

Policing Accountability and the Armed Police

- In July 2014 the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) concluded that none of the eight deaths investigated was directly caused by the taser (2016).
- The use of tasers in England and Wales has increased by 2%
- In 80% of cases, just the presence of a taser is enough to resolve an issue. Does this therefore justify their use as they are an effective crime deterrent?

European Convention of human rights

Article 5 – Liberty and security – arrests or use of non lethal weapons have to be justified to be

Article 7 – No Punishment without law – Is the use of a taser in a situation proportionate to the threat?

Police Accountability

Police accountability is assessed internally and externally

Internally – organizational policies, reporting systems, codes of ethical standards, appraisal mechanisms, legal frameworks e.g. Human Rights Act 1998.

Externally – IPCC, the media, courts.

**How are police justified in using a taser?
Do their use outweigh the possible risk / accountability issues?**

Philip Hulmes (2011) Tasered after stabbing himself

Manchester the police forced entry with tasers in to the barricaded room and subsequently resulted in Hulmes becoming unconscious and dying later in hospital. The coroner confirmed that the self inflicted wound caused his death and not the taser.

Man Tasered by police four times in under a minute before death (2011)

Body builder Dale Burns was tasered four times after police had been called to his house after being informed that he was self harming and having taken a “gram of Madcat”. After dying in hospital the coroner concluded that Burns had died from a heart attack caused as a result of taking drugs, not being tasered.

Conclusion – Although not the main cause of death, it is evident that greater guidance and offender / victim history should be taken into account before the using a taser. When justifying the use of a taser, a more extensive risk assessment the encompasses the risk to the offender including medical risks.



Andrew Pimlott death after being tasered (2013)

Andrew Pimlott's death was most likely due to him being tasered - IPCC. Pimlott was covered in flammable liquid, the taser acted as an igniter that subsequently killed him. As a result the Police Watchdog have suggested that there should be tighter taser guidance.

