



TASERD: Taser use and its Association
with Social, Ethnic and Racial Disparities in policing.

A research programme on the causes of ethnic /
racial disparities in the police use of Taser.

Structure

- Introduce the project and ourselves
- Discuss how you may like to be involved, if at all

Use of information:

- Slides will be shared.
- Comments will be used to help us shape and plan the research; we will not be quoting anyone by name.
- There will be an anonymous form circulated afterwards for additional thoughts.
- Next steps, further meetings etc

About the project

Linked to Officer & Staff Safety Review: 'The NPCC and College commission an independent programme of social research to explore the nature, causes and consequences of racial disparities in Taser use, with a view to identifying changes aimed at minimising the problem and mitigating its impact' – directly commissioned in response to this.

Official statistics:

- Taser used on a higher proportion of people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds than other types of force (ie, 34% compared to 27%) (Use of Force statistics, as quoted in College of Policing ITT document)
- Home Office calculations (in College of Policing ITT) show:
 - Ethnic/racial disparities more pronounced in incidents when Taser was drawn c.f. where it was fired (echoes findings from analysis of IOPC cases and Quinton et al 2020).
 - Variation between police forces.
 - Rate of Taser use 8 times higher for Black people than it was for White people (compared to 2011 Census).
- Review of IOPC cases 2015 – 2020 (https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/research-learning/IOPC_Taser_review_2021.pdf):
 - Black people subject to Taser discharges were more likely to be tasered continuously for more than five seconds (29% of White people involved in Taser discharges c.f. 60% for Black people).
 - In the majority of IOPC cases involving allegations of discrimination, stereotyping and / or assumptions, the individual concerned had mental health concerns or a learning disability.

About the project

- Research funded by National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) and the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC).
- Research commissioned by the College of Policing.
- Aims, objectives, methods, timescale for the research jointly agreed by Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi, the NPCC lead for less lethal weapons, and an Independent Academic Advisory Panel.

Aims and objectives

- Analysis of police data and other datasets to explore the factors and processes. Anticipate data from over 10 forces in England and Wales, including Use of Force forms, calls for service / where officers were distributed; information about Taser in the force.
- Analysis of body-worn camera footage (BWC) and interviews with police officers. Anticipate working with a few forces in more detail; 40 – 80 semi-structured interviews with officers; some BWC footage supplemented by observations.
- Research or engagement with members of the public about their personal and/or vicarious experiences of Taser and other types of force. Anticipate Community Testimony Days, interviews and discussions with NGOs, community groups, scrutiny groups, others.
- The research will explore the impact of taser use on members of the public as well as on police officers.

Project timescale and outputs

- Runs until March 2023 (with the possibility of an extension), with research to be published after this date.
- Specifies outputs:
 - Report published by the College of Policing, and subject to peer review.
 - Presented to the Independent Academic Advisory Panel and other stakeholder groups.
 - Possible other outputs (e.g. recorded presentations on website, journal articles etc).
- Extremely ambitious given time scale and reach



About us: A consortium.
Four universities & three consultants.



We recognise issues, including:

- *Independence:* Described as an 'independent' programme of research but funding and terms of reference cannot be ignored, many would say this is not independent. We are cognisant of this and are mindful not to use the word 'independent' in the title and elsewhere. We appreciate the limits but are keen to conduct this research in a way which is as independent as possible, involving yourselves and people affected by Taser.
- *Research design:* we were asked to provide separate costs for the research or engagement with the public, as the Authority reserved the right not to proceed with (this) part. Despite this, we have planned in Roundtables and Community Testimony Days, as this is crucial. Not just about officer safety but community safety. Both about hearing perspectives and also about getting input into the project design.
- *Input into the project:* We can't change the aims of the research or the methods we have been asked to use. We also need to start work asap, given the tight timescale for this project. However, we can make sure there are opportunities to input into a) the data we collect; b) the interview questions we ask of officers; and c) things to look out for when observing BWC. Any thoughts on these would be much appreciated, although we can't guarantee that we will be able to action all of them, and that we can include every question every time (as interviews may vary).

We recognise issues, including:

- *Uncertainty*: we are presenting here initial ideas and what we hope to do. However, this depends on a number of factors outside of our control, including the willingness of police forces to co-operate and share data and body worn camera footage, and a tight timescale. Cannot guarantee what we will observe!
- *Our contribution*: this is a relatively limited project in terms of the timescale and capacity and our contribution will not be exhaustive or provide 'all the answers' to such a long-standing issue. We aim to be clear about this and the limits to our work, here and in other forums (e.g. the NPCC Action Plan).
- *Ability to drive change*: we hope that the research findings and implications will provide the Police Service with the basis for evidence-based changes to policy and practice. In terms of implementing changes, this is the responsibility of the Police Service.

Reasons to input

- Racial disparity concerning issue that must be addressed
- Opportunity to advocate for change around Taser use - 1st type of research in the UK looking at this issue.
- Ensure a broader range of voices and issues are heard, beyond officers, officer safety.
- Keen to explore any involvement that may make sense for you; input into research design (bearing in mind research parameters we have been given); interviews, discussions, Community Testimony Days, evening meetings.

Comments, Questions and Reflections:

- Thoughts, questions and observations on the project?
- How can we best ensure your voices, and the voices of those affected by Taser, are heard in this project?
- How, if at all, might you want to be involved and kept informed going forward?
- Feedback Form to be circulated after the event, or accessed here: <https://forms.office.com/r/SJ9SgYPiQi>
- You can also contact us at;
 - <https://www.keele.ac.uk/kpac/fundedprojects/taserd/>
 - Via Keele Policing Academic Collaboration Centre Manager, Deborah Tallent; d.j.tallent@keele.ac.uk.
 - Directly; Katrina (katrina@unjust.org.uk), Abi (A.Dymond@exeter.ac.uk), Nick (nick.glynn@opensocietyfoundations.org)

