

**Has the media representation of high profile
Taser related fatalities adversely affected police
confidence in Taser as an effective response to
potentially violent and unpredictable
individuals?**

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Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship

BSc (Hons) Policing and Criminology

July 2024

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my parents, my partner Jack, and friends for the immense support and help during this project. Without their help, completing this project would have been very difficult.

I must also thank my supervisor, Deepak Patel, for his ideas and guidance throughout this academic year in supporting me with my dissertation. Without his assistance and guidance, I would have truly struggled more than I have done with my academic writing.

Thanks must also go to those who participated in my research project. Without them I would not have been able to complete a major part of my research and I am very grateful for their time and contribution to this study.

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: E A Jones Date: 01/07/24

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BSc.

Signed: E A Jones Date: 01/07/24

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation was to conduct research into whether the media representation of high profile Taser related fatalities has adversely affected police confidence in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.

An analysis of research on the topic of the media representation of high profile Taser related fatalities and its potential impact upon police confidence in Taser, exposed a gap in the field of research. Research was conducted to define Taser, its parameters of use, and its advantages and disadvantages. Media representation of Taser related fatalities and serious injury cases were examined to determine the proportionality of response. Was media reporting negative, positive or neutral in its emphasis?

A sample of 56 serving police officers in Gwent police force were surveyed for their perceptions. This sample consisted of 35 Taser and 21 non-Taser trained officers. The survey sought both qualitative and quantitative information, to explore officer perceptions to the fullest extent, with qualitative data used to substantiate trends the quantitative data exposed.

Analysis of the responses highlighted three key themes. Theme 1: officer confidence in Taser; Theme 2: perceived lack of management support in the accountability process; and Theme 3: the influence of the media upon officer perception of Taser fatality or Taser related serious injury cases.

The dissertation has evidenced that the confidence of the police in Taser has been impacted by media representation of Taser high profile fatalities or serious injury cases.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

In 2019 the Westminster Government launched an initiative to significantly increase the number of police officers Taser trained and equipped in response to a rise in knife crime. (Marsh, Dodd, Grierson, 2019). Police Federation England and Wales (PFEW) – research carried out in 2019 found that 89% of officers polled stated they would want to routinely carry a Taser, after appropriate training, and 97% of officers supported their colleagues being Taser trained. A concurrent Mori poll of the general public showed 73% of persons polled supported officers being Taser trained. (PFEW, 2023). The number of Taser trained officers in Gwent Police has risen exponentially, from 73 in 2018 to 284 in 2021. (Gwent Police, 2023 b). In contrast, however, as early as 2016 Amnesty International called for a robust parliamentary enquiry into the police deployment of Tasers, following several high profile fatalities, such as the case of Dalian Atkinson and Jordon Begley. (Amnesty International, 2016). While proven officer misconduct should never be tolerated, and all incidents involving the police resulting in either fatalities or serious injury are investigated by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), officers have been prosecuted and found not guilty for incidents involving Taser fatalities or serious injury. (IOPC 2023).

For example, in 2018 PC Claire Boddie was tried and found not guilty of assault after she Tasered Judah Adunbi, a former race relations advisor with Avon and Somerset Police. Despite being cleared by the court PC Boddie then faced an investigation for gross misconduct by the IOPC. (BBC News, 2018, a.). PC Boddie was consequently cleared by the IOPC but in addition to both the court case and misconduct hearings she faced an “entirely negative” press coverage. (BBC News, 2018, b.). The Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner stated in his Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel report 2018, that “In order to build and maintain trust, we welcome public scrutiny. That’s why we’re committed to being as open and transparent as possible...” (Avon & Somerset Crime Commissioner, 2018, p.9).

It could be argued that the desire for legitimacy and transparency, underpinning the principle of policing by consent, may have taken precedence over officer’s wellbeing, and the resultant stress they would experience in the investigative process, especially the “trial by media”. This potentially, may dissuade some officers from becoming Taser trained. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate this possibility, by gathering the perceptions of serving Gwent Police officers. In this context, the research will investigate if the media representation of high profile Taser related fatalities has adversely affected police confidence in Taser, as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.

The aim of this investigation will be realised by satisfying the following objectives:

1. To define the term Taser and explain its purpose. To outline the current positive and negative positions on its use.
2. To obtain the perceptions of current serving police officers in Gwent Police, and compare the perceptions of Taser trained officers against non-Taser trained officers.
3. To critically analyse the findings of the primary research obtained, to determine if the media representation of Taser related fatalities is impacting upon the confidence of officers in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.

The rational for conducting this research is that this is a currently uninvestigated area of study, which potentially could impact upon police enrolment in Taser training.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The first objective in this research is to define the term Taser, explain its purpose, and outline the current positive and negative positions on its use, which will be addressed in this chapter through a literature review.

Definition of Taser

A Taser is a brand of conducted energy device (CED) commonly known as a stun gun. This is a less lethal weapon system which works to temporarily incapacitate a person via an electrical current which temporarily disrupts the body's neuromuscular system producing a sensation of intense pain. (COP, 2022). In the UK most CEDs are referred to as Tasers, though Taser is in fact a brand of CED, developed, manufactured and sold by the American company Taser International. The word TASER is an acronym for Tomas A. Swift's Electrical Rifle, a favourite nineteenth century book of the TASER inventor, Jack Cover. (Lartey, 2015). Tasers are a prohibited weapon in the UK and it is illegal to possess, purchase, acquire, sell or transfer a Taser, without the authority of the Secretary of State. They are classed as a firearm under Section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968. Police officers are exempt from this prohibition and Taser trained officers have carried this device since 2008, following trials in 2003. Officers licensed to carry a Taser need to complete the National Less Lethal Weapons training, delivered by in-force trainers who have themselves been trained by the national instructors of the College of Policing, ensuring consistency in quality of delivery. (McGuinness, 2021).

In the UK police officers use the X26e, X2 and Taser7 models. The Taser gun has the capacity to discharge needle-tipped darts or barbs, up to a distance of 21-25 feet, dependent upon model, with a two-inch penetration capability (for clothing). The darts deliver a high-voltage shock to the subject which temporarily incapacitates them. The Taser is laser-sighted, with cartridges that discharge a pair of darts/ barbs attached to insulated wires, which deliver an electrical charge in 5 second cycles. This cycle can be stopped, extended or repeated. (COP, 2022).

Parameters for Use of Taser

Set criteria define the use of Taser, which must be proportionate, lawful, accountable and absolutely necessary. An officer who draws a Taser is legally accountable for their actions. A Taser is categorised as being used if it is drawn, even it is not deployed, as it is considered a use of force. This includes drawing a Taser; sparking the Taser as a deterrent (also known as 'arcing' or 'a show of strength'); aiming the Taser by placing the sight red dot onto a subject; firing a Taser so its barbs are discharged; discharging a Taser in both angles and drive stun modes; and any other discharge, including unintentional discharge. The use of a Taser for any reason other than as a response to violence/ threat of violence, may engage Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the prohibition of torture and of inhuman or degrading treatment). (McGuinness, 2021). Officers must use the National Decision Model (NDM) to evaluate if the use of Taser is appropriate. (COP, 2013). The NDM is used by officers to structure a rationale for decision making during incidents, enabling the review of decisions and promotion of learning.

Mechanisms are in place to ensure that Tasers are used lawfully. All Tasers have an internal logging system, which records parameters of use. (COP, 2022). Systems are in place to ensure safe use, such as being worn on the non-dominant side of the body, being a visible bright yellow colour, and held in a visible carriage system. Officers must identify themselves as police and state they have a CED; and if circumstances allow give a clear warning of their intention to deploy a CED. (COP, 2022).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Taser

The main advantage to Taser is its de-escalation potential and its less-lethal nature as a response to violent incidents. Knife crime is rapidly increasing in the UK. In 2022/23 there were around 50,000 offences involving knives or sharp objects, in England and Wales. Knife crime has risen steadily since 2014 (except for a dip in 2020/21 – Covid19 Lockdown movement restrictions). This has been accompanied by a 22% increase in the ‘threats to kill’ category, involving a knife, since 2019. (Allen, Harding, 2023). The Government responded to this developing trend by stating an intention to increase the number of Taser trained officers in 2019. (Marsh, Dodd, Grierson, 2019). Assaults on police have steadily increased, standing at 41,000 assaults in the year ending March 2022, of which 11,730 were assault with injury on a constable. (Home Office, 2022). With the increase both in knife crime, and in assaults on police officers, Taser has been found to be an effective response. The National Police Chief’s Council examination of 38,000 uses of force, found that Taser use resulted in fewer injuries to both subjects and officers, in comparison to use of force by other methods such as baton, irritant spray, police dogs or physical confrontation. Indeed, the IOPC was found to deal with more referrals or complaints in relation to non-Taser means of use of force. (Drummond-Smith, 2019). De-escalation is a significant advantage of Taser, in that the threat of deployment frequently results in the subject’s capitulation. In 85% of incidents involving Taser the device is not fired, the threat is sufficient to ensure subject compliance. (Home Office, 2020). This has the advantage of reducing potential injuries to both police officers and subjects. In instances where Taser is drawn, it overpowers the subject via a less lethal means than traditional firearms.

Identified Taser disadvantages centre around its usage on certain groups in society; specifically, Taser use on children, vulnerable persons and a disproportionate use of Taser on black and ethnic minority individuals. In 2016 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended Taser use on children be prohibited due to the impact on children’s physical and mental health. (Cooper, 2020). The IOPC found black individuals were disproportionately likely to be tasered with 22% of incidents involving black individuals while 71% involved white individuals. (IOPC, 2021). Black and afro Caribbean individuals who also have mental health issues were found to account for 50% of those tasered in London. (Mac Attram, 2014). Concerns also exist around the use of Taser on those undergoing a mental health crisis, with incidents also often complicated by drugs and/ or alcohol. The IOPC found cases both where officers showed good practise and appropriate use of Taser, and also cases where officers failed to explore other options appropriately before discharging Taser. (IOPC, 2021). A further significant disadvantage of Taser is its impact on individuals with existing health conditions, especially heart disease and epilepsy. Concerns have been raised as to whether tasering a subject can stimulate an irregular cardiac rhythm, which could potentially induce an adverse cardiac or cerebrovascular event in those with existing cardiovascular disease. Similarly, tasering has been found to stimulate epileptic seizures. This is in conjunction with other known risks, such as bone injuries from falls, musculoskeletal injuries from intense muscle contraction, dart penetration injuries, and localised superficial burns from electrical currents transmission through the skin. (Payne-James, Sheridan, 2017).

On a cost benefit analysis, it could be argued that the benefits of Taser used *correctly* outweigh the risks, and that the risks can be mitigated via upskilling of officers’ training, and following of recommendations, such as not using Taser on children. The IOPC identified cases where complaints were upheld against officers due to a lack of exploring other options before deploying Taser. It recommended officers have a better understanding of learning difficulties, a better knowledge of conditions such as autism, employ verbal de-escalating strategies more effectively. It also advised all

medical risks be taken seriously and considered genuine, and tasered individuals receive prompt medical treatment. (IOPC, 2021).

Taser Fatality and Serious Injury Cases Related to Taser

Taser is defined as less lethal, not non-lethal, and both fatalities and serious injury can occur with its usage. When a Taser deployment results in a fatality or serious injury the case is referred to the IOPC. (IOPC 2023). Eighteen deaths from Taser use have occurred since 2003. Of 5 cases highlighted by law firm Saunders, two resulted in misconduct proceedings against police, who were shown not to have followed procedures. In the case of Adrian McDonald, 2014, police ignored his requests for medical assistance; in the case of Dalian Atkinson, 2016 he was tasered for a long period (33 seconds) and kicked in the head by the officer, who was found guilty of manslaughter. (Newton, 2023). Clearly, in these cases the officers have not followed the correct procedure, resulting in a tragic outcome. Therefore, the investigative procedure is inherently correct, to ensure the use of force was proportionate, lawful, accountable and absolutely necessary. However, certain cases highlight that in a concern for legitimacy and transparency, underpinned by the principle of policing by consent, have resulted in extreme stress and trauma for the officer investigated. The case of PC Claire Boddie in 2018 exemplifies this. She was tried and found not guilty of assault in court after she Tasered Judah Adunbi, a former race relations advisor with Avon and Somerset Police. Despite being cleared by the court, PC Boddie then faced an investigation for gross misconduct by the IOPC. (BBC News, 2018, a.). PC Boddie was consequently cleared by the IOPC but in addition to both the court case and misconduct hearings she faced an “entirely negative” press coverage. (BBC News, 2018, b.). For example, newspaper headlines stated “Police officer *used* unnecessary force...” as opposed to *accused of using* which shows a subtle but clear bias in the choice of language. (PA News Agency, 2018). In an article headlined “What would have happened if no-one had filmed the Tasing of Judah Adunbi in Bristol” *Bristol Live* suggest police “heavy handedness” and “racist” intentions would have remained unchallenged had the incident not been filmed, forcing the police into transparency. The article makes clear judgements about the actions of PC Boddie with statements including “Clearly, something went badly wrong with the police handling of the situation...They lost control of the situation, but they were the ones with the power...They were the ones with the weapons, ...the instigators.” (Cork, 2017).

Media coverage of cases exacerbates the stress accused officers experience. PC Imran Mahmood tasered Jordan Walker-Brown, who consequently fell backwards over a wall resulting in paralysis. BBC news, reporting on the case, arguably do not phrase their coverage of the case in an objective manner. After stating PC Mahmood “inflicted” the injuries, it states he was found not guilty by the jury but immediately follows with the IOPC will consider “disciplinary action”. This is followed by Mr Walker-Brown’s assertion the process was “rigged”. After detailing the circumstances in which Mr Walker-Brown was tasered (running away and climbing on a bin to get over a wall, ignoring calls to stop, and suspected to have a knife) the article continues with an IOPC statement of sympathy for Mr Walker-Brown and a repeat of their intent to investigate for breach of professional standards. This is followed by the Chief Superintendent’s sympathy for Mr Walker-Brown, her offer to meet with the family and discuss their concerns, and the article concludes with the statement “PC Mahmood has been on restricted duties since the incident”. (BBC News, 2023). While not factually inaccurate, the structure and emphasis of the article is negatively biased against PC Mahmood. The Haringey Community Press, commenting on the same case, quoted a council leader stating such incidents led to poor police and community relationships “especially members of our Black communities, who disproportionately experience heavy-handed police tactics”. This is followed by a quote from Black Equity Organisation on the “shocking” decision, finishing with disproportionality

statistics and the statement that “This is no coincidence; it is the consequence of institutional racism and wanton abuse of power.” (Press H.C. ,2023). This goes beyond implication, in stating the incident is racially motivated, despite no evidence to support allegations of racial bias. The Standards coverage of the case is very much in the same vein, with focus on Baroness Casey’s verdict the Metropolitan Police are institutionally sexist and racist. (Burrell, 2023).

The symbiotic relationship of the media with the police has long been recognised. The police rely on the media to disseminate vital information and assist in crime detection and prevention but an increase in transparency has resulted in a concurrent increase in public image management. This has coincided with the transformation of the police into an accountable organisation, which provides a cost effective public service. (Cooke, Sturges, 2009). While police media relations can be to some degree be influenced by dedicated teams and professional relationships, “trial by social media” is a rapidly increasing threat to positive police perception by the public. (Police Federation, 2021). The use of Taser in cases resulting in fatality or serious injury also seem inextricably bound up with allegations of racism, when the subject is black. A Review of IOPC cases involving Taser between 2015-20 examined 101 cases. Of the cases examined 26 led to a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) referral or a case to answer. 16 cases involved a death and of those Taser was found to be a contributory factor in 4. When subjects were in possession of a weapon at the time mental health or acute behavioural disturbance was a factor in 80% of cases. (IOPC, 2021). These statistics evidence that the vast majority of Taser deployments are legitimate, yet the length of time the IOPC takes to conclude its investigations has been challenged.

Police unions have emphasised the stress and strain this lengthy process places upon the officer in question and their families. The Police Federation have argued that there should be a limit of 12-month duration for the IOPC to investigate. (Wiltshire Police Federation, 2021) The PFEW has called for a statutory time limitation on investigations to mitigate stress on officers, citing for example a case which dragged on for 5 years, left the officer feeling suicidal and ultimately collapsed due to lack of evidence. (PFEW, 2020). There is evidence of lack of consistency between the IOPC and CPS. The case of PC David Carpenter is illustrative. After tasering a violent individual in 2017, he was served papers for grievous bodily harm and gross misconduct. The CPS examined the case in 2018, deciding upon no further action, but the complainant appealed. Despite the CPS declining to prosecute a further twice the IOPC directed the force to commence misconduct proceedings. The panel subsequently found PC Carpenter had no case to answer, but the process exposed the officer to 2 years of stress, and limits on his career during this period. (PFEW, 2020).

Academic Research Status

Impartial academic research on the impact of prosecution and investigation of officers appears non-existent. Inherent bias in sources also needs to be considered. Arguably the PFEW material is representative of their members’ interests. The remit of the IOPC is to investigate if the officers acted within the remit of the law – not to evaluate the impact of their investigation on those found innocent. Media sources aim to inform but also to generate sales and interest, and can be influenced by political bias. In aiming to protect the image of the police, senior police officers’ statements are concerned with impartiality of investigation in the public interest. Consequently, gathering the perceptions of front line officers and analysis of their responses, will contribute to understanding of this area. No academic research currently exists to support or dispute the position that a negative press perception of Taser, or the investigation and potential prosecution of officers following Taser death, adversely affects officer take up of Taser training. This is what this research aims to investigate. The impact of prosecution upon officer confidence, does, however, exist for firearms. In 2022 Chris Kaba, was shot by a Metropolitan Police firearms officer in the line of duty, and the

officer was consequently charged with murder. In 2023, in response to the decision to prosecute him, several hundred firearms officers handed in their firearms tickets (permit to carry a firearm) due to "a shift in the way the decisions they take in the most challenging circumstances will be judged". (cited Rhoden-Paul, 2023). The impact was seen when a record low of only 6 Metropolitan Police officers applied to join firearms in 2024. (Evans, 2024)

Conclusion

The literature review has satisfied Objective 1 of this dissertation. It can be taken as implicit that all police officers agree with the principle that their actions must be proportionate, lawful, accountable and absolutely necessary. Inevitably, to ensure this, an independent investigation of the officer's actions is equally necessary. However, currently officers face the tripartite trial of court, professional standards and the media coverage. It is not the remit of this dissertation to argue if less punitive approaches may be more beneficial; such as a lessons learnt approach when an officer is found not guilty in a court of law, instead of disciplinary procedures. There can be little doubt however, that the current system places an extreme burden of stress upon investigated police officers, with many officers considering the media representation the most distressing. The issue is complex, but potentially, the media representation of high profile Taser related fatalities may have adversely affected police confidence in Taser, as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will address the selected methodological approaches chosen to address Objectives 2 and 3 of the dissertation.

Objective 2: To obtain the perceptions of current serving police officers in Gwent Police, and compare the perceptions of Taser trained officers against non-Taser trained officers. This is the primary source information gathered for analysis.

Objective 3: To critically analyse the findings of the primary research obtained, to determine if the media representation of Taser related fatalities is impacting upon the confidence of officers in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals. (The analysis of the data will be addressed in Chapter 4 Findings.)

This methodology chapter will discuss the intent and purpose of the selected methodological choices. The methodological approach has been structured around the Research Onion model. (Saunders et al, 2007).

Research Philosophy

After careful consideration of all stages of the research model, the selected research approach for this dissertation is pragmatist. The positivist approach is concerned with only one reality, and would be unsuitable for the examination of *perceptions* in this dissertation. (Saunders et al, 2007). While the research is interpretivist in its nature, being concerned with people's thoughts and ideas, a purely interpretivist approach was too limited, for a full examination of the research material. (Saunders et al, 2007). Pragmatism is unlimited by a specific philosophy, allowing a flexible mixed-method approach, which allows the fullest exploration of the data, and is therefore, the most suitable approach for this dissertation. (Patton, 2014).

Research Approach

The research aimed to gather officers' perceptions by the most appropriate means, which is a mixed-method approach. Mixed methods uses a variety of approaches.

Clarity of structure can be obtained from analysis of methodological approaches, with different research categories requiring different approaches. (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2024). The form of the research is exploratory. Exploratory research aims to examine a gap in the existing research and literature and may illuminate priorities for further research. (Swedberg, 2020). The literature review (Chapter 2) highlighted the lack of existing research on this topic. The format of the research is also deductive, which is concerned with the testing of a hypothesis. (Streefkerk, 2022). The research will examine if officer perception substantiates the dissertation hypothesis.

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected. Quantitative data can be defined as data which can be measured or tested. (Crosier, 2024) while qualitative data can be defined as information pertaining to the reasoning or beliefs that influence patterns or behaviour. (Kovalainen, Eriksson, 2008). This approach has been selected as the quantitative data will address the prevalence of perceptions, while the qualitative data could substantiate trends the quantitative data may expose.

Research Strategy/ Designs

The chosen research strategy or design is mixed, reflecting the pragmatic approach. It can be categorised as descriptive research, in its examination of officer perceptions. Descriptive research examines trends, patterns and frequencies. (McCombes, 2022). It is also phenomenological in design, as it explores perception. Phenomenological research aims to understand perceptions, emotions and behaviours in a situation. (Jansen, 2023).

Research Choices

A mixed method approach has been selected. As previously discussed, the mixed method will maximise the material collected, which will be done through a survey.

Time Horizon

This will be cross-sectional with all the data collected at one point in time. The focus of the research is to gather officers' perceptions and analyse their responses at this point in time.

Techniques and Procedures

The research will focus on primary sources of data. Primary sources are sources which provide first-hand or contemporary evidence not previously collected. (Creswell, 2023). The research will be conducted with officers in Gwent Police. Gwent Police is one of four forces in Wales and covers the 600 square mile South-East region, encompassing Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport. (Gwent Police, 2024). The opinions sampled will be representative; a range of Taser trained and non-Taser trained serving officers will be sampled, to gain a range of perceptions for comparative purposes. The importance of comparative sampling has been identified as an important methodological strategy. (Keman, 1993). Officers from a range of roles will be invited to participate to obtain a wide ranging perspective, as role opportunities may influence perceptions. Access to the participants will be facilitated through work colleague cooperation. The research aims to obtain perceptions of around 20 serving officers, with approximately half of the sample Taser trained.

A questionnaire has been selected to obtain officer perceptions, which will be disseminated through an electronic platform for ease of distribution and data collection. The questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate strategy due to its ability to quickly but accurately capture the perceptions of serving officers. The questionnaire will produce mainly quantitative data. However, the questionnaire will also contain certain key open ended questions in order to obtain a more in-depth response, and this qualitative data will be analysed to substantiate trends the quantitative data may expose.

Data Collection

Questionnaire data will be distributed and collected via an online platform. Quantitative findings will be displayed in charts and graphs for ease of analysis. The qualitative data obtained from open ended questions will be analysed for repeated patterns of thoughts or beliefs and examined critically and objectively. The questionnaire will aim to gather contextual and demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, length of service and experience. This will accurately describe the sample population. Open ended questions will obtain perceptual information with opportunities to substantiate opinions with reasoning.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The limitations on the research are the sample size and location. The perceptions that will be gathered will come purely from Gwent police, whereas this is potentially a national concern. The questionnaire will only gather responses from around 20 officers, from a similar location within Gwent force, so results could be seen as reflective of regional thinking. The sample size will be too small to indicate a force wide trend. Both Taser and non-Taser trained participants are included in the study for comparative purposes.

A further potential limitation may be the volume of response. If not enough officers respond not enough data will be collected to enable valid analysis. To counter this, reassurance will be given at the start of the questionnaire that it contains only 15 questions and can be completed in 5 to 10 minutes, with many questions offering a tick box answer. The questionnaire will differ slightly for Taser and non-Taser respondents, to reduce repetition or non-relevant questions for different groups.

Within ethical considerations thought has been given to the possibility that if the questionnaire was answered by officers who had experienced an adverse Taser incident, it may trigger difficult memories and cause a detrimental effect upon their wellbeing. This will be addressed by a disclaimer at the start of the questionnaire, outlining the objectives of the research and giving the option to decline participation. Participants will be reassured of the confidential and anonymous nature of their responses, and will be informed of the purpose of the research at the start of the questionnaire. They will have the option of being contacted with the outcome of the findings of the research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the primary source research should enable Objective 2 of this dissertation to be achieved, to obtain the perceptions of current serving police officers in Gwent Police, and compare the perceptions of Taser trained officers against non-Taser trained officers.

Chapter 4 – Results

The aim of this chapter is to examine the results of the primary research to determine whether the media representation of Taser related fatalities is impacting upon the confidence of officers in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.

Research Objective 2 Information Gathering and Comparison

The second objective of this research was “To obtain the perceptions of current serving police officers in Gwent Police, and compare the perceptions of Taser trained officers against non-Taser trained officers.” This has been achieved by examining primary source information gathered via the production of two surveys, comparing the perceptions of Taser and non-Taser trained serving officers in Gwent police.

The surveys were produced and disseminated through Survey Monkey. The Taser trained survey generated 35 responses and the non-Taser officer survey generated 21 responses; a total of 56 across the two surveys. A copy of the questions and a data representation of the responses can be found in the Appendix. The response volume is adequate to generate common themes from within the responses. The questions generated responses around three themes; the confidence and experience of officers around Taser; the influence of media representation on officer perception; and the balance of transparency and officer accountability against officer welfare and support.

Research Objective 3 Comparison and Analysis of Findings

The third objective of this research was to “To critically analyse the findings of the primary research obtained, to determine if the media representation of Taser related fatalities is impacting upon the confidence of officers in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.” This is demonstrated below.

Confidence and Experience of Officers Around Taser

Initial survey questions explored the confidence and experience of officers around Taser. Of the responding Taser trained officers 46% were qualified under 3 years and 54% 4-9 years. This demonstrates a high probability of the respondents being considerably experienced in Taser and its usage. Confidence in Taser as an effective response to violent and unpredictable individuals was extremely high, with an overwhelming 97% of Taser officers and 100% of non-Taser officers considering Taser effective, equalling a total of 55 out of 56 officers surveyed. Furthermore, 90% non-Taser officers considered becoming a Taser trained officer. Respondents comments included “Taser works as a deterrent in the majority of scenarios and does not need to be drawn on many occasions, when needed it is effective in incapacitating the subject ...” (TS, Q2, R29). Therefore, survey analysis indicates that responding officers are either experienced in the use of Taser, and/or have a positive perspective on it as a resource to manage violent and unpredictable individuals. This confirms the research findings previously discussed on Taser’s effectiveness. (Home Office, 2020).

The overwhelming response to Taser as an effective *resource* is shown as positive. However, analysis of the data has revealed a common theme in perceptions of lack of officer support by management during the accountability process. The potential to be investigated, charged or prosecuted has dissuaded 81% of non-Taser officers to apply for Taser training and 86% of current Taser trained

officers are concerned by this. A significant 83% of Taser officers considered the Force would not be supportive during this process. These concerns have led 37% of Taser trained officers to consider handing in their Taser ticket, a significant number given the overwhelming level of support for Taser as an effective tool. Officer comments indicate the opinion that the advantages of Taser as a de-escalation and safety tool outweigh the disadvantages. "...the benefits to my personal safety outweigh the risk of investigation." (TS, Q6, R23). "No support from senior management when Taser is deployed and lack of understanding from senior management when Taser is used in operational environment." (TS, Q4, R21). Officers also felt unsupported by the public, "Believe my actions would justify the use of such, however do not believe that CPS and the public would agree." (TS, Q4, R9). The implications of perceived lack of support are potentially extremely significant. If officers do not feel supported, it could result in officers becoming reluctant to become Taser trained, or even leave the force completely. (Charman, Bennett, 2021). Given the rise in knife crime previously discussed, and the deployment of Taser as a less lethal response, a lack of Taser trained officers to respond to knife incidents could result in a rise in fatalities. (Marsh, Dodd, Grierson, 2019).

These perceptions are not based on officers' personal experience of a Taser fatality or significant injury from the use of Taser, with no respondents disclosing having personal experience of these situations. 23% of Taser and 48% non-Taser officers were unaware of any instances. Media reporting however, was significantly influential with 77% of Taser and 52% non-Taser officers' experiences and knowledge of Taser fatality or serious injury coming from media reporting, which is as 65% of the total officers surveyed. Therefore, it can be arguably concluded that the media plays a highly significant role in the perception of officers on this subject.

The Influence of Media Representation on Officer Perception

Overall, respondents considered the media presented police negatively. Only 3% of Taser and 10% non-Taser officers considered the media represented the police use of Taser positively. The vast majority, 66% Taser and 48% non-Taser officers considered the portrayal to be negative. 31% of Taser and 43% non-Taser officers thought media portrayal was neutral. In total, across the two surveys, 57% of officers considered the media representation of Taser was negative. Comments included "From what I have seen in the media, the majority of the time the Taser deployments that hit the news are negative outcomes or are depicted negatively against the officer." (TS, Q7, R2). The literature review has explored the need for police to be unbiased in line with the Code of Ethics and questioned if this includes support for officers executing their duties lawfully. Officers accept the requirement for impartial investigation and public transparency but seek a balanced, supported approach. Officer perception indicates this balance is clearly not being achieved. An overwhelming 94% of Taser and 81% of non-Taser officers considered the police force is not striking the right balance between supporting officers and engaging with the media, indicated by comments such as "The police service senior management would be likely to make a scapegoat of the officer who deployed Taser in order to prevent a negative view of the service". (TS, Q10, R29). "It feels like officers are not supported at all and if our own force leaders aren't supporting us then who will." (TS, Q10, R27). "Always seems like a witch hunt and the officers are treated as if they are guilty straight away!" (TS, Q10, R22). "I agree the police service need to inform the public, however once the investigation has been carried out, should an officer be found to have used appropriate use of force/found to have not done anything wrong you see little support on social media/updates from forces to report on this, backing officers..." (TS, Q10, R5). These are subjective opinions, but the remit of this dissertation is to gauge *perceptions*, which are obviously subjective and influence individual action and reaction. However, lack of perceived management support has been shown to be a significant factor in lack of retention in the police force. (Charman, Bennett, 2021).

Transparency and Officer Accountability Versus Officer Welfare and Support

The need to present a transparent and ethical police force to the media is a theme that runs through officers' comments in other questions. Comments include "I feel that media blame culture puts pressure on forces to hold officers accountable." (TS, Q4, R32). "Based on previous cases I have seen in the media; I would definitely be concerned about this." (TS, Q4, R2). Reference was made to firearms officer Chris Kaba's prosecution, previously discussed in the literature review. "I would always be worried ... especially following charges put on firearms officers in recent 12 months. We are not protected." (TS, Q4, R24). Also, "As per recent IOPC investigations into fatal firearms usage." (TS, Q4, R23). While Taser training recruitment has not suffered firearm's recruitment decline, concerns are present in officer perception. Officers consider that Force image takes precedent over officers' welfare. Another respondent commentated, "Force Senior Management regularly pander to public opinion and I feel they would do this if someone was seriously injured or killed due to a Taser deployment regardless of how justified the use of force was." (TS, Q5, R29). Fundamentally, officers feel "Police allow [the] need to seem legitimate/transparent/accountable [to] overtake the welfare of the officer." (NT, Q9, R9). As previously mentioned, lack of support could potentially affect officer retention. (Charman, Bennett, 2021). Furthermore, research has indicated a significant rise in sickness absence related to mental health, which would impact upon the police effectiveness as a service due to understaffing, as well as impacting severely upon individual officers. (Police Federation, 2022)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the survey responses indicates that the media representation of Taser related fatalities or serious injury has influenced the perceptions of both Taser and non-Taser serving officers in Gwent police negatively. While both groups perceive Taser as an effective resource, significant concerns have been raised in regard to Force support during the accountability process, with transparency superseding officer wellbeing.

Chapter 5 – Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This dissertation examined the question:

Has the media representation of high profile Taser related fatalities adversely affected police confidence in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals?

Both secondary research (Literature Review, Chapter 2) and primary research (Findings, Chapter 4) were used to examine this question. A range of secondary research was analysed, including internet sources, books, official documentation and media sources including newspapers and news channels. Primary data was collected via two surveys from serving Gwent police officers, and produced both qualitative and quantitative data.

Findings and Objectives

To enable examination of the question three objectives were identified. Objective 1 of the research aimed:

1. To define the term Taser and explain its purpose. To outline the current positive and negative positions on its use.

This objective was achieved in the chapter Literature Review. In conclusion, Taser is a brand of conducted energy device (CED) commonly known as a stun gun. This is a less lethal weapon system which works to temporarily incapacitate a person via an electrical current which temporarily disrupts the body's neuromuscular system producing a sensation of intense pain. (COP, 2022). Taser advantages are it is a highly effective tool both to incapacitate violent and unpredictable individuals and to act to de-escalate violent scenarios. It is a less lethal response to violent individuals and increases officer safety. Its disadvantages are the potential for fatality or serious injury and its use on certain groups, specifically use on children and vulnerable persons and a disproportionate use of Taser on black and ethnic minority individuals.

Objective 2 of this research aimed:

2. To obtain the perceptions of current serving police officers in Gwent Police, and compare the perceptions of Taser trained officers against non-Taser trained officers.

This objective was achieved via the completion of two surveys, disseminated through Survey Monkey. The Taser trained survey generated 35 responses and the non-Taser officer survey generated 21 responses; a total of 56 across the two surveys. The volume of responses was sufficient to identify key themes in perception from the respondents.

Objective 3 of this research aimed:

3. To critically analyse the findings of the primary research obtained, to determine if the media representation of Taser related fatalities is impacting upon the confidence of officers in Taser as an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals.

This objective was achieved by analysing and comparing the results of both the Taser trained officer survey and the non-Taser trained officer survey. The surveys produced both qualitative and quantitative data. Three key themes emerged from the survey analysis.

Theme 1: Officer Confidence and Taser

Firstly, the research identified an overwhelming and clear confidence in Taser as a tool or resource to deal with potentially violent and unpredictable individuals. Respondents confirmed the results of research discussed in the literature review that Taser is a highly effective resource that incapacitates violent and unpredictable individuals more safely than other methods, increases officer safety and frequently de-escalates violent scenarios. Officers confirmed that Taser acts as a deterrent, with threat of its deployment frequently resulting in capitulation by violent individuals.

Theme 2: Perceived Lack of Management Support in the Accountability Process

Secondly, the research identified a significant majority of officers are concerned about lack of support during the accountability process. The potential to be investigated, charged or prosecuted has dissuaded 80.95% of non-Taser officers to apply for Taser training and 85.71% of current Taser trained officers are concerned by this. The need for investigation to ensure that actions were proportionate, lawful, accountable and absolutely necessary is a given. Concerns arise around support for the officer when their actions have been proven to be proportionate, lawful, accountable and absolutely necessary. A significant 82.86% of Taser officers considered the Force would not be supportive during this process. These concerns have led 37.14% of Taser trained officers to consider handing in their Taser ticket. Several officers referenced the case of firearms officer Chris Kaba, as indicative of a lack of support for officers when lawful execution of duty has resulted in a fatality, and resulted in a consequent lack of confidence demonstrated by only 6 officers applying for firearms training in the Metropolitan police.

Theme 3: The Influence of the Media Upon Officer Perception of Taser Fatality or Taser Related Serious Injury Cases

Finally, the influence of the media upon the perception of serving police officers was undisputedly demonstrated by the survey respondents. No officers had personal experience of a Taser fatality or serious injury, therefore their perceptions were based upon media reporting. A significant 65.71% Taser and 47.62% non-Taser officers considered the portrayal to be negative. Furthermore, the need for the police to be transparent and impartial in their actions, and perceived as such by the public and media, has resulted in officers feeling unsupported in the carrying out of their duties when deploying Taser. A clear theme in perception emerged, that officers considered the Force need to present a transparent and ethical police force to the media, supersedes officer wellbeing. Officers' perceptions are that public representation of the police through the media will be the priority of senior management, irrespective of the lawfulness of the officers' actions.

Limitations and Recommendations

The primary research material was obtained from two surveys. The major limitation of the research was that it was limited in its number of respondents and specifically to Gwent police force. A total of 56 participants' responses were analysed. While the number is sufficient to identify themes in perception of the officers surveyed, it cannot be assumed these themes are indicative of perceptions

amongst a wider spectrum of police officers. Therefore, a further avenue of research would be to gather and analyse the perception of police officers with a wider remit. An increase in the volume of officers surveyed may have produced different outcomes. Officers were invited to participate in the survey through an invitation via social media. This may, or may not, have influenced the composition of the surveyed group.

While the survey was completed by both uniform and non-uniform officers, both response officers and those from other departments, and a reasonably equal spread of genders, the age of the respondents was not evenly spread. The majority of persons completing the survey were under 40 years old, with a large number in the 20s to 30s age category. Older recipients may have had a different perception. Consequently, further research on this topic should aim for a wider age demographic.

A further limitation was the rank of respondents. The respondents to the surveys were of the rank of constable and sergeant, and perceptions of officers of higher rank may have been different. Particularly in regard to questions relating to the support offered to officers from senior management if a Taser deployment resulted in a fatality or serious injury. Therefore, further research should investigate the perceptions of senior management on this question.

Conclusion

The research has clearly indicated specific trends in the perceptions of the serving officers surveyed for this research. The research indicates that the confidence of the police in Taser has been impacted by media representation of Taser high profile fatalities or serious injury cases. Police confidence in Taser is inextricably entwined with media representation and the perception that senior management will prioritise media representation above officer support for legitimate Taser deployment. Consequently, police perception of Taser has been adversely affected by media representation.

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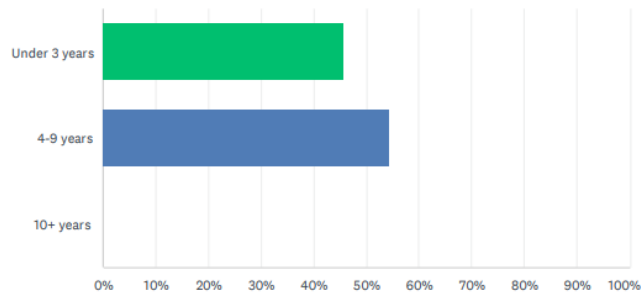
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Appendix

Taser Trained Survey

Q1 How long have you been a Taser trained officer?

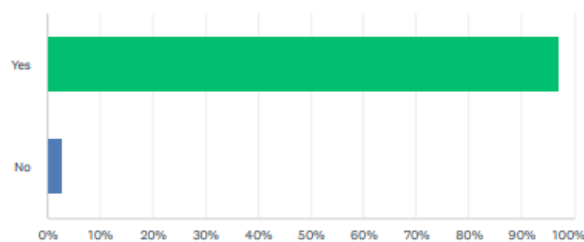
Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 3 years	45.71%	16
4-9 years	54.29%	19
10+ years	0.00%	0
TOTAL		35

Q2 Do you consider that Taser is an effective response to violent and unpredictable individuals?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

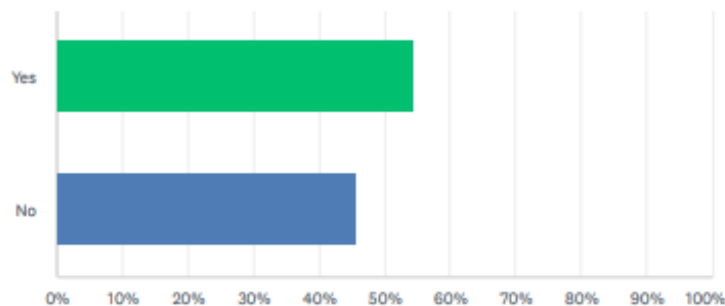


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	97.14%	34
No	2.86%	1
TOTAL		35

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Taser works as a deterrent I'm the majority of scenarios and does not need to be drawn on many occasions, when needed it is effective in incapacitating the subject provided NMI is achieved	5/6/2024 9:00 AM
2	Taser is a presence which can detain a situation once a violent subject is aware of it.	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
3	Against a black vest, the colour of the yellow taser is clearly highlighted and offenders/subjects can not ignore the taser. It works well as a de-escalation tool with only it's presence.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
4	It can act as a deterrent and help to neutralise violent people and people carrying weapons.	5/5/2024 6:38 PM

Q3 Since being Taser trained, have your experiences changed your opinion on the validity of the police carrying and deploying Tasers?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

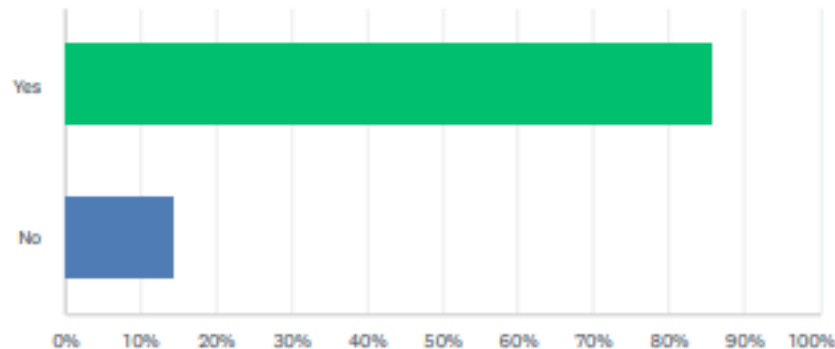


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	54.29%	19
No	45.71%	16
TOTAL		35

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	I think taser is very effective, but should not be enforced and should be a choice that officers take to carry.	5/9/2024 10:14 AM
2	Prior to being taser trained I viewed the use of taser as a last resort piece of equipment however since being trained I feel that taser can be justifiably used when a subject is being aggressive or violent towards officers or members of the public to prevent the need for officers to get hands on with the subject	5/6/2024 9:00 AM
3	I feel as though all officers should do the course as it changes the way you view risk	5/5/2024 11:53 PM
4	All officers should carry tasers	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
5	It certainly is not a tool that every officer should be carrying or trusted with. The training is tough and so it should be to determine who should be carrying such a weapon/tool.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
6	All officers should carry them	5/5/2024 7:21 PM
7	Taser is a good tool to keep distance when threatened with a weapon & it can be a good visual deterrent without even needing to draw the taser.	5/5/2024 7:01 PM

Q4 Are you concerned about being investigated, charged or prosecuted if your Taser deployment resulted in a fatality or serious injury?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

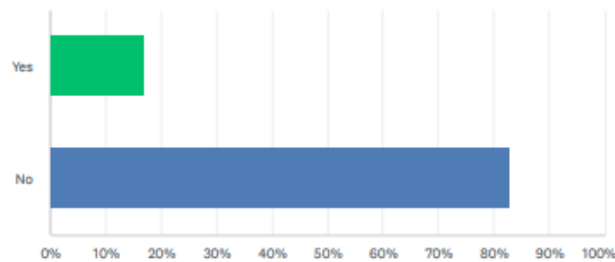


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	85.71%	30
No	14.29%	5
TOTAL		35

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	I feel that media blame culture puts pressure on forces to hold officers accountable.	5/9/2024 10:14 AM
2	Due to the Police Service as a whole pandering to public opinion rather than supporting officers	5/6/2024 9:00 AM
3	Every officer is wary about deploying taser and if unfortunately ending up in a serious injury or even worse. Where unfortunately the officer is publicly scrutinized	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
4	I would always be worried due to the injury levels a subject could receive and especially following charges put on firearms officers in recent 12 months. We are not protected.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
5	As per recent IOPC investigations into fatal firearms usage.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
6	I think every officer would be worried however that's why your trained to a high level to carry a taser. You know the risks associated with deploying a taser and take that in to consideration when spinning the NDM.	5/5/2024 8:36 PM
7	No support from senior management when taser is deployed and lack of understanding from senior management when taser is used in operational environment.	5/5/2024 8:35 PM
8	Believe my actions would justify the use of such, however do not believe that CPS and the public would agree.	5/5/2024 7:21 PM
9	I have been in situations where I have been threatened with a weapon & because of the angle in which the suspect held the weapon I have been concerned about secondary falls & consequences there after	5/5/2024 7:01 PM
10	Based on previous cases I have seen in the media, I would definitely be concerned about this.	5/5/2024 6:38 PM

Q5 Do you consider that your Force senior management would support you if a Taser deployment resulted in a fatality or serious injury?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

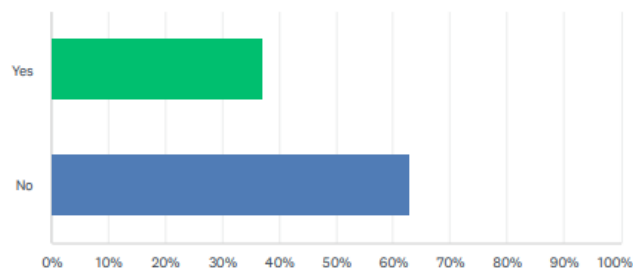


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	17.14%	6
No	82.86%	29
TOTAL		35

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Force Senior Management regularly pander to public opinion and I feel they would do this if someone was seriously injured or killed due to a taser deployment regardless of how justified the use of force was	5/6/2024 9:00 AM
2	I don't feel supported by SMT at all	5/5/2024 11:53 PM
3	Id like to hope so , if used correctly	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
4	They would not protect me	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
5	These days it seems those higher up never support officers! I feel the federation will support you as long as what you did was lawful and proportionate!	5/5/2024 8:36 PM
6	Self preservation would be key for them.	5/5/2024 8:22 PM
7	I have no faith in senior management helping with use of force, due to my own experiences in this situation.	5/5/2024 7:21 PM

Q6 Have you considered returning you Taser ticket?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

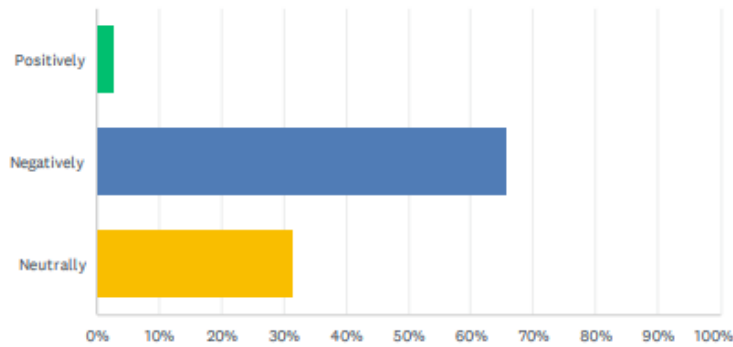


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	37.14%	13
No	62.86%	22
TOTAL		35

#	FURTHER COMMENT (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	It is a lot of responsibility the reason I keep it is for the protection of myself and others	5/5/2024 11:53 PM
2	Worried over public scrutiny if used and it causes serious harm, especially with social media	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
3	I feel confident in my training that I will only use it when necessary and it also provides me with added protection as an officer who is 90% of the time, single crewed.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
4	I feel as though the benefits to my personal safety outweigh the risk of investigation.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
5	Lack of support from management with no real conversation taking place as to why taser was used.	5/5/2024 8:35 PM
6	Never had to use it in my length or service , however prefer it being there.	5/5/2024 7:21 PM

Q7 How do you feel the police use of Taser is represented in the media?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

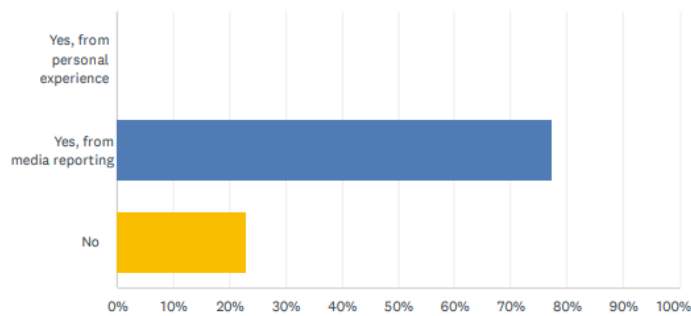


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Positively	2.86% 1
Negatively	65.71% 23
Neutrally	31.43% 11
TOTAL	35

#	FURTHER COMMENT (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Mostly negative	5/5/2024 11:53 PM
2	Always shows the worst part in the media , never the led up and the whole picture	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
3	It's very rare anything the police do is anything other than portrayed in a negative light.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
4	There's very few reports of good taser use.	5/5/2024 8:22 PM
5	I don't feel taser is pushed in the media.	5/5/2024 7:21 PM
6	From what I have seen in the media, the majority of the time the taser deployments that hit the news are negative outcomes or are depicted negatively against the officer.	5/5/2024 6:38 PM

Q8 Are you aware of instances where Taser deployment has resulted in a fatality or serious injury?

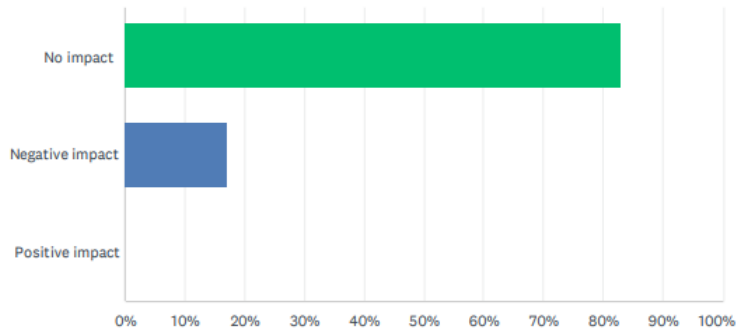
Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes, from personal experience	0.00% 0
Yes, from media reporting	77.14% 27
No	22.86% 8
TOTAL	35

Q9 Has the media reporting on police use of Taser affected your confidence in Taser?

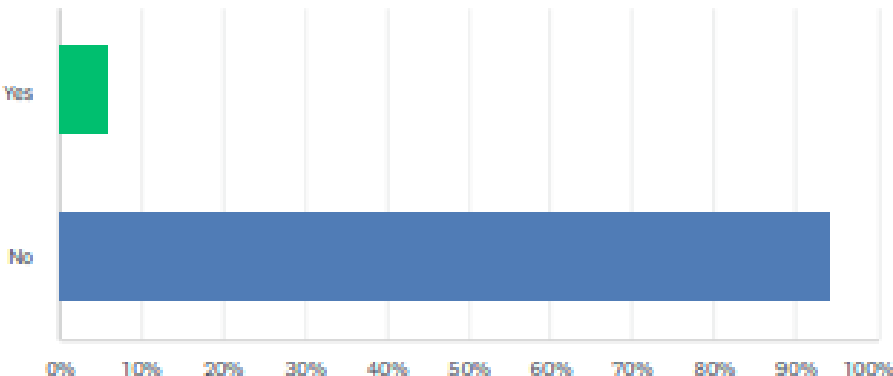
Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No impact	82.86%	29
Negative impact	17.14%	6
Positive impact	0.00%	0
TOTAL		35

Q10 When there is a Taser incident that has resulted in a fatality or serious injury do you think the police service is striking the right balance between supporting the individual officer concerned and engaging with the media?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



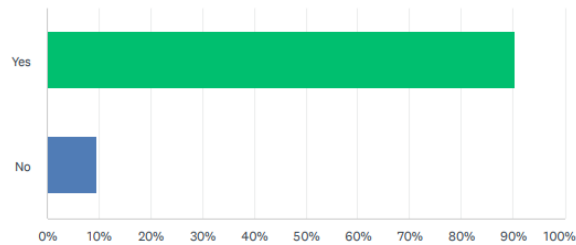
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.71%	2
No	94.29%	33
TOTAL		35

#	FURTHER COMMENT (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	The police service senior management would be likely to make a scapegoat of the officer who deployed taser in order to prevent a negative view of the service	5/6/2024 9:00 AM
2	It feels like officers are not supported at all and if our own force leaders aren't supporting us then who will	5/5/2024 11:53 PM
3	I feel that the taser officer involved should be kept anonymous and protected until the investigation is complete and no be pressured into releasing information to quickly to the public. Keep the release to a bare minimum.	5/5/2024 9:05 PM
4	More should be released to the media regarding the justification for the use of taser, often it's just a blanket statement stating the matter has been referred to the IOPC which suggests that the Officer has done something wrong.	5/5/2024 8:45 PM
5	Always seems like a witch hunt and the officers are treated as if they are guilty straight away!	5/5/2024 8:36 PM
6	There's too much scrutiny on police use and not enough support for the officers deploying.	5/5/2024 8:34 PM
7	The police take action to appease the public rather than make decisions themselves.	5/5/2024 7:21 PM
8	I agree the police service need to inform the public, however once the investigation has been carried out, should an officer be found to have used appropriate use of force/found to have not done anything wrong you see little support on social media/updates from forces to report on this, backing officers. There is lots of focus in the beginning, but little after. The police service should be more transparent, share bww.	5/5/2024 6:52 PM

Non-Taser Trained Survey

Q1 Have you ever considered becoming a Taser trained officer?

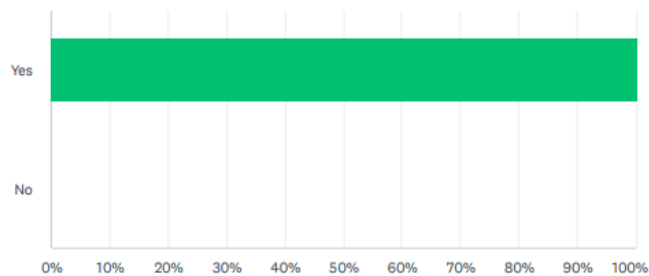
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.48%	19
No	9.52%	2
TOTAL		21

Q2 Do you consider that Taser is an effective response to potentially violent and unpredictable individuals?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

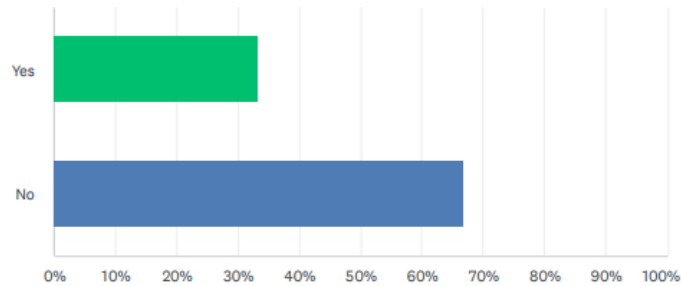


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	21
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		21

#	FURTHER COMMENT (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	People are less likely to consider violence with officers if a taser is an option	5/6/2024 5:08 AM
2	Provides safety for officers and other members of the public.	5/5/2024 6:37 PM

Q3 Have you had personal experience of a Taser deployment with a colleague that has had a positive or negative impact upon your position on Taser?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

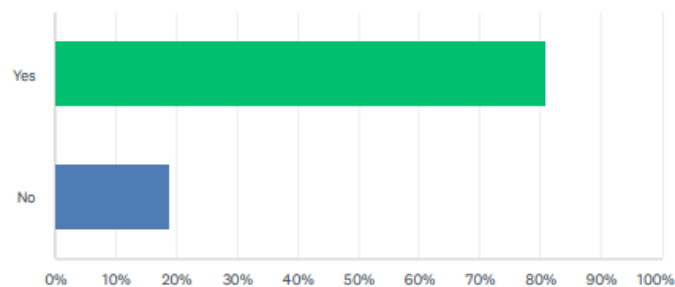


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		33.33%	7
No		66.67%	14
TOTAL			21

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	I have never attended a call where a colleague has had to deploy their taser.	5/5/2024 6:37 PM

Q4 Does the possibility of being investigated, charged or prosecuted if your Taser deployment resulted in a fatality or serious injury put you off becoming Taser trained?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

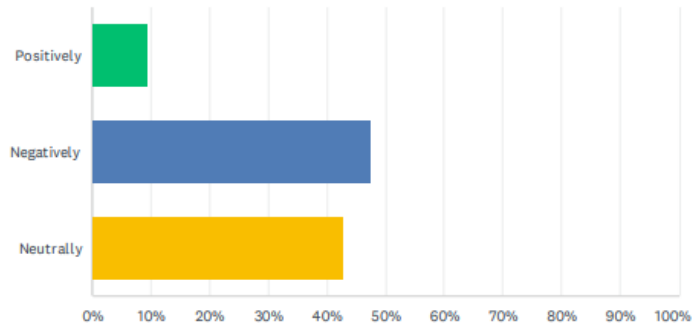


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		80.95%	17
No		19.05%	4
TOTAL			21

#	FURTHER COMMENT (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Concerns that those scrutinising actions are not operational and do not understand the risks associated with managing live incidents	5/6/2024 5:08 AM
2	Police officers are no longer trusted in the decisions they make. If you make a decisions regardless of the end result your questioned and scrutinised	5/5/2024 7:11 PM
3	Difficult process with arguably little support.	5/5/2024 7:08 PM

Q5 How do you feel the police use of Taser is represented in the media?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

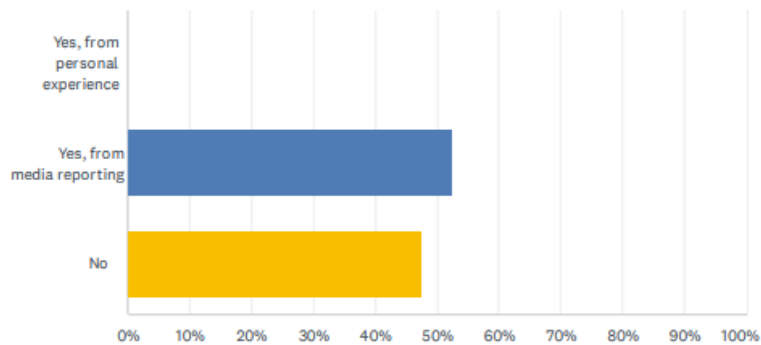


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Positively		9.52%	2
Negatively		47.62%	10
Neutrally		42.86%	9
TOTAL			21

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Both positive and negative.	5/5/2024 9:16 PM
2	I feel that the police are constantly negatively depicted in the media no matter what we do.	5/5/2024 6:37 PM

Q6 Are you aware of instances where Taser deployment has resulted in a fatality or serious injury?

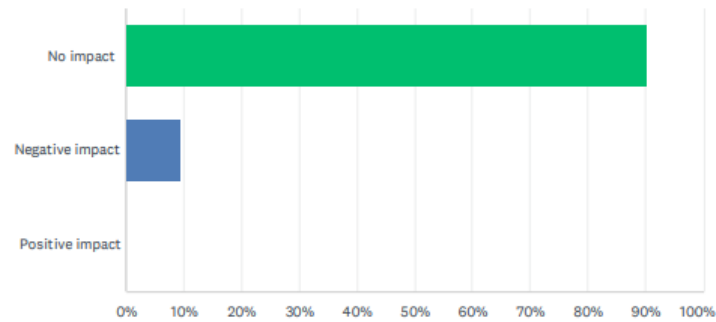
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes, from personal experience		0.00%	0
Yes, from media reporting		52.38%	11
No		47.62%	10
TOTAL			21

Q7 Has the media reporting on police use of Taser affected your confidence in Taser?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

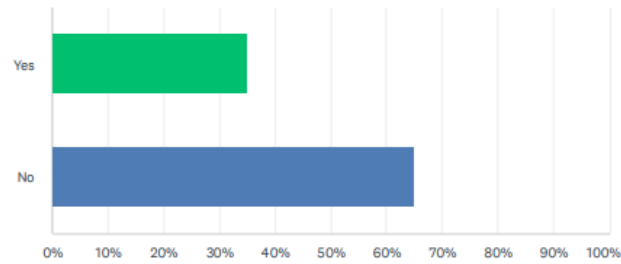


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
No impact		90.48%	19
Negative impact		9.52%	2
Positive impact		0.00%	0
TOTAL			21

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Both negative and positive.	5/5/2024 9:16 PM

Q8 Has the media coverage of police use of Taser put you off becoming Taser trained?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 1

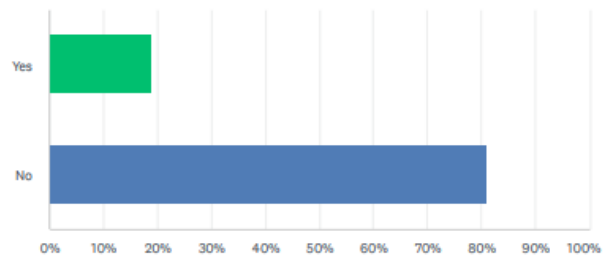


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		35.00%	7
No		65.00%	13
TOTAL			20

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	It's always a negative perception even though I know the full story is never exposed and why a taser was required in the first place.	5/5/2024 7:11 PM

Q9 When there is a Taser incident that has resulted in a fatality or serious injury do you think the police service is striking the right balance between supporting the individual officer concerned and engaging with the media.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.05%	4
No	80.95%	17
TOTAL		21

#	FURTHER COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):	DATE
1	Feels that the force only scrutinise and there is little to no support.	5/5/2024 9:16 PM
2	The force is more concerned with keeping members of the public and the media happy rather than supporting the officer and the choice they made in order to protect themselves and other members of the public.	5/5/2024 7:11 PM
3	Police allow need to seem legitimate/transparent/accountable overtake the welfare of the officer.	5/5/2024 7:08 PM

Demographic Information

