

Body worn cameras having an impact on UK policing



What is Body worn cameras?

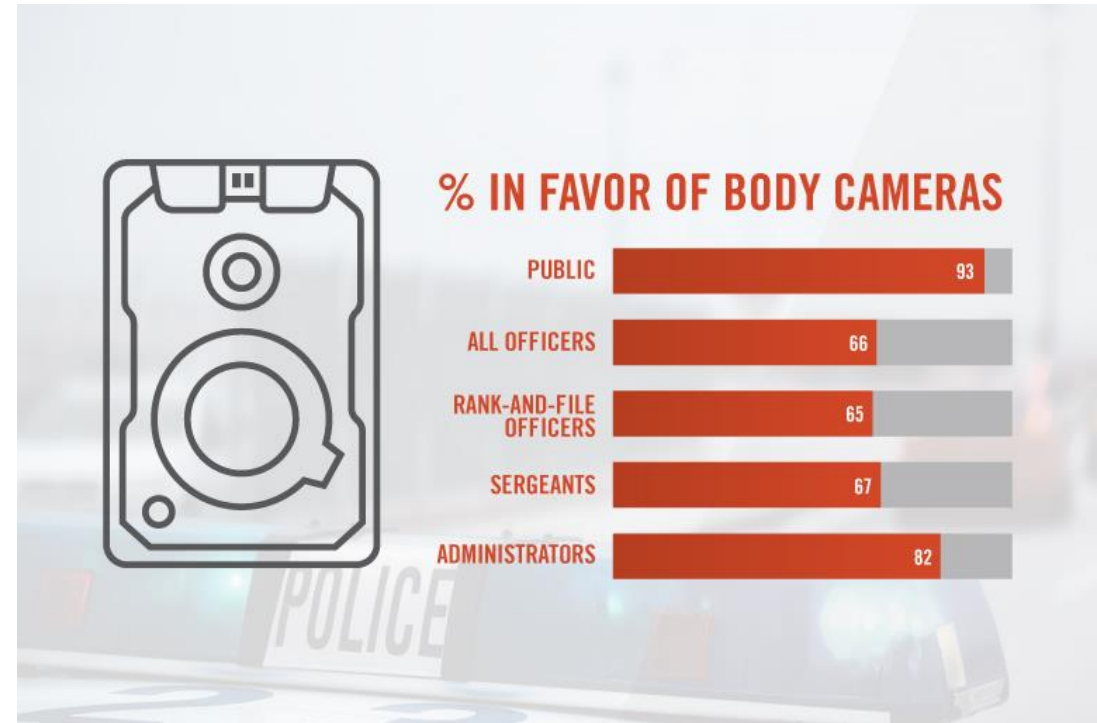
- Body worn are small cameras worn by officers to record audio and visual evidence
- The body worn is usually worn on the officers chest on their uniform
- The police activate them at the start of an incident and they record until it is no longer necessary
- The footage is stored on the camera then uploaded on to the files for further investigation
- (BWV) continues to represent a significant advancement in our ability to document interactions between the police and the public (NPCC 2024)

(South Wales 2017)



Benefits of body worn cameras

- Evidence gathering- All camera footage recorded provide a record for review and possible use in court
- Accountability- Body worn can reduce the force of officers and decrease complaints
- Transparency- The public can see that they are being recorded during their interactions making trust and transparency
- Training- Footage can be used to train other officers and improve their practises
- They also aim to deter misconduct, build community trust (metropolitan police 2021)



(Gatec 2024)

The negatives of body worn cameras

- Invasion of privacy- Body worn can be intrusive, individuals who are unaware of recording can claim an invasion on their privacy
- Technical and practical- Body worn can malfunction or be damaged meaning potential loss of evidence if the footage is not transferred
- Missuse of footage- Recording without proper justification to or not activating the camera where it should be used
- Research suggests that the presence of BWCs in domestic abuse cases may have unintended impacts on the victim, such as increasing their fear of further abuse if the perpetrator is aware they are being filmed (Titeheradge 2023)



(Media 2025)

Statistics

- Reported by 15 studies, and the meta-analysis found a small (15.9%) increase in assaults or resistance against officers wearing BWCs. (college of policing 2021)
- Outcome measures on complaints against police were reported by 22 of the 30 studies. A significant reduction of 16.6% was found in those wearing BWCs compared to the control groups without BWCs. (college of policing 2021)
- a 50% reduction in the odds of force being used was recorded when body worn cameras are present compared to control conditions (Henstock 2015)



Case study

A case study on a man who verbally abused and assaulted two london tube staff in baker street in 2020



Brittan visitor 2021

- Use of body worn
Officers recorded the whole incident using their body worn cameras
The footage gathered aggressive behaviour and physical assault from the man in question
- Outcome
Video evidence led the man to plead guilty and was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment for each assault
- Impact of the body worn
Provided clear, objective evidence for prosecution.
Helped protect officers and support swift justice.
Encouraged TfL to expand body camera use

(Matters 2020)

Conclusion

Body-worn cameras have improved transparency, reduced complaints, and decreased use-of-force incidents in UK policing. They provide crucial evidence in legal cases, speeding up prosecutions and increasing conviction rates. The cameras also act as a deterrent, promoting better behavior from both officers and the public. While challenges like privacy concerns remain, BWCs have significantly enhanced officer safety and public trust, shaping the future of policing in the UK.



(South Wales Police
2021)

Overall conclusion

The introduction of body-worn cameras, youth engagement initiatives, neighbourhood policing, and community meetings has had a major positive impact on UK policing.

Body-worn cameras have improved transparency and trust, while youth engagement has helped build early positive relationships between young people and the police. Neighbourhood policing teams have strengthened local connections and increased community safety, and regular community meetings have given the public a stronger voice, improving cooperation and confidence. Together, these strategies have made policing more accountable, more visible, and more community-focused across the UK.



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