and search is undertaken by police in uniform and marked cars, other than in exceptional circumstances in which case ID is clearly visible when the police officers approach members of the public;
- stop and search is not undertaken in the presence of children, other than in exceptional circumstances;
- searches are conducted by police officers of the same gender as the person being searched;
- that police officers have good local knowledge, have strong positive relationships with local people, and care is taken if deploying officers into communities where they do not normally work, for short-term operational needs;
- that stop and search is conducted on the basis of recognisably solid grounds for suspicion rather than in a way that feels random to people, or feels based on their appearance, or simply happens to take place in a local crime hotspot;
- that police officers are more engaged in developing positive relationships in communities, including through developing stronger relationships with the local Third Sector Interfaces which exist in all 32 local authority areas (and who are key partners on community planning partnerships);
- that communities should be provided with accessible, regular information about the use of stop and search where they live;
- that the police commit to providing communities with reports on stop and search related operations and initiatives within their communities and the outcomes that these achieve;
- that Plain English is used in encounters with members of the public;
- that police officers explain the reason(s) for the search clearly;
- that details of their rights, and the process for complaints, are consistently made available to people being stopped and searched;
- that searches are conducted in as private and discreet a location as possible;
- that the police should regularly and independently conduct public consultation and opinion surveys to test, monitor and improve public and communities' confidence in the use of the tactic.

APPENDIX 1 SCRIPT FOR FOCUS GROUPS

SPA Qualitative Evidence Gathering

Semi-structured focus group guide for communities

Welcome and introductions (3 mins)

Blake Stevenson introduction

Thank you all for coming along today. We are conducting this research for the Scottish Police Authority to find out about people's experiences of stop and search and what they think about it. I would like to ask you a few questions as a group but taking part is entirely voluntary – you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can leave the meeting at any point. Your responses are completely anonymous – we might use quotes from you in our report but we won't use your name anywhere.

BS facilitator to explain:

- how people's comments will be used, anonymity
- 'house rules' (valuing everyone's views, one person speaking at a time etc)

Participants Introduction

Participants introduce themselves

Icebreaker (5 mins)

Provide a laminated list of items and ask participants to identify which the police have a statutory power to search for (including some red herrings: money, cigarettes, solvents, chocolate).

Understanding of stop and search in your area (10 mins)

1. How common do you think stop and search is in your area?
2. Where does it tend to take place? How often?

Experiences of stop and search (30 mins)

3. Have you (or your friends/family) been stopped and searched?
4. Display quote: stop and search should be "lawful, proportionate, intelligence-led and respectful to the member of the public involved" (Police Scotland) and display the words "lawful", "proportionate", "intelligence-led" and "respectful to the member of the public involved". Ask participants to reflect back on their general experience of being stopped and searched and ask....
 - i. Did the police have a reason to stop and search you – what reasons did they give and what do you think it was that led them to stop you?
 - ii. Did they tell you who they were? Did you ask for evidence and was it provided?

- iii. Did they ask you for your consent to search you? Were you asked to remove any clothing? Were you made aware that you do not have to give your consent to be searched? If you did not give consent how did they handle this?
- iv. How did you feel you were treated? Did they take care to search you in as private a location as possible? Were they polite?
- v. Were you asked to explain your behaviour in any way?
- vi. Did they ask you to go to the station on a voluntary basis? Did they detain you?

Prompts for Question 4

- Lawful** Police officers act according to the law
- Proportionate** Police officers carry out a search only when they have a good reason to do so
- Intelligence-led** Police officers carry out searches based on reasonable suspicion
- Respectful to the member of the public involved** Police officers treat people who are searched fairly and with dignity

5. Are the police who stop and search you in plain clothes or uniform? Do you tend to know them?
6. Graffiti board exercise (*check in advance with workers for literacy issues*): please write down a few words to describe the way in which people are treated when they're being stopped and searched.

Impact on individuals and communities (10 mins)

7. What impact does being stopped and searched have?
 - i. Does it change your behaviour?
 - ii. Does it change your relationships with family, friends?
 - iii. Does it change your relationship with the police e.g. your willingness to report crime?
 - iv. Does seeing someone being stopped and searched have any impact on how other members of the community feel about people who are stopped and searched?
 - v. Does it change relationships between younger and older people in the community, or other groups?
 - vi. Can you give any examples of the above?

Effectiveness of stop and search (20 mins)

8. What do you think the purpose of stop and search is?
9. Give participants a piece of paper to record how effective they feel stop and search is (*check in advance with workers for literacy issues*) in each of these respects on a scale of 1–4 – How effective do you think stop and search is in:
 - i. Catching people involved in crime?
 - ii. Stopping crime from taking place?
 - iii. Helping to keep communities safe?

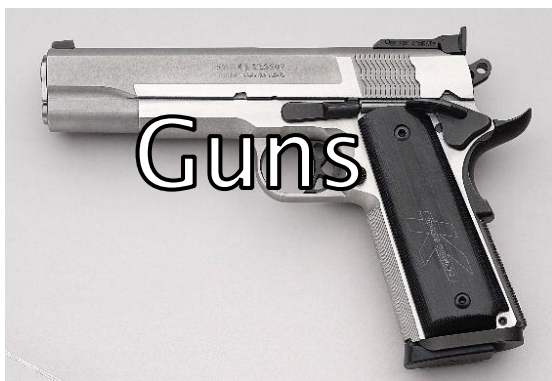
Discuss participants' responses and their reasons for their ratings.

10. Have the police ever been right to stop and search you?
11. Do you ever feel safer because the police are stopping and searching people who might be involved in crime in your area?
12. Can stop and search ever make your community safer?

Future of stop and search (10 mins)

13. Do you think anything needs to change about the way stop and search is carried out in your area? If yes, how should it change? Why?

Other comments: Does anyone have any final comments?





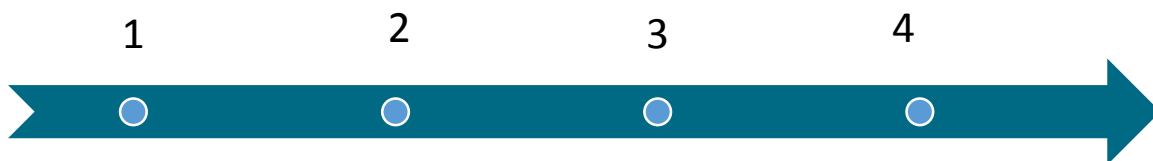
Question 9 Tools

Stop and search



On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is not effective at all and 4 is very effective, how effective do you think stop and search is in:

a. catching people involved in crime?



b. stopping crime from taking place?



c. helping to keep communities safe?



APPENDIX 2 OTHER RESEARCH TOOLS

SPA Qualitative Evidence Gathering

Semi-structured interview guide for individuals who have personal experience of stop and search

Introduction

We are carrying out interviews with people who have experience of stop and search because the Scottish Police Authority would like to know what people think about stop and search. I'd like to ask you a few questions but taking part is entirely voluntary – you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can leave the interview at any point. Your responses are completely anonymous – we might use quotes from you in our report but we won't use your name anywhere.

Stop and search

1. How common do you think the use of stop and search is by the police in your area?

Personal experience of stop and search

2. How often have you been stopped and searched? If more than once: when were you first searched and how old were you? When was the most recent instance?
3. Can you tell me about when you were stopped and searched? Prompts:
 - a. Why do you think you were stopped and searched?
 - b. In which location(s) have you been searched?
 - c. What time of day have you been searched?
 - d. What happened when you were searched?
 - e. Did the police officer(s) explain why you were being searched? Did he/she explain what might happen as a result of being searched?
 - f. (If non-statutory) were you asked to consent to the search? Were you given the option to say no?
 - g. If you said no how did the police respond
4. How would you describe the way you were treated when you were stopped and searched?
5. How did stop and search make you feel personally?
6. Did you feel you were treated fairly? Why/why not?

Personal impact of being stopped and searched

7. Has being stopped and searched had any impact on your life? Have you changed any of your behaviour as a result?
8. Have your relationships with your family, friends or other people changed as a result?
9. Does being stopped and searched change how the community views you?
10. Has it changed your view of the police?

11. Does it make you more or less likely to cooperate with them?
12. Do you think there are any particular groups in society that experience stop and search more than others? If yes, who? Why?

Views and impact of stop and search in general

13. Why do you think the police use stop and search?
14. In general, do you think the use of stop and search is fair? Why/why not?
15. Do you think stop and search helps the police to catch people doing criminal things? Why/why not?
16. Do you think stop and search stops people from taking part in illegal behaviour? Why/why not?
17. Do you think stop and search is making any positive differences to your local community?
18. Do you think stop and search is having a negative impact on your local community?

The future of stop and search

19. Do you think anything needs to change about the way stop and search is carried out in your area? If yes, how should it change? Why?

Other comments

20. Do you have any other final comments you would like to make?



SPA Qualitative Evidence Gathering

Semi-structured interview guide for stakeholders

Community and youth leaders, social workers, community safety representatives, community planning representatives, third sector representatives and others

Introduction

We are carrying out research on behalf of the Scottish Police Authority to find out what people think about stop and search and the impact it has. I would like to ask you a few questions but taking part is entirely voluntary – you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can leave the interview at any point. Your responses are completely anonymous – we might use quotes from you in our report but we won't use your name anywhere.

About you

21. What is your job title/role?

22. How long have you been in the role?

Use of stop and search

23. How common is the use of stop and search (choose as appropriate):
 - in your area?
 - among the clients you work with?
 - within the community you represent?

24. Do you think the use of stop and search has increased, decreased or stayed the same in the past couple of years?

25. Do you think any particular groups or communities are especially affected by local stop and search tactics?

Individuals' experience of stop and search

26. What do you think about the way in which police officers conduct stop and search?
 - Are individuals treated fairly? With dignity?
 - Are procedural guidelines followed (eg do officers explain why the search is taking place, explain what might happen as a result, seek consent if a non-statutory search)?

27. Do you think being stopped and searched has any impact on the people who are searched? How does it make them feel? Does it change their behaviour? Does it have any impact on their relationships with their family, friends or other people in the community?

Views of stop and search

28. How do you think the local community/groups you work with feel about the use of stop and search?
29. Do you think the way stop and search is being used is fair? Why/why not?
30. Do you think the community/groups you work with are aware of the difference between statutory and consensual stop and search i.e. that people have a right to refuse to be subject to a consensual search?

Impact of stop and search

31. What do you see as the aims of stop and search (for detection, deterrence or a mixture of the two)?
32. Does it achieve these aims? Why/why not?
 - Do you think stop and search helps the police to detect crime? Why/why not?
 - Do you think stop and search deters people from taking part in illegal behaviour? Why/why not?
33. Do you think stop and search is having any impact on the relationships between different groups in the community?
34. How, if at all, do you think stop and search is affecting people's:
 - a. confidence in the police service?
 - b. trust in the police service?
 - c. relationship with the police?
 - d. fear of crime?
 - e. sense of personal safety?
 - f. feelings about their community as a place to live?
 - g. views of other people in the community who have been stopped and searched?
35. Do you think stop and search is making any other positive differences to the local community?
36. Do you think stop and search is having any other negative impact on the local community?

The future of stop and search

37. Do you think anything needs to change about the way stop and search is carried out in your area? If yes, how should it change? Why?

38. Do you think anything needs to change about the police service's powers to carry out stop and search? If yes, how? Why? (Prompt: should they have additional powers to search for additional items? Should anything be changed in relation to gaining consent for consensual searches?)
39. Are there any other preventative measures or strategies that might be more effective at tackling knife crime, drugs misuse and street drinking?

Other comments

40. Do you have any other final comments you would like to make?

