



# Stop and Search Inspection

## Terms of Reference

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## Terms of reference

In 2012 HMIC was commissioned to carry out an inspection into the use of stop and search legislation by police forces in England and Wales.

Over recent years the legislation and its use have come under increasing scrutiny. In particular, following the August 2011 riots reports published by the London School of Economics and the Riots Victims and Communities Panel highlighted stop and search as a contributory factor to the disorder. There have also been regular accusations of discriminatory use, particularly towards black and minority ethnic groups.

### Inspection objectives

- To determine how effectively and fairly the Police Service is using the power to stop and search in the fight against crime.
- To establish if operational police officers know how to use stop and search tactically as part of evidence-based practice to fight crime.
- To identify how the powers can be used in a way that builds the public's trust in the police, supporting the legitimacy of the Service rather than eroding it.

### Inspection approach

The inspection will involve all 43 forces in England and Wales, as well as the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police.

Inspection activity will consist of four distinct elements:

- A **desktop review** will include looking at the details of documented policies and strategies.
- **Fieldwork**, including interviews with relevant staff, reality testing, and reviewing a sample of stop and search records.
- A **survey** of a sample of the general public and people who have been subject to stop and search.
- Production of a **national report** drawing out the key issues, strengths and areas for improvement, to help all forces to improve the effectiveness of their use of the tactic.