



Home Office

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29 July 2025

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July about the potential approval of Taser 10.

It was a pleasure to see you at the Police Bravery Awards, a powerful reminder of the courage and commitment shown daily by officers across England and Wales. I very much welcome the opportunity to reschedule our bilateral meetings and fully agree that regular engagement will be crucial in continuing to build effective, joined-up approaches across policing and justice. I will ask my office to liaise with yours to get a date in the diary shortly.

I understand you have concerns around the potential approval of Taser 10 for use by police forces in England and Wales and the impact of this on children. You will know that government departments and police forces must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

The PSED includes consideration of the potential impact of policies and decisions on all groups with protected characteristics as well as children. The Government evidences consideration of the PSED by way of an equality impact assessment (EIA). While a Child's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) may evaluate the impact of a policy on rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the robust and thorough EIA of Taser 10 provides a vehicle to consider and assess the impact of the new model of Taser on children.

In completing the EIA, we ensure that the impact on children is fully considered. The EIA will of course consider any relevant risks and mitigations, in relation to the impact of a new model of Taser should it be used on children. More broadly, you will know that Taser has been approved for police use since 2003 and has been a crucial tactical option when officers face potentially violent situations.

The Government's approach to the use of force, including Taser, aligns with Articles 2 and 3 of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms. These Articles set out that governments and agencies should develop a broad range of weapons that enable a graduated and proportionate use of force, with the development and use of less lethal weapons to be carefully assessed and strictly controlled to minimise harm, especially to

bystanders. Rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that are relevant to the use of Taser, for example the right to protection from harm, align with safeguards and mitigations set out for the police use of force which are underpinned by the approach outlined in Articles 2 and 3 of the UN Basic Principles.

I am aware that there are times when it is deemed operationally necessary by officers for the police to use a Taser, including on children in the interests of public safety. The Government is clear that all police use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and based on the officer's assessment of threats and risks. In 2023/24 there were 2,900 incidents where Taser was 'used' on under-18s, which included 66 incidents of the Taser being fired (which equates to 2.3%). You may also wish to note that Taser use involving discharge for under-18s has decreased by 46% from 2020/21 to 2023/24 (123 to 66 discharges).

In 2023/24 there were five reports of Taser tactics being deployed involving children in the under-11 age group, and in all these incidents the Taser was not discharged. There are a number of safeguards and mitigations in place around police use of Taser. These include specific mitigations for Taser use on children. All officers who are selected to use Taser must pass a comprehensive training programme and need to have an appreciation of the physical and psychological effects of the device on children. This includes training officers to have a thorough understanding of de-escalation skills and to factor in the potential vulnerability of a person and factors such as age and stature when assessing each situation.

Furthermore, College of Policing guidance sets out that individuals in police custody, who have been subjected to a Taser discharge must be examined by a specially trained healthcare professional working in General Forensic Medicine. Guidance produced by the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine also outlines the steps for post-Taser healthcare, which includes considering the age of individuals under 18 as a factor for referral to hospital. If the Taser 10 is approved, a bespoke form will be completed by officers each time it is used use of to help capture trends and support the early identification of any issues. This will assist with the ongoing requirement to uphold the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensure mitigation and resolution of any unintended consequences.

I can also assure you that the Home Office continues to work closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and other policing partners to review the use of force data and identify any patterns that may need to be addressed. Forces are expected to analyse their force data to develop ways of improving practice. It is also important to note that when an officer takes the decision to use force, they are accountable through the law for their actions. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) continues to investigate where serious injury is caused, and complaints made.

Before any Taser device is approved for use in policing, it is subject to scientific testing and medical assessments as part of a stringent process which indicates that it is safe and effective for the device to be used by trained police officers. We intend to publish the technical testing, user handling trials and medical assessments undertaken for the Taser 10. Should the Taser 10 be approved by the Home Office for police use, it will remain a decision for Chief Officers to determine whether to authorise Taser 10 in their force area including in Wales, based on their assessment of threats and risks.

As ever, I am grateful for your continued engagement and look forward to deepening our collaboration in the months ahead, across the broad range of areas where our governments share responsibility and ambition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diana Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal line above the "J" in "Johnson".

**Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP
Minister of State for Policing and Crime Prevention**