

19th July 2018

Freedom of Information Request – Reference No:20180948

REQUEST

Pursuant to section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I should be grateful if you would confirm whether any of your officers are authorised to use 'spit hoods', 'spit guards' or similar devices as described at pages 82 and 83 of Module 4 of the ACPO Personal Safety Manual.

- (a) ***If some or all of your officers are authorised to use a spit hoods please provide copies of:***
- (i) ***Your equality impact assessment(s) concerning the use of spit hoods;***
 - (ii) ***Guidance and training documents issued to officers concerning the use of spit hoods;***
 - (iii) ***Minutes of meetings at which the use of spit hoods was discussed;***
 - (iv) ***Risk assessments regarding the use of spit hoods;***
 - (v) ***Internal and external correspondence regarding the use of spit hoods.***
- (b) ***If none of your officers are authorised to use spit hoods please:***
- (i) ***Confirm the rationale for this position and provide any documents recording the same;***
 - (ii) ***Provide any documents which were considered in the course of reaching this decision e.g. risk assessments, expert advice, etc;***
 - (iii) ***Provide minutes of meetings at which the decision not to authorise the use of spit hoods was discussed;***
 - (iv) ***Provide documents detailing training provided to your officers on the techniques they should employ to mitigate the risk of spitting;***
 - (v) ***Internal and external correspondence regarding the decision not to use of spit hoods***

RESPONSE

I approached a number of departments within South Yorkshire Police for assistance with your request.

A Custody Unit Inspector was able to advise:

Custody Staff are being trained to use Spit-guards during their rotational training.

The Training Department have provided the attached Policy and Training Documents.

The Force Lead on this subject has explained the following:

A (i) the introduction of spit guards is a recent addition. Prior to this decision the proposal was taken to the Independent Ethics Panel in 2017. The initial training is on-going and our experience with the guards is limited. A draft Equality impact Assessment has been submitted to the Sheffield IAG reassuringly issues raised in feedback are covered within the

training. However as the training completes in the next month there is a scheduled review of experience so far and will include the EIA.

(iv) there are more than one degree of risk assessment. The SCT paper included assessment regarding perception, reputation and dignity/degrading conduct- there is specific mention of the off-set of these risks in comparison with the risk to staff of being spat at combined with an approved training package which includes restraint and constant supervision whilst a guard is applied and continual dialogue to achieve cooperation to enable the guard to be removed at the earliest opportunity.