

**POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR
LEICESTERSHIRE
ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND
COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**

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Report Of	CHIEF CONSTABLE
Subject	STOP SEARCH EQUIPMENT
Date	FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2017 – 2.00 PM
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Purpose of Report

1. The Committee requested a short report to be completed by the IT Department/Information System Section which commented on the functions of the electronic Stop Search recording system and any limitations associated to this. This request was due to be delivered at the March 2017 meeting however for reasons not known this was not completed.
2. The request was therefore rightly chased and it was agreed that the Committee will be updated at the September 2017 meeting.

Background

3. In December 2016 the Ethics Committee discussed a complaint (CO/489/15) which had arisen out of a stop/search. The finding of the Committee was that the complaint had been handled correctly however it appeared that the character limit of the electronic form in which the relevant grounds were entered had stopped the officer's narrative at a crucial point. The inference being that the system was perhaps overly restrictive and forcing officers to either not enter detailed grounds or shortcut these to fit the character limit and was therefore not ethical.

Enquiries Completed

- The IT Department were asked to examine the current method of recording stop/search occurrences.
Specifically, comment was requested in relation to the following areas;
- Functions of the electronic stop/search form.
- Imposed character limits within the electronic stop/search form.
- Capability of paper reports being produced from the electronic stop/search form.
- Any previous history of similar problems with the electronic stop/search form.
- Any changes/development required as a result of the above.

4. PS Glen Icton, force lead for Stop/Search was also consulted and asked to comment on the above issues being identified elsewhere within the force area.

Summary of Findings

5. The electronic stop/search reporting tool was introduced in order to provide an accurate and secure process associated to the recording of stop/search.

At the time that the stop/search record that complaint CO/489/15 relates to was entered there would have been a 500 character limit within the 'grounds box'. The box did not inform the inputting officer how many characters were allowed or remained.

6. Changes implemented prior to the request of this report now allow for 4000 characters within the 'grounds box'. The number of characters that the officer has left to input is now also displayed.

The electronic stop/search record does not have a print function however it does permit an export of anonymised data into an Excel document that can subsequently be printed. This includes the 'grounds box'.

7. Although the 'grounds box' is included within the Excel document the 'update contents' field does not and therefore there is the potential for this to be reviewed and a decision made in respect of inclusion of this data.
8. The issue of the permitted characters within the 'grounds box' was previously highlighted in April 2017. Upon receipt of this feedback the IT Department began working with the Stop Search Reference Group to implement changes.
9. PS Icton has referenced the above however is now of the opinion that issues associated to this process have now been rectified.

Conclusion

10. The issues highlighted by the Ethics Committee with respect to a restrictive character limit having been imposed upon the 'grounds box' have already been remedied and now provide a significantly greater space for officers to enter the full extent of their grounds for search.
11. The IT Department has made a number of small recommendations in respect of future changes to the electronic stop/search recording system. This report has been shared with the Stop Search Reference Group for their consideration.

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