



Police Service of Northern Ireland

EQIA on the Use of Spit and Bite Guards-interim EQIA Stage 7 data

The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the continued use of Spit and Bite Guards, published on 30 June 2022, found that any Section 75 group that is:

- (i) more likely to be subject to the use of a Spit and Bite Guard or
- (ii) which may be more likely to be negatively affected by the application of a Spit and Bite Guard if they are subjected to its use

may be adversely impacted by the use of Spit and Bite Guards in a post-Coronavirus environment. Alternatively, if officers deploy a Spit and Bite Guard in situations where physical restraint would be the only other option, the impact could be largely positive.

The EQIA concluded that the use of Spit and Bite Guards affects all Section 75 groups. In examining the data available within the EQIA and the comments from respondents, we identified that there may be a greater impact on some groups, namely:

- men
- young people
- people with a disability (including mental health)
- members of the Catholic community

Stage 7 of the EQIA process (*Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring*) began in July 2022.

To comply with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (ECNI) guidance on Equality Impact Assessments, we have developed a system to monitor the impact of our Spit and Bite Guards policy on the relevant groups and sub groups within the Section 75 equality categories (detailed below). We will review the results of ongoing

monitoring on an annual basis. The results of this monitoring will be included in the PSNI Annual Progress report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

We will present this data in the Stage 7 EQIA report on the Use of Spit and Bite Guards in July 2023.

We have monitored the use of Spit and Bite Guards daily since the introduction of the tactic (temporarily) in March 2020. The Service's Operational and Tactical Development Unit search the Use of Force system daily and note the details of any applications of a Spit and Bite Guard on a spreadsheet. The Spit and Bite Guard Daily Return Spreadsheet contains the following data:

- Officer details
- Name of subject
- Age of subject
- Gender of subject
- Ethnicity of subject
- Community background of subject
- Any disability noted (we use the Equality Act 2010 definition of a disability: *...a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.*)
- Duration of application of the guard
- If alcohol/drugs were a factor
- If the incident was related to mental health
- If the subject is married
- If the subject has dependants

- Details of the Officer/Staff applying the guard
- District applied and where applied (street/police car etc.)
- If Body Worn Video used activated
- When the officer completed Spit and Bite Guard training
- If the incident was referred to the Police Ombudsman

If there has been a Spit and Bite Guard deployment on a child, we view the Body Worn Video of the incident and prepare a report for ACC Operational Support Department for discussion at the Service Accountability Panel.

We circulate the Spit and Bite Guard spreadsheet weekly to Senior Management within the Service, District Commanders, our Professional Standards Department and Staff Associations.

How we capture data:

To assist with the preparation of the Stage 7 EQIA report, we capture quantitative data on the use of Spit and Bite Guards from our electronic Police records system (the system we use to capture details of calls from the public to police control centres. It also records the police resources dispatched to incidents and monitors events and calls for service) and forms that record injuries on duty.

We use the Police records system to gather data on the following Section 75 groups:

- Age
- Gender
- Racial/Ethnic Group

These are the only Section 75 groups we hold official data on.

We obtain data relating to the remaining Section 75 groups by asking a detained person questions in the custody suite or from officer perception or previous

knowledge of an individual. We hold this information on the Case Management System - our core operational information system. We cannot rely on this information as official data as a detained person may wish to withhold it or to provide inaccurate information.

We use a manual trawl of our Case Management System to gather data on the following Section 75 groups:

- Religious Belief
- Marital Status
- Disability
- People with dependants and those without

However, whilst we may ask for these details, the detained person can decline to provide them or provide inaccurate information. Officer perception or previous knowledge of an individual can account for some of the data recorded for these four groups.

The Police Service never asks for data on the following Section 75 groups:

- Sexual Orientation
- Political Opinion

Following publication of the Stage 7 EQIA report in July 2023, we will continue to review data on the Section 75 groups on an annual basis. The Service Accountability Panel (SAP) will provide governance for the use of Spit and Bite Guards and will consider quarterly data reports on Spit and Bite Guard deployments, to include deployment on the nine protected groups. Data collated to date shows that we use Spit and Bite Guards predominantly on young males, which reflects similar levels in the wider judicial system. If data reviews highlight a disproportionate use of the tactic on any group or any deviation from the standard norm, we will conduct further analysis and additional engagement with advocates for the protected group.

Our Statistics Branch present a bi-annual Use of Force report to the NI Policing Board and an annual public Use of Force report. These reports contain data on all types of force used by the Service and includes Spit and Bite Guards.

Deployments of Spit and Bite Guards on the Section 75 Groups-interim data:

Below are statistics we have gathered to date relating to deployments of Spit and Bite Guard on seven of the nine Section 75 groups (we do not ask for information on sexual orientation or political opinion). We obtained the figures below from our Case Management System based on 325 deployments from 16 March 2020-16 December 2022.

Gender	Spit and Bite Guard Applications	% of Total Deployments
Male	272	83.7
Female	53	16.3

Ethnicity	Spit and Bite Guard Applications	% of Total Deployments
White	309	95.1
Black	6	1.8
Irish Traveller	4	1.2
Roma	3	<1
Other	3	<1

Age range	Spit and Bite Guard Applications	% of Total Deployments
10 – 17	19	5.8
18 – 20	40	12.3
21 – 30	141	43.4
31 – 40	85	26.2
41 – 50	29	8.9
51 – 60	10	3.1
71 – 80	1	<1

Community Background	Spit and Bite Guard applications	% of Total Deployments
Roman Catholic	140	43.1
Protestant	58	17.8
Unknown	121	37.2
Refused	2	<1
Muslim	1	<1
Other Christian	3	<1

Marital Status	Spit and Bite Guard Deployments	% of Total Deployments
Single	285	87.7
Married	6	1.8
Co-habiting	11	3.4
Separated	9	2.8
Divorced	1	<1
Not Known	13	4.0

Subject with Disability (recorded on Case Management)	Spit and Bite Guard Deployments	% of Total Deployments
N	237	72.9
Y	88	27.1
Type of Disability recorded		
Mental Health	56	17.2
Physical	13	4.0
Learning	8	2.5
Autism	3	<1
Sensory	1	<1
More than one of Mental Health/Learning/Physical	7	2.2

Subject with Dependants	Spit and Bite Guard Deployments	% of Total Deployments
Yes	39	12.0
No	280	86.2
Not known	6	1.8

We derived this data presented from management information, sourced from more than one system and collated manually on a daily basis. The different methodology and sources may result in slight differences between the management information and Official Statistics. The figures are provisional and subject to change.