**OPERATIONAL SAFETY**

**USE OF FORCE**

Quarter 4 Performance Report

April 2024 to March 2025

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# Part One – Introduction

### What is in this Report?

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

All data used in this report are provisional management information and not official statistics. This report covers the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. All data are correct at the published date and were extracted at the start of April 2025. Therefore, incident attended data maybe differ slightly to other published reports.

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

### What is the purpose of this Report?

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

### About “Use of Force” Forms

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

The level of force used must be proportionate, legal, absolutely necessary and officers are individually accountable in law for the amount of force they use. The use of force in any situation will involve a unique set of circumstances and deploying use of force tactics will be based on a variety of factors. A police officer’s priority will always be ensuring wider public safety as well as that of the individual(s) they are dealing with.

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

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

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

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

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

### About Taser

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

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

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

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

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

It should be noted that:

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

# Part Two – Management Information

## “Use of Force” forms recorded by Police Scotland

### Quarter 4 YTD 2024/25

| **Count** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| Total number of incidents attended by Police Scotland  (Previous reports were based on the total number of incidents recorded. However, Police Scotland has now refined this methodology to focus only on incidents where the police physically attended). | 780,501 |
| Number of “Use of Force” forms submitted | 8,032 |
| Percentage of incidents attended where a “Use of Force” form was submitted.  (Number of ‘Use of Force’ forms divided by number of incidents) | 1.0 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

The total number of incidents attended by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25 is 780,501. The total number of “Use of Force” forms submitted for the same period is 8,032. The percentage of incidents recorded where a “Use of Force” form was submitted (the total number of “Use of Force” forms submitted divided by the total number of incidents) for the same period is 1.0%.

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

### Quarter 4 YTD 2024/25

| **Use of force applied** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| Handcuffs used | 8,075 |
| Empty hand restraint / hold used  (Empty hand restraints and holds include; pushes, fend offs, arm locks, strikes, blocks and the placing and restraining of a subject on the ground). | 10,452 |
| Spit Hood used | 1,027 |
| Fast straps (leg restraint) used | 1,701 |
| Baton drawn only | 286 |
| Baton strike | 215 |
| Baton restraint | 147 |
| PAVA drawn only | 129 |
| PAVA discharged  (All PAVA Discharges are automatically referred to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC)) | 187 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table shows the number of times the named use of force was recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25:

* Handcuffs were used 8,075 times
* Empty hand restraint/hold (Empty hand restraints and holds include; pushes, fend offs, arm locks, strikes, blocks and the placing and restraining of a subject on the ground) was used 10,452 times.
* Spit hoods were used 1,027 times
* Fast straps (leg restraints) were used 1,701 times.
* Baton (drawn only) was used 286 times, a baton strike was used 215 times, and a baton restraint was used 147 times.
* PAVA (drawn only) was used 129 times and PAVA was discharged 187 times - all PAVA Discharges are automatically referred to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC)

It is important to note the below

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

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

### Quarter 4 YTD 2024/25

| **Subject detail** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| Subject is under 18 | 1,313 |
| Subject is Male | 6,239 |
| Subject is Female | 1,916 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

* The total number of incidents recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25 where the subject was under 18 is 1,313.
* The total number of incidents recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25 where the subject was male is 6,239. The number of incidents where the subject was female recorded for the same period was 1,916.

## Ethnicity breakdown from “Use of Force” forms for Subject

### Quarter 4 YTD 2024/25

| **Subject Ethnicity** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |  | **Subject Ethnicity** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African, African Scottish or African British | 84 |  | Other Ethnic Group | 40 |
| Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British | 31 |  | Other white British | 337 |
| Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British | 3 |  | Other white ethnic group | 110 |
| Black, Black Scottish or Black British | 49 |  | Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British | 51 |
| Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British | 7 |  | Unknown | 131 |
| Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British | 8 |  | White English | 191 |
| Choose not to disclose | 10 |  | White Gypsy/Traveller | 22 |
| Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British | 11 |  | White Irish | 28 |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic group | 64 |  | White Northern Irish | 46 |
| Other African Background | 21 |  | White Polish | 102 |
| Other Asian Background | 32 |  | White Scottish | 6,674 |
| Other Caribbean or Black background | 4 |  | White Welsh | 7 |

The table above shows the breakdown of subject’s ethnicity recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms for the period Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25 as follows:

* African, African Scottish or African British – 84 reports
* Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British – 31 reports
* Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British – 3 reports
* Black, Black Scottish or Black British – 49 reports
* Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British – 7 reports
* Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British – 8 reports
* Subject who chose not to disclose their ethnicity – 10 reports
* Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British – 11 reports
* Mixed or multiple Ethnic Group – 64 reports
* Other African background – 21 reports
* Other Asian background – 32 reports
* Other Caribbean or Black background – 4 reports
* Other Ethnic Group – 40 reports
* Other White British – 337 reports
* Other White Ethnic Group – 110 reports
* Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British – 51 reports
* Unknown Ethnic Group – 131 reports
* White English – 191 reports
* White Gypsy/Traveller – 22 reports
* White Irish – 28 reports
* White Northern Irish – 46 reports
* White Polish – 102 reports
* White Scottish – 6,674 reports
* White Welsh – 7 reports

It is important to note the below:

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

| **Ethnicity** | **% of Population (2022 census)** | **% of UOF forms submitted Quarter 4 2024/25 YTD** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| White | 96.9 | 93.2% |
| Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities | 7.1 | 5.0% |
| Unknown | - | 1.8% |

The table above shows the breakdown of subject’s ethnicity recorded on Police Scotland “Use of Force” forms for the period Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25 as follows:

* 92.9% of the population (according to the 2022 census data) was of white ethnicity, of the “Use of Force” forms submitted during the recording period 93.2% had a subject of white ethnicity.
* 7.1% of the population (according to the 2022 census data, ethnic minority excluding white minorities) were from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, of the “Use of Force” forms submitted during the recording period 5.0% had a subject from BME communities
* From the “Use of Force” forms submitted during the recording period 1.8% had a subject with unknown ethnicity, no comparison is provided to the 2022 census data.

## Taser Data

### Quarter 4 YTD 2024/25

| **Types of Taser Use** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| Drawn | 275 |
| Aimed | 103 |
| Red Dot | 315 |
| Arced | 17 |
| Fired | 104 |
| Total Number of Uses | 814 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of the total number of different types of Taser Use recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25. For this period Taser was drawn 275 times, aimed 103 times, red dotted 315 times, arced 17 times and fired 104 times. There is a total of 814 uses of Taser for this period.

In Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25 on 14 occasions Taser was pointed at the same subject by two separate Specially Trained Officers and there were two occasions when no person was tracer. No uses recorded against animals in 2024/25.

| **Gender / Total Number of Uses** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| Male | 717 |
| Female | 68 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of Taser Use by gender recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25. For this period Taser was used on a male subject 717 times and a female subject 68 times.

| **Age / Total Number of Uses** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| Under 18 | 52 |
| 18 - 30 | 252 |
| 31 - 64 | 443 |
| 65 + | 12 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of Taser Use by age recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25. For this period Taser was used 52 times on a subject under the age of 18, 252 times on a subject between 18 to 30 years of age, 443 times on a subject between 31 and 64 years of age and 12 times on a subject 65 or over. Age was not stated in 32 uses.

| **Ethnicity / Total Number of Uses** | **Quarter 4 YTD**  **2024/25** |
| --- | --- |
| W1 – White British | 720 |
| B2 – African | 12 |
| B9 – Any other Black background | 3 |
| W9 – Any other White background | 20 |
| O1 – Chinese | 1 |
| O9 – Any other ethnic group | 4 |
| A1 – Asian Indian | 1 |
| A2 – Asian Pakistani | 5 |
| A9 – Any other Asian background | 9 |
| M2 – White and Black African | 2 |
| M9 – Any other Mixed background | 6 |

The following information is presented in the above table:

The table above shows a breakdown of the total number of Taser Use by ethnicity recorded by Police Scotland for Quarter 4 year-to-date 2024/25. For this period Taser was used 720 times on a subject who was White British, 12 times on a subject who selected African, three times on a subject who selected any other Black background, 20 times on a subject who selected any other White background, one time on a subject who selected Chinese, four times on a subject who selected any other ethnic group, one time on a subject who selected Asian Indian, five times on a subject who selected Asian Pakistani, nine times on subject who selected any other Asian background, two times on White and Black African, and six times on a subject who selected any other Mixed background. Ethnicity was not stated or not applicable for 30 uses.

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

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

## Useful Links

[Police Investigation and Review Commissioner](https://pirc.scot/)