

The IPCC's experience of Tasers

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IPCC Commissioner

About the IPCC



Our role

The IPCC was established by the Police Reform Act 2002 and became operational in April 2004. Our remit includes:

- Police officers and staff;
- Police and Crime Commissioners and their deputies;
- The London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and his deputy;
- The National Crime Agency (NCA);
- Certain non-Home Office police forces (including BTP);
- Serious matters relating to HMRC;
- Serious matters relating to staff who carry out border and immigration functions who now work within the UK Border Force and Home Office.

Our role

Our primary statutory purpose is to secure and maintain public confidence in the police complaints system in England and Wales. In addition to this our role is to:

- Independently oversee the police complaints system;
- Investigate the most serious issues, including deaths and serious injuries, serious corruption, and serious criminal offences;
- Decide whether allegations that a PCC or their deputy and the Mayor of London and their deputy has committed a criminal offence and should be investigated;
- Act as the appeal body for certain complaints;
- Identify and share best practice and lessons;
- Call in matters where there is serious public concern.

Our purpose and aims

Confidence

Increase public confidence
in the complaints system

System outcomes:

Public, complainant and police
confidence in the system

IPCC outcomes:

Public, complainant and police
confidence in the IPCC

A graphic for the Engagement section consisting of four circles of varying sizes and shades of blue, arranged in a cluster that tapers to the right.

Engagement

Improve awareness,
accessibility and
engagement in the
complaints system

A single green circle.

Learning

Enable police
to learn from
complaints
and enhance
professional
standards

A single dark blue circle.

Proportionality

Improve the
proportionality
of the resolution
of complaints and
conduct issues

A graphic for the Accountability section consisting of four circles of varying sizes and shades of green and yellow, arranged in a cluster that tapers to the right.

Accountability

Improve the
transparency and
accountability of
the police and the
complaints system


Investigation/resolution

- **Independent investigation**
- **Managed investigation**
- **Supervised investigation**

[All of the above involve IPCC staff]

- **Local investigation**
 - **Local resolution**
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New powers

- Power to compel police officers to attend for interview;
 - Power to allow the IPCC to investigate any matters previously considered by the Police Complaints Authority.
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Legislative changes

- Extending the IPCC remit to include private contractors;
- Giving the IPCC the power to recommend and direct Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) following a death or serious injury;
- Giving the IPCC the power to acquire material from third parties in relation to complaint and DSI investigations;
- Creating a statutory framework for IPCC recommendations;
- Removing the requirement for statutory review / oversight from a police officer when IPCC investigators exercise criminal investigative powers under PACE.

Current challenges

- Legal framework;
- Meeting demand for our services;
- Operating under a high level of public and media scrutiny;
- Strengthening perception of our independence;
- Delivering on changes already identified whilst managing a period of expansion following Home Secretary announcement;
- Changing landscape of the police.

IPCC experience of Tasers



Background

- 2003 – initial trial of Tasers in five police forces
- 2004 – availability of Tasers extended to firearms officers in England and Wales
- 2007/08 – extension of Taser to specially trained units

IPCC oversight

2004	Referral of all Taser discharges
2005	Referral in line with mandatory referral criteria
Since 2009	Mandatory referral criteria AND all complaints

Benefits

- IPCC is not anti-Taser
- Alternative to conventional firearms
- Valuable tool when used correctly

High media profile


Police using tasers on children as young as 11 almost every day

More police to carry stun guns

Police in firing line over growing use of Tasers

Police shoot 83-year-old man with 50,000-volt Taser

Public perception

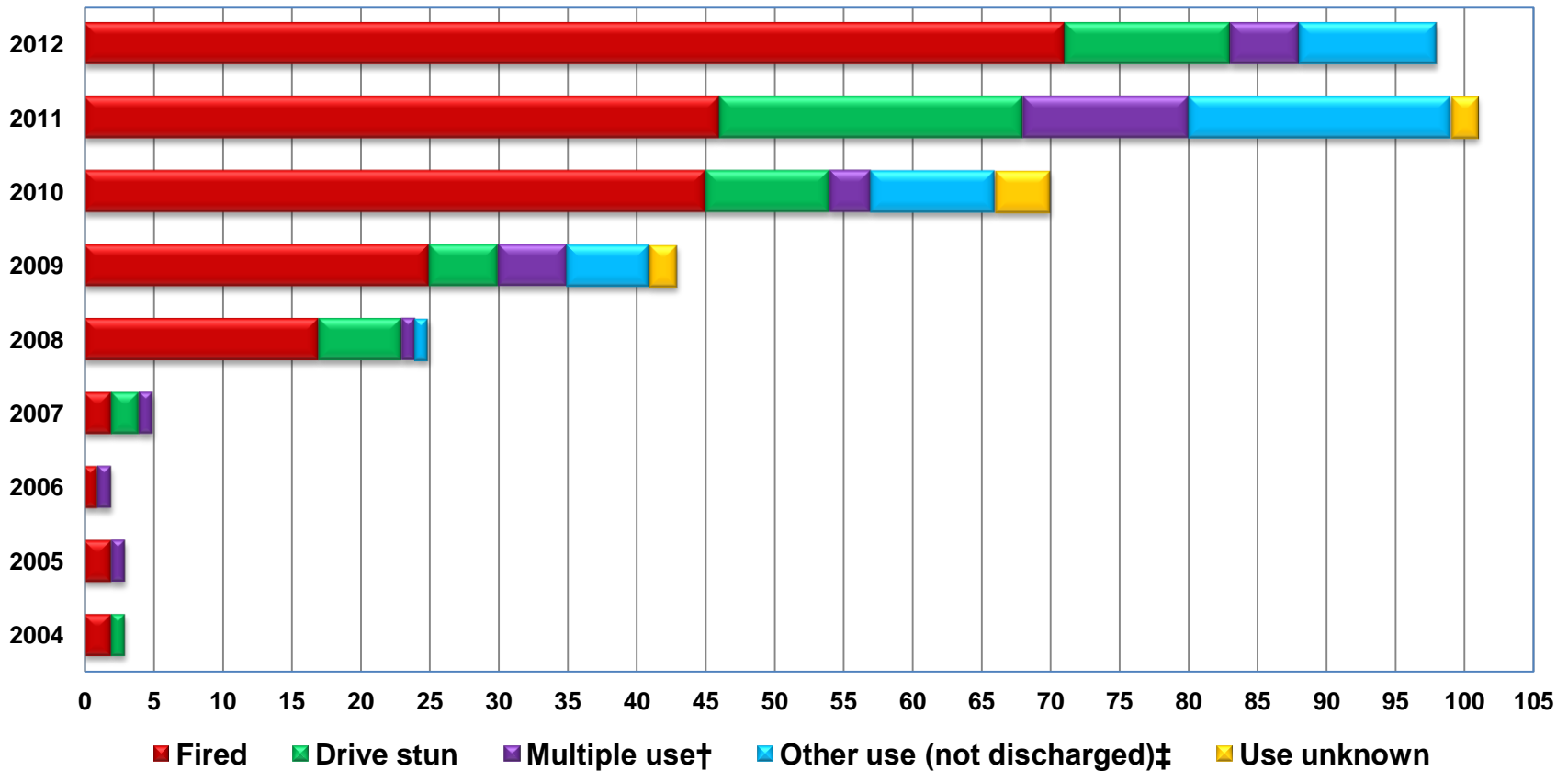
- Debate about safety
 - Circumstances of use
 - Limited public understanding
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Our experience

- 7 referrals following a person's death – none directly attributable to Taser use
- Injuries include wounds from barbs, burn marks and head injuries from falling
- General pattern of rising complaints

Complaints


Taser complaints received by IPCC by reported use




Learning identified

- Aim to identify quick time learning
- Issues around use of Taser on people with epilepsy
- Flammability
- Duration of cycling
- Aftercare

Areas of concern

- Drive stun
 - Use in custody suites and confined spaces
 - Dealing with vulnerable people
 - Justification
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What is the IPCC doing

- Two Commissioner leads
 - Exploring the possibility of a Learning the Lessons bulletin on Tasers
 - IPCC Taser report – spring 2014
 - Engagement with ACPO Less Lethal Weapons Working Group
 - Referral of cases where appropriate to SACMILL
 - Research project on use of force
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Questions?