

Tasers to roll out to all police forces

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The government will fund 10,000 Tasers for police officers in England and Wales, now that a successful pilot programme has ended.

The weapons - which fire barbed darts charged with enough electricity to stun an attacker - have been carried by select firearms squads for some time. They will now also be carried by thousands of trained frontline officers.

Successful pilot project

In the pilot, which was carried out by frontline officers on 10 forces, the weapons proved to be safer for police and the public than other alternatives. In the vast majority of cases in which officers drew their Tasers, suspects chose to cooperate, and did not need to be subdued.

Statistics from the trial show that, of the 661 uses of Tasers, in more than 75% of those cases, the weapon was merely drawn but not fired. Tasers were only fired 93 times in the trial.

Proud most police don't carry guns

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said, 'I am proud that we have one of the few police services around the world that do not regularly carry firearms. And I want to keep it that way.'

'But every day the police put themselves in danger to protect us, the public. They deserve our support, so I want to give the police the tools they tell me they need to confront dangerous people. That is why I am giving the police 10,000 Tasers to ensure that officers across the country benefit from this form of defence.'

'Vital' to stopping crime

Paul McKeever, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales thanked the Home Secretary for 'listening to our call for the further roll out of Tasers.'

'This investment is testament to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of police officers nationwide, and recognises the vital role Tasers plays in the fight against crime.'
