



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

31-year-old man died after being shot with the Taser

The matter has been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Police said last night that Mr Petty, who has **recently been released from a psychiatric unit**, **wounded himself after being shot with the Taser**.

Armed police were called to the house in Goldington, Bedford at about 7pm on Saturday night. Mrs Petty, 71, had managed to flee their terraced council home and sought refuge with a neighbour. When officers arrived, Mr Petty - who had been discharged from the Weller Psychiatric Wing at Bedford Hospital - barricaded himself in his attic. He threatened police with the knife. A Taser gun was used and he staggered back into the house.

Shortly afterwards officers went into the house and found the former council worker seriously injured. He was rushed to Bedford South Wing hospital, where **he died from his injuries**. A Bedfordshire police **spokeswoman** said: "Armed officers went to the address after being called to a domestic dispute involving a mother and son.

*"On arrival at the property police found the man in his thirties **suffering from injury** and armed with a knife. He threatened officers and as a result the taser was discharged. The man then retreated into the house alone and when found **shortly afterwards** by police officers he was in need of urgent medical attention because of **subsequently self-inflicting serious injury to himself**."*

He was taken to Bedford Hospital where he died from these injuries. **The injuries from the Taser gun were "minimal", she added.**

The spokeswoman said the IPCC would look into the incident tomorrow and decide whether or not to launch an investigation.

The PPP note that

An increasing number of police forces are using the high-voltage guns, which discharge a disabling electric shock, as an alternative to conventional weapons to subdue armed suspects. Tasers have been **used 450 times in the past five years in Great Britain** and **police say there have been no fatalities** or serious injuries. **One other man has died in the UK after being shot by police with a Taser and a baton round** but a post-mortem examination concluded the death was from **natural causes**.

Human rights group **Amnesty International** has mounted a long-running campaign to outlaw Taser guns which it says are more dangerous than the authorities claim. **The organisation said Tasers pose a disproportionate risk to many of the most vulnerable** - the pregnant, **those with mental health** or drugs problems or those with a **heart conditions**. Amnesty state that more than **270 people have died after being shot by Tasers in the US and Canada since 2001**, and concerns about them have led a number of American law enforcement agencies to stop using them,.

In October last year, Canadian police attracted heavy criticism after officers shot 40-year-old Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski with a Taser at Vancouver International Airport. Video footage showed officers firing at a distressed Dziekanski twice, 46 seconds after arriving on the scene, then physically subduing him on the ground. Dziekanski died at the scene.

The PPP comments we share Amnesty's concern about the growing and indiscriminate use of TASERS we have highlighted the key points in this story...draw your own conclusions.