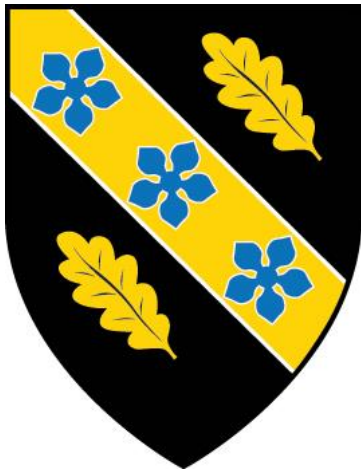




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Gwent Police Perspective: When should Probationary Officers receive TASER, training and should it be mandatory?

School: UWTSD Swansea

Degree: Professional Policing Practice

Due Date: 7th October 2024

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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: George Plowman

Date: 07/10/2024

Statement 1

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

Signed: George Plowman

Date: 07/10/2024

Statement 2

- 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

TASER and its use within modern policing practice is a topic of great conversation and scrutiny, currently there is a wealth of academic literature surrounding perceptions from the public, social and psychological studies, and the effects of TASER. However, there is more research to be completed surrounding TASER, modern policing, and probationary officers.

This dissertation aims to examine the use of TASER and probationary officers as they now contribute to a large majority of UK frontline policing, the study will focus on the perspective of Gwent Police force in Wales as they have been an early adopter of utilising 2019 Home Office Policy allowing probationary officers to carry TASER.

The researcher will provide the perspectives of serving police officers within Gwent surrounding whether they support probationary officers carrying Taser, as well document opinions surrounding training, officer safety and resources available to officers. Furthermore, the study hopes to provide valuable recommendations that can contributed to enhancements in the field of research as well as recommendations that can have a positive impact on operational policing.

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1. Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Taser plays a vital role in UK operational policing; it is a tool of much conversation and at the centre of debates surrounding public perception. A recent study has documented that 79% of the public supported the thought of more officers being equipped with Taser. (National Police Chiefs Council, 2019) and furthermore a 2016 study detailed 66% of the public stated they would feel safer knowing more officers had Taser and 69% of the respondents commented they trusted police to use them responsibly, (North Yorkshire Police and Fire commissioner, 2016).

The public opinion on TASER is well documented in academic research, this study hopes to illuminate the opinions of serving Gwent Police Officers surrounding Taser and probationary officers. There is clear support for more officers having Taser, however the researcher hopes to identify whether this opinion is shared from within a Police force such as Gwent that allows officers within their probationary period to carry Taser in line with recent Home Office (2019) policy for which they have been an early adopter. This dissertation hopes to contribute to the existing literature and provide positive data that can assist future studies as well as the Home Office in future plans for Taser within UK Policing and probationary officers.

1.2 Background – What is Taser?

A controlled Energy Device or CED is a less lethal firearm specifically designed to aide in incapacitating a person through implantation of a controlled electrical current that targets the subject's neuromuscular system for a short period of time through a painful electrical current, (College of Policing, 2013). Taser international is an American brand of the device and it was implemented into UK policing in the year 2003, following on from trials by firearms officers in five counties in the UK and

authorisation being granted by the Home Secretary at the time David Blunkett. Within the UK “TASER” constitutes as a Section 5 Firearm under the Firearms Act 1968 and is prohibited. However, UK Police officers are exempt and do not require further legal authority to carry the device, (McGuinness, 2016). The Home Office (2015) identifies CED as a use of force tactic within UK policing, and states force can be use or seen to have been used in seven situations when the device has been, drawn, aimed, re-dotted, arched, dry stun, fired and angle fired, officers whom carry out any of these tactics must document their use of force.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives.

- 1) *To gain an understanding of officer's views and opinions of Probationary officers and their use of Taser.*

This will be achieved through the collection of primary data that will be analysed to identify themes and provide clear opinions surrounding Taser and probationary officers.

- 2) *To provide recommendations surrounding Probationary Officers and Taser Training*

This will be achieved through examining the existing literature thoroughly as well as documenting findings from the primary data which could assist in recommending productive actions such as training, future research, and changes in policy.

2. Chapter Two Literature Review

2.1 Introduction:

Within this chapter of the dissertation the aim is to provide a clear summary of the existing literature from academic sources surrounding the topic of Taser and its implementation to probationary officers within UK Police forces. The chapter will focus to critically analyse these current findings and illustrate potential gaps in the research. It will look to highlight differences in opinions surrounding Taser documenting those for and those against the device, and cover topics such as National Policies, Gwent Police force policy, training requirements, use of force concerns and public perceptions and scrutiny. In carrying out this review of existing literature, the researcher hopes to provide insight into the current challenges facing the UK in relation to violent offending and the review hopes to accurately summarise opinions on Taser and its use by probationary officers within the current UK context in a clear and concise manner.

This chapter will look to achieve this by locating and examining research through various practicable means such as well-known internet search engines such as Google Scholar, this tool aides in locating information surrounding academic studies that are verified and also scholarly sources, and academic listed journals from approved sources such as universities. The research will contain extracts and citing from such sources as government publications, Policing databases, research, and development publications. This chapter will also utilise the function of the university library -University of Trinity Saint David – Online Library E-Learning. Literature within the section may assist the researcher in producing primary research and also in the creation of the methodology for data collection. Specific search terms used to obtain information surrounding the topic including “Probationary officer and Taser”, “Taser use UK”, “Public perception of Taser”. “Taser and use of force” and “Taser in policing”.

2.2 UK Taser Policy – Authorised Professional Practice

To understand the discussions and opinions surrounding Taser and its use by probationary officers within UK policing it is important to first highlight the current legislation and practices implemented on a national level by the College of Policing. The college of policing is the professional body for Police in England and Wales, and it holds responsibility for development and training including setting standards across the 43 police forces in the UK and implementing policy and guidance to forces such as use of force, (Police Federation, 2024). The current College of Policing guidance details that only specially trained police officers may carry Taser, these officers are named accordingly as STO's or "Specially trained officers. These are constables that are selected after a successful application process and have then been specially trained, accredited, and then authorised by the chief constable to carry a Taser, Conducted Energy Device (CED) operationally, (College of Policing, 2022). Currently within this guidance there is no specification on the criteria for when a constable can apply for this training, specifically there is no mention of probationary officers and whether they would be selected, trained, and accredited to carry Taser. Despite the vagueness surrounding the timing of when officers may apply for Taser, As of February 2019, UK Police forces and more specifically student or probationary police officers were given the opportunity by the UK Home Office to apply for specialist training to carry Taser for operational duties. Previous to this, the option for Taser was only available for officers who had successfully passed their two-year probationary period, (Home Office, 2019). A contributing factor to this change in policy in 2019 occurred due to an increase in of new officers from diverse backgrounds and varied life experiences. Previously as stated an officer would be allowed to carry Taser, simply due to the length of service they had carried out, that being if they had completed their two-year probationary period.

However, Lucy D'Orsi the National Police Chief's Council Lead for Less Lethal Weapons and Deputy Assistant Commissioner, stated that there are now officers in the workforce who have come from diverse backgrounds and have professional and

life skills, such as decision making, communication and risk assessment from before they were police officers, that would assist in demonstrating their ability to carry Taser, (Home Office, 2019). This contribution from D'Orsi details it should be an officer's skillset and ability that warrants them to carry Taser operationally and not simply the length of service worked. Conflict and risk of violence in the workplace are present for both probationary officers and those with more experience as almost all frontline officers will be exposed to the same type of calls, varying from vulnerable individuals in need of assistance to dynamic violent offences, (National Police Chiefs Council, 2018).

2.3 Violence towards Police and the call for Taser

In a 2021 independent report into crime and policing from the UK Home Office, statistics illustrate there has been increases of assaults towards police officers on a yearly basis since the end of 2015. Furthermore in 2017 the Police Federation of England and Wales published data findings documenting on average a Police officer was assaulted every 4 minutes in the UK, (Home Office, 2021). Also noted was that in 2019/20 there were a total of 30,000 assault on Police officers in England and Wales, and within the Metropolitan Police an increase of almost 40% of officers being assaulted throughout the COVID Lockdown period at the start of 2020, (Sam Francis, 2020). These figures have a clear effect on officer safety and the Home Secretary between 2019 to 2022 Priti Patel took the rise in assaults on Police officers into consideration when providing funding for an additional 10,000 officers to carry Taser due to the rise in assaults on duty. Patel issued a statement explaining that officers often place themselves in harm's way when carrying out their duty and she wished to provide them with the suitable tools to keep both themselves and the public safe (BBC Wales News, 2020). In correlation to these statistics the same article highlighted that Gwent Police would benefit from an additional 350 Taser trained officers by the end of March 2020, and would also look to increase this further over time. The Police and Crime commissioner for Gwent at that time, Jeff Cuthbert attested to this need for further trained Taser officers in the Gwent Force.

In line with the National guidance which was updated in 2019 as noted in section 2.2 of this literature review, the Gwent Police Issue and Use of Conducted Energy Devices for STO's policy aligns with the national guidance and has allowed for probationary officers to partake in the specialised training to carry Taser in addition to those officers already attested in rank. The policy states for this to be achieved student officers must meet rigorous standards, they must provide enhanced applications with further examples of where they have encountered violence and also have accomplished independent patrol status and illustrate, they are both safe and lawful when performing their duties. They must also get full supervisor support and their application must have at least a superintendent's signed approval, (Gwent Police and Burton, 2023). This change in force policy within Gwent meant that the force would have more scope to identify potential candidates within the force who were previously unable to apply for CED training due to the restriction on probationary officers and aide the force in reaching their 350 Taser carrier target by March 2020 that they set as mentioned in section 2.3 of this Literature review as set out by the force and Jeff Cuthbert. However, a freedom of information request was submitted to Gwent Police in 2021 specifically asking whether the March 2020 target for 350 Taser trained officers had been met. The outcome was documented in the response from Gwent Police stated they had in fact did not meet the target having only 290 Taser trained officers in force by March 2020. There was no reasoning provided within the report for the deficit, (Gwent Police, 2021).

2.4 Police and Public's perception on Taser – Is it supported?

Since 2019 Police forces have seen an uplift in the presence of Taser in modern policing with the home office supplying UK forces with an extra £10 million worth of investment funds (Home Office, 2019). Due to its capabilities some of its use had gained controversies and a voice of public opinion surrounding the matter, and although there had been research done into the physiological effects of taser, there is a deficit in the opinions of the public and the social effects of this introduced technology (Wolf and DeAngelis, 2010). Between the years 2015 and 2020 the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) highlighted statistics that show 17,000

incidents involving taser between 2017/18, there was then a 50% rise of incidents to 32,000 nationally between 2019/20 (IOPC, 2021). Their report details that the presence of taser alone can be a deterrent and in the majority of these incidents taser was not discharged. However, community focus groups and various organisations still express the growing concern surrounding taser use and its implications and a lot of that focus is on relation to death or serious injuries and use on persons vulnerabilities, children, and unjustified use on black or ethnic groups, (IOPC, 2021).

In a 2014 report from the Independent Police Complaints Committee (IPCC) the study documented how the improper use of Taser would have a detrimental effect on public trust towards Police as officers were using the device as a compliance tool against offenders and inflicting pain through, out dated techniques such as the “Dry Stun” which is no longer recommended, due to it simply causing intense pain to a subject and not reaching the goal of incapacitation, (McGuinness and House Of Commons Library, 2016). This motion could be deemed as a form of torture and as McGuinness documents any use of the Taser must be, lawful, proportionate accountable and absolutely necessary in all instances. Its use for a reason other than mitigating a threat of violence may engage Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights which details the prohibition of torture and of inhuman or degrading treatment, (McGuinness, and House of Commons Library, 2016). Concentrating on the issue of Human Rights, activist groups such as Amnesty International also issue their opinions on Taser, they state although they do see the positive aspects for its use in policing for managing risk and violent offences, they also highlight negative effects. Amnesty International highlight two cases in the UK whereby individuals have died, and Taser has been linked as a contributing factor, and like the 2021 report from the IOPC they also voice concerns for the rise in over-usage on groups such as BAME persons, persons suffering with vulnerabilities and other minority groups, (Amnesty International, 2018). Furthermore, the activist group states the British Public should attempt to resist calls for every officer to carry taser as it comes with more risk to the public and more room for error.

In 2024 a research study conducted in Scotland explored some interesting perspectives surrounding the differences in officer perception in comparison to the public surrounding Taser. It also illustrated alignments in viewpoint also covering

supportive opinions. Using qualitative comprehensive data from interviews with 13 Specialized Trained Officers (STOs), 88 Police officers and focused community groups involving 66 members of the public, the study found that the majority of officers perceive Taser to be an effective deterrent against violent offending and as a result benefitted community safety, (Deuchar et al., 2024). However, while the vast majority of the community is supportive and agreed with the positive factors, further concerns were risen in relation to misuse of Taser against young persons and also the risk surrounding vulnerable people. This finding would align then with what was already touched upon in De Angelis and Wolfs, (2013) research in that, a lot of the public's apprehensions about misuse of Taser simply derived from their misunderstanding of the information surrounding the device and highlight the need for the enhancement of community engagement and education alongside Police, (DeAngelis and Wolf, 2013).

To expand on this Abi Dymond carried out extensive research surrounding Taser use both in England and Wales and other countries, her findings in relation to perception found there was a duality to Taser, (Dymond, 2021). On one hand they were effective as they minimised risk to both officers and suspects relative to other uses of force, however they are far from risk free. Dymond (2021), noted this dual nature informs the public's own opinion and although some opinions demonstrated an understanding and agreement with Police that Taser was a safer alternative to a firearm, others saw again potential for misuse especially surrounding officer misjudgement and potential biased actions.

A 2012 study took a different approach to research by not just speaking with Police and members of the public but by also investigating the opinions of citizens who had actively resisted or attempted to resist lawful Police commands and force was used by officers, (Rojek et al., 2012). The study collected data from multiple types of use of force incidents, not limited to but including Taser usage, the findings highlighted discrepancies between how the public and Police registered and interpreted the same scenario. The findings detailed that Police often focus on the operation correctness and the protocol in place as well as the presence of threat or risk, whereas the public will often look at a scenario through the eye of fairness, accountability, and necessity. This finding then highlights the public need to clarify

the use of force or in fact the degree of force used such as Taser and the Police defending their actions in the name of Policy and safety for person involved.

2.5 Leicester Police Federation Study

A recent study from Leicester Police federation in 2020 produced important research surrounding Taser and it being operationally available to frontline officers. The study documented responses from a large pool of 906 officers with 74% of them being constables. The study highlighted that 75% of the participants believed that all front-line officers should carry Taser, furthermore 78% of officers who were not currently Taser trained stated they would feel safer on duty having Taser as a tactical option following appropriate training, (Leicester Police, 2020). 40% of the respondents stated they had been assaulted in the last two-year period, these figures align with the Home Office (2021) statistics previously mentioned in this study, and of those officers 63% of them stated carrying Taser would of have made a difference in the incident. Despite the study being produced in 2020 after the change in national Taser policy, it does not pay specific mention to probationary officers and simply covers the basis of “All front-line Officer”, however it could be presumed probationary officer will be included in that statement.

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion of the Literature review it is apparent there is a wealth of information and research surrounding Taser, the police and public's perceptions of the device and use of force as a well and its function surrounding, tackling violent offending, and promoting both and public safety. There are however gaps in the research especially surrounding probationary officers and receiving taser training and there is a lack of research from Police forces in Wales, this may be due to the home office policy being as recent as 2019. To Summarise the Leicester study does answer questions relating to demand for Taser, however the researcher hopes to achieve further clarity through the research and methodology chapters.

3. Chapter Three Research and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter assisted in the analysis of existing literature surrounding Taser and probationary officers. The following chapter serves to highlight the research methodology that will be produced within the study. The methodology aims to create a suitable data sourcing tool to bridge the gap in the Literature as highlighted in the previous chapter and in doing so aims to achieve answering the projects question.

Research can be defined as the clear and concise collection of relevant information to enhance one's knowledge and understating on a specific topic, through systemic data collection, (Saunders. Et al, 2019) There typically are two main fields of research, Primary and secondary research, Primary research is when original data unique to the specific research project is collected directly from the source, (Gratton and Jones, 2010). Bryman (2016) explains that secondary research does not involve the collection of original data but instead relies upon pre-existing data that has been collected from prior studies, an example being archived data. This particular study will collect on primary research gathered from police officers, as stated in the previous chapter, there is an inherent academic gap in the perspective of officers surrounding Taser and its implementation to probationary officers and through primary research this study hopes to identify strengths and weaknesses in the topic under investigation. To gain a more clear and improved understanding of the research process this chapter will now highlight the intended methodology for this research project.

3.2 Research Strategy

The strategy that will be implemented within this study to collect the desired data will be conducted through an online survey platform, this will be constructed via

Microsoft Forms, a platform which allows the researcher to create tailored surveys online that can be easily disseminated, (Johnson, 2021). These surveys will then be distributed via WhatsApp workplace chats, work email and the Gwent Police “Beat” forum to target the perspectives of probationary officers, but also the wider network of police officers and staff. This is important as the researcher hopes to gain perspectives from different genders, ages, specially trained officers such as firearms officers and also officers and staff with different levels of services and experience. These opinions will be vital in illustrating an honest opinion from the primary research as each individual will have unique experiences and will have been exposed to previous Taser policies and this will add to a more enriched research study. This research is important as the participants of this research study are current serving police officers and staff members within Gwent, they are actively operational and working within current UK and Local policies surrounding Taser and their opinions and actions play a vital part in shaping Taser policy for the future.

The survey will be distributed to approximately 30 to 50 probationary officers which the intention of collecting relevant information to aid the research. This method will allow the study to target the desired sampling pool of probationary officers and the wider team networks more accurately and is a sustainable method due to it being a simple user face for which participants can engage with easily. This method will mainly focus on Qualitative research to hopefully identify themes in the participant responses, Qualitative data is data that focuses on the analysis of research questions that are more exploratory in nature and highlights spoken opinions and textual words, rather than Quantitative data that pays more focus towards numerical data and measurement, (Jensen and Warren, 2023). However, to best achieve the study objective there will be an implementation of a mixed quantitative and qualitative method to obtain a variety of data perspectives such as listing ages, gender, length of services and departments, this approach has been seen to be beneficial in understanding the research issue more effectively, (Creswell, 2017). The survey approach is the favoured approach for data collection as it is both an economical and straightforward approach and will allow participants to remain anonymous via the online platform. This is important as there will be an element of sensitivity surrounding the use of force implementations that correlate to Taser use.

This anonymity will hopefully encourage more participation in the research approach. The sampling pool will be focused on probationary officers working within the East and West Newport Response teams within Gwent Force as well as the wider force and such departments as CID and Neighbourhood teams to hopefully draw in responses from more experienced officers, and the desired outcome is to collect a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data as officers will have differences in experiences surrounding Taser, due to length of service, whether they are an accredited STO trained CED officer, and the types of incidents occurring within their policing areas such as violent offending.

A blank copy of the Microsoft survey form will be attached to the study and viable for the reader within the **Appendix A**.

3.3 Data Collection

As noted in the prior chapter this research will to collect a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative data on the perceptions of probationary officers on Taser, so to build a rich picture from the research findings. As quantitative data focuses on the numerical measurements of data findings, this research methodology will present the quantitative data in the form of bar charts so to illustrate a clear representative to the reader of the responses in the survey. These said charts will be located within the Appendix section under **Appendix C**, of the research study for easy accessibility. Qualitative response will be analysed through exploring the themes of officer's responses within the survey. These findings will be presented within the analysis section of the study. Both the Quantitative and Qualitative data collected within this research will support to identify any aligned patterns and assist in highlighting any recommendations that will be documented within the conclusion.

3.4 Limitations to Research

As with many research studies there will be limitations present that are beyond the practical control of the researcher themselves. There are multiple factors that may contribute to the success of the scope of the study, a primary example being

participation of probationary officer within research and their willingness to engage. Stress factors such as Policing workloads, university deadlines and timeframes may hinder open responses. Furthermore, the amount of STO Taser trained officers may be fewer than probationary officers who have no experience surrounding Taser. Additionally, the research pool may be a limitation as it will be centred around Newport Gwent area and no other neighbouring or UK wide police forces, which would potentially allow for a more diverse data collection. Gwent has been utilised as a sampling pool as the force endorses probationary officers and the use of Taser as of 2019, so the study will hopefully illustrate raw and honest responses about the policy being in practice within a busy force.

3.5 Summary

To summarise this chapter highlights the research methodology that will be undertaken within the study. It documents the use of an online survey to collect qualitative and quantitative data from a sampling pool of Police officers from various teams, ages, genders, and departments inside Gwent Police. The data will then be analysed the proceeding chapter “Analysing data” and the findings will be illustrated for the study.

4. Chapter Four Analysis of Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will cover objective one of the research, study which is:

To gain an understanding of officer's views and opinions of Probationary officers and their use of Taser.

The survey obtained a wide variety of perspectives from across Gwent police, providing opinions from officers of different genders, from different ethnic groups, ages, and backgrounds. The primary research gathered was drawn from 76 responses in total and included both quantitative and qualitative responses.



Figure 4.1 – Charts Displaying variety in Gender/Age/Ethnicity/Length of Service

This chapter will be divided into three key themes, to best illustrate the collective findings of the research survey. The chapter will also provide clear graphs to show breakdowns in responses. A full source of the highlighted themes and the responses in their entirety can be located in the **Appendix B**, for clear and concise access.

4.2 Theme One – Officer Safety in professional practice

6. Are you a QUALIFIED TASER trained Officer?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



Figure 4.2 – Pie Chart Illustrating responses to question 6. Orange – 53% / Blue – 47%

Question six of the research survey asked the participants where or not they were a qualified Taser Officer (STO). There was a healthy comparison provided with 47% of the participants answering “Yes” and 53% answering “No”. A clear theme emerged from the data set with the majority of the responses paying tribute to the fact that carrying a CED had increased officer confidence when dealing with violent offending and enhanced their level of safety in operational duty. This was a consistent response across all service durations, ages, and gender and in reference to the literature this opinion aligns with the 2021 report from the IOPC which states Taser can effectively increase officer safety and provide a natural visual deterrent to violent offending (IOPC, 2021). Another point that was consistent in the responses from STOS was that they felt is that carrying a Taser provided them with more confidence when single crewed attending violent incidents, Gwent force policy states all Taser incidents require a double crewed unit to attend, however from these findings detail this is obviously not being implemented in professional practice.



Figure 4.3 – Key Words from responses from Specially Trained Officers (STOS)

4.3 Theme Two - Demand for STOS within Gwent Police

One of the most profound responses was illustrated in response to question eight, when participants were asked whether they believed there was enough Taser trained officers within Gwent Police. There was a considerable disparity in responses with 91% of participants stating “No” and only 9% stating “Yes” with every participant providing a response, *Figure 4.3 Documents this clearly.*

8. Do you believe there are enough TASER trained officers within GWENT Police?

76 Responses



Figure 4.4 Pie Chart illustrating response to Question 8

This finding is concerning, within the literature it was stated that Gwent Police aimed to have 350 Taser officers by March 2020 (BBC News Wales, 2020). However, this was documented to have not been reached in 2021, as a result the findings in the survey illustrate there is a clear opinion from Gwent staff that Gwent Police has not met the mark with sufficiently training enough officers to carry Taser and this could have potential for detrimental repercussions within policing practice. Within this response another consistent theme was identified with multiple respondents noting that response policing as a role is now predominately made up of probationary officers, this is supported by Home Office (2024), statistics between 2019 and 2023 there is a clear increase in probationary officers due to the Police Uplift Programme and the aim to recruit an additional 20,000 officers. Respondents replied stating, Taser training should definitely be offered towards probationary officers as they are now the majority of front-line responders who are exposed to the most dynamic and violent incidents. Many found there were issues surrounding Taser units available within response policing and that resulted in units having to travel further distances to attend calls. Furthermore, many voiced the need for more training to every officer that wishes to obtain a Taser qualification, with some stating they felt every front-line officer should carry Taser. especially when more experienced officers are moving departments and leave a lack of Taser officers on response policing teams. Those few who answered “Yes” to the question, ranged from CID, NPT and Firearms and their common response was that they believed there was sufficient resources for the current demand in Gwent with one stating the uplift of officers has helped filled roles and now these officers carry Taser.

4.4 Theme Three – Taser Training for Probationers with Gwent Police

Question 13 showed that a key theme identified was that more than 90% of the responses fell in line with the NPCC’s 2019 recommendation for probationary officers to be able to carry Taser with UK Police forces, (National Police Council, 2018). With 62% of respondents documenting that Taser should be available to officers in there

probationary period as they face the same risks as more experienced officers and should have the appropriate tools to deal with violence, this opinion affirms the statement from the Home Secretary Priti Patel with the literature as she stated it was her intention to introduce more Taser officers in the UK to enhance officer and public safety BBC Wales News (2020). Respondents did highlight some criteria they deemed necessary for probationary officers to carry Taser. The main focus being around decision making and sufficient training, many respondents stated they would not want a younger officer to become “Trigger Happy” and felt as long as enhanced training standards could be met then Taser was a viable option for that officer. These findings align with Dymond (2021) and the importance of decision making and credibility.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion three key themes were identified from the data collected, the general consensus identified within the themes is that Gwent Officer support the implementation of Taser to probationary officers. The themes also highlighted officers' agreement from research by Dymond (2021) surrounding decision making and officer safety representations from research by NPCC (2018) and Deuchar (2024). There was learning highlighted in the responses surrounding policy such as crewing and training and these representations will be documented in the next

5. Chapter Five Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters of this dissertation have directed the research study through the introductory, literature and existing research, planning and methodology and the analysis of primary research that was collected in the in previous chapter through the research survey. Chapter four achieved the first aim of the dissertation,

To gain an understanding of officer's views and opinions of Probationary officers and their use of Taser.

This chapter will achieve the second and final aim of the study. *To provide recommendations surrounding Probationary Officers and Taser Training.*

Chapter five with also highlight and summarize the main findings from the study and further state any research gaps, it will also cover the benefits of this study and document the significance of the research conducted surrounding Taser and Probationary officers.

5.2 Main Findings

Throughout the research there has been a clear picture that Taser is a topic of clear interest within UK Policing (Chambers, 2024). The topic is current and the policies and procedures surrounding Taser are fluid as Policing continues to evolve and perceptions surrounding the device with it. A key finding identified throughout both the existing literature and this study is that there is an overwhelming support for Taser within Policing itself. The Leicester study (2020) highlighted 75% of officers felt Taser should be mandatory for frontline officers with many stating that although they do not carry Taser, they would want to for further safety This viewpoint was then aligned with the Gwent survey as 71% percent of respondents expressed that more probationary officers carrying Taser would help mitigate the risk of assaults and

violence towards Police. These opinions had a clear connection to the literature with support surrounding officer and public safety being illustrated by both Dymond (2021) and Deuchar et al (2024) as well as aligning with the opinion that Taser decreases violent offending due to it being a visual deterrent. The study highlighted how Taser training had often assisted in increasing officer confidence when dealing with dynamic situations and the overall feeling of increased safety knowing that in dangerous incidents the device was available to them as a tactical option.

The second key finding that came from the research study assisted in answering the dissertation question, 62% of respondents from the Gwent study stated they felt probationary officers should be carrying Taser and have equal access to the training, their opinions aligned with the research from Deuchar et al (2024) and Leicester Police (2020). However, they also recognised decision making attributes a big part in Taser usage and felt appropriate training and judgement would need to be evidenced first, this opinion was common among the qualitative responses and aligns with Dymond (2021) that misjudgement can play a part in Taser perceptions.

The final main finding is that of demand for Taser officers, the study clearly illustrates that 91% of the participants feel there is not enough Taser trained officers in force. Home Office statistics state that the majority of frontline officer in the UK are proximately probationary officers, Home Office (2024), with this data available it is clear that more probationary officers will need to be Taser trained to meet standards and force requirements not just in Gwent but the UK as a whole. This dissertation documented the deficit in officers carrying Taser in frontline policing was mostly due to more experienced officer moving departments and not enough officers available to covered large areas.

5.3 Recommendations

This research project has identified three key recommendations as a result of the research undertaken, firstly there are clear gaps in the research surrounding

probationary officers and whether Taser training should be mandatory. The primary research has successfully covered collecting perspectives, on whether probationary officers can carry Taser but there is still much work to be done on whether it should be a mandatory requirement for them. There will be a time where more academic research will be needed surrounding the majority of frontline officer being probationary officer.

Secondly the study has highlighted the need for more information to be provided to new officers within their initial training period surrounding Taser as 48% of respondents from the Gwent survey stating there was not sufficient resources provided. This recommendation could be implemented relatively easily on a UK wide basis and is realistic, to achieve this the College of Policing could construct a simple yet informative initial training package that details the fundamentals of Taser. This could then be delivered in a classroom setting by training school staff or even occupational safety trainings or Taser tutors, by producing the training this way it would stay in house and could be delivered as part of the initial curriculum from the College of Policing at a minimal extra costing and would not offer much deterrent to logistics as it would be covered early in an officers training.

Finally, more funding and commitment from the Home Office and College of Policing towards Taser training so to best benefit the new officers within UK policing and as a result give them the appropriate tactical options to best serve the public and deal with the rise in violent offending (Office of National Statistics, 2024). These recommendations would be more difficult to achieve, and clear parameters would have to be in place, funding would be an issue on a national level and budgets would have to be addressed by government to allow funding for police forces. Furthermore, the likelihood of forces receiving funds and the training would differ depending on regions and demands, realistically this recommendation would have to be addressed over a three-to-five-year time period so for the training to be implemented nationally. Costing would also have to be drawn up for the devices themselves and the training staff to provide this blanket training method.

5.4 Conclusion

This research study has successfully achieved the goal of collecting Gwent Police officers' perspectives surrounding Taser and probationary officers. Through the examining of existing literature and the sourcing of primary research through the Gwent survey, the study has illuminated the need for further research and also provided valuable recommendations to the field of research surrounding Taser. The study has highlighted the need for more concise UK policy and also enhancements in the information and training that new officers require withing Gwent and the wider UK police forces.

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7 - Appendix

7.1 Ethics Form - Complete

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.
Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	George Plowman			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	IMH
4	Campus:	Swansea, Campus.
5	E-mail address:	2124938@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	N/A
	For students:	
7	Student Number:	2124938
8	Programme of Study:	BSC (HONS) Professional Policing Practice
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Jane Davies / Stephanie Brown

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
					Date
2	If yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in) – Jane Davies	☒		

	<i>source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>			
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SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.			
1	<u>UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice</u>			☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy			☒
3	<i>[List any other relevant documents here]</i>			☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators, then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators, then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address.					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES, then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Is the use of Taser CED an appropriate use of force in the current policing practice?		
2	Proposed start date:	04/01/2024	Proposed end date:	07/10/2024
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain. • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: Is the use of Taser CED an appropriate use of force in the current policing practice? INTRODUCTION: In the current Policing climate within the UK and other countries around the world, use of force and policing powers is often at the forefront of conversation and the public's concern surrounding excess or negligent use of power. The IOPC states in a 2021 paper that if UK police forces do not address public concerns surrounding the use of taser and the training provided for its usage there is a growing concern towards the public's faith in the legitimacy of policing, (IOPC,2021).			

	Furthermore, there are risks to individuals' health such as intense pain and risk of injury due to falls, following on from effective use of taser, this is highlighted within the "Authorised Policing Practice and documented by the college of policing, (College of Policing, 2022). Contrary to these points Superintendent Ian Drummond-Smith highlights in his 2019 paper – Analysing Taser 15 years since its introduction, that with proper use taser can in fact save the lives of members of the public, police, and suspects as a less lethal weapon, (Drummond-Smith, 2019). This dissertation will explore the current training methods used by police forces globally and evaluate whether there is adequate training surrounding the use of CED firearms, it will also explore the public's opinions in relation to its use and whether it is deemed appropriate and effective and supported by communities. This dissertation will assist in highlighting the need to share the opinions and thoughts of police officers and hopefully draw conclusion to a very real topic of conversation surrounding policing powers.
4	LITERATURE REVIEW: This dissertation will gather information from a varied list of resources surrounding the topic, it will utilise government data bases like the Home Office and current reports in the public domain, journals, and published research reports. There will be information reviewed from university research such as the University of Cambridge which documented Taser on its news pages. The research study led by Dr Barak Ariel explored how Taser carrying had a negative effect overall effect with public-police interactions and that the presence of taser could increase aggressive behaviour, something criminology researchers at Cambridge University called "<i>The weapon effect</i>". (University of Cambridge, 2018). Focus will also be drawn to studies surrounding negative implications of taser such as racial and ethnic disparities when it comes to use of force and targeted groups, (UCL, 2018).

	News articles will also be a source of information as they will deliver insight into public perception. College of Policing and the Authorised Professional Planning will also play a large part within the review, focusing on the Legislation, weapons and equipment, command, and deployment sections, (College of Policing, 2018). There are currently great research studies currently in the public domain such as “An Analysis of TASER in British Policing” published by Superintendent Drummond-Smith and studies such as this highlight many key points. However, this dissertation will hopefully assist in drawing more focus on Police officer opinions surrounding taser as this is a potential gap in the literature. The research will also utilise textbook findings such as “Blackstone – Policing handbook”.
5	Aims of Research Activity This dissertation will focus on gathering data from the opinions of Police officers and police staff. The justification for the method of research is that it will provide an understanding from a policing perspective, it will provide focus surrounding the use of force and decision-making surrounding deployment of taser in risk heavy environments and also police perspective and opinion surrounding when its use is appropriate. The dissertation will obtain data from a variety of officers, those taser CED trained and those not to help provide a variety of specialist and knowledgeable opinions.

	(this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity This dissertation will look to analyse specific findings and figures from Police officers and review whether their opinions favour the equipment as an appropriate use of force. There will be exploration as to whether there needs to be an uptake in officers carrying taser and or whether there is a need to explore other non-lethal options around force in policing. Identify concerns from the public in which the police serve and outline measures such as improved training of officers which may help elevate public perception and trust. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	Alongside a thorough Literature review this Dissertation will utilise questionnaires as its primary research method. These questionnaires will focus on collecting data relating to officers' perspectives and experiences, prior knowledge and exposure surrounding the uses of Taser. The findings will hopefully bring a diverse range of opinions. This questionnaire will be distributed to multiple officers to best understand a variety of opinions. The benefit of this research method is that a large number of surveys can be distributed allowing for better data collection.

	This research method is best suited as it will also allow for collecting quantitative and qualitative responses to my research question. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	- Research Carried out in place of work Newport Central Police Station, Cardiff Road. (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research, then please state this.
9	Not applicable. (this box should expand as you type)

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	If yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. This SECTION IS NOT APPLICABLE (this box should expand as you type)		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☐
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☐
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally, or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent, or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒

17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source		
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?		
10	How many participants are expected?	- Approximately 10 to 16 persons. (this box should expand as you type)

11	Who will the participants be?	- Participants are likely to be fellow policing students, active Police staff and officers. Potential for the research to also include friends and family members as sources of information also. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	How will you identify the participants?	- I will look to identify the participants through work, university and friends and family via phone calls and direct contact. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☒	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	Question 15) All participants will be over 18 years of age. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐

28	If YES to any question, please provide full details
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐
		No	☒
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: No Risks to participants – University – Researcher and No environmental risk present. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: No Risks to participants – University – Researcher and No environmental risk present. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: No Risks to participants – University – Researcher and No environmental risk present. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: No Risks to participants – University – Researcher and No environmental risk present.	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
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Disclosure and Barring Service				
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☐	☒
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available, please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	(this box should expand as you type)		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	(this box should expand as you type)		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒

6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☐	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☐
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	George Plowman	Date: 12/02/2024

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☐	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☐	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☐	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☐	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above-named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☐	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

7.2 Appendix A - Blank Survey Questions

Should it be mandatory for Probationary Response Police officers to receive TASER Training?

I appreciate you taking the time to complete this short survey in relation your opinions on Probationary officers TASER training. This survey is part of a research Dissertation by PCDA Student of PC 2449 George Plowman.

The main aim of this survey is to gather opinions from Police officers surrounding their perspectives on TASER and whether it should be Mandatory for Gwent Probationary officers to carry the device.

As this research is being undertaken, participants responses will be kept completely confidential and secure, and upon completion of the research all responses will be deleted. Please ensure NO personal details are produced when completing the survey.

By participating in and completing this survey, you are consenting to your answers being included within the research project. All entries will be anonymous.

Again, sincere thanks for your participation PC2449.

1. Are you Male or Female?

Male
Female

2. Please select your age group.

18-25
25-35
35-45
45 +

3. What is your ethnicity?

White
Black
Black Caribbean
Black British
Prefer not to say
Asian
Asian British
Mixed Race - Multiple Ethnic Groups
Other

4. How many years of Police service do you have?

Less than one year (Probationary Period)

1 - 2 years' service (Probationary Period)

3 years (Final Year of Probation PCDA)

3 - 10 years' service

10 - 20 years' service

20+ years' service

5. Please state which Gwent Police team or department you work in? (For Example- Response - RPSO -NPT -PPU - CID etc).

6.Are you a QUALIFIED TASER trained Officer?

Yes

No

7. If you answered YES to question 6, Explain how carrying TASER has impacted on your professional practice and/or your sense of safety as a Police officer?

8. Do you believe there are enough TASER trained officers within GWENT Police?

Yes

No

9. Please provided a short explanation for the answer you have provided in QUESTION 8.

10. **Please select the most suitable option in your opinion in relation to the following statement:** Probationary officers are provided with sufficient information surrounding TASER in the initial 6 Months Training.

Agree

Strongly agree.

Disagree

Strongly disagree.

Somewhat true

Neutral

11. **Probationary officers often face the same risks and threats as their more experienced colleagues.** Do you believe more Probationary officers carrying TASER would mitigate the level of violence towards Police officers?

Yes

No

12. Please provided a short explanation for the answer you have provided in QUESTION 11.

13. When do you feel is the most suitable time for Probationary officers to receive TASER Training? Please provided a short explanation for the answer you have provided.

Submit

7.3 Appendix B – Themes - Raw Data

Appendix B – Themes – Qualitative Responses Questions, 6-7 / 8-9 /11-12 / 13

6. Are you a QUALIFIED TASER trained Officer?

Yes – 47 % No – 53 %

7. If you answered YES to question 6, Explain how carrying TASER has impacted on your professional practice and/or your sense of safety as a Police officer?

N/A
As a Taser officer I feel much better trained and equipped to deal with the ever raising violent and weapon related crime. I feel I have much better awareness when at calls and have an improved knowledge of my use of force powers.
This has massively increased my confidence when attending emergency calls when as serious threat/harm/risk is apparent. Being a taser officer has also developed my professional as I know how to communicate with people more effectively sticking to time and space.
increases feeling of safety especially working alone or dealing with dynamic incidents and is a very useful thing to carry however is not essential for every officer and should be considered when people can evidence, they're dynamic and able to make good use of the NDM and risk assess things appropriately.
It gives me an additional use of force but acts mainly as a deterrent to people I engage with.
Helped my confidence with conflict and making decisions
Carrying Taser has enhanced my safety daily. Due to the internet people are fully aware of Taser and the mere presence of it can result in subjects altering their level of threat. Combining this with what should be better safety training through the new two-day PPST module will likely result in fewer violent incidents towards Officers. On one occasion my quick discharge of Taser saved a colleague from shooting an armed subject with live ammunition and saved the subjects life. On another occasion I discharged Taser to prevent someone jumping off a bridge and there have been numerous other incidents involving armed and violent subjects being safely neutralised without Officer risk and injury.
no change really
Provides extra sense of safety when attending high risk incidents. Having taser provides an extra level of reassurance however i always ensure to utilise the NDM and consider all other

use of force before utilising Taser as an option. I believe when members of public see officers carrying taser they perceive a greater level of safety as that officer can deal with what's in front of them instead of requesting specifically trained officers
Increases capacity to deal with violent persons, spontaneous incidents and makes me feel safer whilst carrying it
It makes you appreciate keeping distance from others. You keep distance anyway but tend to get sucked in to speaking to people but since doing taser you appreciate the distance needed for it to work effectively therefore keeping distance at all times just in case
Carrying Taser has allowed me to be first responding officer to several Incidents where there has been a high risk of harm to officers, members of the public or the subject at emergency graded calls. Carrying out the training has changed my perception and tactics when engaging with subjects, specifically utilising space and positioning for safety.
Greater awareness around personal safety and increased ability to dynamically risk assess situations. This level of dynamic risk assessment training should be mandatory for all officers.
Has not changed, but I am aware that I am now better equipped to deal with certain situations
Feel safer attending calls, more able to deal with incidents involving weapons or extreme violence, more responsibility
Acted as a visual deterrent to subjects and increased own spatial awareness to danger
N/A
it has a more positive impact as it the sight of the taser on my vest helps to de-escalate the situation.
More aware of surroundings

Have run out of compliance.

n/a

I believe carrying TASER aids your safety as above all else it operates as a deterrent to violent offenders. I also believe the training you undertake to become qualified to carry TASER make you a better officer.

When tactical communications have failed or are not possible Taser is another tool that can be used to protect public / colleagues. ASP and PAVA are not always effective on individuals who have taken drugs / other substances.

n/a

De-escalates the situation when attending calls

Adds additional distance tool to help deal with volatile and tense situations. Adding to my personal safety.

As a single crewed female officer, I feel this is a good deterrent. It does bring a presence when you have a disadvantage due to impact factors and gender.

It hasn't. It is simply an extra piece of equipment like an Asp, Pava or Handcuffs.

Allows me to keep myself and colleagues safe.

n/a

Allows me the option of time and space when dealing with serious or aggravated threat

I do not feel it has had an impact.

Feel a great deal safer especially always being single crewed

N/A

mainly single crewed when backup can be 20+ minutes in Monmouthshire allows a better sense of safety when dealing with calls on own

N/A

Makes you feel safer, especially when single crewed. Acts as a visual deterrent in most situations and a first step in conflict resolution without having to do anything.

It has made me more aware and capable of dealing with violent situations.

Enables you to identify risk and ensure you take your time and create distance between yourself and the offender

Carrying taser I believe should be a pre-requisite for all front-line officers. It is a vital tool that offers most importantly a deterrent for violence officers may otherwise be victim to. Not only does it help to protect officers from violence, but it also can be used as a tool to stop members of the public hurting themselves.

N/A

It has given me a sense of appreciation of distance, before taser i was often sent to crimes involving knives.

Feel safer, improved situational awareness

8. Do you believe there are enough TASER trained officers within GWENT Police?

Yes – 9 % No – 91%

9. Please provide a short explanation for the answer you have provided in QUESTION 8.

I believe that all operational officers should be taser trained

I believe there should be a certain amount of taser trained officers each shift

I feel most if not all officers should be trained in the use of taser as any situation could turn to a potential life-threatening incident and being equipped with a taser provides an additional level of PPE.

Every frontline officer within Gwent should have access to training and provision for carrying TASER

I believe everyone should be taser trained as this will help increase the safety of all officers as they will have another appointment to which they can utilise giving the current climate of the public who are anti police, and this will impact the offenders and the sheer presence of a taser can calm offenders down increasing everyone's safety.

Due to the turnover on response it should be offered to officers in their probation once they can evidence the above so that there are more officers with taser available for calls as often the same people are relied on and additionally those without are having to go to calls that require taser and "risk assess" which is an unnecessary risk

When people are on AL it can leave some shifts without any taser officers

Not enough taser officers, some have to be called to other areas to assist with taser calls if all taser units are committed. This can then take longer than 15 minutes. Or if there are no taser unit's available units without taser are deployed which can be a risk as taser was authorised for a reason.

Taser officers should attend calls double crewed; this is not happening in a majority of cases

Taser itself is a deterrent and doesn't need to be discharged to have the desired effect on non-compliant individuals

All officers if they can pass should be able to carry including plain clothes

everyone should receive training

all responsible officers should have it

Due to the amount of calls we are now receiving with use of weapons and high levels of violence; I feel more officers should be TASER.

codes of practice state that all taser calls should be a double crew unit. more often than not this is not the case in reality where there is a single taser officer going to calls and a non taser assisting which then limits what the non taser officer can do at the incident itself

Numerous times there have been calls for taser trained officer and they haven't been available or a distance away

There appears to be an imbalance in the number and spread of STOs in the force. I have seen a large number of officers who are STO's change to different roles, which leaves their response shift (often manned mostly with probationary officers) either low on STOs or having none at all. I understand the home office review which provides the force with the number of licenses they can issue, but i feel that this does not necessarily represent the number of officers who actively carry and use Taser.

Training officers in the use of taser will in effect be planning for the unexpected. Although there may not be the volume of calls that require a taser carrying officer, there is on occasion the unexpected threat towards officers and a taser could make the difference to mitigate the threat.

All frontline officers need to be offered/equipped with taser

Due to the risks officers face and often working single crewed. Believe all officers should be taser trained.

I believe taser should be offered to all officers after their tutorship.

With crime getting more and more violent with more knife incidents i believe more officers should be trained in taser. I believe all officers should be taser trained

Current Taser courses hold long waiting lists with the majority of those being trained moving department or forces away from response where they are needed most. Several large areas including Monmouthshire currently hold no Taser trained officers on shift that have led to Newport response being the closest available unit when specialist departments have been committed

Despite there being taser officers on each shift, officers quickly move on to different departments, leaving shortages

Officers should be taser trained during initial training

There is a heavy reliance on the same officers to take taser calls due to the lack of trained officers.

It is a usefully tool to have within multiple roles of the police

Only 1 taser officer on my shift

I am the only one on my team and I am often diverted to other areas of the force to attend calls where taser has been requested suggesting that other teams do not have sufficient taser capacity

I have often been in scenarios or heard of scenarios whereby a taser officer was required and none were available across response. with FCR needing to pull in firearms officers or officers from other areas to assist

More officers should have taser. It is also a visual deterrent

There have been numerous occasions where control room have requested a 'taser trained officer' to attend calls, however on numerous occasions, there hasn't been trained officers available. If there were more trained officers, this would therefore cope with the call demand.

during the last 12 months there appears to be a downsize in officers carrying Taser. For example, 2 years ago 6 of 8 on my shift carried now we only have 3 of 8.

With the increasing violent crimes within Gwent, officers not carrying tasers are at higher risk of injury. Taser should be part of the standard PPE for all officers to ensure the risk to officers is lower.

officers tend to move on from front line response therefore just leaving one maybe two officers on shift. sometimes due to AL there may not be any on shift working.

Staffing levels are constantly short and i don't feel there are that many officers who wish to put their name forward to carry taser.

More and more calls are showing an increased level of violence. Quite often other depts are having to provide taser support

It would appear as though there are a lot of taser officers in GWP.

There are not enough officers in general with Taser a requirement for the highest risk environments, I believe any officer single crewed should be taser trained due to the risks involved

Currently there are no taser trained officers on shift

There can be very few officers on shift who are trained to carry taser, take into consideration annual leave, courses, etc. This can leave a gap in taser cover for the respective areas. Every incident that we go to can change very quickly and can result in a

need for a taser officer to be present to minimise risk and threat, however with the lack of numbers of taser officers this is not possible.

I believe there are not enough officers trained simply put. However, I also believe that officers early on in their probation should not carry TASER, so they do not hug the trigger.

The Taser app shows the availability of Tasers within the Force at any one time. When reviewing that data, it is clear that many stations have no Taser trained officers on duty as all the Tasers were shown as available.

There is a shortage of taser officers within the force which often leads to resources being pulled across from other areas to try and accommodate call demand. This then has a knock-on effect for call demand across the force.

My shift has 1 taser unit, if they're off we're still expected to answer emergency calls with a high T/H/R

There is enough at this time, but will shortly be a shortage

All front-line response officers should have access to taser

I believe there are sufficient resources available to actively deal with the number of calls that require taser units.

There has been a huge uplift, however a lot of new officers now carry taser.

all response officers should carry taser

Regularly, my area will rely on other areas to support at incident with a taser capacity.

As RPSO am often tasked to Assist LPA for Taser calls due to non taser.

I believe that all officers should be given the opportunity in training as it is essential in some situations to have taser qualified officers, given the young workforce this is not always possible

It's not for everyone and not something that the training can be watered down for to accommodate the unsuitable

I believe more officers could be trained as we need more officers in order to appropriately respond to calls that require additional tactics.

I do not believe there are enough taser officers because on my shift there are 2 out of 7 on there and frequently, they are off on AL or courses etc leaving us with no cover. Across the entire shift we frequently struggle with getting taser officers and have to turn to RPSO etc.

Due to the increase in violent crimes across the force its often very difficult to resource a double crewed taser unit

I think there are sufficient trained and carrying most shifts. However, I do believe all officers should carry if they want to

There are regularly taser calls on-shift and due to a lack of taser carriers on shift, FCR regularly has to dispatch traffic / firearms / other areas to assist with taser calls.

ideally 2 taser trainer officers should be going to calls - often going to taser calls as a single taser officer

Taser is required most days for 'authorised' incidents, yet we are having to move people around

I believe every uniform officer should be carrying taser in this current climate

I feel that a TASER should be part of mandatory appointments just like PAVA, baton, and cuffs.

TASER should be standard PPE.

Every officer should be able to carry a taser to avoid scenarios where there are no covering taser officers to attend certain calls.

As answered in answer 7

I feel that every officer should be equipped with TASER - if suitable. TASER offers a huge deterrent to offenders and is a really good instrument to provide safety to officers.

There are a small number of officers that are taser trained.

Officers who are taser trained are having to go out of their area to cover other areas for taser incidents due to a shortage of taser trained officers

The initial course is enough; however, you only shoot the taser once a year on the refresher. When the time is needed you may find issues finding the shot

There are many requests for double crewed taser units that can often not be met by number of taser carrying officers available

There should be AT LEAST enough Taser trained officers that one can reliably be deployed to all incidents involving potential violence. This does not seem to happen at the moment.

Very rarely an officer carrying taser is close to the call requiring it

11. Probationary officers often face the same risks and threats as their more experienced colleagues. Do you believe more Probationary officers carrying TASER would mitigate the level of violence towards officers?

Yes – 71% No – 29%

12. Please provided a short explanation for the answer you have provided in QUESTION 11.

Having been crewed with Taser officers, I find members of the public are far less confrontational after seeing a Taser officer

N/A

Any call whether it be ASB with a group of children or a shoplifter has the potential to turn into an incident where officers are faced with weapons or high aggression and the threat of violence.

TASER is a visible deterrent and a Low-level use of Force option.

As stated above the sheer presence of a taser calms people down and not only that the officer would feel more confident in themselves if they had to deal with a violent offender.

Once signed off and independent they can be deployed to any call regardless of their specific training so are exposed to just as much risk as any other officer. You cannot predict what will happen as first responders.

Taser is not always a suitable option in certain types of conflict

When people see a taser on tac vest I feel they're automatically more withdrawn. Whereas officers without tasers can often be seen as nothing, increasing the risk of violence as they only have PAVA Spray, to defend themselves which is hard to deploy if you're fighting etc.

All officers should be given the choice to carry taser as part of their PPE

The presence of a taser can have a huge impact on a person's behaviour. The only issue being is when using force, the justification tends to come with experience. If persons don't have sufficient experience, it could cause them to neglect the basics, such as effective communication and de-escalation skills. Also, taser can be an issue in large public order incidents such as street/pub fights when and there is a potential for it to be grabbed.

Officers can go to any call

A Taser should not be relied on to provide the only response to a subject with a bladed article or firearm, and is an ideal option against an unarmed violent subject, or someone with a blunt type of weapon - baseball bat / bar etc. Quite simply, if an Officer is likely to be dispatched to an incident of violence or threats of violence of such severity that they may need to use force to protect people, they should be carrying Taser.

taser is a great de-escalation tool.

start off learning the art of talking to people and gaining an understanding of risk prior to having a taser

I think it depends of length of service. I think officers need to show they are capable of independent patrol for a number of weeks / months before being allocated a TASER course as a lot can change in those initial weeks. Following this I think it should be an option, even within the 2 years probationary period.

More taser officers would limit the risk to all officers however I firmly believe that if officers are to get taser in the probationary period then they need to undergo an extensive taser training programme to ensure they are fully aware of use of force policy and not 'trigger happy'

I feel level of risk can often be determined by how an officer ages with a service user and not having a taser will ensure officer develop their communication skills

Taser can act as a de-escalation even when not drawn. The presence of a Taser, visible on a belt or vest carriage system can lead to persons calming down or not being as violent so as to avoid the use of Taser. Response teams seem to be predominantly probationary officers and therefore more probationary STOs will mean more Tasers on response, thus mitigating the violence used and displayed towards Police.

where a well-trained officer draws a taser, the risk to the officer would be mitigated due to the subjects understanding of what will happen if the taser is used against them.

irrelevant of experience you cannot pre-empt any spontaneous/violent persons

All face being put into the same type of calls and face the same threats. We are seen as boots on the ground regardless of skill set and length of service

I feel the more taser is visible to the public then officers will start to encounter less violence.

Taser is a fantastic visual deterrent. Not many people know what it's like to be sprayed but everyone has had some form of electric shock and know it hurts therefore they know the impact it could have on them

The majority of Incidents whereby I have been assaulted early in my career have been from unarmed subjects where their demeanour had rapidly shifted with few warning signs. In these instances, PAVA can be a suitable alternative and Taser would not generally be considered the appropriate response. There are also certain skills developed on time on response that simply cannot be taught in a classroom environment, including the officer's response to sudden incidents back-to-back with high levels of stress and adrenaline that may alter their reaction or judgement.

Visual deterrent & also a method of dealing with aggressive resistance

I believe the more officer that carry taser, irrelevant of service, would, of course, mitigate risk

Officers carrying taser, can act as a deterrent for violence towards them.

The critical thinking required with the level of responsibility that comes with carrying a taser is not necessarily always present in probationary officers

Threats and risks can escalate

Yes and no, do it think it is a great tool and should be available to all - yes, however I feel that you need to experience the job without it first to understand use of force, dealing with people and just talking to people.

I believe that officers never truly know the threat and risk they face until it presents itself at a call. An officer may be attending by themselves to a routine graded welfare check for example, which could quickly turn into a dangerous situation whereby somebody has gained possession of a knife etc. I believe all officers being armed with, or offered the option of carrying taser, would prevent a delay in the right resources being allocated and arriving, as the officer there would be equipped to deal with any situation that arises

Visual deterrent as well as an use of force option

The more officers with the presence of a Taser may mitigate the level of violence against these officers

Acts as a visual deterrent

Regardless of service levels, all officers are at risk when attending calls.

No matter how much experience an officer has, you face the same risks. You go to the same type of calls.

Purely by the fact that more officers carry taser

Just the presence of Taser can be a deterrent. All Officers should be trained to carry should they so wish.

Taser is usually a deterrent in the highest risk environments, the majority of officers on shift are in their probationary period so having greater numbers taser trained should help mitigate further risk

Just the presence of a taser can defuse a situation

As previously stated, any incident we attend can change very quickly. There have also been times where there has been no taser officers that unarmed officers are being sent to these calls.

As stated previously I think officers new out of the box are too new to carry TASER, they need to experience conflict management so they can learn effective tac comms first

The presence of an officer should be sufficient to mitigate any level of violence and maintain the Kings Peace. Unfortunately, members of the public see Police officers as a legitimate target for violence therefore officers should be offered training / equipment to protect themselves and others.

Probationary officers still attend call where there is a high level of risk and there are a high number of officers on response who are still in their probationary period.

All police officers face the same risk, especially when on response you're often the first at a scene of a high-pressure environment. Further to this, you're often single crewed dealing with volatile situations with aggression directed at yourself

Sometimes using taser and utilising the option can make the officer escalate the situation which is not always the best option and probationary officers have a lot to learn around managing conflict before going up the scale

I believe carrying Taser does add an additional layer of protection, however it needs to be evidenced by officers that they can display strong understanding of practical use of the NDM

There will always be a level of risk towards officers, I do not believe taser will fix that. I also believe it's more of a risk that newer officers carry taser depending on level of service.

Probationary Officers have a lot going on through their initial service. This includes continuous learning of the law, policies, their own university work, and other factors. I believe that in some circumstances they may be additional risks of probationers carrying taser.

I attend the same calls as my colleagues who are not in probation and face the same risks

There needs to be an extended period for officers to learn tactical communication and understand threat risk and harm appropriately before taking on the additional responsibility

I do believe officers in their probation can be suitable to carry taser, but this would have to be assessed based on the person as opposed to a length of time in service.

I believe that if officers are given their taser as a standard part of the kit and it was seen that taser is standard, that individuals would be less likely to try something on with officers and that it would act as a deterrent. I also believe it provides officers with the necessary protection to deal with the incidents we deal with.

I think probationers carrying taser would mean they would neglect the basics of learning communication skills, and are more likely to go straight in with a higher level of force due to their inexperience dealing with conflict causing them to panic and go straight for a higher level of force

Being a new police officer you have a great deal to learn. Adding complex decision making involving a taser would be too much

probationary officers attend the same calls and are more likely to be exposed to risk due to lack of experience

I had taser training within 8 months of starting on shift - it allowed me to deal with violent incidents better, use the NDM more to make decisions. It is also a deterrent by just carrying it visibly on vest.

Yes, but with the consideration that a probationary officer is potentially 3 years. It should be like blue lights, given when ready. For some that is early in their careers, for others that is late

Younger Police officers or younger in-service officers are sometimes more likely to be targeted - as this is identified by the public

Members of public rarely know how much service an officer has so it makes no difference to them, all they will see is an officer with TASER. They can make a judgement on the officer's service by the looks of their age but either way, they will see that the officer has a TASER in the first instance which acts as a visual deterrent.

When on uniform, I carried TASER when in my probation; this was following none of the non-probationary officers volunteering to carry. Prior to being trained to carry TASER, I was threatened by a knife and felt wholly unequipped to effectively resolve the situation and keep myself safe.

Having a taser and completing the training will allow the probationer to understand the element of risk posed to them, their colleagues, and the subject. This will also show them how effective tactical communications are and the need to speak to people properly.

Taser as standard issue would train probationers to a higher level of risk assessment and would therefore be more prepared to deal with violent incidents.

From experience, members of the public are less likely to proffer aggression and/or violence toward an officer that is armed with TASER, as they know the effects and the outcome of its use.

There are more officers on response within their probation than those who are not.

During my service, I have found myself attending the same calls as officers who have over double the length of service I have

You are unaware of what dangers face you at any call

Officers should have an initial dealing with live incidents before carrying taser

I don't think that the level of violence that would be dealt with by taser is generally offered by people who have made a tactical assessment of the situation in which they are placed. It may offer more effective methods to deal with violence offered, but I don't think it would prevent the initial conduct.

People will be violent towards officers regardless

13. When do you feel is the most suitable time for Probationary officers to receive TASER Training? Please provide a short explanation for the answer you have provided.

1 year service, enough time to gain experience with conflict and to gain a level head but also officers should be trained after a year to protect themselves and other officers

Once completed 2-year probation

12 months into the job.

Following a minimum of 6mths front line operational policing.

It is difficult to put a time on when officers should be taser trained as some are more capable than others however, I believe if you are capable of passing the initial taser training course then there should be no reason as to why you cannot carry a taser.

Once they can evidence the above (time frame not necessarily required but should be able to evidence dynamic incidents they have dealt with and how they risk assessed / spun the NDM)

After at least one years' service so they have some experience without it.

Possibly 12 months after passing out

Once they are competent independently

If they possess the suitable skills, then the current system of after 12 months with sufficient examples to show competence.

Roughly 18 months in

If this is going to be done properly before they begin patrolling. This would be the case in every other country which provides Taser to its Officers.

during training

During PPST

A few weeks / months after they have proved they are capable of completing independent patrol

case by case basis once their line manager deems them ready

I feel officers should have had over 2 years out of training school before they can apply for taser giving officer time to develop communication skills, etc. this will enable officer to better manage scenarios with their experience rather than relying on a piece of equipment

I feel that without prior experience of firearms or Taser, adding Taser to the equipment of a probationary officer may add too much extra to their thought and decision-making processes. I think that after about a year and a half officers will have often experienced and dealt with sufficient variety, complexity and severity of conflict management/use of force that some will be able to confidently add Taser to their skillset. I do not believe this should be a blanket time period though, rather a minimum service length before they can be considered. Carrying Taser is an additional responsibility and comes with greater scrutiny. for an officer that is not fully confident with conflict management this could lead to either a lack of, or overuse of Taser, putting public confidence and indeed officers, at risk.

After their second year of frontline policing. I feel this should allow the officer to develop the basic policing skills and communication skills to manage people who are posing a threat.

following successful completion of 10 weeks and able to competence

At least 6 months after joining

After initial tutorship, when an officer becomes independent.

I believe officers should do the first 6 months in class as normal then 6-12 month on shift without taser so they can deal with people effectively without taser then they should be offered a course for taser. I do not feel it should be in the initial 6 months training as you need "real world" experience dealing with people.

Those who have it straight away may reach for it at every opportunity and a lot of those times taser would not be needed

Given the long waiting list for Taser training and the shortage of courses available I feel that officers should look to have completed at least 1 year in service prior to applying for their Taser and that they should be able to evidence strong supporting decision-making incidents that show they have the necessary risk assessment and appropriate level of force when responding to dynamic Incidents

Following completion of tutorship

Initial training

After 1 year of service.

2 to 3 years' service

After 1 year of independent patrol status as officers should have a good working knowledge of NDM and THRIVE

I think that it is more of a capability question than a time served question. There are people who I work with who have told me they are applying for taser (who have three months less service than me) and I can't see them being efficient with the tool, at the same time there are people who are a few months out of tutorship who I feel that I can depend on and who I believe would be good with the device. I feel that officers should be chosen based on their performance in conflict scenarios

I believe that once officers have completed their tutorship, they should be offered the chance to receive taser training - Ensuring they have developed other skills and been exposed to a variety of situations prior to taking on the potential extra risk and responsibility of carrying a taser

After showing to their supervisor that they are competent in the role

After successful completion of initial tutorship

When the covering Sgt feels they are competent in their basic skills I.e communication and prisoner handling

Initial training / PPST

Final year. Gives you enough time to get an idea of the role first before putting yourself forward to carry more responsibility.

I feel it should be offered in y2, y1 officers are still finding out a lot about themselves and the job and y1 is a very steep learning curve. Any offer of taser in y2 should only be granted with Insp approval following a robust review of performance and workload

During initial training.

18 months plus (1 year on response)

This should be done different for each individual. The user should be confident before being given the chance to carry a taser. (roughly 1.5 - 2 years into the job)

6 months before the end of probationary training. Officers before this have enough stress with trying to get to grips with the job and to balance a university/work/social life. Towards the end of the probation, it would be expected that officers have managed to get to grips with the job and are relatively confident in their abilities

I believe once officers have completed 18 months employment (including training) they should be open to applying to carry TASER as their supervisor has to sign off on it first anyway

Towards the end of their two-year probationary period. Student officers already have some much to learn (Degree / policies & procedures)

I believe that officers should be given the option to have taser as soon as possible after completing 6 months on response.

In year 2

When they have evidence 5 or more managing conflict scenarios

During initial PPST

At least two years' service, they need to have the relevant experience to understand use of NDM and Conflict management. Giving active examples and authorisation by line manager.

Out of their two years. My reasons being the officers joining now are young and lack life experience. Working on your core skills as a police officer initially is important. Communication I feel is key in your core role, but also in carrying taser. It's not a compliance tool and communication are a big part of being an STO and being able to dynamically assess the risk that comes with it.

before then begin with their tutor

I do not believe Probationers should carry taser. Once they have completed and are substantive in the role should this be the case. (My personal views).

given the opportunity whilst in training if not, the first 12 months

Once deemed suitable by a supervisor

I feel that when officers are 1 year in service (6 months out of training), supervisors are able to assess capability / attitude and put forward officers for taser training, should they be suitable.

I believe that taser training should be conducted automatically on during their last year of probation (or 3 years of service if they're DEHP) as I think that provides officers with enough time and experience to fully develop their risk management and decision-making skills. Officers should feel confident in their decisions and understanding of risk and how to manage that and 3 years gives enough time to develop these and understand how you react in the situations where you'd use taser.

I believe Probationers should need there Sargent's sign off before they can be considered for taser training after they completed their 2nd year matrix

I believe knowing how to communicate with people is most important and I feel some officers may quickly reach for taser instead of communication tactics

within the initial 3 years.

I believe it is most suitable when a probationer has shown they are capable of carrying a taser, by having evidence of dealing with incidents, whether this be within a few short months of being on shift. Not necessarily a certain timescale of when they should but how they evidence they can and will use it sensibly.

As above, around the 12 months on the frontline period onwards

In their initial training as part of OST

After being tutored ready for independent patrol. This allows the tutor to also assess the suitability of the officer to carry a TASER in the first place and could be part of their objectives. Some student officers may show signs of negativity towards TASER for various reasons and the tutor can discuss this and those who may be nervous or less willing to carry a TASER could be given extra inputs and training around it.

There isn't a suitable time per-se. I do not believe it's a particularly more/less dangerous tool than a baton. The reason we don't carry TASER from training is a hang-up SMT and politicians have with 'arming' police officers; most other countries manage it without significant problems.

As soon as they finish their 10-week tutorship period

Upon completion of their independent status immediately following their tutorship.

TASER training should be an option provided to those officers that would accept it before they are deployed into a live policing world post training.

Once officers are out of their 10-week tutorship, I believe they should be given the opportunity to complete the course

When they finish their initial 6 months of training

After probation, taser is a big responsibility to carry and should not be issued to everyone because they want it.

IN the first year of training after the tutorship period

After 12 months experience on response

I think it is more suitable for after probation, provided that there are sufficient substantive PCs for deployment to violent situations. Use of Taser is a higher-level use of force and requires experience and decision-making skills that need to be developed prior to deployment. There

would be a higher level of risk in deploying probationers with taser than there would be in deploying more experienced taser officers.

7.4 Appendix C – Charts and graphs

1. Are you Male or Female?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

	Male	59
	Female	17



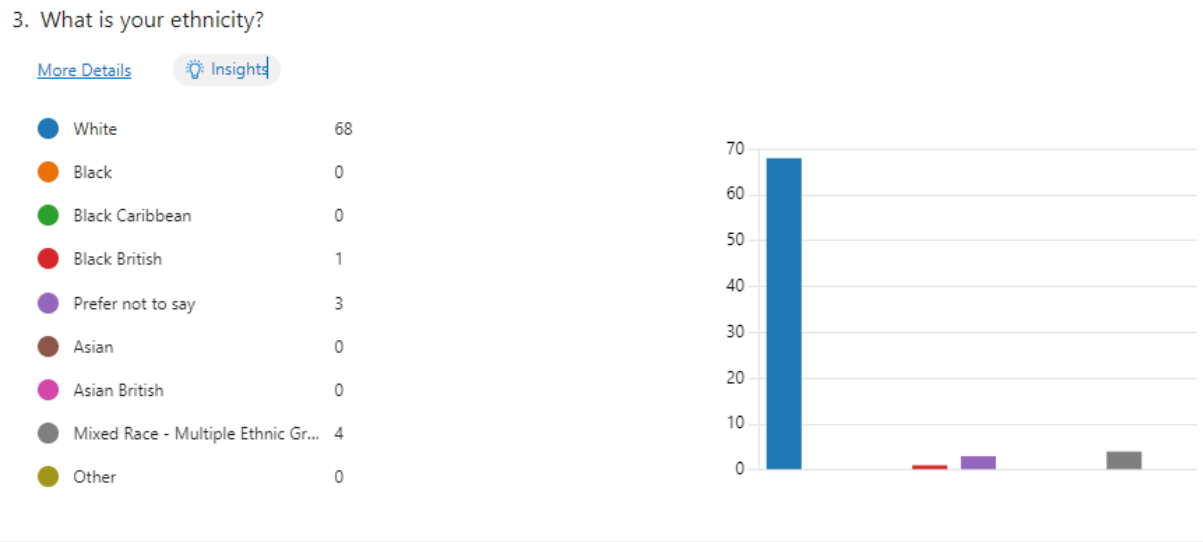
2. Please select your age group.

[More Details](#)

 Insights

	18-25	15
	25-35	38
	35-45	14
	45 +	9





6. Are you a QUALIFIED TASER trained Officer?

[More Details](#)

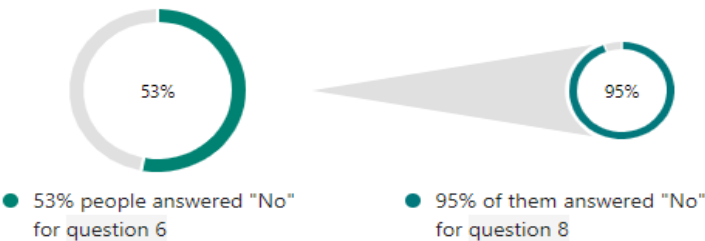
[Insights](#)

Yes	36
No	40



[Update](#)

53% of people answered **No** for this question, and the majority answered "**No**" for Question 8.

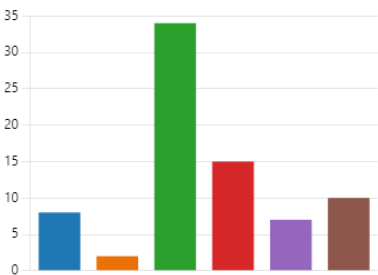


10. Please select the most suitable option in your opinion in relation to the following statement: Probationary officers are provided with sufficient information surrounding TASER in the initial 6 Months Training.

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Agree	8
Strongly agree	2
Disagree	34
Strongly disagree	15
Somewhat true	7
Neutral	10



11. Probationary officers often face the same risks and threats as their more experienced colleagues. Do you believe more Probationary officers carrying TASER would mitigate the level of violence towards Police officers?

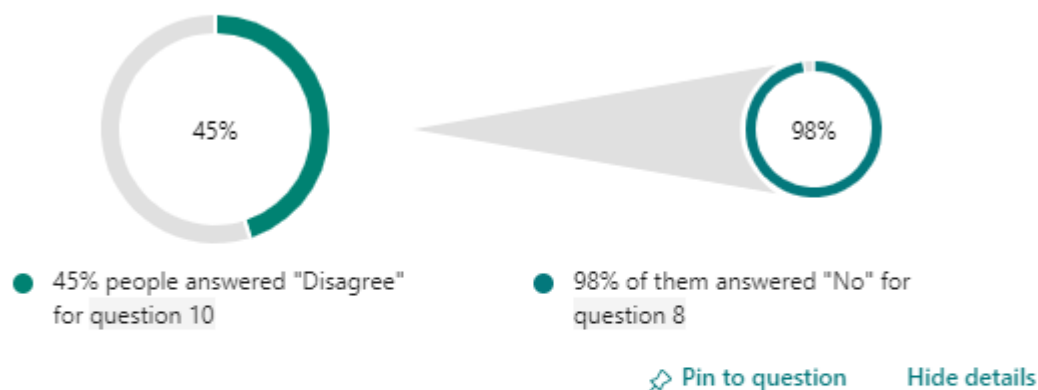
[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	54
No	22



45% of people answered **Disagree** for this question, and the majority answered "No" for Question 8.



11% of people answered **Agree** for this question, and the majority answered "White" for Question 3.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

3% of people answered **Strongly agree** for this question, and the majority answered "No" for Question 6.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

3% of people answered **Strongly agree** for this question, and the majority answered "Yes" for Question 11.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

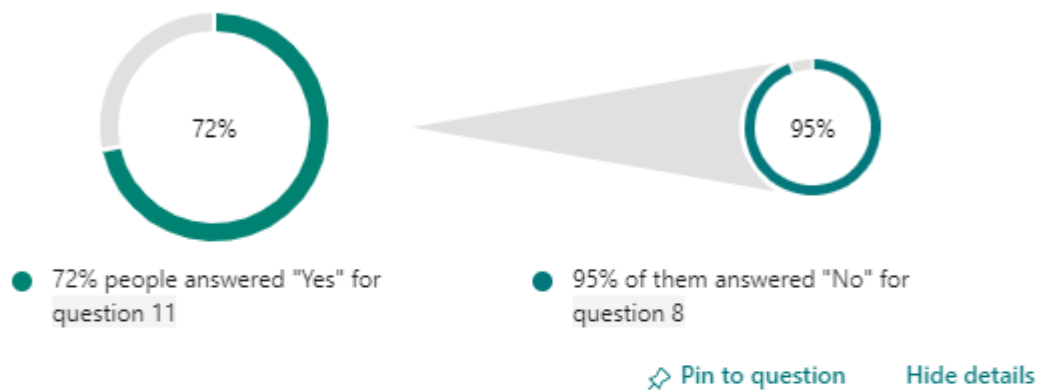
45% of people answered **Disagree** for this question, and the majority answered "Male" for Question 1.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

10% of people answered **Somewhat true** for this question, and the majority answered "3 - 10 years service" for Question 4.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

72% of people answered **Yes** for this question, and the majority answered "**No**" for Question 8.



72% of people answered **Yes** for this question, and the majority answered "**White**" for Question 3.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

72% of people answered **Yes** for this question, and the majority answered "**Male**" for Question 1.

[Pin to question](#) [Show details](#)

7.5 Research Proposal Form



UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

Please complete the following research proposal and submit it to Turnitin.

Which project option are you taking? Please tick:

8,000 word project:

OR

4,000 word project and presentation:

Selected: 8000-word Essay.

NAME: George Plowman	STUDENT ID No.: 2124938
DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: Is the use of Taser CED an appropriate use of force in the current policing practice? INTRODUCTION: In the current Policing climate within the UK and other countries around the world, use of force and policing powers is often at the forefront of conversation and the public's concern surrounding excess or negligent use of power. The IOPC states in a 2021 paper that if UK police forces do not address public concerns surrounding the use of taser and the training provided for its usage there is a growing concern towards the public's faith in the legitimacy of policing, (IOPC, 2021). Furthermore, there are risks to individuals' health such as intense pain and risk of injury due to falls, following on from effective use of taser, this is highlighted within the "Authorised Policing Practice and documented by the college of policing, (College of Policing, 2022). Contrary to these points Superintendent Ian Drummond-Smith highlights in his 2019 paper – Analysing Taser 15 years since its introduction, that with proper use taser can in fact save the lives of members of the public, police, and suspects as a less lethal weapon, (Drummond-Smith, 2019). This dissertation will explore the current training methods used by police forces globally and evaluate whether there is adequate training surrounding the use of CED firearms, it will also	

explore the public's opinions in relation to its use and whether it is deemed appropriate and effective and supported by communities.

This dissertation will assist in highlighting the need to share the opinions and thoughts of police officers and hopefully draw conclusion to a very real topic of conversation surrounding policing powers.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

This dissertation will look to **analyse** specific findings and figures from Police officers and review whether their opinions favour the equipment as an appropriate use of force.

There will be exploration as to whether there needs to be an uptake in officers carrying taser and or whether there is a need to **explore** other non-lethal options around force in policing.

Identify concerns from the public in which the police serve and **outline** measures such as improved training of officers which may help elevate public perception and trust.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

This dissertation will gather information from a varied list of resources surrounding the topic, it will utilise government data bases like the Home Office and current reports in the public domain, journals and published research reports.

There will be information reviewed from university research such as the University of Cambridge which documented Taser on its news pages. The research study led by Dr Barak Ariel explored how Taser carrying had a negative effect overall effect with public-police interactions and that the presence of taser could increase aggressive behaviour, something criminology researchers at Cambridge University called "*The weapon effect*" (University of Cambridge, 2018).

News articles will also be a source of information as they will deliver insight into public perception.

College of Policing and the Authorised Professional Planning will also play a large part within the review, focusing on the Legislation, weapons and equipment, command, and deployment sections, (College of Policing, 2018).

There are currently great research studies currently in the public domain such as "An Analysis of TASER in British Policing" published by Superintendent Drummond-Smith and studies such as this highlight many key points.

However this dissertation will hopefully assist in drawing more focus on Police officer opinions surrounding taser as this is a potential gap in the literature.

Please clarify some of the key literature to be utilised as part of your research. Consider textbooks, journals, articles, government reports, organisational strategic plans. Understand the current state of existing research

You can demonstrate the gap and the need for the research
Gives credits to those who have laid the groundwork for your research
Demonstrates your knowledge of the research problem

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH –SURVEY METHOD:

Alongside a thorough Literature review this Dissertation will utilise questionnaires as its primary research method.

These questionnaires will focus on collecting data relating to officers' perspectives and experiences, prior knowledge and exposure surrounding the uses of Taser. The findings will hopefully bring a diverse range of opinions.

This questionnaire will be distributed to multiple officers to best understand a variety of opinions. The benefit of this research method is that a large number of surveys can be distributed allowing for better data collection.

This research method is best suited as it will also allow for collecting quantitative and qualitative responses to my research question.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:

This dissertation will focus on gathering data from the opinions of Police officers and police staff.

The justification for the method of research is that it will provide an understanding from a policing perspective, it will provide focus surrounding the use of force and decision-making surrounding deployment of taser in risk heavy environments and also police perspective and opinion surrounding when its use is appropriate.

The dissertation will obtain data from a variety of officers, those taser CED trained and those not to help provide a variety of specialist and knowledgeable opinions.

ETHICAL ISSUES:

All questions within the dissertation will be approached with ethical responsibility in mind.

There will be no inclusion of subjects whereby the application of Taser has been utilised and there will be no involvement of offenders.

There will be no concerning ethical issues during the course of the Dissertation, this will be due to the fact no personal data will be included.

TIME SCALE:

The Timescale in which this dissertation will be completed in will be set to the following dates throughout 2024:

Proposal and ethics form will be completed by **26/02/2024**.

Literature review will then follow and be completed by **06/05/2024**.

Research methodology and planning stage will be completed by **17/06/2024**.

Following on the Analysis of results will be completed by **05/08/2024**.

Findings and Conclusion will then be completed by the **09/09/2024**.

The Final Project Submission will then be completed and submitted by **07/10/2024**.

REFERENCE LIST:

Carried out with Harvard Referencing Guide.

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