

Background Information – Stop and Account

Staffordshire police is considering discontinuing the practice of recording stop and account.

Background information for stop and account

Stop and account is where a person is stopped by a police officer and asked to account for their actions, behaviour, reason for being in a place, or possession of anything. The encounter is recorded by the police officer and a copy of the record is given to the person stopped. The person is not searched.

Important to note: - Stop and account is different to 'stop and search'. The power of stop and search also allows the police to search you if they suspect you might be carrying an illegal substance or something that could be used as a weapon. Staffordshire Police will continue to carry out stop and search.

The recording of stop and account was implemented in 2005 following recommendations made by the Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence.

All police forces adopted this practice to reduce the number of people stopped randomly, and address community concerns that people from black and minority ethnic communities were being stopped more frequently than white people.

Current position

On 7 March 2011 the government removed the requirement for police forces to record all stop and account.

Staffordshire Police is considering discontinuing the recording of stop and account:

- To reduce unnecessary bureaucracy
- To improve the actual interaction without the need to fill in a form
- Because we already have several other processes by which we effectively engage with and monitor information about minority groups

In context

The use of stop and account is monitored on a monthly basis and regularly brought to the Force's attention through structured performance review meetings.

Over the last 3 years, from October 2008 to September 2011, Staffordshire Police carried out 33,763 stop and accounts:

- 31, 488 were carried out with white people (93% of the total) and,
- 2, 275 were carried out with people from black and minority ethnic groups (7% of the total)