

Change to the Deployment of Taser – additional questions

1. How many officers with firearms authority are currently trained to use taser?

In total there are 30 trained Firearms Officers within the SoJP.

All Firearms Officers are trained in the use of Taser. The five-day Taser Course is a pass/fail course and is a prerequisite to the actual firearms course.

The five-day Taser Course that is delivered locally is the same as what is delivered in the UK (National standard and College of Policing approved).

2. Can you detail how many additional officers will be given training if this change is adopted?

The aspiration is to have an additional two officers on duty, on each operational team who are in possession of Taser. Therefore, to achieve this the SoJP would be looking to train an additional twenty (20) officers, four (4) from each operational team. There are five operational shifts so an additional 20 officers spread across the five operational teams would provide resilience in respect of managing leave, sickness, departmental moves, courses etc.

3. How many taser units do the States of Jersey Police currently have?
 - a) What has been the cost of these units?
 - b) Is there a target for the number of officers you wish to have the ability to deploy tasers?

Currently the SoJP own twelve (12) Tasers however these pieces are due for renewal in 2021. As such the SoJP have ordered fifteen (15) new Taser devices which they hope to take possession of in the first quarter of 2021. These devices are new to the market and will be used by UK Police Forces.

Fifteen (15) new Tasers, with associated cartridges and pouches is just over fifty (50k). This money has already been paid and the SoJP await delivery.

The SoJP believe that fifteen (15) Taser devices is all that is required to ensure an effective Taser capability given the low number of officers who will be authorised to carry this device.

4. In 2019 there were 42 instances of a taser being drawn and 31 instances of the red dot being used. Do you count instances where a red dot is used within instances where a taser is drawn or are they treated as separate processes entirely?

The term 'use' of Taser has a broad definition. A 'use' can be counted as any of the following;

- An officer equipped with a Taser unholstering the device
- A verbal instruction or a physical gesture by the officer to highlight that they are in possession of a Taser
- Arcing the Taser whereby showing an individual by way of a deterrent that the device carries an electric current
- Placing the red-dot laser on a person to indicate where the Taser will strike should they fail to comply
- Actually discharging the Taser at an individual because all efforts have tried and failed or would be likely to fail if tried

Since 2014 there have been 341 uses of Taser, that can be broken down as follows;

- 181 occasions where the officer has opted to simply draw the Taser
- 152 occasions where the red-dot laser has been placed on a person
- 8 discharges of Taser

5. Do you record incidents where tasers are not used but would have been a viable option had they been available?

There will have been instances where a Taser would have been a more appropriate piece of PPE to use in a certain situation, however these instances, although recorded, do not show that Taser would have been a better option. These cases simply document what options the officer chose to use given the situation that they were dealing with.

The use of PPE, Cuffs, Baton, PAVA, is down to the individual officer and they must justify their actions. There will be occasions when the use of Taser is not appropriate and as such an officer may decide to use PAVA or a Baton.

The training that Police Officers undertake does not stipulate which piece of PPE they must use in any given situation. Police Officers are trained in effective communication and negotiation skills which will, where possible, always be the starting point when dealing with any situation. All use of force must be proportionate, and officers must justify their actions.

The use of Taser is not a punishment.... Taser simply seeks to give a Police Officer an additional 'option' when dealing with an individual might be a risk to the public, themselves or the Police Officer who is dealing with them.

6. How do Officers ascertain the age of a person who is displaying behaviour that may warrant the use of a taser?

Without knowing how old a person is, it's impossible to ascertain the age of an individual. The issue here is not about age, it's about managing the threat that the individual poses at that time, whether that threat be to the public, the individual themselves or the police.

A 16-year-old armed with a gun or a knife is the same threat as a 20-year-old.

Effective communication is key to dealing with any individual and where possible a Police Officer will seek to engage in communication. During the communication phase a Police Officer will try to quickly develop a relationship, simple questions like ascertaining a person's name, age, address would be seen as good rapport building questions. Clearly there will be occasions when a Police Officer needs to act immediately, in order to protect the public, the individual or indeed themselves

7. Are you experiencing increased numbers of callouts concerning people's mental and physical welfare? If so, how many calls have you received each year over the past 6 years?

Daily incoming demand;

On a typical day there is approximately one officer on duty for every 536 people living in Jersey.

SoJP respond to approximately 2.4 missing person reports a day. A number of these individuals could be classed as being vulnerable through mental health or age.

SoJP respond to 2.9 incidents a day which are flagged as being associated with people with mental health issues. Some of these matters can be dealt with within a short time, however some are often protracted and can take many hours and a high number of resources.

COVID restrictions throughout 2020 changed the demand placed upon the SoJP and as such this year's recorded statistics are very different to previous years. Night-time economy has been quieter in 2020 however we still see that most crimes are committed on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Each year has seen a rise in the number of mental health incidents that the SoJP deal with. In comparison to 2019 the SoJP have dealt with 70% more mental health incidents compared to 2019 YTD. It could be predicted that this upward trend will continue.

In respect of the times that Taser has been discharged locally – 5 cases have been in respect of Mental Health issues – Self-Harm.

It is predicted that the UK will see a rise of 500,000 people experiencing mental health issues and as such you could safely predict that Jersey will also see a rise (relevant to the size of our population).