

USE OF FORCE POLICY

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NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY



SUFFOLK
CONSTABULARY

USE OF FORCE

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Legal Basis

Legislation specific to the subject of this policy document:

- Common Law
- [Criminal Law Act 1967](#)
- [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008](#)
- [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- Equality Act 2010
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated Regulations
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Other documentation which you must check this document against:

- College of Policing – Code of Ethics
- [Legal frameworks | College of Policing](#)
- Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies' Standards of Professional Behaviour
- College of Policing – Authorised Professional Practice
- [Public and Personal Safety Training Policy](#)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Police officers and staff will on occasions use force in the course of their duties to uphold the law while keeping the public and themselves safe from harm. The use of force is derived from statute and common law. Responsibility for the use of force rests with the individual officer. When using force, officers and staff must be able

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to show that the force used was proportionate, lawful, accountable, necessary and ethical in the circumstances. The term 'use of force' covers a range of approved techniques and equipment.

- 1.2 The aim of this document is to provide a single reference point for all Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies' policies, processes, and procedures associated with the use of force. This will ensure that the guidance provided to officers, staff, and their supervisors is clear, succinct, and inter-relationships are mapped out.
- 1.3 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies recognise the importance of effective Use of Force scrutiny and the need for it to be timely, informative, and focused on learning. We are committed to openness and transparency, striving for impartiality by continuously seeking opportunities to reflect on and enhance our decision-making processes, and to strengthen public confidence.
- 1.4 In addition to our own internal scrutiny, we have independent and external scrutiny both at a tactical and strategic level from the public of Norfolk and Suffolk.

2. Policy Aims

2.1 Ensure that:

- Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies record their use of force correctly.
- There are effective mechanisms in place to monitor use of force across both counties.
- The communities of Norfolk and Suffolk have confidence in the use of force applied by officers and staff.
- There is support in place for officers and staff who have used force when the force was necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

3. Statement of Policy

- 3.1 This policy illustrates the internal processes and procedures required when using force and completing the associated records. We want officers and staff to feel confident and supported when using force and doing the right thing for the right reasons.
- 3.2 The [Public and Personal Safety Training Policy](#) outlines the training provisions in place as well as the core professional development available to officers and staff to ensure that they have the most up to date information, knowledge, skills, equipment, and training.
- 3.3 This policy has been formally agreed via the approved policy development/review process. It will be maintained by the Learning and Development Department in conjunction with the Central Policy Unit.
- 3.4 The policy is intended to promote equality, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and actively foster good relations for all individuals, irrespective of age, disability (including neurodiversity, learning disability and mental health), gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or economic or family status. This policy

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should be read in conjunction with the 'Equality Impact Assessment' (EIA) for use of force.

- 3.5 Managers have a responsibility to ensure this policy is applied fairly, and unless otherwise stated, all policies and procedures are non-contractual.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Lead – Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing (Norfolk)

- 4.1 Responsible for the strategic governance and scrutiny of the Use of Force, and for overseeing the implementation of this policy across both counties through the Joint Police Powers Board.

Use of Force Lead – Superintendent

- 4.2 Responsible for the governance and scrutiny of the Use of Force, and for overseeing the implementation of this policy at an operational level within each county, through the Police Powers Development and Scrutiny Meeting (Norfolk) and the Police Powers Delivery Group meeting (Suffolk).

All Supervisory Roles

- 4.3 Responsible for ensuring staff compliance with this policy and for overseeing the accurate and timely completion of Use of Force documentation.

All Officers and Staff

- 4.4 Responsible for compliance with this policy. This policy applies to all Police Officers, including Special Constables, and to all members of staff whose roles require completion of Public and Personal Safety Training (PPST), including Custody Detention Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

Police Training

- 4.5 Responsible for ensuring that all training delivered across Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies is aligned with this policy and relevant national guidance, and that it reinforces the requirements for accurate and timely recording.

IT Support

- 4.6 Responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the Use of Force recording application, and that the application enables officers and staff to record Use of Force in accordance with this policy and Home Office requirements (Annual Data Requirement 148).

Research and Analysis

- 4.7 Responsible for compiling monthly, quarterly, and annual reports in accordance with Home Office requirements and this policy, to support ongoing force governance and scrutiny of Use of Force.

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Local Policing

- 4.8 Responsible for providing a Single Point of Contact to attend the governance and scrutiny meetings chaired by the Use of Force Leads.
- 4.9 Responsible for supporting all supervisors and staff within Local Policing to ensure adherence to this policy.

5. Recording use of force

- 5.1 All Use of Force will be recorded on the Assault, Force, Injury (AFI) form which is available in the Force Forms Application. In addition to the AFI form submission officers are required to record any rationale or justification for the force used within an MG11, Pocket Notebook (PNB), or verbally on Body Worn Video (BWV) including the impact factors that justify the Use of Force.
- 5.2 For every arrest, stop search or other interaction where force has been used, **including compliant handcuffing** or show of force (such as drawing batons), an AFI must be completed by each individual officer detailing rationale/justification for use of force and application of force as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case before their set of shifts is concluded.
- 5.3 If more than one officer/staff member uses force in a single incident, each must generate a separate AFI form submission. This is required as it is important for everyone to record their own separate justification and rationale for the force used.
- 5.4 It is recognised that some Uses of Force, particularly during fast moving or public order incidents, may not be easily recorded at the time, especially where multiple Uses of Force occur over a period. In such circumstances, individuals must still submit an AFI form as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, before the end of their set of shifts.
- 5.5 Where force is used on a child under the age of 18, the officer(s)/staff involved must ensure that a parent, guardian or other relevant appropriate adult is informed and updated on the circumstances. Where this is not possible, or contact cannot be successfully made, a rationale must be clearly documented.
- 5.6 Where force is used on a child under the age of 18, a Child Protection Investigation (CPI) form (Norfolk) or a Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) form (Suffolk) must be submitted. Where a CPI or PVP form is already being completed for the incident, for example, where the child is arrested and a CPI / PVP is submitted in relation to that arrest, a separate form is not required specifically for the use of force; however, **it must be clearly recorded within the existing submission that force was used during the encounter.**
- 5.7 The use of force must be recorded on BWV unless it is impractical or technically not possible to do so, for example due to device battery depletion or technical failure. BWV should be activated as soon as reasonably practicable and, wherever possible, in advance when it is anticipated that force may be used. This requirement applies to all officers present, whether directly using force or not. The BWV footage must be retained in accordance with the [Body Worn Video Policy](#)

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and classified as evidential or non-evidential in line with the Force Review, Retention and Disposal (RRD) Schedule.

- 5.8 The completed Use of Force record (AFI form) is disclosable in both criminal and misconduct proceeding.
- 5.9 Where the Use of Force relates to a death or serious injury and a Post Incident Procedure (PIP) is initiated, the duty/on-call PIM and Professional Standards will be notified in line with policy. In such circumstances, the Use of Force application (AFI form) completion is not required until agreed by the PIM following legal advice being sought and only at the appropriate stage within the Post-Incident Procedure (PIP). In some cases, advice from legal services may advise that the use of force application (AFI) refers to their detailed stage 4 account completed during their Post incident process.
- 5.10 Where force is used by a Norfolk or Suffolk police officer or member of staff outside of the force area, it must be recorded in accordance with that force's policy and, as a minimum standard, documented within the individual's PNB.
- 5.11 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies will publish Use of Force data on their respective public websites on a quarterly basis. This will include data relating to protected characteristics, including gender, ethnicity and age.
- 5.12 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are committed to identifying, understanding, and addressing any instances of disproportionality in the use of force. Where analysis identifies disproportionality, the Constabularies will take appropriate and proportionate action to understand the underlying causes and implement remedial measures. This may include targeted supervision, review of individual incidents, enhanced training, and policy or operational changes.
- 5.13 Disproportionality will be examined through both internal governance structures and independent external scrutiny, with findings reported through established oversight mechanisms. Where concerns indicate potential breaches of professional standards, these will be referred to the appropriate misconduct or performance procedures in line with the Police (Conduct) Regulations.
- 5.14 The Constabularies will ensure that outcomes from such reviews are used to drive organisational learning, address any identified disparities, and reinforce the requirement that all use of force must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, and non-discriminatory.

6. Review/Approval

- 6.1 The Policy Business Owner retains overall ownership of this Policy and any associated documents and, in turn, delegates responsibility for its ongoing monitoring to the relevant department or unit.
- 6.2 The policy should be regarded as a living document and subject to regular review to reflect Force-level changes, Home Office and NPCC guidance, legislative developments, and good practice, including lessons learned both locally and nationally. This approach supports continuous improvement in our understanding and application of Use of Force.

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7. Governance / Scrutiny

- 7.1 Internal and external scrutiny frameworks have been established to monitor the legitimate use of force, ensuring accountability to the public, supporting a rights-based approach to policing, and enabling independent community oversight. Feedback from external scrutiny panels is used to identify learning, address disproportionality, and drive continuous improvement in policy, training, and operational practice.”

External Scrutiny

- 7.2 Use of Force interactions will be reviewed by the Community Scrutiny and Legitimacy Panels for each county. These panels are independently chaired and comprise external volunteers who review Use of Force encounters to provide an independent perspective on the fairness, proportionality, and effectiveness of the powers exercised.
- 7.3 The Joint Custody Independent Scrutiny Panel meets quarterly to review the use of strip-search powers and the use of rip-proof clothing within custody. Findings from these reviews will be fed into the Joint Police Powers governance and scrutiny meeting.
- 7.4 The Independent Advisory Group (IAG) in Norfolk and the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) in Suffolk provide an independent voice representing the interests of minority communities. They offer insight and advice on local community issues.

Internal Scrutiny

- 7.5 The Joint Police Powers Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) for Local Policing for Norfolk on behalf of both Forces, provides strategic-level governance and oversight of the Use of Force and scrutiny arrangements.
- 7.6 The Police Powers Development and Scrutiny Meeting (Norfolk) and the Police Powers Delivery Group meeting (Suffolk), provide operational-level governance and oversight of the Use of Force and scrutiny arrangements.
- 7.7 The supervision of Use of Force is a key component in ensuring not only that the legal and ethical requirements are met when force is used, but that issues such as data quality are addressed, allowing for effective analysis and governance.
- 7.8 Taser management have a process that ensures that all incidents are monitored for scrutiny, and findings are subject to review.
- 7.9 Regular audits and dip-sampling of Use of Force reports (including Body Worn Video) will be undertaken by Learning and Development staff, alongside routine supervision and management oversight of officers and staff. These audits will consist of a randomised sample, with additional scrutiny directed towards areas identified through internal governance processes and external/public scrutiny as requiring further review. Findings, themes, and identified trends will be governed and reviewed through the Norfolk and Suffolk Joint Police Powers Boards.

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8. Definitions

- BWV – Body Worn Video
- PIP – Post Incident Procedures
- PNB – Pocket Notebook
- PPST – Public Personal Safety Training
- NPCC – National Police Chief Council
- AFI – Assault Force Injury
- PVP – Protecting Vulnerable People
- CPI – Child Protection Investigation
- CPC – County Policing Command