

News story: Selected student police officers to receive Taser training

Student police officers working on the frontline will be able to apply for Taser training, the Home Office has announced today.

It comes after senior officers made a request to the department to allow selected students to put themselves forward for the specialist training. Previously, only officers who had passed their two-year probation period were eligible.

Student officers can be deployed to the frontline and face the same threats as ranked officers. Police chiefs therefore want certain recruits to complete Taser training where there is a clear local need.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The police put themselves in harm's way to keep us all safe and that includes student officers working on the frontline.

Tasers give them an important tactical option when facing potentially dangerous and violent situations.

I remain committed to giving officers the tools they need to protect themselves, their colleagues and the public.

Lucy D'Orsi, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Less Lethal Weapons and Deputy Assistant Commissioner, said:

Giving chief constables the option of selecting and training their probationary officers to carry Taser is a welcome step

Probationers are posted to the frontline and they respond to the same calls as other colleagues. These calls range from dealing with vulnerable people in need of help to incidents of serious violence.

At present, an officer's suitability to carry Taser is determined by the amount of time someone has been an officer. The diversity of our workforce has changed considerably and many of our probationers have professional and life skills from before they started their police career that help to demonstrate their capability to carry Taser. I believe these skills should be recognised as well as their ability as a Police Officer, particularly when dealing with conflict.

Police use of Taser is regulated by strict standards and is conditional on the completion of a training programme.

All officers who volunteer to carry a Taser are required to have the support of their supervisor, endorsement at Superintendent level and pass the Taser training course.

In addition, student officers who undertake the training are required to:

- have been assessed as safe and lawful for independent patrol
- have demonstrated experience of successfully managing conflict
- hold a review with a supervisor following use of a Taser

The deployment of Taser is an operational matter for chief officers, who determine the number of devices and specially trained officers they need based on their force's strategic assessment of threat and risk.

Taser refers to TASER®, the brand name of the conducted energy device used by police forces in England and Wales