



STOP AND ACCOUNT: CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide the results of a consultation exercise to capture the views and experiences of young people in West Cheshire about their police stop and account experiences.

METHODOLOGY

2. A questionnaire was designed in collaboration with Connexions. The survey was conducted face to face by link workers in West Cheshire over a six week period, in 23 locations including youth clubs, parks and interest groups such as Young parents, Utopia (for LGB&T) young people, Youth Challenge and "New Images".

RESULTS

3. 163 people responded to the questionnaire, demographics are provided as Appendix 2. 94 of the respondents stated they had been stopped and asked to account for themselves and 59 had not. 62 of the 94 young people had been stopped within the last 6 months. The number of encounters are provided in the table below:-

Number of times been stopped by the Police	Number of people
None	15
Once	24
2-5	23
5-10	9
10-20	9

4. Where respondents gave examples of the places where they had been stopped they provided the following information. Three of the experiences took place outside Cheshire (Heswall, Deeside and Wrexham) and eight said that the stop had taken place in a train station (by British Transport Police).

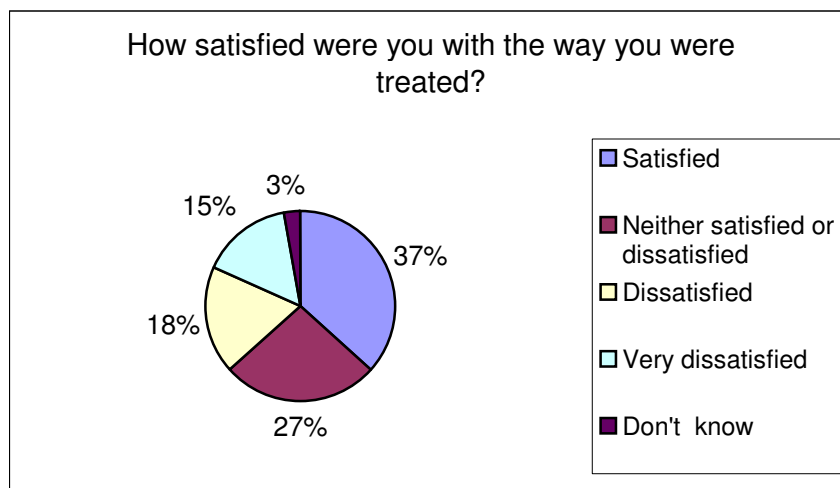
Northwich	12	Blacon	24
Rudheath	3	Chester City centre	20
Winsford	15	Neston	7
Everywhere	3	Heswall	1
Winnington	5	Wrexham	1
Near shops	1	Deeside	1
Can't remember	1	Ellesmere Port	2
Next to my house	4	Liverpool	1
On a park	9	Buckley	1

EXPERIENCES

- Respondents were asked:- “thinking of the last time you were stopped and asked to account for yourself, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”:
- The results below indicate that the majority of young people felt that they had been treated fairly and the reason for the stop had been explained to them, however, the stop process had not been explained well to most respondents and slightly over half felt that they had not been listened to.

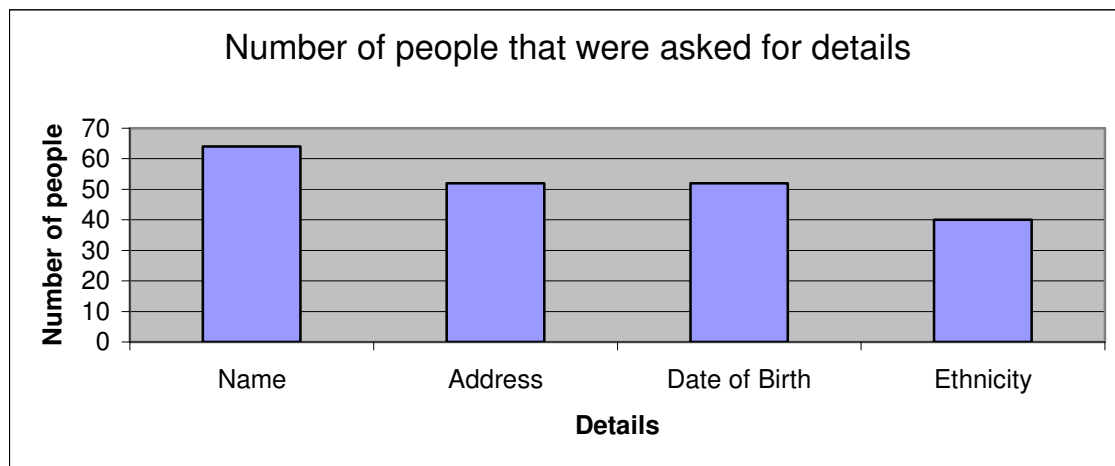
The Police Officer/PCSO who stopped me:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Treated me fairly	5	46	12	25	6	0
Explained why I had been stopped	3	56	11	18	5	1
Explained how stop and account works	1	20	11	49	9	4
Listened to what I had to say	3	25	19	34	13	0

- Respondents were asked “overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way you were treated during your stop?” 37% of the young people who answered this question were satisfied with the way they were treated and 33% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 30% gave a neutral response.



Satisfied	29
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	34
Dissatisfied	13
Very dissatisfied	16
Don't know	2

8. When asked whether they would know how to make a complaint about treatment during a stop and account, only 20 respondents stated that they would know. 50 respondents said they would not know how to make a complaint. The remainder did not answer the question.
9. Respondents were asked: “when you were stopped, which of the following were you asked for?” Worryingly, only 40 of the 94 had been asked to define their ethnicity, but as 70% declared that they had been asked for their name, this may indicate some reluctance to answer the question.



10. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:-

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I understand my rights if a police officer/PCSO stops me	23	35	7	20	5	5
I understand why a police officer/ PCSO will ask me for my ethnicity if they stop me	2	26	8	25	28	4

11. 61% of the respondents said that they understood their rights but only 30% understood why they were asked for their ethnicity.

COMMENTS

12. The nature of the consultation, i.e. young people being asked to complete the survey, face to face with briefed link workers, who were themselves young people in locations which provided access to young people with whom it is harder to engage, allowed an excellent opportunity to capture the respondent's comments and thoughts about their stop encounters. Generally, the comments differed by geographic area and some experiences appeared to be dependant upon the local officers. The comments collated are summarised as follows:-

- Most young people did not understand the difference between the Constabulary and the Police Authority;
- The majority of young people felt victimised by the police if they felt that they had been stopped for no reason but they did understand the need for the stop process. If the reason for the stop was explained, the acceptance level was higher but many felt that they were stopped without good reason;
- Some young people felt that the location was a police target due to its reputation but that the stops taking place in a target location were based upon stereotyping; young people wearing tracksuits, hoodies or "goth" attire would be more likely to be asked to explain their behaviour than if they were wearing "normal" clothes;
- There was a perception that older people (early twenties) do not get stopped even if they are drunk and disorderly;
- There was some evidence of stop forms being collected as "trophies" and saved to demonstrate social status; and
- Individual experiences were varied between PCSOs and officers being perceived positively, there were many positive and negative comments received.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) engagement with young people be undertaken to explain the role of the Authority and to communicate "know your rights" for police stop experiences; and
- (3) the Chief Constable be asked to consider the findings from the consultation and review the training provided to officers on how to explain the stop and account/search process to young people.