

**Hertfordshire Independent Body Worn Video
Scrutiny Panel
Annual Report 2023/24**



**Police & Crime
Commissioner**
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

Chair's Foreword



As Chair of the newly created Hertfordshire Independent Body Worn Video (BWV) Scrutiny Panel, I am delighted to present our first annual report.

The Panel has been in a pilot phase since April 2022 and became effective as a full panel in October 2023. We are a small team of 11 panel members with the aim to recruit more members over the year to increase our capacity to review more BWV. Currently we meet every 2 months with a preference to meet face to face.

We have been able to scrutinise 6-8 BWV footage per meeting with a focus on compliance to the Hertfordshire BWV policy and professionalism of the Police Officers.

Over the course of the past year our focus has been on Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, Police Generated, Rowdy / Nuisance and Violence. We have also conducted two deep dives on Stevenage and St Albans Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and our video reviews are selected randomly from the previous 2 months' worth of data.

The support and transparency provided by the Constabulary to the Panel has been exceptional. We have built an excellent working relationship which has helped us to introduce a system of recognition when outstanding performance has been observed and also when areas of concern have been identified and require feedback and reflection from the Officer involved.

Our focus for this year is to increase membership which will allow for increased review of BWV footage. We have also added Safety of the Public and Police Officers to our purpose.

Diversity within the team is currently good however can be enhanced further so this will be taken into consideration when recruiting.

We are the newest and smallest scrutiny panel with an amazing team who have worked hard to get the panel to official status, and I would like to take the time to express my sincere gratitude for all their support and dedication. We work alongside staff from the Office for Police Crime & Commissioner (OPCC) and I would like to express my thanks for their invaluable support in ensuring our meetings run smoothly. It is this diverse team that makes us successful.

Ann Hunter

Chair of the Hertfordshire Independent Body Worn Video Scrutiny Panel

Police and Crime Commissioner's Foreword



Since taking office in May 2024, I am pleased to witness already the impressive breadth of independent scrutiny of Hertfordshire Constabulary undertaken by committed volunteers.

The Body Worn Video (BWV) Scrutiny Panel is the newest addition to the scrutiny panels managed by my office and augments the scrutiny work on use of police powers already undertaken so effectively by the OPCC's Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel and Use of Force Scrutiny Panel.

BWV is a vital tool in modern policing and represents a step-change in transparency in policing activity. It is an important safeguarding measure, protecting officers from potentially malicious allegations and accelerating resolution of complaints. It is an invaluable evidence-gathering device in criminal investigations, whilst it also aids officer learning and development, highlighting good practice as well as areas for improvement in interactions with the public.

In addition to these key benefits, BWV fundamentally advances the potential scope of independent scrutiny of policing activity. BWV opens police practices to communities for closer examination, and I am delighted that Hertfordshire's BWV Scrutiny Panel is helping to maximise the technology's benefits in this respect. The Panel has established a well-defined remit in identifying trends around levels of compliance in the use of BWV, officer attitude, and behaviour and professionalism in interactions with members of the public. These significant insights in turn support me in effectively discharging my duty to hold the Chief Constable to account.

I am grateful to our panel members for volunteering their time to the important work of the BWV Scrutiny Panel, and I look forward to working with them over the coming year as they continue to refine and expand their scrutiny activity in their first full year as a permanent OPCC Scrutiny Panel.

Jonathan Ash-Edwards

Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire Constabulary's Foreword



As the Senior Officer responsible for the oversight of the Use of Police Powers, I am pleased to note the first annual report from the Body Worn Video (BWV) Scrutiny Panel. The work of the panel provides vital independent scrutiny and oversight of the Constabulary's use and deployment of BWV as we interact with the public.

As with much of policing, the methods and tools we use to record evidence in fighting crime and keeping people safe are not without risk in terms of public confidence. Indeed, in the case of BWV its use or omission can impact on communities and policing legitimacy.

In general terms, we seek to use BWV in an 'overt way' in every formal interaction with the public where we are likely to record evidential material. We set clear guidance to all officers with regards to when and how to use this equipment, and vitally to ensure the public know that this is being used. Not only to ensure we capture the best possible evidence but also to reassure the public that policing is accountable and professional in its dealings with them.

The work of the panel is not only to ensure we comply with these policies and guidance but also to provide independent oversight and feedback to our officers on the way in which these interactions are conducted, seeking to ensure that any interactions are professionally conducted and safe for all parties.

Finally, it is important to note that the work of the panel does not operate in a vacuum, indeed when the panel meets, we have in attendance supervisors and operational officers whose presence allows the panel to ask questions to inform its decision-making, and allows operational officers to see the work of the panel, feed back to their peers and inform and improve operational practice.

We are lucky to have the panel in place, acting as an independent 'critical friend' representing the communities of Hertfordshire and holding the Constabulary to account. I look forward to continuing this work with the panel in the coming year.

Chief Superintendent Dean Patient

Chair of Hertfordshire Constabulary's Police Powers Board



Members of the Hertfordshire Independent Body Worn Video Scrutiny Panel at their meeting in April 2024 at Stevenage Fire Station

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. Introduction	9
2. Background	10
3. Panel Membership and Leadership	11
4. Meetings	12
5. Panel Training	13
6. Health Check.....	14
7. Key Findings	15
7.1 Summary of scrutiny data and outputs	15
7.2 Key themes identified by the Panel	17
7.3 Panel impact on Constabulary policy and practice.....	18
7.4 Case studies of BWV incidents.....	19
8. Conclusion	20
Appendix A: Prompt Sheet for Panel Members.....	22
Appendix B: Panel RAG Grading System	23
Appendix C: Process for selecting BWV incidents for the Panel	24
Appendix D: Panel Feedback Loop	25
Glossary of Terms.....	26

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings

- The Panel met six times and scrutinised 36 BWV incidents over the year, an average of 6 incidents per meeting.
- The Panel scrutinised a broad range of different police-defined incident categories including domestic incidents, violence, rowdy nuisance, and police generated activity.
- Of the 36 incidents reviewed, 9 were graded Green, 26 Amber¹, and 1 Red.
- The Panel identified a set of common themes during its scrutiny work this year:
 - Most BWV incidents viewed by the Panel were handled calmly and effectively by officers, although there were some incidents where the Panel felt officers could have gained quicker control of the situation.
 - Officers tended not to inform members of the public they were being recorded on BWV.
 - Officers were praised for their sensitive handling of situations involving vulnerable members of the public.
 - Officer safety was flagged as a concern on multiple occasions, with officers occasionally putting themselves in unnecessary danger. (The Panel's grading system has been adapted as a result to factor in Panel consideration of safety for officers and members of the public.)
 - Officers were not always equipped with suitable kit.
 - Officer statements occasionally lacked a clear rationale for their decision-making or did not reflect what the Panel viewed in the corresponding BWV.

Key achievements

- The Panel has completed a successful pilot period and is now established on a permanent basis as a Scrutiny Panel managed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- The Panel has adapted and evolved its working practices in its first year on a permanent footing and has formed a clear purpose and remit around assessing appropriate use of Body Worn Video and whether officer decision-making adheres to public service values of high standards and professional personal conduct.
- The Panel has operated effective and efficient bi-monthly meetings throughout the year to deliver on this purpose and remit.
- Its work has complemented the specific focus of the Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panels on use of police powers to provide wider insights and observations around officer behaviour and conduct. Hertfordshire now has a richer and more robust police scrutiny landscape as a result.

¹ The high number of Amber grades is due to many officers failing to announce to members of the public that they are being recorded on BWV. The Panel's grading system in use for most of the reporting period meant that this BWV policy compliance issue resulted in an Amber score by default. The grading system was amended towards the end of the reporting period to ensure that it can more appropriately grade incidents in which officer conduct and decision-making is otherwise excellent but still record the fact of failing to notify the member of the public they are being recorded.

- Panel members have taken up a multitude of training opportunities throughout the year, including refresher training, observation of officer training, and ‘Ride Alongs’ with the Constabulary.
- In line with the Health Check recommendations, Panel meetings have been hosted at different external locations across the county, helping to build positive working relationships with partner organisations and facilitate attendance and participation in meetings by Neighbourhood Policing Teams across Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

Recommendations for year ahead (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

- Increase the number of BWV incidents scrutinised, seeking to average 10 incidents per meeting over the course of next year.
- Increase the size of its membership through effective recruitment to facilitate a greater amount of scrutiny, enabling the Panel to break out into groups in line with practice adopted by the other Scrutiny Panels.
- Find effective ways to deliver a more diverse Panel membership by ethnicity, age and those with lived experience of police activity.
- Support the delivery of a communications strategy spanning the OPCC’s scrutiny panels to increase community awareness of and involvement in the panels’ work.
- Adopt a more data-influenced approach to scrutiny work, making more sophisticated use of PowerBI and other police data to understand trends and anomalies and identify issues requiring further investigation – and tracking progress over time.
- Continue to identify public venues for meetings to maximise opportunities for members of the public to observe the Panel’s work; and working to establish effective, practical hybrid meeting options to help attract and retain younger, more diverse panel members.
- Continue to implement the Health Check recommendations and adopt the Home Office’s draft National Guidance for Community Scrutiny Panels to ensure that the Panel aligns with national best practice.

Become a Member of the BWV Scrutiny Panel!

We are recruiting for new Members! As a Panel Member you would:

- **Attend and participate in Panel meetings.** Meetings last for 2.5 hours and are currently held bi-monthly mostly in person, during the day, across the county. Our ambition is to make Panel Meetings as flexible and inclusive as possible, and we continue to develop optimum online and hybrid options.
- **Be offered training to support your scrutiny,** including the opportunity to go on a Ride Along with police officers.
- **Be paid travel expenses.** Whilst this is a voluntary role, the OPCC meets any reasonable travel expenses incurred by Panel members.

We welcome applications from anyone who lives, works or studies in Hertfordshire. The OPCC is particularly interested to hear from younger people and those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a Panel Member, please email Susan McNeill at the OPCC: susan.mcneill@herts-pcc.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The use of Body Worn Video (BWV) is an incredibly powerful tool in modern policing and when used properly has the power to transform how we police. First and foremost, it fundamentally advances transparency in policing activity. We see the benefits of this through the police complaints process where its evidence frequently provides speedy resolution in cases that in the past might have dragged on for years. It also has fantastic evidence-gathering potential in criminal investigations – providing compelling support to officer testimonies, picking up details that might otherwise have been missed, and giving victims and witnesses the opportunity to have their stories captured in the moment. BWV plays an equally important part in officer learning and development, shining a light on good practice as well as errors.

For these reasons, BWV is something that should be embraced wholeheartedly and exploited to its fullest potential. External scrutiny, and the ability of BWV to open police practices to communities for closer examination, is a fundamental part of maximising the technology's benefits. With that objective in mind, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) last year established a new scrutiny panel – the Hertfordshire Independent Body Worn Video (BWV) Scrutiny Panel (hereafter referred to as 'the Panel') – to identify any trends around areas for improvement and support individual and organisational learning in relation to levels of compliance in the use of BWV, officer attitude, and behaviour at incidents.

This is the first annual report of the Panel, which was established on a permanent footing in October 2023 following a successful pilot period. The report summarises the work undertaken by the Panel from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and details the Panel's history and background to date.

The report sets out how the Panel complements and augments the scrutiny of police powers undertaken by the well-established Hertfordshire Independent Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panels to deliver rich and varied insights into officer conduct and interactions with the public via scrutiny of BWV. The technology is a brilliant tool for providing insight. It brings statements to life by enabling Panel members to witness first-hand officer interactions and the behaviours, language and intonation tied up in those interactions – all things that simply are not possible through reading a written statement. BWV also enables Panel members to make independent judgements based on what they see and hear in interactions which would otherwise be based on an officer's perspective. In this respect, the Panel and its use of BWV makes a telling and progressive contribution to the dynamic and wide-ranging police scrutiny landscape in Hertfordshire.

The report concludes by highlighting the Panel's key achievements this year and proposes recommendations to deliver further growth and success in the year to come.

Profile of Hertfordshire

- Hertfordshire is a large county stretching from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to the north to the outskirts of London in the south. It borders Buckinghamshire to the west and Essex to the east.
- Hertfordshire has a population of 1,204,588. 28.2% of residents are from an ethnic minority compared to 26.5% in England as a whole.
- Urban areas make up around a third of Hertfordshire by area and account for around 89% of the population. There is no single dominant large urban centre. In total, there are 40 settlements with 4,000 or more residents in each.
- Hertfordshire Constabulary has Neighbourhood Policing Teams which operate in each of the ten Community Safety Partnerships. These represent the ten local district and borough councils: Dacorum, East Herts, North Herts, Welwyn Hatfield, Broxbourne, Hertsmere, Watford, Three Rivers, St Albans, and Stevenage.
- Hertfordshire has lower crime levels than the national average: 64.6 crimes per 1,000 residents compared to 82.2 in England (Feb 2023 – Jan 2024). However, levels of antisocial behaviour incidents are higher: 21.3 per 1,000 residents compared to 14.7 in England (Feb 2023 – Jan 2024).

See [HertsInsight](#) (ONS Census 2021 Data, ONS mid-2022 population estimates, April 2024) for references and more information.

2. Background

BWV is a vital tool in modern policing. It provides critical evidence, promotes officer safety, improves transparency and trust between the police and communities, and enables officer and wider organisational learning and development.

It also provides new and positive opportunities to expand independent community scrutiny of policing, particularly around officer compliance with BWV policy, decision-making, and conduct and professionalism in interactions with members of the public. The OPCC has sought to make the most of this rich potential by establishing a new independent scrutiny panel that supports the PCC in discharging their statutory duty to hold the Chief Constable to account by assessing the appropriate use of BWV and that officer decision-making is adhering to public service values of high standards and professional personal conduct.

The Panel's pilot was signed off in September 2021 and, following successful scoping work, the Panel convened for the first time in April 2022 with nine volunteer members who lived, worked or studied in Hertfordshire. After demonstrating its value during its pilot period, the Panel was established on a permanent basis in October 2023 and continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis to scrutinise BWV incidents alongside officer statements.

The Panel in operation today took shape during its pilot phase, with key decisions being taken regarding its purpose and remit. It was decided at an early stage, for example, that the

Panel would incorporate within its scrutiny criteria key questions relating to BWV policy compliance, including officers noting if the camera was switched on at the earliest opportunity and informing individuals they are being recorded. It was also agreed that the Panel's scope would be broadened to examine officer conduct, providing a wider understanding of the way officers handle different incidents, whilst mitigating the risk of duplication with the Stop and Search and Use of Force Panels and their very specific remits around use of police powers.

It was decided that BWV footage would be selected based on themes, enabling the Panel to drill down and explore thematics such as violence, domestic incidents, and mental health. A new RAG (Red-Amber-Green) grading system and accompanying feedback sheet were created to reflect the Panel's distinct role and purpose and enable members to making informed and meaningful assessments. The Panel's development was strongly supported by representatives from Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Since being placed on a permanent footing in October 2023, the Panel has continued to demonstrate its value by providing key insights into officer compliance, professionalism, safety and decision-making, delivering a distinct, but complementary strand of scrutiny alongside the work of the Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panels on the use of police powers that enhances the totality of scrutiny undertaken in Hertfordshire.

3. Panel Membership and Leadership

The Panel has benefited from consistent and valued leadership since its first meeting in April 2022. Ann Hunter has served as Chair of the Panel since June 2022 and Daren Power has served as Vice Chair since June 2023. The meetings are run efficiently to ensure the Panel delivers on its objective to provide effective scrutiny. They also work in close partnership with the OPCC to identify and implement measures that will continue to grow and strengthen the impact of the Panel.

As of 31 March 2024, the Panel had a total membership of 11 members, all of whom live, work or study in Hertfordshire and bring a wealth of valuable experience and insights to its work. During the year, three new members joined the Panel and two members stepped down.

The Panel's overall membership remains relatively small and one key ambition for the coming year is to increase the size of its membership to enable a greater volume of records to be scrutinised at panel meetings. A larger membership would, for example, enable the Panel to break out into two or more groups and conduct scrutiny in parallel (as is standard practice by the Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panels).

The Panel is also committed to strengthening the diversity of its membership to better represent the demographics in the wider county. The OPCC is continuing efforts to broaden the diversity of all its Panels' memberships by age, ethnicity and lived experience of the criminal justice system and addressing this point will be an absolute priority in the coming year. To deliver a more proactive approach to recruitment, the OPCC has developed a 'mock panel' model that will be delivered in colleges and educational settings to bring to life the

scrutiny process and engage proactively and directly with young people from less well represented communities throughout the county.

It is the Panel’s target to reflect the demographics within Hertfordshire and we will continue to pursue a recruitment strategy that delivers as far as possible a Panel membership which echoes the thriving diversity in our county.

The following table provides a breakdown of Panel membership by gender, age and ethnicity compared against Hertfordshire’s 2021 Census data:

Category	Panel	2021 Census ²
Gender		
Female	45.5%	51%
Male	54.5%	49%
Age		
16 – 24	0%	9.4%
25 – 39	0%	19.9%
40 – 54	36.3%	21.3%
55 – 70	27.3%	17.2%
70+	9.1%	12.5%
Prefer not to say	27.3%	
Self-defined Ethnicity		
White	72.7%	81.8%
Asian/Asian British	18.2%	8.6%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0%	3.8%
Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African	9.1%	3.7%
Other Ethnic Group	0%	2.1%

4. Meetings

Terms of Reference (ToR) are in place to guide the work of the Panel and provide clarity and transparency around its remit, membership, and governance. These are reviewed every two years, but with flexibility in place to make amendments if circumstances require. The ToRs are published on the OPCC website.³

A Superintendent, Chief Inspector, Inspector and Sergeant (or combination thereof) from Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Strategy, Performance and Transformation Department (OST) is present at all meetings to answer operationally specific questions from the Panel. Their role is not to provide an opinion or grading on an incident, but to advise on operational context or inform the Panel, when audio is unclear, what an officer would have heard through their earpiece. This support provides the Panel with all relevant information and in turn enables members to make informed gradings. Members of OST are responsible for ensuring

² ONS Census 2021 Hertfordshire: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/areas/E10000015/>

³ [bwv-panel-terms-of-reference-2024.pdf \(hertscommissioner.org\)](#)

feedback from the Panel is received by the relevant officer and their line management as appropriate.

Invitations to meetings are extended to other representatives across the Constabulary where appropriate; for instance, if there is a focus on a particular CSP, the relevant Chief Inspector will be invited to attend. As the Panel meets at different venues across the county, Sergeants and Police Constables from Neighbourhood Policing Teams are invited to attend to observe and understand the Panel's work. Feedback from attending officers continues to be very positive as it helps them understand public opinion on the deployment of police powers.

The Panel meets on a bi-monthly basis to review incidents which took place in the preceding two months. The Panel met on six occasions during this reporting period. Meetings follow an established format including standing agenda items (welcome, apologies, minutes, actions, and Constabulary feedback), with a majority of meeting time dedicated to scrutiny.

Panel members randomly select a BWV incident to observe from a numbered list supplied by the OPCC (which itself is randomly generated from police data - please see Appendix C). The Panel reads the officer's statement linked to the incident, before viewing the accompanying BWV footage. Panel members then discuss their observations in detail. They can pose any operationally specific questions to members of the Constabulary present in order to provide clarity. Panel members then form a commonly agreed grading for the incident using their RAG grading system and complete a feedback form with written observations which is conveyed to the officer concerned via the Constabulary lead.

An established feedback loop (see Appendix D) is in place between the Panel and the Constabulary, meaning that the work and views of the Panel has a direct and meaningful impact on the training and performance of officers on the frontline. Following each meeting all Panel feedback is circulated via the Strategy, Performance and Transformation Department to the officer's Sergeant or Inspector to deliver the feedback. All positive feedback is provided back to officers, and, in cases of exemplary conduct, the Panel will send a thank you note to the officer concerned.

Where the Panel raises specific concerns about any given incident, these are recorded on the Constabulary's action tracker and the outcome and any agreed next steps for the officer concerned are outlined to the Panel at its next meeting in order to complete the feedback loop. In rare cases involving potential serious misconduct, procedures are in place to enable the Panel to refer an incident to the Professional Standards Department (PSD).

5. Panel Training

On joining the Panel, new members participate in one or both core training sessions delivered to members of the Use of Force and Stop and Search Panels, which covers BWV Policy. In parallel, they receive core training to understand the purpose and remit of the Panel and the role and expectations placed on members. Members are offered refresher training on an ongoing basis.

Panel members are also encouraged at any point in their membership to participate in the Constabulary's Ride Along scheme, giving members the opportunity to join officers on patrol

and experience daily policing first-hand to provide them with the operational context in which stop and searches are conducted across different scenarios. With the help of the Constabulary, the Ride Along application process for Panel members was streamlined this year, significantly reducing wait times between applying and participating in the scheme.

We continue to work with the Constabulary to identify opportunities for Panel members to attend and observe officer training, not just for stop and search but for relevant wider topics such as Bias training. In December 2023 and January 2024, members from all OPCC Scrutiny Panels had the opportunity to attend 'Impact of Bias' training being delivered to frontline officers in Neighbourhood Policing Teams. This gave members additional insight into the training officers receive around how bias training is being used to minimise the impact of any assumptions, biases, or stereotyping and how that can impact decision-making in policing. Feedback from Panel members was extremely positive.

In line with the Health Check recommendations, the OPCC continues to explore how to improve and widen the training offer to Panel members to give them the best possible grounding to fulfil their scrutiny role effectively, including exploring what value might be added by potential external training providers to supplement what is already delivered in-house by the OPCC and Constabulary.

6. Health Check

Significant progress has been made this year in implementing the recommendations made by the independent Health Check of the governance and operations of the Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel and Use of Force Scrutiny Panel, undertaken on behalf of the OPCC by Att10tive Social Enterprise.⁴ The Health Check concluded that in Hertfordshire the foundations and framework are in place to provide effective scrutiny and oversight of police powers. It identified areas of good practice and made recommendations for further areas of development which have been progressed at pace.

Whilst the BWV Panel was not fully established when the Health Check was completed, we have as a matter of policy implemented its recommendations across all three panels to ensure alignment between panels and with recommended best practice. In addition, we continue to focus on ensuring the panels' alignment with national best practice set out in the Home Office's draft National Guidance for Community Scrutiny Panels.

In the coming year, there will be a resolute focus on raising community awareness of, and involvement in, the work of OPCC scrutiny panels and continuing efforts to broaden the diversity of the Panels' membership by age, ethnicity and lived experience of the criminal justice system. These objectives will be delivered by a coherent, unified communications strategy sitting across all the OPCC's scrutiny panels. The Panel recognises that improving diverse attendance and membership must go hand-in-hand with considering what format panel meetings take in future. Meetings held during the day in a formal classroom setting

⁴ Att10tive Social Enterprise <https://att10tive.com/>

will not always appeal to younger people and those with different work or learning commitments.

7. Key Findings

7.1 Summary of scrutiny data and outputs

The Panel met six times this year and scrutinised a total of 36 BWV incidents in Hertfordshire (an average of six incidents per meeting). The aim for the coming year is to increase the totality of scrutiny undertaken by the Panel, which will go hand-in-hand with increasing the size and diversity of its membership.

For each meeting, the Panel is provided with a list of BWV incidents randomly selected from a range of police-defined categories from police records. Figure 1 summarises the number of incidents for each selected category that the Panel assessed this year. The incident categories provide the Panel with a diverse range of scenarios to view, including incidents involving domestic abuse, vehicle stops, violence and rowdy behaviour, and arrests and searches.

Figure 1: Incidents Scrutinised by Category, April 2023 to March 2024

Incident Category (as defined by Hertfordshire Constabulary)	Number of incidents scrutinised by the Panel
Police Generated	12
Rowdy Nuisance	9
Domestic Incident	8
Violence	7
TOTAL	36

The Panel's grading approach follows a Red-Amber-Green rating system in line with best practice and in alignment with the Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panels. The Panel assesses incidents against a range of considerations including the officer's compliance with BWV policy, the completeness and clarity of their decision-making, their adherence to the College of Policing Code of Ethics, their effectiveness in controlling a situation and keeping themselves and members of the public safe, and their ability to build rapport with the public.

The grading system is detailed in Figure 2. (Please see Appendix A for the prompt sheet used by Panel members to assist their grading decisions.)

Figure 2: Panels RAG (Red-Amber-Green) Grading System (updated February 2024)

Green	<p>Appropriate with observation(s)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate and consistent with Hertfordshire Constabulary Policies / Standard Operating Procedure. 2. Observation that officer did not inform member of the public they are being recorded, otherwise appropriate and consistent with Hertfordshire Constabulary Policies / Standard Operating Procedure.
Amber	<p>Appropriate with observation(s)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observations relating to the officers' behaviour or performance. 2. Any other observations relating to policy / SOP compliance, or safety.
Red	<p>Inappropriate and inconsistent with policy</p>

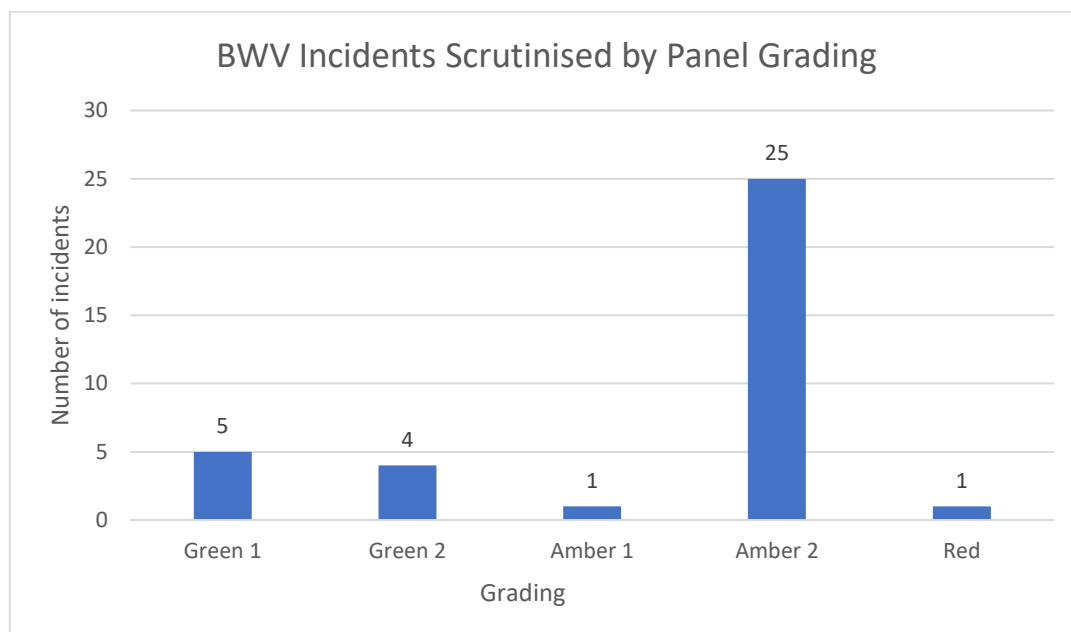
The chart at figure 3 summarises how the Panel graded the incidents it scrutinised over the course of the year.

Overall, the majority of incidents were graded 'Amber 2' (appropriate with observations) by the Panel. This is because the previous iteration of the grading system required Panel members to grade as Amber incidents where the officer did not inform the member of the public that they were being recorded (a BWV policy requirement), even if their approach and conduct was exemplary in all other respects. In February 2024, the grading system was amended to create a new 'Green 2' grade to enable the Panel to assess incidents in which the officer displays excellent conduct and decision-making whilst still recording the failure to inform a member of the public they are being video recorded.

The Panel were concerned that the previous grading system risked creating a false perception that officer behaviour and decision-making was somehow poor in most incidents viewed by the Panel, which has not been the case.

The revised RAG grading system also factors in the theme of safety within the Amber 2 grade which enables the Panel to assess officers' effectiveness in keeping themselves, fellow officers and members of the public safe. This amendment was introduced in response to recommendations made by the Health and Safety Executive and concerns raised in Panel feedback around officer safety and has been welcomed by the Constabulary.

Figure 3: summary of grades allocated to incidents scrutinised, April 2023 to March 2024



(source: Panel scrutiny records)

7.2 Key themes identified by the Panel

Most incidents were handled calmly and effectively by officers:

In most incidents viewed by the Panel, it was noted that officers handled the situation well. There were only two incidents reviewed by the Panel where the officer's decision-making was assessed as being poor or unclear. Officers were often calm in their approach to engaging the public and displayed good skills in de-escalating situations. There were, however, three incidents where officers' language and behaviour were judged too aggressive. In one of these incidents, an officer's language in dealing with a suspected drunk driver escalated the situation and resulted in unnecessary confrontation.

Officers tended not to inform members of the public they were being recorded:

In a majority of incidents, the officer failed to inform members of the public they were being recorded, which is a breach of Standard Operating Procedure. This prompted the Constabulary to circulate a reminder to all frontline officers, but compliance with this BWV policy requirement does remain a challenge.

Officers in most cases displayed empathy and concern for welfare where appropriate:

In six incidents reviewed by the Panel, officers were praised for their sensitive handling of situations involving vulnerable members of the public, for which they received positive feedback. However, in one domestic abuse-related incident assessed in December 2023, the Panel observed that an officer could have taken a more empathetic approach in communicating with children at the scene, where this was judged to be quite cold and lacking in care.

Officers occasionally put themselves in unnecessary danger:

Concerns for officer safety were raised in eight of the incidents reviewed. In one incident reviewed in October 2023, Panel members identified that an officer, intervening in a violent situation, attempted to deal with a detained person close to a railway line. In another incident viewed in December 2023, the Panel observed that the officer put themselves at risk by bending over to tie their shoelace when a front door they had knocked on was being answered. In the same incident they later went on to allow a detained person to switch handcuffs to the front stack position. (This incident partly prompted the amendment to the RAG grading system to factor in consideration of officer safety).

Officers could have established better control of the situation in some incidents:

There were seven incidents reviewed by the Panel where it was judged the officer could have established better control of the situation. This would sometimes have implications for officer safety and safeguarding. For instance, in one domestic abuse-related incident, the officer allowed the alleged perpetrator (male) to wander into the same space as his children while they were being questioned by police. In another example, an officer allowed a detained person to freely roam around and search their home, moving from room to room – it was suggested that officers would have been better restricting the person's movement to one room (specifically denying access to the kitchen for safety reasons).

Officers were not always equipped with suitable kit:

At the October 2023 meeting, the Panel noted in several incidents that officers had insufficient kit (spit guard, pens, drink/drive kit, etc.) and were therefore ill-equipped to deal with situations that they might need to take control of.

Officer statements could be improved:

Officer statements were provided for most of the incidents scrutinised over the course of the year; only four BWV incidents lacked a corresponding statement. The Panel has also noted that statements do not always reflect the BWV footage and sometimes omit crucial information which would have helped evidence the officer's decision-making.

7.3 Panel impact on Constabulary policy and practice

The Panel's work has had a positive impact on individual officer learning and development, and wider Constabulary policy and practice. Through their scrutiny, members have evidenced the clear trend of officers not informing members of the public they are being recorded on BWV. Important concerns have also been raised around officer safety which now forms a core question for the Panel in assessing incidents. At its meeting in August 2023, the Panel identified an inconsistency with the Constabulary's approach to dealing with no insurance vehicle stops. This observation resulted in guidance being sent to officers on what the correct policy should be for future incidents.

The Panel's feedback has had a positive impact on the conduct and behaviour of individual officers. During one piece of BWV footage, members observed that an officer's bad language escalated the aggressive behaviour of a drink driver. Their Inspector held a one-to-one

meeting with the officer and subsequently reflected back to the Panel that the officer's behaviour had improved.

7.4 Case studies of BWV incidents

The case studies below set out the Panel's observations on two separate incidents, to illustrate the types of issues and concerns that members typically identify when scrutinising incidents.

The first case study is an incident graded Green which received positive feedback, although there was some concern expressed for safety of the officers involved. The second case study is for an incident graded Red where serious concerns were identified, including a perceived aggressive attitude displayed by the officer, and an apparent absence of clear decision-making.

Case Study 1 – Example of an incident receiving positive feedback.

Category: Police Generated.

Context: Traffic stop. Officer stops driver for driving otherwise in accordance with a driving license (DL).

Panel comments: Statement provided. Camara started upon engagement. Person cautioned as officer learns 'driving other than in accordance with DL' and the detainee was a provisional licence holder with a pillion* passenger. Searched under Sec 23 MDA (intelligence that vehicle was linked to supply of drugs.) Video announcement made and right to search record heard. Further cautioned when arrested for possible offensive weapon. The panel was concerned that one officer turned away from the detainee once cuffed and they considered this to be an officer safety risk. All officers were calm, polite, and respectful. The team worked well together. Discussion followed regarding officers being 'too friendly.' The panel was advised that this was a tactical communications decision. Officers need to be approachable. In this case the detainees were young. From a safety viewpoint, the Panel raised why detainee seated on the car bonnet with traffic close by when large green area was available.

Grade: Green – with advice to be given to officer regarding their personal safety.

**A pillion is a secondary pad, cushion, or seat behind the main seat or saddle on a horse, motorcycle, bicycle or moped.*

Case Study 2 – Example of an incident where areas for significant improvement were identified.

Category: Police Generated.

Context: Traffic stop. Officer detains person for taking without consent and suspected drunk driving.

Panel comments: Statement provided. Camera switched on early, but the quality of the recording was poor, both in terms of lighting and angle. Footage skipped beyond the 'person check' as this is a lengthy process and not part of the scrutiny process. Detainee was arrested for 'taking without consent' and further arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. The panel felt that the officer was somewhat confrontational; the detainee was cheeky but not aggressive. He appeared compliant. No mention of recording heard. It was not apparent to the panel as to why the handcuffs were applied. This should have been covered in the statement. Detainee was young and the officer believed he was even younger and the panel felt this did not warrant her combative attitude. They felt her decision-making process was questionable. The officer should have been more focused in her questioning.

Grade: Red – due to combative and judgemental attitude displayed by officer.

8. Conclusion

This report evidences the Panel's view that there are no serious concerns about Hertfordshire Constabulary officers' appropriate use of BWV, and that officer decision-making in almost all instances adheres to public service values of high standards and professional personal conduct. Where concerns have been raised, the Panel's feedback has been used as appropriate to inform individual officer learning and development and Constabulary policy and practice. The Constabulary has reported back to the Panel on outcomes and actions agreed in response to its concerns, ensuring a complete feedback loop (see Appendix D) for the Panel's work.

This year has been one of significant progress for the Panel following its establishment on a permanent basis. The Panel has evolved and adapted its own practices throughout the year to strengthen the meaning, relevance and impact of its scrutiny, and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Whilst we note its successes this year, the Panel is still in its early stages of development and there is much more exciting progress to be made.

In 2024/25, the Panel has agreed it will focus on delivering on the following recommendations, which will increase the totality and impact of its scrutiny and deliver closer alignment with both the Use of Force and Stop and Search Scrutiny Panels and national best practice as set out in the Home Office's draft National Guidance on Community Scrutiny Panels:

- Increase the number of BWV incidents scrutinised, seeking to average 10 incidents per meeting over the course of next year.

- Increase the size of its membership through effective recruitment in order to facilitate a greater amount of scrutiny, enabling the Panel to break out into groups in line with practice adopted by the other Scrutiny Panels.
- Find effective ways to deliver a more diverse Panel membership by ethnicity, age and those with lived experience of police activity.
- Support the delivery of a communications strategy spanning the OPCC's scrutiny panels to increase community awareness of and involvement in the panels' work.
- Adopt a more data-influenced approach to scrutiny work, making more sophisticated use of PowerBI and other police data to understand trends and anomalies and identify issues requiring further investigation – and tracking progress over time.
- Continue to identify public venues for meetings to maximise opportunities for members of the public to observe the Panel's work; and working to establish effective, practical hybrid meeting options to help attract and retain younger, more diverse panel members.
- Continue to implement the Health Check recommendations and adopt the Home Office's draft National Guidance for Community Scrutiny Panels to ensure that the Panel aligns with national best practice.

Progress against delivering on these recommendations is already underway and will be reported on in full in next year's annual report.

Appendix A: Prompt Sheet for Panel Members

This prompt sheet is to help panel members expand on the grading sheet questions to help provide overall comments for the footage they are scrutinising. The overall comments box is where officers gain the best feedback. This should include why they have given the score they have, what was good about the incident they viewed and what improvements there could have been.

Supplementary Questions

Was the camera turned on at the earliest opportunity?

- If the camera was switched on at the earliest opportunity, at what stage was this? For example, in the car arriving at the scene, before conducting a stop and search etc, as this will help to identify good practice.
- If you felt the officer did not switch the camera on at the earliest opportunity, when do you believe it would have been a more appropriate time?
- Is the audio and picture quality clear?

Did the officer inform everyone they were being recorded?

- Although the officer may have said they were recording, was this made clear and did the individual(s) in the footage acknowledge this?
- Whilst announcing they were recording, did the officer also explain the nature of the incident?
- If no, when do you feel was the most practical time for the officer to inform everyone at the scene their BWV was switched on?

General Considerations:

- Is the safety of the Officer and members of the Public maintained throughout?
- When interacting with the individual(s), was the officer honest, used correct language, and treated all people fairly and with respect?
- Is the decision-making process of the officer clear and complete?
- Did the officer follow the 'Ethical Policing Principles' (Courage, Respect & Empathy, Public Service)?

Were all parts of GOWISLEY covered? (Stop and Search Only)

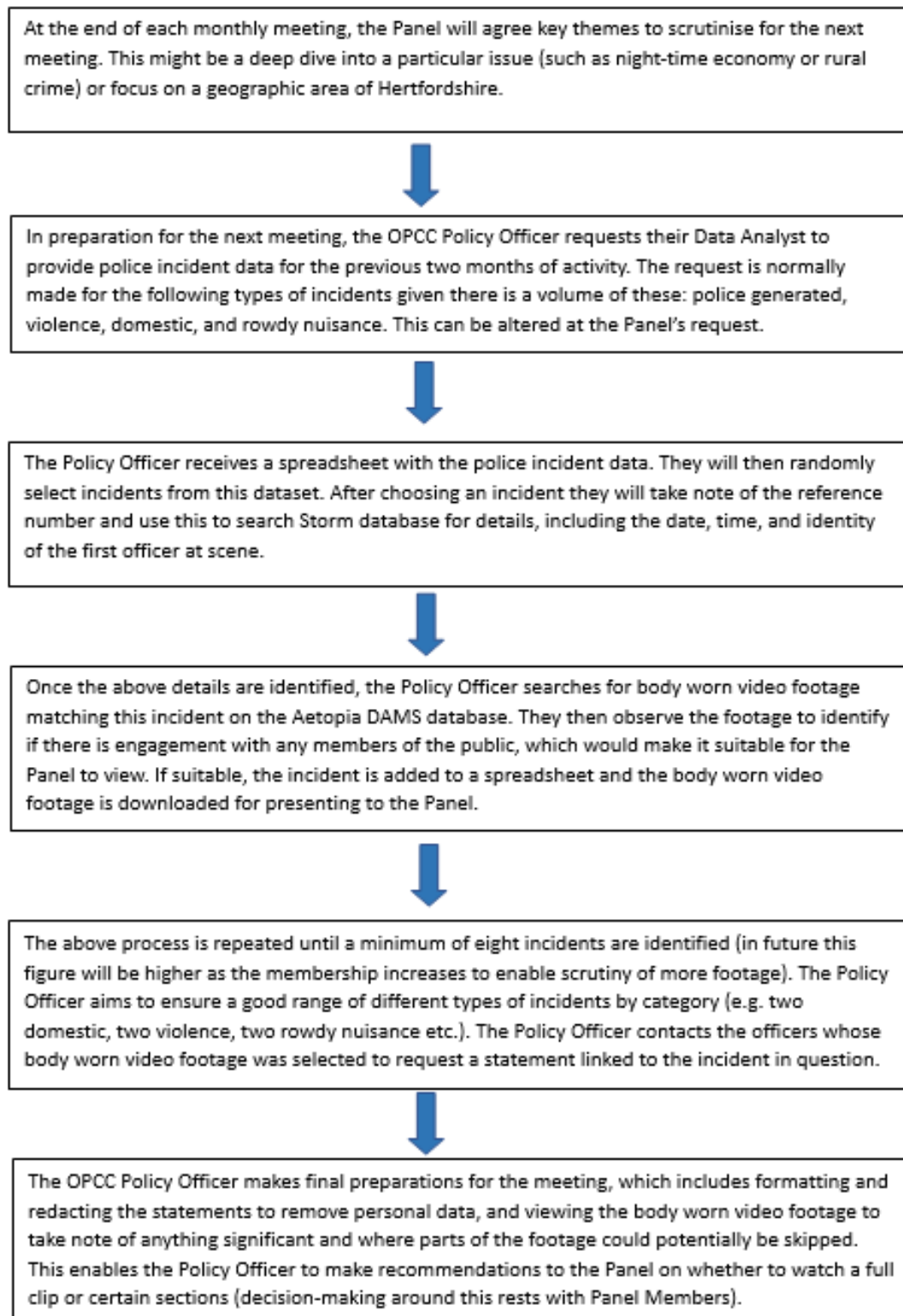
- If no, what parts did the officer not cover?

Appendix B: Panel RAG Grading System

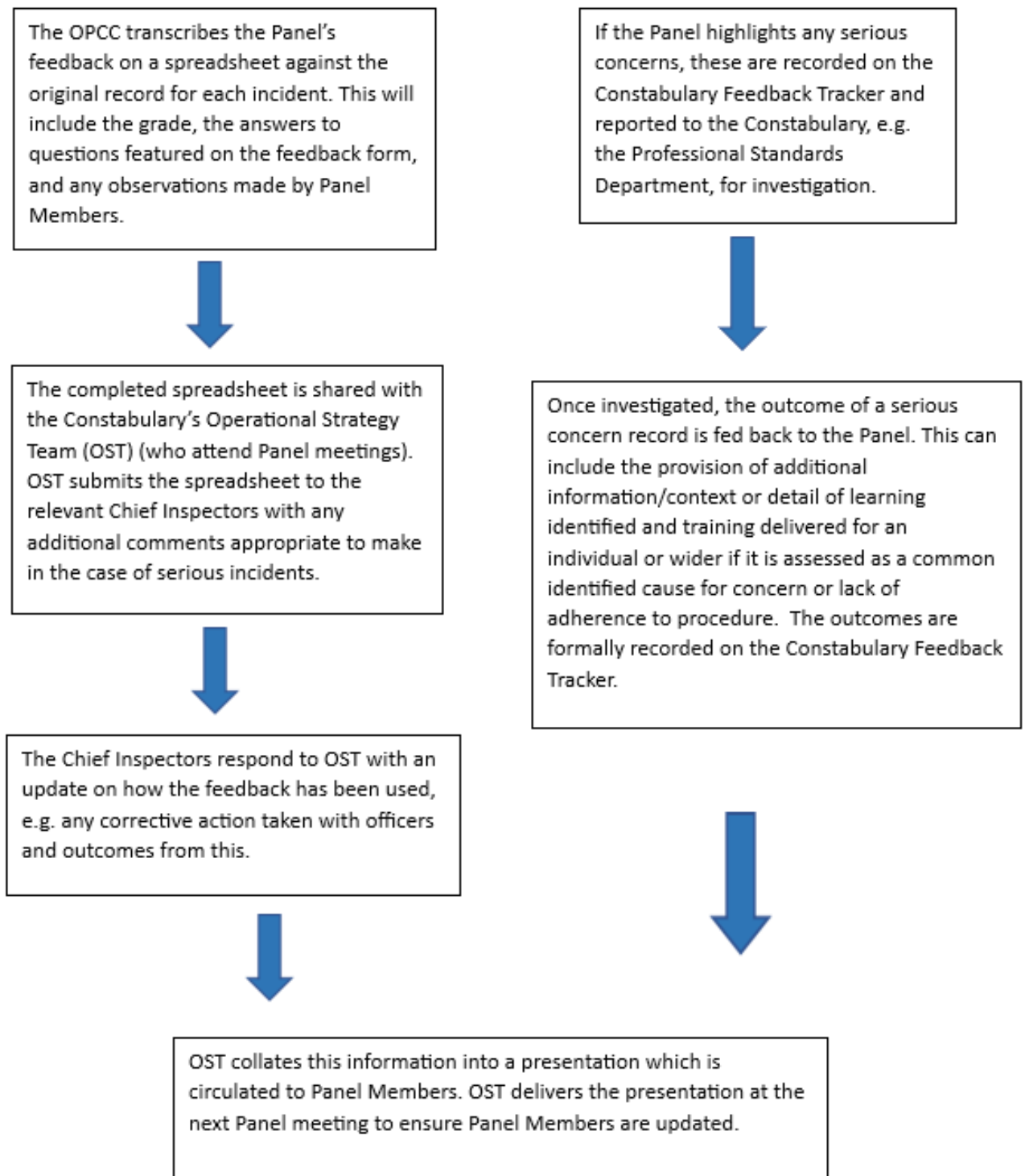
The Panel uses the below system for grading incidents reviewed in meetings.

Green	Appropriate with observation(s) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appropriate and consistent with Hertfordshire Constabulary Policies / Standard Operating Procedure.2. Observation that officer did not inform member of the public they are being recorded, otherwise appropriate and consistent with Hertfordshire Constabulary Policies / Standard Operating Procedure.
Amber	Appropriate with observation(s) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Observations relating to the officers' behaviour or performance.2. Any other observations relating to policy / SOP compliance, or safety.
Red	Inappropriate and inconsistent with policy

Appendix C: Process for selecting BWV incidents for the Panel



Appendix D: Panel Feedback Loop



Glossary of Terms

Terms	Acronym (if applicable)	Description
Body Worn Video	BWV	The cameras which officers wear to capture both video and audio evidence.
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	OPCC	The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner helps the Commissioner to discharge their statutory duties and deliver their Police and Crime Plan. Office staff are politically restricted. This includes being a member of a political party.
Red, Amber, Green rating	RAG	Also known as 'traffic lighting,' this rating system is used to summarise indicator values, where green denotes a 'favourable' value, red an 'unfavourable' value and amber a 'neutral' value.
Code of Ethics		The Code of Ethics is a non-statutory guidance framework developed by the College of Policing which outlines ethical policing principles and guidance for ethical and professional behaviour in policing. For more information visit the College of Policing website: Code of Ethics College of Policing
Aetopia DAMS database		Police database containing records of body worn video footage uploaded by officers.
Storm		Police database containing information regarding incidents handled by the police, including call log details (e.g., date and time the incident was reported to Force Communications Room, officers mobilised and attending the scene etc.).
Community Safety Partnership	CSP	Community Safety Partnerships are made up of representatives from the police, Local Authorities, fire and rescue authorities, health and probation services (the 'responsible authorities'). The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer.