



Scottish Police Federation

5 Woodside Place Glasgow G3 7QF

**Joint Central Committee
Health & Safety Subject Committee**

Ref: CS/GF/LS

MINUTES

1st October 2020

1. Attendance and Opening of Meeting

North Area Committee	Andy Bilton
North Area Committee	Simon Lewis-Dalby
North Area Committee	Ross Polworth
North Area Committee	Marc Lorente
East Area Committee	Heather Macdonald
East Area Committee	Graeme McLaren
East Area Committee	Lyn Redwood
East Area Committee	Andy Toombs
West Area Committee	Jamie Carruth
West Area Committee	Dougie Chalmers
West Area Committee	Gordon Cumming
West Area Committee	Ian Florence
West Area Committee	Craig Fraser
West Area Committee	David Hunter
West Area Committee	Michael McCaughey
West Area Committee	Dougie McKinlay
West Area Committee	Chloe Rice
West Area Committee	Campbell Smith
West Area Committee	Elaine Sutherland
Chair	Brian Jones
Assistant to the General Secretary (H&S) AGSH	Gordon Forsyth
Business Administrator	Lesley Stevenson

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Apologies were received from Kenny Kean and Mark Murphy who were replaced by Craig Fraser and Mark Murphy respectively.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 situation the meeting was done by Video Conferencing. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and invited all to take an active part.

The Minute of the previous meeting had been circulated with JCC Circular 34 of 2020 and was approved.

COVID Update

The AGSH reported that the Op Talla H&S Meetings had largely stopped at the end of July however due to increasing cases across society, Op Talla had been re-established, with two Silver meetings and a H&S meeting being held each week.

SPF have routinely asked for the wearing of Type IIR masks to be mandatory however the Executive continued to use language such as “should” and “default” rather than using the word “must” which was an instruction and did not allow for any ambiguity. Members discussed the differences in policy directions across the force.

It had been noticed in recent weeks that the focus was on potential transmissions within the workplace. There had been incidents in the SPC, Lanarkshire and West Lothian where officers had tested positive and their colleagues had to self isolate. There had been a distinct lack of clarity over the isolation process.

Station visits were being carried out by SPF representatives to establish the understanding and compliance with the operational guidance as well as cleaning regimes. The biggest issue being found was of general complacency and a disregard of social distancing.

3 Violence

The AGSH reported that following the last meeting more in-depth snap shots of police assaults had been conducted in C and G Divisions as they appeared to have had the biggest increase in reported assaults.

In C Division, 11 of the 13 weeks analysed had normal levels of assaults but two weeks had significant spikes. The analysis found that COVID had no effect on these numbers regarding coughing/spitting incidents. However, it was noted that the first high week coincided with the easing of lockdown and good weather, so inadvertently did have an effect.

In G Division, the increases in assaults correlated to increases in Antisocial Behaviour. Again, the spikes coincided with easing of lockdown restrictions. It was apparent that policing was suffering as a result of the public’s frustrations. In most cases, the assault on the officer had been preceded by other acts of violence by the perpetrator.

Again, there was a high number of incidents within Helen street Custody and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital nearby. This was comparable to the increased number of custodies that were being processed at that time.

The issue of repeat victims was discussed, and members were asked if there was any evidence of the same officers being repeatedly involved. There was potential for cumulative effect of victimisation on staff mental and physical wellbeing.

Members discussed techniques for placing unruly custodies in cells and were asked to consider whether alternative techniques could be identified. James Bertram had advised that similar issues were raised through accident reporting, particularly when unruly custodies were being put in or removed from caged vans.

Taser

There was currently 436 tasers deployable with 80 trained but not deployable for a variety of reasons. Refresher training had restarted. A Taser Review Group had been created to liaise with Divisions regarding the management and development of STOs. They had experienced issues with officers handing their Taser tickets in and very little in the way of management intervention/support. The AGSH asked members to feed in any examples of where STOs were being used as opposed to firearms officers which would be raised at the Armed Policing Monitoring Group.

It was noted that since 1st January 2020, Taser had been deployed at 299 incidents and used on 173 occasions. This included drawing, red dotting and arcing as well as discharge. It had been discharged on 18 occasions. 90% of discharges involved a weapon, but 50% involved persons self harming. There had been no injuries sustained by officers or suspects when Taser had been discharged.

It was reported that the majority of discharges were successful. The AGSH asked what consideration and review was given to the failures. Louise Skelton advised that the failures had all been down to the suspect being too close to the STO for it to deploy fully or a poor barb contact had been made due to clothing worn by the suspect.

Use of Force

The Committee was given an update on the handcuffing policy and were informed that ultimately DCC Taylor considered it impossible to give absolute prescriptive guidance as it simply wouldn't be practicable. Officers had to be sensitive to each situation. The AGSH said the Policy still needed a review as it hadn't been fully considered for some time.

He reported that the Use of Force form submission had risen by 10% for the quarter however incidents were still being massively under reported. Handcuffing suspects to the rear had been utilised more often. This was suspected to be COVID related. There was also a significant increase in the use of spit hoods that appeared commensurate with the number of COVID related spitting incidents.

4 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Body Armour

It was reported that Phase 1 was complete and phase 2 was commencing. A self-measuring pilot had commenced with officers given guidance on how to measure themselves and then attending to be measured by Stores staff. If the pilot was successful it would dramatically reduce the time taken to order and replace existing armour. In future, it was hoped that common sizes would be kept in stock, so officers should in most cases be able to get an immediate replacement. There was still no formed armour approved by the Home Office, but this was still being actively pursued by Safariland.

It was confirmed that armour should be checked annually at OST. Training was to be looked at for OST instructors to be able to complete that task.

The meeting Chair said that PSoS were still the only force that had purchased lighter body armour and was hoped that there would be a full roll-out within the next three years.

Footwear

The AGSH reported that the SLWG had not met since the last H&S meeting, but he had received an update from the project delivery team. The initial template for sizing was found to be inaccurate. An alternative method had been introduced in Fife for testing and hopefully would be rolled out to the rest of the force. There were some manufacturing issues that would likely see the first phase extended into the next financial year for delivery for some officers.

Clothing

The AGSH reported that the Clothing and Uniform Working Group had met on a few occasions since the last meeting. There was no update regarding the cycle kit lists. He said consideration was being given to a regular user/occasional user kit lists. It was noted that progress was slow on this matter.

Members discussed gender neutral headwear and were advised that the solution used by LGBTI counterparts in Europe was baseball caps. Some E&W forces were moving to a flat cap as a single option, but this seemed to be a move to the male hat rather than a neutral option. The only identified alternative to the baseball cap was the Swedish option of a boat or garrison cap, however the Swedish police still used a flat cap as their formal headwear for all genders.

Additional consideration was also being given to the provision of protective headwear, but it was unsure what form this would take. Bump caps had been issued to an English force but had been recalled following complaints from the officers.

The Policy on tunics still required development.

It was reported that due to the amount of equipment being carried on carriers, the current click-fast solution was no longer a viable option. The Molly system which allowed officers to adapt the carrier system to suit their own needs was being considered.

It was reported that the supply of ripstop trousers from the USA was still an issue. Some sizes were simply unavailable. An update was sought.

It was noted that the current agreement for waterproof jackets had been extended for a year with the potential of a further three years. Other options could be explored which may prove more successful. Any concerns or evidence should be submitted to the AGSH in order that he could submit feedback.

Shields SLWG

The AGSH reminded the Committee that the Shields SLWG had been created to look at the requirements of shields being carried in divisional vehicles in the West area. This was a legacy position as no other area other than Forth Valley used to carry public order shields in divisional response vehicles. A memo was produced in 2016 advising that these shields would not be replaced when they became unserviceable and should be retained in stations and obtained in the event of an incident requiring them. However, they continued to be carried in vehicles. These divisional shields were now well beyond their manufacturer's warranty and had not undergone any form of confidence testing and were also not certified for use against edged weapons.

Work was ongoing to assess the need for shields in vehicles, and if there was, what type of shield was best as there was currently no single shield certified to repel edged weapons and missile/blunt object attacks.

OST had received a Buckler shield which was used in defense from edged weapons and would be demonstrated for feedback during OST refresher training once it recommenced.

5 Operational Equipment

It was reported that since the initial rollout of the new road signs, it had been discovered that in some circumstances, the signs were unsuitable. The new signs were immediately withdrawn, and it was later discovered that the suppliers had changed the design. Further testing was carried out at the SPC and it was agreed that additional weight would be added to the signs and then returned for testing.

The AGSH gave an update from the Vehicle Users Group meeting which largely discussed the fleet strategy. The first phase of the green wave was to replace all 1700 unmarked vehicles with Ultra-low Emission Vehicles (ULEV). There were currently 100 ULEVs already in service.

An infrastructure procurement process had been undertaken which would take place in three phases namely; Phase 1 – “The Green Corridor” which was essentially the M8 extended through to Prestwick; Phase 2 – the rest of the East/West areas and Phase 3 the rest of the country. Sites had been identified with the number of charger points required. A feasibility study was to be carried out at each site to identify the requirements for upgraded national grid access.

It was noted that funding for replacing the petrol/diesel fleet was difficult as there was no way of predicting how much funding on a yearly basis they would get for non-electric vehicles. The technology is not available to confidently deliver a fit for purpose and safe marked fleet.

Driver awareness of ULEVs is being built into driver training as there are differences to driving conventional vehicles.

Due to the purchase of the electric unmarked vehicles and only around a third of the normal fleet replacement taking place this year, discussion took place and concerns aired on the effect that would have on the remaining fleet which was only getting older with higher mileages.

The AGSH reported that Telematics had been fitted to 2700 vehicles and the fleet management product was live from the beginning of August.

Driver cards would be used, and mileage books would be removed once the automatic drivers log compliance reached 95%. Mileage books would remain in the vehicles that did not have telematics.

6 First Aid

Naloxone

The AGSH reported that the naloxone policy was still being developed for the Test of Change. Members discussed the legal indemnity of officers who administered naloxone. A letter had been circulated to the PIRC, COPFS and the HMICS seeking their views. A decision was awaited.

Training

The AGSH reported that the two-day OST course had been signed off by the SLB however course content was still being awaited. It was thought that bleeding and the use of Israeli bandages had been included. Work was being carried out in relation to the potential for CPD and training for advance first aid training techniques was being delivered which would include the use of tourniquets, chest seals and compression bandages. The OST course was being revised and some unused and difficult techniques were being removed from the syllabus.

The carriage of oxygen policy was almost complete. This mainly affected ARVs as oxygen is utilised as part of their first aid training.

A patient recording form was still being developed and would be required prior to administering oxygen or naloxone.

7 Administration & Governance

The AGSH reported that there were nine ongoing accident investigations.

H&S inspections were mostly on hold due to COVID but a few had taken place. Similarly, some custody audits were continuing. Issues were generally in relation to fire safety with the provision of fire doors and fire gaps being the most reported. This was replicated across the force and significant works were required in some areas to achieve suitable fire protection in stations.

8 Training

No SPF training had recently been carried out due the current pandemic.

The meeting Chair reported that training on Section 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006 required to be carried out and the matter had been raised in July. A response was awaited from the force.

9 Area Updates

North

Ross Polworth reported that the last North H&S meeting was held on the 7th September 2020. The quarterly H&S report showed an improvement in near miss recording across all Divisions. All divisions had put out communication to encourage reporting of near miss incidents as had local Federation representatives.

He said there was a concerning increase in weapons including used against officers which was being monitored by SPF.

He reported that a number of outstanding actions had still to be completed regarding Fire safety management due to Op Talla, although none were urgent or significant enough to close stations.

He reported that the supply of ballistic bags no longer looked financially possible to implement. Training was to be developed for firearm enquiry officers. A Home Office approved course was being considered.

He said that COVID-19 masks were now to be worn within buildings and vehicles which was welcomed.

He said that the main issues in A division related to Op Talla. It was acknowledged that money saved on OT and fuel would be used to pay for some minor refurbishments.

He reported that in D division a SharePoint site to allow more efficient recording and management of inspections across the Division was being considered. Building security also being reviewed.

It was noted that there appeared to be delays in Ambulance attendance times within D division and they were working with SAS to address issue. This did not appear to be an issue in other areas.

He reported concerns regarding the fleet investment in electric vehicles. This resulted in ageing vehicles not being replaced due to the lack of infrastructure.

East

Heather Macdonald gave an update and said that most issues in the East related to COVID. Visits and checks had been carried out in some stations and she said that information had been circulated to East representatives asking them to carry out as many as possible.

Type-IIR masks were now mandatory in J division and she said that it had a positive impact in the division.

She said that the East area had recently suffered a number of spikes and said that due to the force's failure to address the matter, in particular with self isolation, it had subsequently resulted in a wider impact across the area. The matter had been raised with the force.

She said that there was still a number of investigations ongoing.

West

Ian Florence reported that he and Paul Connelly had carried out some station visits.

There were issues regarding health checks for firearms officers. Hearing tests were not being carried out properly and the matter had been reported. He was now attending the SLWG.

Michael McCaughey reported a local issue regarding an officer with a latex allergy and issues she faced relative to this. Members discussed these matters and the meeting Chair said that alternatives should be in place.

The meeting Chair told the Committee that only 600 ear defenders had been secured due to costs however this was insufficient and said that potentially the force could be subject to legal claims.

10 Competent Business

No items had been received.

11 Closure

The meeting Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Proposed date 14th January 2021