

Dear Whom it may concern,

I am writing this email on behalf of Youthful Minds. We are worried that if every uniformed police officer is allowed to use tasers, they may use them on a child under the age of 18. We feel like this could be traumatic to anyone, let alone a child.

We also have a major concern that if uniformed officers were allowed to use tasers, it would mean more people experiencing a mental health crisis and are reaching out to the police for support, or have the police called for them, they may be tasered instead of being supported and spoken to. Police officers may use their tasers and say that they were worried they were going to get hurt because of someone in a mental health crisis, we fear that this will only bring more stigma and discrimination around mental health and mental illnesses.

We agree that some police officers should have tasers, however feel like they should be properly trained and not given to every police officer. We also feel that if the police officers were to get tasers, they should have to receive a go ahead before using them.

We know from talking with young people that when people are experiencing a mental health crisis/problem/illness they should be treated with dignity, respect, compassion and a calm approach which is the opposite of using a taser. We also know that people experiencing a mental health crisis need to be listened to and heard, and using a taser will not allow this and would most likely stop someone from feeling comfortable about talking about how they're feeling.

Another important point to consider is that the perception of tasers is normally around punishment and we would never want anybody to feel like they were being punished for seeking help or punished for something that they need support with.

We hope you find this information helpful, if you have any questions, please ask.