

Child Q - Special Joint Scrutiny (Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission and Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission)

All Members Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission and Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission are requested to attend the Special Joint Scrutiny meeting to be held as follows:

Monday 13 June 2022

7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1EA

This meeting can be viewed live (or replayed) via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/TvyF1O1bH7c>

A back up link is provided below in the event of technical difficulties:

<https://youtu.be/zvQsrJXu8uk>

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Mark Carroll

Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Date of

Publication: Wednesday 1st June 2022

Members:

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Sophie Conway (Chair), Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Cllr Lee Laudat-Scott, Cllr Midnight Ross, Cllr Caroline Selman, Cllr Anya Sizer, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge, Cllr Lynne Troughton and Cllr Claudia Turbet-Delof.

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Soraya Adejare (Chair), Cllr Clare Joseph (Vice-Chair), Cllr Zoe Garbett, Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Ali Sadek, Cllr Penny Wrout and Cllr Sarah Young

Co-optees:

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Salmah Kansara, Michael Lobenstein, Jo Macleod, Steven Olalere and Ernell Watson.

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- 1 **Welcome (Election of Chair)**
- 2 **Apologies for Absence**
- 3 **Urgent Items**
- 4 **Declarations of Interest**
- 5 **Scrutiny of Strategic Response to Child Q (19.05)** (Pages 11 - 18)

To set out the aims and objectives of scrutiny involvement.

 - Cllr Soraya Adejare (Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission)
 - Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice Chair, Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission)

(5 mins)
- 6 **Serious Case Review (SCR) of Child Q (19.10)** (Pages 19 - 62)

To set out the timeline of events in relation to Child Q, and highlight the key conclusions and recommendations of the serious case review (SCR).

 - Jim Gamble, Independent Chair of City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
 - Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Advisor, Safeguarding and Learning

(25 min; 10 min presentation, 15 min Q & A)
- 7 **Strategic Response of Statutory Partners to Child Q (19.35)** (Pages 63 - 86)

Key statutory bodies have been requested to provide a written briefing in relation to Child Q SCR:

 - Initial response and actions taken;
 - Identify lessons learnt and identified priorities for change;
 - Those actions taken (or planned) to engage, involve and reassure the local community and other local stakeholders.

Speakers:

 - Metropolitan Police – report attached
 - London Borough of Hackney – report attached
 - The Mayor’s Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC)
– **REPORT TO FOLLOW**

(60 mins: 5 min summary presentation for each partner, 45 min Q & A)

8 Accountability & Monitoring Arrangements (20.35) (Pages 87 - 88)

To establish what structures are in place to plan, coordinate and monitor the responses to recommendations and actions set out in:

- The Serious Case Review;
- Correspondence between Chief Executive of London Borough of Hackney and the Borough Commander;
- The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) (*when published*).

To assess how partners will ensure that such accountability and monitoring structures are open, transparent, and accountable to local communities.

- City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
 - Metropolitan Police
 - London Borough of Hackney
 - MOPAC
- (25 mins, 10 mins presentation, 15 mins Q & A)

9 Summary and Next Steps (21.00) (Pages 89 - 90)

A summary of the key issues to arise from the scrutiny session including any agreed actions to take forward.

- Cllr Soraya Adejare, Chair of Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission;
- Cllr Margaret Gordon, Vice Chair of CYP Scrutiny Commission.

(10 min)

10 Background Papers and Reports (Pages 91 - 104)

Correspondence

- (1) Letter from Phillip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney to the Metropolitan Police (17/3/22)

- (2) Letter from Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor at Metropolitan Police to Mayor of Hackney (31/3/22)

- (3) Letter from Mark Carroll, Chief Executive of London Borough of Hackney to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor at Metropolitan Police (1/4/22)

Links to Background Reports

[Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools \(2021\)](#)

[When to call the Police – guidance for schools and colleges \(2020\)](#)

11 Any Other Business

Access and Information

Public Involvement and Recording

Public Attendance at the Town Hall for Meetings

Scrutiny meetings are held in public, rather than being public meetings. This means that whilst residents and press are welcome to attend, they can only ask questions at the discretion of the Chair. For further information relating to public access to information, please see Part 4 of the council's constitution, available at <https://hackney.gov.uk/council-business> or by contacting Governance Services (020 8356 3503)

Following the lifting of all Covid-19 restrictions by the Government and the Council updating its assessment of access to its buildings, the Town Hall is now open to the public and members of the public may attend meetings of the Council.

We recognise, however, that you may find it more convenient to observe the meeting via the live-stream facility, the link for which appears on the agenda front sheet.

We would ask that if you have either tested positive for Covid-19 or have any symptoms that you do not attend the meeting, but rather use the livestream facility. If this applies and you are attending the meeting to ask a question, make a deputation or present a petition then you may contact the Officer named at the beginning of the agenda and they will be able to make arrangements for the Chair of the meeting to ask the question, make the deputation or present the petition on your behalf.

The Council will continue to ensure that access to our meetings is in line with any Covid-19 restrictions that may be in force from time to time and also in line with public health advice. The latest general advice can be found here - <https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-support>

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Those wishing to film, photograph or audio record a meeting are asked to notify the Council's Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting, if possible, or any time prior to the start of the meeting or notify the Chair at the start of the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer, or the Chair of the meeting, may designate a set area from which all recording must take place at a meeting.

The Council will endeavour to provide reasonable space and seating to view, hear and record the meeting. If those intending to record a meeting require any other reasonable facilities, notice should be given to the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting and will only be provided if practicable to do so.

The Chair shall have discretion to regulate the behaviour of all those present recording a meeting in the interests of the efficient conduct of the meeting. Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be required by the Chair to cease recording or may be excluded from the meeting.

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All those visually recording a meeting are requested to only focus on recording Councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will ask any members of the public present if they have objections to being visually recorded. Those visually recording a meeting are asked to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed or photographed. Failure by someone recording a meeting to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed and photographed may result in the Chair instructing them to cease recording or in their exclusion from the meeting.

If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the press and public then in order to consider confidential or exempt information, all recording must cease, and all recording equipment must be removed from the meeting. The press and public are not permitted to use any means which might enable them to see or hear the proceedings whilst they are excluded from a meeting and confidential or exempt information is under consideration.

Providing oral commentary during a meeting is not permitted.

Advice to Members on Declaring Interests

Advice to Members on Declaring Interests

Hackney Council's Code of Conduct applies to all Members of the Council, the Mayor and co-opted Members.

This note is intended to provide general guidance for Members on declaring interests. However, you may need to obtain specific advice on whether you have an interest in a particular matter. If you need advice, you can contact:

- Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services
- the Legal Adviser to the Committee; or
- Governance Services.

If at all possible, you should try to identify any potential interest you may have before the meeting so that you and the person you ask for advice can fully consider all the circumstances before reaching a conclusion on what action you should take.

You will have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter if it:

- i. relates to an interest that you have already registered in Parts A and C of the Register of Pecuniary Interests of you or your spouse/civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse/civil partner;
- ii. relates to an interest that should be registered in Parts A and C of the Register of Pecuniary Interests of your spouse/civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse/civil partner, but you have not yet done so; or
- iii. affects your well-being or financial position or that of your spouse/civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse/civil partner.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda you must:

- i. Declare the existence and nature of the interest (in relation to the relevant agenda item) as soon as it becomes apparent to you (subject to the rules regarding sensitive interests).
- ii. You must leave the meeting when the item in which you have an interest is being discussed. You cannot stay in the meeting whilst discussion of the item takes place, and you cannot vote on the matter. In addition, you must not seek to improperly influence the decision.
- iii. If you have, however, obtained dispensation from the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee you may remain in the meeting and participate in the meeting. If dispensation has been granted it will stipulate the extent of your involvement, such as whether you can only be present to make

representations, provide evidence or whether you are able to fully participate and vote on the matter in which you have a pecuniary interest.

Do you have any other non-pecuniary interest on any matter on the agenda which is being considered at the meeting?

You will have 'other non-pecuniary interest' in a matter if:

- i. It relates to an external body that you have been appointed to as a Member or in another capacity; or
- ii. It relates to an organisation or individual which you have actively engaged in supporting.

If you have other non-pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda you must:

- i. Declare the existence and nature of the interest (in relation to the relevant agenda item) as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- ii. You may remain in the meeting, participate in any discussion or vote provided that contractual, financial, consent, permission or licence matters are not under consideration relating to the item in which you have an interest.
- iii. If you have an interest in a contractual, financial, consent, permission, or licence matter under consideration, you must leave the meeting unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee. You cannot stay in the meeting whilst discussion of the item takes place, and you cannot vote on the matter. In addition, you must not seek to improperly influence the decision. Where members of the public are allowed to make representations, or to give evidence or answer questions about the matter you may, with the permission of the meeting, speak on a matter then leave the meeting. Once you have finished making your representation, you must leave the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed.
- iv. If you have been granted dispensation, in accordance with the Council's dispensation procedure you may remain in the meeting. If dispensation has been granted it will stipulate the extent of your involvement, such as whether you can only be present to make representations, provide evidence or whether you are able to fully participate and vote on the matter in which you have a non-pecuniary interest.

Further Information

Advice can be obtained from Dawn Carter-McDonald, Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services via email dawn.carter-mcdonald@hackney.gov.uk

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Induction loop facilities are available in the Assembly Halls and the Council Chamber. Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

Further Information about the Commission

If you would like any more information about the Scrutiny Commission, including the membership details, meeting dates and previous reviews, please visit the website or use this QR Code (accessible via phone or tablet 'app')

[Child Q - Special Joint Scrutiny](#)



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| Special Joint Scrutiny of Child Q June 13th 2022 Item 5 - Scrutiny of Child Q | Item No 5 |
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Outline

Cllr Soraya Adejare (Chair of Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission) and Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission) to set out the aims and objectives for the scrutiny session.

Attachments

- Briefing on previous work of scrutiny in connection with the issues raised by the Child Q Serious Case Review.

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Work of Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission and Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission which aligns to the outcomes and recommendations of the Child Q Serious Case Review.

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission: work in relation to the MPS rebuilding Trust and Confidence with the local community in Hackney.

Concern about the growing distance between the community and the local police (especially with young people) led to the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission (LiH) requesting for the local Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to talk about disproportionate use of stop and search and the work by the MPS to build trust and confidence with the local communities in Hackney. Following the meeting in June LiH remained concerned about the following:

1. Impact of stop and search on community relations with the police service
2. The increasing use of handcuffs and use of handcuffs on young children aged 10-14
3. Concern about the treatment of young children like adults for stop and search activity
4. Information about the training police officers receive in relation to carrying out a stop and search
5. The threshold of a police officer's complaint record before investigation of any trend
6. The use of Territorial Support Group (TSG) officers in the borough and the impact of their work on community relations locally
7. Explanation about the intelligence and how links are made between different crime types to inform stop and search activity
8. An explanation about why stop and account is not used first instead of stop and search
9. An explanation about accountability and the complaints system in the MPS
10. An overview about the stop and search monitoring data and the insight it provides the MPS.

The Commission was mindful that the work of the local MPS in Hackney is guided by the Police and Crime Plan which reflects the Mayor of London's manifesto and priorities for making London a safer city for all Londoners. Recognising a significant proportion of the decision making related to corporate plans and objectives for the MPS in London is directed by Metropolitan Police HeadQuarters (MET HQ) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). A broader discussion involving the local MPS, MET HQ, MOPAC and the IOPC followed. A further meeting was held in November 2020.

The aim of this discussion was to hear how MET HQ, MOPAC and our local MPS were working to build trust and confidence in the police and their plans to address public concern about the disproportionate use of stop and search. This meeting also gave Hackney the opportunity to share the wealth of community insight from its community engagement on this topic and highlight the impact this is having on the local community, cohesion and police relations with the local community they serve.

The key themes that emerged for follow up were:

1. **MPS complaint system** - The system was not trusted and seldom used by the community groups most impacted by stop and search activity.
2. **Accountability of police officers for behaviour and appropriate use of police tools.** The wider public perception is that the MPS does not have robust systems in place for police officers to be held to account.
3. **No set monitoring targets for stop and search and outcome success rates.** Having on average a 20-25% success rate from the volume of stops and searches conducted is not a good demonstration of success or a good use of resources.
4. **Reducing the disproportionality among ethnic minority groups being stopped and searched.** There were no reports of current work to address this, or reassurance given on how the MPS plan to address this wider than the BCU review work.
5. **Representation of Hackney's diverse community in MPS / MOPAC community engagement and scrutiny structures.** We learned the MPS are working to improve dialogue and engagement with the public, but this is not widely known by the local community.

A further meeting was held in June 2021 to discuss the themes above, The Commission remained concerned that community tension between the community and the police remained high and about the progress of the work by the MPS to address this. The concerns raised by the scrutiny commission about the treatment of young people like adults related to handcuffing and the impact of this trauma was not satisfactorily resolved. The scrutiny commission decided to continue to monitor the progress and get a more detailed update from MPS, IOPC and ask MOPAC about the progress of its review for local community engagement structures and the impact the new Mayor's Action Plan was having on building trust and confidence with local communities and the MPS.

Link to the minutes of the meeting are below:

[June 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

[June 2021](#)

Links to correspondence from the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

[Letter from LiH to IOPC April 2021](#)

[Letter to MOPAC April 2021](#)

[Letter from LiH to MPS April 2021](#)

The Commission planned to review this in 9-12 months following the meeting in June 2021.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission: Work in relation to the issues and outcomes of the Child Q Serious Case Review.

Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions - December 2021

The CYP Scrutiny Commission completed an in-depth review of school exclusions in December 2021. The [final report](#) formed a number of conclusions and recommendations which align with the outcomes of the Child Q Serious Case Review.

Higher ongoing rates of permanent and fixed term exclusions

The investigation undertaken by the Commission highlighted an established trend of significantly higher levels of permanent and fixed term exclusion across Hackney schools when compared to national and regional averages.

- In 2018/19 the permanent exclusion rate of pupils in Hackney was 0.13 compared to 0.1 of pupils nationally and 0.07 pupils across inner London.
- In 2018/19 the fixed term exclusion rate among pupils in Hackney was 7.06 compared to 5.36 of pupils nationally and 4.45 across pupils in London.

Disproportionality within school exclusions

The research also noted that there were also significant disproportionalities within the local exclusion data in relation to gender, ethnicity and special educational needs.

- Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of all permanent exclusions in Hackney in 2018/19 were among boys;
- Although fewer girls were permanently excluded than boys, the rate of permanent exclusion of girls in Hackney (0.09) was almost twice that of girls nationally (0.05) or across inner London (0.04).
- Whilst the rate of permanent school exclusion among Black Caribbean pupils declined both nationally and across London from 2015/16-2018/19, corresponding figures for Hackney show an increase in the rate of exclusions from 0.29 to 0.37.
- Nationally, pupils with a special educational need (but without an EHCP or statement) were over five times more likely to be permanently excluded than those without and identify SEND. Locally, $\frac{2}{3}$ of all pupils who were permanently excluded had a special educational need.

In light of this data, the Commission recommended improved public oversight and scrutiny of school exclusion is necessary to ensure that this important metric remains at the forefront of local education policy, planning and decision making. Hackney Education is now required to report annually to the Commission where data publication will not only improve monitoring of school exclusions, but will also ensure that there is improved transparency and accountability for those policies and practices aimed to prevent them.

Behaviour Management in Schools

From focus groups conducted with both young people, local parent groups and other stakeholders, the Commission found that some schools' behaviour policies were excessively punitive and failed to make proper adjustments for pupils with additional

needs. The application of some schools' behaviour policies were also felt to have a disproportionate impact on certain groups of young people.

The Commission recommended that Council should encourage more positive behaviour management strategies across schools, which help to identify and address children's unmet needs and create a more supportive and inclusive school environment.

More inclusive schools

The Commission noted research which indicates the positive role school attendance plays not only in terms of a child's educational, social and emotional development, but also in helping to keep children safe and protected. Regular adult engagement and oversight ensures that children have daily supervision where they feel safe to learn, and protected from antisocial or criminal exploitation. Schools are an important setting for children and young people to safely explore and to build social and emotional support networks with other young people and other adults which are essential which not only help to keep them safe, but also help to maintain their wellbeing and assist them on their journey to adulthood.

The Commission recommended that Hackney reaffirms its commitment to the principle of the inclusive school, and that local schools offer a broad and balanced curriculum which keeps children and young people engaged and motivated with learning, and school life and culture, and which recognise the needs of those children with SEND and or other learning challenges. The Commission also recognises that schools need a broad programme of wraparound behavioural, emotional and wellbeing support, linked to local statutory (CAMHS, SEND) and other providers (e.g. Young Hackney, WAMHS and other early help services).

Improved safeguarding in schools

Given the protective influence that schools have on young people, and the increased risks that young people face from permanent exclusion (e.g. reduced adult oversight, susceptibility to criminal exploitation) the Commission recommended that improved safeguarding processes should be established in local schools:

- That specific guidance and information for local schools is developed to help them assess safeguarding risks within school exclusion decisions;
- That schools are encouraged to undertake an independent multidisciplinary safeguarding assessment prior to any final decision to permanently exclude a child;
- That training is developed and implemented for school governors and other school leaders about the safeguarding risks and implications of permanent exclusion from school;
- That City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (or appropriate subgroup) is notified of any permanent school exclusion 'in real time' to enable a full safeguarding assessment of the child/young person, and the ability of parents to effectively safeguard that young person at home;

- That systems are developed to support effective and timely sharing of safeguarding and other welfare information for excluded children moving from school to alternative provision;
- That all alternative provision at which young people are in attendance (both internal and external to the borough) is routinely included in safeguarding information distributed by Hackney Education Service, CHSCP, Gangs Unit or other relevant bodies;
- At the point of exclusion, Children and Families Service are notified for Children in Need or other Family Support.

In its other work the Commission has:

Reviewed efforts of Children and Families and Hackney Education to develop a joint anti-racist action plan across both directorates. [CYP Scrutiny Commission 28th February 2022](#)

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| Special Joint Scrutiny of Child Q June 13th 2022 Item 6 - Child Q Serious Case review | Item No 6 |
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Outline

The Child Q Serious Case Review (SCR) was published by City & Hackney Safeguarding Partnership on March 14th 2022. The aim of this item is to set out the timeline of events relating to Child Q and to highlight the key conclusions and recommendations contained within the SCR.

Attachments

- Briefing from City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Child Q Serious Case Review (City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership)

Attending:

- Jim Gamble, Independent Chair, City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Adviser, Safeguarding & Learning

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Joint Living in Hackney and CYP Scrutiny Commission

June 2022

Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner, CHSCP

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In December 2020, Child Q, a Black female child of secondary school age, was subject to a strip-search by female police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service. The search, which involved the exposure of Child Q's intimate body parts, took place on school premises, without an appropriate adult present and with the knowledge that Child Q was menstruating.
- 1.2 As a result of this incident and in my capacity as the Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner of the CHSCP, I made the decision to instigate a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (the review).
- 1.3 The review report was published in March 2022. Rory McCallum, the CHSCP's Senior Professional Advisor, was its co-author. The review was also supported by a reference panel that included Black and Global Majority Ethnic safeguarding professionals.
- 1.4 I will be publishing an update report covering the progress made in response to the Child Q review in December 2022. This briefing sets out my written response to several questions raised by the joint Living in Hackney and Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission.

2. An outline of the timeline of events leading up to the review

- 2.1 The report describes the relevant circumstances leading up to the search of Child Q and the instigation of the review. Beyond the immediate events of the strip search at Child Q's school, the review kept information relating to the background and context of Child Q's lived experience to a minimum. The reasons for this were three-fold.

- Firstly, to protect Child Q's identity and that of her family.
- Secondly, to allow for the report's publication and.
- Thirdly, because the review considers much of this information to be largely irrelevant. In this respect, the review was mindful not to detract from the incident itself. It was careful not to introduce a perception that there might be a 'rationale' to excuse the actions of some professionals based on who Child Q is, where she lives or what her family circumstances are.

2.2 In terms of the overall timeline for the review, Child Q first came to my attention on 11 January 2021 and a Rapid Review meeting was convened two days later.

2.3 The Rapid Review report and my decision to instigate a review was submitted to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the national panel) on 15 January 2021. The national panel considered the case on 26 January 2021 and responded on 2 February 2021.

2.4 This response encouraged us to '*think carefully*' about whether a review was necessary as the national panel felt the case was not notifiable and did not meet the criteria for an LCSPR. This advice was noted but ignored.

2.5 Across February and March 2021, the authors were confirmed, a reference panel identified, and a forward plan of key interviews developed. We were mindful of the impact on Child Q and whilst the family were quickly notified of the review, it was right not to interrupt the immediate support services being provided.

2.6 At the outset, we worked with the Council to facilitate communication and ensure that support was wrapped around Child Q and her family. We were aware that formal complaints had been made and we were mindful not to impede or undermine any of these processes.

2.7 Interviews with Child Q, her family and the school teachers were completed by mid-April 2021. The headteacher and Local Authority Designated Officer were

interviewed in May 2021. However, the review continued to be frustrated by its inability to access the police officers involved in the search. This was due to the internal investigative processes of the MPS and the requirement not to undermine their investigation.

- 2.8 Over the next three months, I continued to press the MPS for access to the officers involved, or at the very least, their statements. Due to the nature and range of complaints, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) had become formally involved.
- 2.9 On 6 July 2021, I wrote to the Director General of the IOPC explaining the situation and asking if he could reconcile the issue of access. This resulted in the CHSCP being designated an 'interested party' to the IOPC's investigation. This allowed for the lawful sharing of relevant information which was received in October 2021.
- 2.10 Whilst eventually resolved, the difficulties encountered are exactly why the review made its first recommendation for the national panel and the IOPC.
- 2.11 Other work followed and advice from the reference panel, research and data helped us come to a position whereby the findings and recommendations could be focused and developed.
- 2.12 In the New Year, fact checking was completed, and final rounds of engagement undertaken, including with the family (and their solicitor), the reference group, the MPS and the IOPC. Throughout the review process, safeguarding partners and relevant agencies of the CHSCP, LA leaders / officers and key agencies were routinely briefed.
- 2.13 The report took 14 months to complete. On 22 March 2022, in response to public questions about the time it took to complete the review, I published a third statement that addressed the timeline.

3. Overview of key findings and recommendations

3.1 The Child Q report speaks for itself and makes eight findings and fourteen recommendations for practice improvement. It concluded that Child Q should never have been strip searched and found across many of the professionals involved that day, there was an absence of a safeguarding-first approach to their practice. The report also concluded that racism was 'likely an influencing factor' in the strip-search and that there was a high level of probability that practitioners were influenced by 'adultification' bias.

3.2 The report details an analysis for each of the findings set out below:

- **Finding 1:** The school was fully compliant with expected practice standards when responding to its concerns about Child Q smelling of cannabis and its subsequent search of Child Q's coat, bag, scarf and shoes. This demonstrated good curiosity by involved staff and an alertness to potential indicators of risk.
- **Finding 2:** The decision to strip search Child Q was insufficiently attuned to her best interests or right to privacy.
- **Finding 3:** School staff deferred to the authority of the police on their arrival at school. They should have been more challenging to the police, seeking clarity about the actions they intended to take. All practitioners need to be mindful of their duties to uphold the best interests of children.
- **Finding 4:** School staff had an insufficient focus on the safeguarding needs of Child Q when responding to concerns about suspected drug use.
- **Finding 5:** The application of the law and policy governing the strip searching of children can be variable and open to interpretation.
- **Finding 6:** The absence of any specific requirement to seek parental consent when strip searching children undermines the principles of parental responsibility and partnership working with parents to safeguard children.
- **Finding 7:** The Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time appeared to have frustrated effective communication between school staff and the Safer Schools Officer.

- **Finding 8:** Having considered the context of the incident, the views of those engaged in the review and the impact felt by Child Q and her family, racism (whether deliberate or not) was likely to have been an influencing factor in the decision to undertake a strip search.

3.3 In terms of the review's 14 recommendations, these centre of the following practice areas:

- The review process x 1 (National Panel & IOPC)
- Data and the recording of stop and search activity x 1 (MPS)
- School guidance on searching, screening and confiscation x 2 (DfE)
- Policy & Guidance relating to searches x 4 (MPS / Home Office / NPCC / College of Policing)
- Awareness raising / training x 4 - (CHSCP)
- Monitoring / Oversight of safeguarding as part of stop & search x 1 (MPS)
- Anti-Racism x 1 (CHSCP)

4. **Accountability and Monitoring**

4.1 The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from reviews is set out in the statutory guidance, Working Together 2018. At a national level, this lies with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and at local level with the safeguarding partners – the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Group. All three safeguarding partners have an equal and joint responsibility for the CHSCP's overall safeguarding arrangements.

4.2 Statutory guidance is also clear that safeguarding partners should consider how identified improvements should be implemented locally, and that they should regularly monitor / audit progress on the implementation of recommended improvements.

4.3 In terms of this monitoring, the CHSCP has convened a defined 'Core Group' to undertake this task. Review Core Groups are an embedded part of the CHSCP's usual response to local reviews. They allow for the routine oversight,

challenge and monitoring of review recommendations whilst collating evidence of impact. I am chairing the Child Q Review Core Group, with membership comprising safeguarding partners and other agencies represented on the CHSCP's case review sub group.

- 4.5 The remit of this group is focused on the 14 recommendations of the review, although it is sighted on other strands of related activity for which Child Q has been a catalyst. There are clear mechanisms in place for reporting to the CHSCP's Case Review Sub Group, the CHSCP Hackney Executive and the CHSCP's Strategic Leadership Team. Further commentary will be made on in my update report and will similarly be referenced in the next annual report of the CHSCP.
- 4.6 The arrangements in place covering the MPS and planning for the publication of the IOPC report are set out in the submission from the Council's Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery.
- 4.7 In terms of wider issues of leadership and accountability, the Senior Professional Advisor and myself recently met with the chair of the national panel to discuss the Child Q report. I set out my concerns about the panel's failure to recognise the significance of Child Q's experiences and its response that actively discouraged us from undertaking a review.
- 4.8 Whilst they acknowledged their errors to us, I remain surprised at the lack of public acknowledgement that their judgement on this matter was flawed and that they too are taking time to reflect on why the national panel failed to recognise the significance of this incident and the likely attitudes that facilitated it.

Jim Gamble QPM

30 May 2022



Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

Child Q

March 2022

Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner

Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Advisor

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2020, Child Q, a Black female child of secondary school age, was strip searched by female police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The search, which involved the exposure of Child Q's intimate body parts, took place on school premises, without an Appropriate Adult present and with the knowledge that Child Q was menstruating.
- 1.2 Teachers told the review that on the day of the search they believed Child Q was smelling strongly of cannabis and suspected that she might be carrying drugs. On questioning Child Q, she denied using or having any drugs in her possession. A search of her bag, blazer, scarf, and shoes revealed nothing of significance.
- 1.3 Remaining concerned, teachers sought advice from the Safer Schools Police Officer. Due to the restrictions arising from Covid-19, this officer was not on site. He recommended that the school call 101 and ask for a female officer to attend.
- 1.4 A male and female officer subsequently arrived at the school, followed by another two officers (one of whom was also female). After discussions between the police and teachers, Child Q was escorted to the medical room. She was subsequently strip searched.
- 1.5 No Appropriate Adult was in attendance, teachers remained outside the room and Child Q's mother was not contacted in advance. No drugs were found during either the strip search or a search of the room in which Child Q had been waiting beforehand.
- 1.6 Child Q was later allowed to return home where she disclosed the events to her mother. Child Q described how she had been strip searched whilst menstruating. Due to the level of her distress, Child Q's mother took her to the

family GP who made a referral for psychological support. This led to contact with Hackney Children and Families Services (Hackney CFS).

- 1.7 Given these circumstances, a Rapid Review was initiated by the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP). The Rapid Review report was submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel¹ (*the Panel*) in early 2021. As part of its response, the Panel made the following suggestion.

'We noted your decision to carry out a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) but would encourage you to think carefully about whether one is necessary as we felt that this case was not notifiable and did not meet the criteria for an LCSPR.'

- 1.8 Despite this suggestion, a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (*the review*) was nonetheless initiated. The delegated decision to do this was made by the CHSCP's Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner (ICSC) and ratified by safeguarding partners in line with the CHSCP's written safeguarding arrangements.

- 1.9 In considering the relevant statutory guidance², the overwhelming opinion was that Child Q had been exposed to a traumatic incident and had undoubtedly suffered harm. Whilst there was less certainty about whether the precise definition of a '*serious child safeguarding case*' had been met, there was little doubt that the impact on Child Q had been profound. The repercussions on Child Q's emotional health were obvious and ongoing. Given the context of where and how the search took place, it was impossible not to view these circumstances as anything other than the most serious and significant.

- 1.10 The incident also illustrated unambiguous issues of importance that warranted independent analysis, not least the potential impact of disproportionality and racism and how these factors might have influenced the actions of organisations and individual professionals.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/child-safeguarding-practice-review-panel/about>

² Working Together 2018, Chapter 4 para 15-19

1.11 Indeed, reinforcing the gravity with which this case was being viewed, Ofsted's National Director for Social Care and Regional Director for London were engaged by the CHSCP and verbally appraised of its details.

1.12 Terms of Reference were set for the review, with the methodology requiring the following questions to be addressed:

- Was the rationale and practice to strip search Child Q sufficiently attuned to the rights of children as set out in the relevant articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- Was practice involving Child Q sufficiently focused on her potential safeguarding needs?
- Is the law and policy, which informs local practice, properly defined in the context of identifying potential risk and furthermore, does law and policy create the conditions whereby practice itself can criminalise and cause significant harm to children?

1.13 To ensure the review had access to relevant expertise, a reference panel including Black and Global Majority Ethnic³ safeguarding professionals was also convened. Their input has been invaluable in helping to explore and validate the review's findings in the context of anti-racist practice.

1.14 These and other findings are consistent with the overall purpose of reviews. In line with statutory guidance, they are focused upon preventing or reducing the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. The review has not been *'conducted to hold individuals, organisations or agencies to account, as there are other processes for that purpose, including through employment law and disciplinary procedures, professional regulation and, in exceptional cases, criminal proceedings.'*⁴

1.15 With regards to the above, following a formal complaint, Child Q's school swiftly responded to this by way of a Stage 2 investigation. Investigations remain

³ This terminology is used in place of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME).

⁴ [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Chapter 4, para 4.](#)

ongoing by the Independent Officer for Police Conduct (IOPC) into the conduct of the police officers.

- 1.16 The review makes eight findings and 14 recommendations for improving practice.

Finding 1: The school was fully compliant with expected practice standards when responding to its concerns about Child Q smelling of cannabis and its subsequent search of Child Q's coat, bag, scarf and shoes. This demonstrated good curiosity by involved staff and an alertness to potential indicators of risk.

Finding 2: The decision to strip search Child Q was insufficiently attuned to her best interests or right to privacy.

Finding 3: School staff deferred to the authority of the police on their arrival at school. They should have been more challenging to the police, seeking clarity about the actions they intended to take. All practitioners need to be mindful of their duties to uphold the best interests of children.

Finding 4: School staff had an insufficient focus on the safeguarding needs of Child Q when responding to concerns about suspected drug use.

Finding 5: The application of the law and policy governing the strip searching of children can be variable and open to interpretation.

Finding 6: The absence of any specific requirement to seek parental consent when strip searching children undermines the principles of parental responsibility and partnership working with parents to safeguard children.

Finding 7: The Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time appeared to have frustrated effective communication between school staff and the Safer Schools Officer.

Finding 8: Having considered the context of the incident, the views of those engaged in the review and the impact felt by Child Q and her family, racism (whether deliberate or not) was likely to have been an influencing factor in the decision to undertake a strip search.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 Beyond the immediate events of the strip search at school, the review has kept information relating to the background and context of Child Q's lived experience to a minimum. The reasons for this are three-fold. Firstly, to protect Child Q's identity and that of her family, secondly, to allow for the report's publication and thirdly, because the review considers much of this information to be largely irrelevant.
- 2.2 To explain this latter point further, the review has been mindful not to detract from the incident itself. It has also been careful not to introduce a perception that there might be a 'rationale' to excuse the actions of some professionals based on who Child Q is, where she lives or what her family circumstances are.
- 2.3 The review is clear that the strip search of Child Q should never have happened and there was no reasonable justification for it.

Definitions

- 2.4 A 'strip search' is a specific practice related to the overall stop and search powers available to the police. There are two distinct types of strip search that are outlined under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984.

More Thorough Searches

- 2.5 A more thorough search, as part of a stop and search, is where an officer deems it necessary that the subject removes more than an outer coat, jacket or gloves. This process does not reveal intimate parts of the body. Powers for this more thorough search are set out under PACE Code A, [paragraph 3.6](#).

'Where on reasonable grounds it is considered necessary to conduct a more thorough search (e.g. by requiring a person to take off a T-shirt), this must be done out of public view, for example, in a police van unless paragraph 3.7 applies, or police station if there is one nearby.'

Any search involving the removal of more than an outer coat, jacket, gloves, headgear or footwear, or any other item concealing identity, may only be made by an officer of the same sex as the person searched and may not be made in the presence of anyone of the opposite sex unless the person being searched specifically requests it.'

Searches Involving Exposure of Intimate Parts of the Body

- 2.6 Searches involving exposure of intimate parts of the body are where the person removes all or most of their clothing. They are, by definition, one of the most intrusive forms of search. As with searches involving less intrusion, they must only be used where it is necessary and reasonable, bearing in mind the object of the search.
- 2.7 Consultation with a supervisor is always required prior to such a search⁵. The police officer must be of the same sex as the person being searched and the process must be conducted in accordance with [paragraph 11](#) of PACE Code C, Annex A. Full powers are set out under [PACE Code A, paragraph 3.7](#).

'Searches involving exposure of intimate parts of the body must not be conducted as a routine extension of a less thorough search, simply because nothing is found in the course of the initial search.'

⁵ [College of Policing – Authorised Professional Practice](#)

Searches involving exposure of intimate parts of the body may be carried out only at a nearby police station or other nearby location which is out of public view (but not a police vehicle).

- 2.8 During a search involving the exposure of intimate parts of the body, persons are required to remove some or potentially all of their clothing. They can also be required to bend over and spread their legs. The police are allowed to require compliance in this regard if the person is suspected of concealing evidence. This might include, for example, class A drugs or an object that could cause harm. Child Q was searched under this criterion.

Intimate Searches

- 2.9 In addition to these defined 'strip searches', the police can also undertake 'intimate searches'. These involve a physical examination of a person's body orifices other than the mouth. PACE identifies that '*the intrusive nature of such searches means the actual and potential risks associated with intimate searches must never be underestimated*'. It further sets out the specific approach to consent that must be followed prior to any such search being undertaken.

The Day of the Incident

- 2.10 In trying to determine why the events unfolded as they did, inconsistencies in the accounts of those involved have hampered the review's ability to clarify these details with any precision. These variations primarily relate to the initial conversations held between the police and the school, whether school staff knew that Child Q was going to be searched (and to what extent) and who was acting as an Appropriate Adult.
- 2.11 Whilst taking account of interviews and written statements, the review does not draw any firm conclusions about each event in question. Some remain subject to investigation as part of ongoing complaints. That said, the review believes it reasonable to infer the following:

- School staff contacted the police because they remained concerned that Child Q had drugs in her possession. They had searched Child Q to the extent that was permissible, and it is likely they knew a further search of Child Q would be undertaken by the attending officers.
- Indeed, if a potential search wasn't expected, then the instruction for a member of staff to follow Child Q when being taken to another office is unlikely to have been made. This was done to make sure that Child Q didn't attempt to dispose of anything in her possession.
- It is unlikely that the school was informed by the attending police officers of the intention to strip search Child Q.
- It is likely that the importance of the Appropriate Adult role was insufficiently explained to either Child Q or the school staff present. Relevant requirements set out under para 11, Annexe A, Code C of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) appear not to have been followed.
- There is no evidence that the officers consulted with a supervisor prior to the search.
- There is no evidence that Child Q was resistant to the search undertaken by school staff or that there were any indicators in her behaviour that she might be hiding drugs on her person.
- The rationale used by the police to initiate the strip search was primarily based on reports provided by the school – that she had smelt of cannabis, that she had previously smelt of cannabis at school and that someone known to Child Q had previously been excluded for drugs.

Previous Incidents of Concern

2.12 A month before Child Q was strip searched, she was similarly identified by the school as smelling of cannabis. On this occasion Child Q was described by school staff as being 'intoxicated', although on contacting her mother, she explained that Child Q had been studying late the night before and it was this that accounted for her presentation. Such background is relevant to the review given the different approach adopted by the school in managing this earlier

incident (and the likely influence of this event on the actions prior to Child Q being strip searched).

- 2.13 In the school's record log, it is noted that Child Q and her mother were advised that *'if this behaviour continues or that if she is found with weed/drugs on her she will not be able to continue her place with [the school].'* No further action followed by way of exploring this incident further, contacting the police or engaging external agencies for advice and support. Child Q's mother was, however, quickly engaged by school staff to inform her of the concerns.

The School Context

- 2.14 The most recent inspection of Child Q's school found it to be good with safeguarding effective. There are no known complaints regarding pupil well-being or the overall provision for pupils prior to the incident involving Child Q.
- 2.15 There have never been any similar incidents whereby a child has been strip searched on the school's premises. The review is not alert to any other child having been strip searched in any other local school.
- 2.16 In the school's Stage 2 investigation report, its author commented: *'The involvement of the police in this manner is an irregular occurrence at the Academy. In the 12 months prior to the incident the Academy had not requested police involvement about searches or suspicion of possession of banned/illegal items for students.'*

Local Facts & Figures

- 2.17 During 2020/2021, there were 299 *'further searches'* conducted in Hackney by local police officers from the Central East BCU of the MPS. The review was advised that *'further searches'* is the terminology used to cover strip search activity, although this does not differentiate between the specific types of searches that can be undertaken.

2.18 Over the same period, 25 children under the age of 18 were subject of 'further searches'. 19 were male and 18 were handcuffed during the process. The reasons for search primarily related to suspicions about drugs (20), followed by weapons (4) and stolen property (1). 22 (88%) of the searches were negative with an outcome of no further action recorded in 20 (80%) of the cases. In terms of ethnicity, (as per the codes used by the police), 15 (60%) of the children searched were Black, 2 were White, 6 Asian and 2 Arab or North African.

3. Views of Child Q

3.1 During her engagement with the review, Child Q was spoken to and shared a written account of her experiences. The following statements made by Child Q reflect the significant impact that this incident had upon her.

"Someone walked into the school, where I was supposed to feel safe, took me away from the people who were supposed to protect me and stripped me naked, while on my period."

"...On the top of preparing for the most important exams of my life. I can't go a single day without wanting to scream, shout, cry or just give up."

"I feel like I'm locked in a box, and no one can see or cares that I just want to go back to feeling safe again, my box is collapsing around me, and no-one wants to help."

"I don't know if I'm going to feel normal again. I don't know how long it will take to repair my box. But I do know this can't happen to anyone, ever again."

"All the people that allowed this to happen need to be held responsible. I was held responsible for a smell."

“...But I’m just a child. The main thing I need is space and time to understand what has happened to me and exactly how I feel about it and getting past this exam season.”

“..... I need to know that the people who have done this to me can't do it to anyone else ever again. In fact so NO ONE else can do this to any other child in their care.”

“Things need to change with all organisations involved. Even I can see that.”

4. Views of Mother and Maternal Aunt

4.1 Child Q’s mother and maternal aunt were also engaged by the review. During interviews, there was a clear sense of shock as to what Child Q had experienced and the ongoing impact upon the whole family. The events themselves have dented the family’s confidence and trust in those professionals tasked with caring for and protecting Child Q.

4.2 There was also an overwhelming perception by the family that Child Q had been let down badly, criminalised, and above all, a view that Child Q was treated differently because she is Black. A sample of their views reflecting the impact of the strip-search are set out below.

4.3 Comments from Child Q’s mother during interview.

“...the incident that happened (was) treated not as a safeguarding issue. (It was) treated as a criminal matter.”

“(Professionals) treated her as an adult. (She was) searched as an adult.”

“Child Q is a changed person. She is not eating, every time I find her, she is in the bath, full of water and sleeping in the bath. Not communicating with us as (she) used to, doesn’t want to leave her room, panic attacks at school, doesn’t

want to be on the road, screams when sees/hears the police, and we need to reassure her.”

“We try to get her to do things and reassure her. Child Q is not the same person. Was a person who liked to be active and get into things. Not now, she has changed. She comes home, goes upstairs in the bedroom and closes the bedroom door. Saying she is doing mock exam studies, she just locks off, saying leave me alone. When sleeping, (she is) screaming in her sleep, I have to watch her.”

“At the end of day, things like that happen, is it because of her skin, hair. Why her, now looking at the future, will she be comfortable?”

“Child Q was searched by the police and was asked to go back into the exam without any teacher asking her about how she felt knowing what she had just gone through. Their position in the school is being part of the safeguarding team, but they were not acting as if they were a part of that team. This makes me sick - the fact that my child had to take her sanitary towel off and put the same dirty towel back on because they would not allow her to use the restroom to clean herself. I was also wondering if the officers body cameras were on while my child was stripped of her clothes, are they re-watching it?”⁶

4.4 When questioned, the MPS informed the review that there is no Body Worn Camera recording of the incident.

4.5 Letter from Child Q’s mother to the review.

“Consider what is happening now diversity and racial equality around Black Lives Matter and what is happening to women out there.”

“Do you think it is appropriate for a black girl to be search without a parent or family member, when I send my child to school, I expect teachers to act as a

⁶ The MPS informed the review that there is no Body Worn Camera recording of the incident.

parental substitute. Would allow your child to be strip searched and questioned without consent or a guardian present, for a 15-year-old to be interrogated by multiple unnamed police officers.”

“Why doesn’t my daughter deserve the same rights as every other child, is this because they think she is a young girl, with no respect for her parents or adults and no fear of consequences or because she is a black child living in a poor city area.”

“As you can see clearly in the incident, they have already pointed out the area that Child Q lives in, they made where we live a boundary for Child Q. Our children have families, have names, have hearts and minds, their lives matter. They wish to be scientists, educators and mathematicians.”

4.6 Comments from Child Q’s maternal aunt made during interview.

“I see the change from a happy go lucky girl to a timid recluse that hardly speaks to me...In my personal opinion, they have got a problem with Child Q and the aftermath is that when she sees this individual (a teacher) in school, gets panic attacks. They are the main instigator of the exposure.”

4.7 Letter from Child Q’s maternal aunt to the review.

“I cannot express to you how aggrieved I am with the school and the police enforcement officers for exposing Child Q to such an undignified, humiliating, and degrading exposure. No child of her age should have to experience this without due cause.”

“Child Q was doing exceptionally well at school, top of the class and getting praised every day for her good work and good conduct. She was even the prefect of her year at one stage. She was progressing well, a happy go lucky child, well loved, and cared for. Then for whatever reason, cracks crept in and she appeared to be singled out by the teachers repeatedly for various things.”

“The family do not believe that the officers would have treated a Caucasian girl child who was on her monthly periods in the same way.”

- *“Child Q was made to take her pad off, something so personal and exposed in such a way to strangers.”*
- *“Child Q was racially profiled due to her being black and her extreme large head of locks.”*
- *“She was made to bend over spread her legs, use her hands to spread her buttocks cheek whilst coughing.”*
- *“She was not permitted to use the toilet despite asking.”*
- *“She is now self-harming and requires therapy. She is traumatised and is now a shell of the bubbly child she was before this incident.”*
- *“From the time she was pulled out of her exam to the time she returned home, she was isolated, not given food or offered water, where is the care.”*
- *“It is now being circulated in her school that she is the big-time drugs seller.”*
- *“All the above is related to the police behaviour towards her.”*

5. Findings and Recommendations

5.1 It has been a relatively straightforward process for the review to conclude that Child Q should never have been strip searched. Across many of the professionals involved that day, there was an absence of a safeguarding first approach to their practice. There were other ways that this incident could and should have been managed, beyond the largely criminal justice response from the police and the disciplinary response from the school.

5.2 Whilst school staff were right to respond to their concerns, the intervention that followed is considered by the review to have been disproportionate and ultimately harmful to Child Q.

- 5.3 Prior to addressing each of the questions as set out in the Terms of Reference, the review makes two supplementary recommendations.
- 5.4 The first, not relating to the experiences of Child Q, involves the LCSPR process itself. This has been made given the significant difficulties experienced by the review team in gaining direct access to the police officers involved in the case.
- 5.5 This was due to their practice being subject to a formal investigation by the IOPC. Whilst eventually resolved through effective collaboration between the IOPC and the CHSCP⁷, the following recommendation is made.

Recommendation 1: The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel should engage the IOPC with a view to developing national guidance on the IOPC's interface with the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review process. As a minimum, this should set out the arrangements for securing cooperation, accessing key staff for interview and the requirements for the timely sharing of information.

- 5.6 The second recommendation involves the data submitted to the review by the MPS in respect of strip searches. This lacked specificity on the different types of strip searches, demographics of those searched, locations and timing. The review was informed there was no existing mechanism to retrieve this data without significant operational tasking.

Recommendation 2: The MPS should review and revise its recording system for stop and search to ensure it clearly identifies and allows for retrieval of the full range of activity under stop and search powers (including the ability to differentiate between the different types of strip searches undertaken).

⁷ The CHSCP was designated a formal party to the IOPC investigation in order to facilitate a legal basis for information sharing. Whilst this allowed access to information provided to the IOPC as part of its investigation, none of the officers were engaged in face-to-face interviews.

Review Question 1: UNCRC Compliance

- 5.7 **Was the rationale and practice to strip search Child Q sufficiently attuned to the rights of children as set out in the relevant articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?**
- 5.8 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history. *‘The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.’*⁸
- 5.9 The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is an international treaty, in which Member States of the Council of Europe, including the UK, commit to upholding a number of fundamental rights.
- 5.10 As part of the review’s analysis, consideration has been given to the relevant articles under both conventions. Firstly, it has examined them in the context of the school’s decision to search Child Q.

Finding 1: The school was fully compliant with expected practice standards when responding to its concerns about Child Q smelling of cannabis and its subsequent search of Child Q’s coat, bag, scarf and shoes. This demonstrated good curiosity by involved staff and an alertness to potential indicators of risk.

- 5.11 The identified concerns about the smell of cannabis, the concern that this was a repeated incident and the additional context about someone known to Child Q⁹ all provided a rationale for the school to act. The school also held concerns that if Child Q did have drugs in her possession, then this could present a

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

⁹ A person known to Child Q had previously been excluded for drugs and there were concerns about this individual and gang affiliation.

potential risk to other pupils in the school. Given these circumstances, there were reasonable grounds for the school to be worried.

- 5.12 Under the UNCRC, the decision of the school to investigate further and conduct a search of Child Q's bag, scarf, coat and shoes reflects compliance with Article 33 (protecting children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs) and Article 3 (best interests).
- 5.13 Practice by the school at this point was also fully in line with its powers defined in government guidance¹⁰. This describes how school staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees, alongside setting out the statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, '*where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item*'. Prohibited items include illegal drugs.
- 5.14 Actions taken by the school in searching Child Q demonstrated an adherence to obligations under Article 8 of the ECHR. Whilst this defines a pupil's right for respect to their private life, the 'interference' by way of the initial search was fully justified and proportionate.
- 5.15 Whilst evidencing positive practice, the next steps were characterised by a level of ambiguity and a diluted focus on Child Q's safeguarding needs. This is addressed later in the report.
- 5.16 Whilst no recommendations are made in respect of Child Q's experiences at this stage, the review has identified a need for the government's guidance, '*Searching, screening and confiscation - Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies, DfE, January 2018*' to be updated. In the opinion of the review, this guidance could be strengthened by including much stronger reference to the primary need to safeguard children.

¹⁰ [Searching, screening and confiscation - Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies, DfE, January 2018](#)

- 5.17 As framed, its tone is largely about discipline and is likely to lead front-line staff down this path of practice. By including relevant narrative about, for example, extra-familial risks and contextual safeguarding, this might help concentrate practice on helping and protecting children.
- 5.18 Indeed, the section covering what should happen after a search contains no reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 or the expectation that schools should escalate their concerns when indicators of abuse, harm or exploitation are identified. Being in possession of drugs is one such indicator, although the only external agency identified in the guidance for contact is the police.
- 5.19 The guidance also includes worryingly outdated terminology that should be urgently corrected. For example, on pages 12 and 13, the guidance refers to ‘*child pornography*’ and ‘*pornographic images of a child*’ respectively.

Recommendation 3: The Department for Education should review and revise its guidance on *Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2018)* to include more explicit reference to safeguarding and to amend its use of inappropriate language.

Finding 2: The decision to strip search Child Q was insufficiently attuned to her best interests or right to privacy.

- 5.20 There is valid critique about whether the decision and execution of the strip search were consistent with Child Q’s best interests¹¹ and her right to privacy¹².
- 5.21 An example of this can be seen in the approach to engaging an Appropriate Adult for Child Q. Practice was ambiguous and appears not to have aligned with the defined legal application of stop and search (concerning searches

¹¹ Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. UNCRC

¹² Article 16 (right to privacy) Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child’s private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation. UNCRC

involving exposure of intimate parts of the body) as set out by the College of Policing¹³. This guidance states:

'Unless there is a risk of serious harm to the person or to someone else, there must be a minimum of two persons present in addition to the person being searched. One of those must be the appropriate adult if the person is a child or vulnerable adult unless, in the case of a child, the child and appropriate adult both agree that the adult should not be present during the search.'

- 5.22 In Child Q's circumstances, whilst two people were present, they were both police officers. In the account of one of these officers seen by the review, they comment that Child Q '*indicated*' that she didn't mind one of the teachers acting as an Appropriate Adult but was uncomfortable about them being in the room. The officer further states that this teacher (and another) '*seemed*' happy to be outside whilst the search was undertaken. 'Indicated' and 'Seemed' do not suggest a thorough process whereby specific clarification was being sought about how Child Q's best interests would be protected.
- 5.23 Indeed, school staff dispute having ever been told about the planned strip search. In this sense, even if they knew they were the Appropriate Adult for Child Q, their ability to effectively advocate for her was seriously undermined.
- 5.24 On initiating the review, the MPS quickly recognised this as an area of improvement, issuing a revised guidance note to its officers across London in February 2021. This reinforced the following requirements with regards to Appropriate Adults.
- *Arrange for an Appropriate Adult to be present in the case of a child or young person or vulnerable adult (except in cases of urgency where there is a risk of harm to the detainee or others).*

¹³ <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/stop-and-search/legal/legal-application/>

- *If the subject is under 18 and does not wish an Appropriate Adult to be present during the actual search, ensure they explain this in the presence of the Appropriate Adult and obtain the agreement of the Appropriate Adult.*

5.25 Whilst positive, this guidance could be strengthened by fully reflecting the procedure set out under the revised Code C, PACE, Annex A, paragraph 11 (C)¹⁴.

'Except in urgent cases ... a search of a juvenile may take place in the absence of the appropriate adult only if the juvenile signifies in the presence of the appropriate adult that they do not want the adult to be present during the search and the adult agrees. A record shall be made of the juvenile's decision and signed by the appropriate adult.'

5.26 No evidence has been seen by the review indicating that any of the above expectations were actioned by the police during the strip search of Child Q. The review makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 4: The MPS should update its guidance note and local policy to better emphasise the requirements for engaging an Appropriate Adult under the revised Code C, PACE, 1984.

5.27 In terms of the wider responsibility of all practitioners to protect and promote the rights of children, the review makes the following finding:

Finding 3: School staff deferred to the authority of the police on their arrival at school. They should have been more challenging to the police, seeking clarity about the actions they intended to take. All practitioners need to be mindful of their duties to uphold the best interests of children.

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117589/pace-code-c-2012.pdf

5.28 As a learning point, this has been fully accepted by the school staff involved. Many reflected their sadness and disappointment at what Child Q had experienced, with comments made as part of the school's Stage 2 investigation report echoing these feelings:

"In hindsight I put my trust in the law; I know now that I need to understand the law better... For example, insisting on staying with a student at all times..."

"This is the hardest thing that we've had to go through and for anyone to think that the school might be complicit is very stressful and difficult to deal with."

"In my experience with police [at her previous schools], where there has been a suspicion of carrying drugs or a weapon, and police found it necessary to conduct a search, it would only be a 'pat down'. I have known drugs to be found in socks or a waistband as I had witnessed that before, twice in my career. I have never known any more than that on site or known a student to be taken off site."

"I am an experienced Designated Safeguarding Lead with over 6 years' experience of safeguarding and liaising with the police to support young people. I have never known, nor would I condone a strip search of a young person on a school site."

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| <p>Recommendation 5: The CHSCP should review and revise its awareness raising and training content to ensure the Child Q case is referenced, with a specific focus on reinforcing the responsibilities of practitioners to advocate for and on behalf of the children they are working with / who are in their care.</p> |
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Review Question 2: Safeguarding Needs

5.29 Was practice involving Child Q sufficiently focused on her potential safeguarding needs? In circumstances where young people are being engaged due to concerns about drug use / possession, is the safeguarding of children a recognised and evidenced priority in practice?

- 5.30 Concerns about strip searching children are not new, having previously attracted scrutiny from a range of different sources. Whilst not practical to highlight every relevant article or document, the following provides a snapshot of some of this material.
- 5.31 In 2014, a report by Joe Sandler Clarke¹⁵ for the Guardian newspaper identified that *'...4,638 children aged between 10 and 16 were asked to remove their clothes and then searched by police between April 2008 and the end of last year. Just over a third were released by police without charge.'*
- 5.32 This article also highlighted the attempts of Julian Huppert, a Liberal Democrat MP for Cambridge who unsuccessfully campaigned for children to be strip searched only if an adult other than police officers was present.
- 5.33 In 2015, Just for Kids Law and Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) published a briefing note¹⁶ detailing their serious concerns about an *'alarming increase in the number of children being strip searched by the police'*. This note also highlighted concerns that in 45% of strip searches of children, no Appropriate Adult was present.
- 5.34 More recently, the practice of strip searching within the CHSCP's footprint has also been critiqued. Whilst involving an adult, the case of Dr Koshka Duff¹⁷ evidences the impact and trauma that can be caused when practice falls well outside of defined standards.
- 5.35 Whilst some may argue that the strip searching of children should never be done at all, the review acknowledges its place in practice, with the caveat that this needs to be firmly embedded in a culture that addresses the safeguarding needs of children.

¹⁵[Metropolitan police strip searched more than 4,500 children in five years](#), Joe Sandler Clarke, The Guardian, March 2014

¹⁶<http://www.crae.org.uk/media/76504/FINAL-Strip-Searching-at-Police-Station-Briefing.pdf>

¹⁷<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60141559>

- 5.36 The senior leaders at both the school and the police have fully acknowledged they could and should have done better in this regard. It is accurate to describe the senior leadership teams as being appalled at what Child Q experienced.
- 5.37 If children are suspected of carrying drugs or weapons, it is more likely than not that they are being exploited in some way or form. So, whilst stop and search powers '*enable officers to allay or confirm suspicions about individuals without exercising their power of arrest.*'¹⁸ – they should equally be used as a tool to identify risk and give children the help and protection they might need.
- 5.38 Taking a binary approach as to whether a crime has been committed or not runs the risk that important aspects of a child's life will be missed. Important aspects that may make the difference between that child being protected or not.
- 5.39 In terms of the strip search of Child Q, practice that day appears to have been far too weighted towards a criminal justice response. This may be explained in part by the deference of school staff to the police. It might relate to the relative junior police staff involved or the fact that officers didn't seek the advice of their supervisor. It might also relate to elements of disproportionality and racism leading those involved to make certain assumptions about Child Q and what response was required.
- 5.40 It was also the lack of action taken after the strip search that shows Child Q was primarily being seen as 'the risk' as opposed to being 'at risk'. Because of this, little to no thought was given as to whether a referral to external agencies might be required. Indeed, if the rationale to strip search Child Q was based on fears about exploitation, then it should have followed that this concern was escalated as a safeguarding referral¹⁹. As it was, Child Q was sent home in a taxi.

¹⁸ [Revised code of practice for the exercise by: Police Officers of Statutory Powers of stop and search, Home Office 2014](#)

¹⁹ The MPS did create a Merlin report, however, this was RAG rated as BLUE. These are not ordinarily submitted to Hackney CFS as risk is assessed as not being a factor. The Merlin was received by Hackney CFS 14 days later as part of a request for information from the police following the referral from Health. The Merlin made no reference to the strip search.

Recommendation 6: Relevant police guidance (both local and national) governing the policy on strip searching children should clearly define a need to focus on the safeguarding needs of children and follow up actions that need to be considered by way of helping and protecting children at potential risk.

Recommendation 7: The Central East BCU should engage the local stop and search monitoring group, ACCOUNT, and other representative bodies to consider the lessons from this review and how the effectiveness of safeguarding (as part of stop and search practice) can be overseen through their respective activities.

Finding 4: School staff had an insufficient focus on the safeguarding needs of Child Q when responding to concerns about suspected drug use.

- 5.41 When evaluating practice by the school, lessons also emerge about the need to maintain a clear line of sight on the safeguarding needs of children. Neither the incident of the strip search nor the previous concerns about Child Q smelling of cannabis resulted in any contact with external agencies.
- 5.42 Practice during both these incidents was similarly binary in approach, with the focus appearing to be on whether Child Q had breached the rules as opposed to what the alleged substance misuse might mean for her safety and welfare. The review makes the following finding in this respect:

Recommendation 8: Where any suspicion of harm arises by way of concerns for potential or actual substance misuse, a safeguarding response is paramount. Practitioners should always contact Children's Social Care to make a referral or seek further advice in such circumstances.

Review Question 3: Law and Policy

- 5.43 Is the law and policy, which informs local practice, properly defined in the context of identifying potential risk and furthermore, does law and policy create the conditions whereby practice itself can criminalise and cause significant harm to children?

Finding 5: The application of the law and policy governing the strip searching of children can be variable and open to interpretation.

- 5.44 Home Office guidance²⁰ explains that the use of powers relating to stop and search '*must be used fairly, responsibly, with respect for people being searched and without unlawful discrimination*'. Under the Equality Act 2010, section 149, officers also have '*a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'relevant protected characteristic' and people who do not share it, and to take steps to foster good relations between those persons.*' It further emphasises section 11 of the Children Act 2004 that requires chief police officers and other specified persons and bodies '*to ensure that in the discharge of their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of all persons under the age of 18.*'
- 5.45 The Home Office policy framework also acknowledges that if the fundamental principles (governing the discharge of stop and search powers) are not observed, the use of powers to stop and search '*may be drawn into question*'. For any search undertaken by the police, the guidance is clear that it must be based on reasonable grounds for suspicion that the person has a particular article in their possession²¹.
- 5.46 Whilst there is no disagreement with many aspects of this guidance or the broad principles of the law, it is here that the review believes further emphasis could help support improved practice with children.

²⁰ [Revised code of practice for the exercise by: Police Officers of Statutory Powers of stop and search, Home Office 2014](#)

²¹ Except when officers are authorised under section 60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

- 5.47 Indeed, with regards to Child Q’s experiences, having a previous associate who used drugs and being noted to have smelt of cannabis twice, should not have led an officer to conclude a strip search on school grounds was the right course of action. This and subsequent actions did not have regard to Child Q’s safeguarding or welfare. They were not the most proportionate tool available, and the extent of the strip search did not keep the degree of intrusion to the minimum.
- 5.48 It is also worth highlighting the IOPC finding²² of a complaint in September 2020 that emphasised ‘*the use of the smell of cannabis as a single ground is not good practice as set out in the College of Policing’s Authorised Professional Practice on stop and search.*’
- 5.49 Whilst fully acknowledging the complexities that face front-line policing and the challenges in making definitions ‘too tight’, it seems to the review that better guidance and training covering ‘reasonable grounds’ would benefit decision making, particularly where this involves children. Practice was undertaken by officers believing they were operating in line with law and policy. Even by doing so, their actions arguably criminalised Child Q and caused her significant harm.

Recommendation 9: The MPS should engage The College of Policing to explore potential improvements to the guidance concerning reasonable grounds involving stop and search activity with children.

Finding 6: The absence of any specific requirement to seek parental consent when strip searching children undermines the principles of parental responsibility and partnership working with parents to safeguard children.

- 5.50 A clear theme of practice on the day of the strip search was the lack of any parental engagement. One account from the police states that Child Q was asked if she wanted her mother to be contacted, which they say she declined.

²² <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-upholds-cyclist%E2%80%99s-stop-and-search-complaint-against-metropolitan-police-officer>

Child Q disputes this and states that she did in fact ask for her mother on both this and other occasions that day. In the opinion of the review, little thought appears to have been given to the importance of contacting someone with parental responsibility for Child Q.

5.51 This was first seen in the school's response. Despite Child Q's mother being contacted following the previous incident, this wasn't done immediately on this occasion. It is likely that the involvement of the police influenced this being considered in the depth that would have reflected best practice. School staff appear to have deferred to the decisions of the police. That said, the DfE guidance on searching screening and confiscation²³, is also light on the inclusion of parental consent as an issue of importance. Section 16 of this guidance includes the following relevant statements:

- *'Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child'*. The review agrees with this position.
- *'There is no legal requirement to make or keep a record of a search'*. This statement is permissive and whilst likely to be accurate from a legal sense, it runs the risk of promoting poor practice. There will be equally no legal impediment to recording a search. Any guidance that steers practitioners away from making records on safeguarding matters is poor and should be changed.
- *'Schools should inform the individual pupil's parents or guardians where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, though there is no legal requirement to do so.'* In the absence of this document sufficiently referencing the requirement to safeguard children and engage external agencies, this point needs strengthening. Whilst noting that schools should inform parents or guardians, permissive statements such as this risk schools not doing anything. In Child Q's case, she was the one who had to tell her mother she had been searched by the school and

²³

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674416/Searching_screening_and_confiscation.pdf

stripped searched by the police. In the opinion of the review, this ‘legally permissible practice’ is not good practice.

Recommendation 10: Alongside Recommendation 3, the Department for Education should review and revise its guidance on *Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2018)* to include much stronger reference to the importance of keeping records and engaging parents as part of best safeguarding practice.

5.52 In terms of the strip search of Child Q, her mother was neither engaged to seek consent nor informed by the police that the search was going to take place or had taken place. In the opinion of the review this was poor practice.

5.53 However, as set out within PACE 1984, there is no specific requirement to gain parental consent prior to a strip search – even those that might involve the exposure of intimate parts of the body. For intimate searches, this position is different. Annexe A, 2B of the Revised Code C, PACE 1984 states:

*‘In the case of a juvenile or a vulnerable person, the seeking and giving of consent must take place in the presence of the appropriate adult. **A juvenile’s consent is only valid if their parent’s or guardian’s consent is also obtained** unless the juvenile is under 14, when their parent’s or guardian’s consent is sufficient in its own right.’*

5.54 Both the review and the reference group struggled to understand the rationale behind these differing approaches to consent. On the face of it, the law appears to suggest that the requirement for a child to expose their intimate body parts is insufficiently significant to require their parents to be told it is going to happen.

5.55 This fundamentally fails to acknowledge the dehumanising and traumatic impact that such searches can have on children, and again, the important role that parents / carers have in terms of protecting their own children. It potentially minimises the ability of parents / carers to provide immediate support. The

review struggled to see how the absence of any requirement to even tell parents that a strip search was going to take place could be in a child's best interests.

Recommendation 11: The Home Office and the National Police Chiefs Council should seek to strengthen the Revised Code C, PACE 1984 to better define the engagement of parents / carers / guardians when strip searches that involve the exposure of intimate parts of the body are undertaken on children.

- 5.56 The review considers that benefits could also be accrued by educating and empowering young people to better understand their rights in respect of stop and search activity by the police.
- 5.57 Indeed, Child Q was fully compliant with the school's search of her possessions and compliant with the request to be strip searched by the police. Whilst not advocating she should have been disruptive, she appeared unable to challenge any of the actions being undertaken and is unlikely to have known about what she could expect, even by way of procedure (i.e. such as the requirement for both her and an Appropriate Adult to agree and sign for the Appropriate Adult not to be present during the strip search). She responded in this way, despite being adamant that she had no drugs in her possession and being upset about not being allowed to take her mock examination.
- 5.58 The reference panel considered the arrival of the police at school and how Child Q might have reacted to this trauma. Whilst well-known behavioural responses are the fight, flight, or freeze responses, Child Q may have experienced a fawn response²⁴. Flight includes running away, fight is to challenge aggressively, and freeze is when someone becomes unable to move physically or make choices. The fawn response involves rapidly moving to try to please a person to avoid any conflict. This could have accounted for Child Q's compliance.
- 5.59 Whilst only a hypothesis, the circumstances nonetheless highlight evidence of where improvements could be made in directly raising awareness and

²⁴ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/addiction-and-recovery/202008/understanding-fight-flight-freeze-and-the-fawn-response>

knowledge amongst children about their rights. A range of material²⁵ already exists that could be developed in this context.

Recommendation 12: The CHSCP should engage ACCOUNT, Safer Schools Police Officers and other community organisations to develop an awareness raising programme across schools and colleges about stop and search activity by the police.

Covid-19

Finding 7: The Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time appeared to have frustrated effective communication between school staff and the Safer Schools Officer.

- 5.60 The Safer Schools Police Officer (SSPO) was not on the school premises due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time. In usual circumstances, it is likely that the SSPO would have been directly involved with Child Q and this may have led to a different response. Whilst only a hypothesis, the review is alert to the fact that the attending officers that strip searched Child Q had no experience of working in schools.
- 5.61 The SSPO's absence may also have contributed to a dilution in the accuracy of information sharing and a collective understanding about what was being asked for and what would happen. There remain differing accounts provided by teachers and the SSPO as to what exactly the police were being contacted for and the expectations of their subsequent actions.
- 5.62 Whilst no specific recommendations are made in respect of Covid-19 arrangements, there is relevant learning to be accrued about how the SSPO role can help promote a wider understanding about stop and search powers and how these relate to children.

²⁵ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/kyr_inner_april_19_v5_new.pdf

Racism

5.63 Finding 8: Having considered the context of the incident, the views of those engaged in the review and the impact felt by Child Q and her family, racism (whether deliberate or not) was likely to have been an influencing factor in the decision to undertake a strip search.

5.64 The actions of professionals involved on the day of the strip search have been evaluated in the context of Child Q's ethnicity and whether she was treated differently because she is Black.

5.65 The importance of this line of enquiry is starkly reflected in several events that took place around the same time. Significantly, some six months prior, George Floyd was tragically killed in the USA and there were repercussions around the globe, including in the UK. It brought into sharp focus some of the negative experiences that Black and Global Majority Ethnic communities can experience when interacting with the police. Valid questions have been raised about racism within the police and other agencies, the priority given to tackling this and whether organisational commitment ever rises above the rhetoric.

5.66 The strip search of Child Q also took place two months before HMICFRS²⁶ published its report into the disproportionate use of police powers²⁷. In her introduction to the HMICFRS report, Wendy Williams CBE, HM Inspector of Constabulary stated:

'Some of the most intrusive and contentious police powers are those that allow the police to use force and to stop and search people. Some view stop and search as a valuable tool in the fight against crime, while others argue that its use has little effect on crime rates and can in fact increase disorder. For some, particularly Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, it can reinforce the perception that there is a culture of discrimination within the police. And, now

²⁶ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

²⁷ [Disproportionate use of police powers - A spotlight on stop and search and the use of force, HMICFRS Feb 21](#)

that we have some long-awaited data on the police use of force, similar concerns are arising about this area of practice.'

- 5.67 In framing the rationale for this finding, the review has intentionally avoided the use of '*unconscious bias*'. In the opinion of both the review and its reference group, as a term, this somewhat excuses the actions of those involved. It gives the perception that agencies and its practitioners aren't accountable for what they say or do and that they are unable to pause, reflect and consciously control their actions. It similarly suggests that the behaviour and culture within organisations can't be changed. The review disagrees.
- 5.68 Furthermore, Child Q and her family strongly believe that the strip search of Child Q was a racist incident. Whilst acknowledging the ongoing debate concerning definitions²⁸, the review and reference group were clear that the perception of the victim is central to how racism is defined.
- 5.69 Indeed, the review and reference panel held a firm view that had Child Q not been Black, then her experiences are unlikely to have been the same. This view is broadly supported when looking at the disproportionality evidenced in a previous inspection of custody suites in the MPS. Undertaken by HMICFRS and HM Inspectorate of Prisons in 2018²⁹, this inspection found clear evidence of a disproportionate approach in this area of practice.

'Force data indicated that the numbers of strip searches were high and included many children and a significantly higher proportion of black and minority ethnic detainees compared against the overall throughput. We concluded that overall not all strip searches were warranted or properly justified.'

- 5.70 The full reasons behind why racism continues to feature in professional safeguarding practice are without doubt wide-ranging and complex. The review is simply unable to de-construct all these areas within this report.

²⁸ [Commission on Race & Ethnic Disparities 2021](#)

²⁹ [Metropolitan Police Service police custody suites, Jan 2019](#)

- 5.71 That said, one feature believed to have a significance to the experience of Child Q is that of adultification bias. This concept is where adults perceive Black children as being older than they are. It is *'a form of bias where children from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities are perceived as being more 'streetwise', more 'grown up', less innocent and less vulnerable than other children. This particularly affects Black children, who might be viewed primarily as a threat rather than as a child who needs support'*³⁰.
- 5.72 A US study by Georgetown Law's Center on Poverty and Inequality in 2017³¹ found that Black girls as young as five years old were seen *'as being less in need of protection and nurturing compared to their white counterparts.'* Research also showed that Black girls were 2.7 times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system, 2 times more likely to be disciplined for minor violations at school and 20% more likely to be charged with a crime. Whilst a US study, these experiences won't be isolated there.
- 5.73 In reflecting on how adultification bias might have been evident in practice with Child Q, this can be seen in the fact that she received a largely criminal justice and disciplinary response from the adults around her, *'rather than a child protection response'*. This firmly echoes the findings of Davis and Marsh, 2020³². The review believes there to be a high level of probability that practitioners were influenced in this regard. The disproportionate decision to strip search Child Q is unlikely to have been disconnected from her ethnicity and her background as a child growing up on an estate in Hackney.
- 5.74 Recognising the need to immediately influence practice in this regard, the CHSCP commissioned a 12-month programme of multi-agency training sessions on adultification bias. Initially delivered to senior leaders across the safeguarding partnership, this training covers the broad concepts of racism, intersectionality and adultification bias, helping practitioners understand notions

³⁰ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/children-from-black-asian-minoritised-ethnic-communities#heading-top>

³¹ <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/news/research-confirms-that-black-girls-feel-the-sting-of-adultification-bias-identified-in-earlier-georgetown-law-study/>

³² Davis, J. and Marsh, N. (2020) Boys to men: the cost of 'adultification' in safeguarding responses to Black boys, *Critical and Radical Social Work*, 8(2): 255–259.

of vulnerability and childhood and how these are applied to some children more than others. Specific sessions have been held for the police to facilitate maximum attendance, with scheduled sessions also set up for schools.

- 5.75 The review is also alert to significant activity ongoing across the partnership to create the right conditions for anti-racist practice to thrive and be the norm. Whilst safeguarding partners recognise there is more to do, the review acknowledges both the leadership commitment supporting this work and the rapid training response as positive practice. It makes the following two recommendations:

Recommendation 13: The CHSCP should continue with its rolling programme of multi-agency adultification training. Participation should be actively focused on practitioners from the police and schools, with the Training, Learning & Development Sub group developing a process to specifically evaluate impact across these sectors.

Recommendation 14: The CHSCP should expedite its work on developing an anti-racist charter and practical guides that support the eradicating of racism, discrimination and injustice across its local safeguarding arrangements.



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| <p>Special Joint Scrutiny of Child Q</p> <p>June 13th 2022</p> <p>Item 7 - Strategic Response to Child Q Serious Case Review</p> | <p>Item No</p> <p>7</p> |
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Outline

Key statutory bodies (Metropolitan Police, London Borough of Hackney, Mayors Office for Policing and Crime) have been requested to set out their response to the Child Q Serious Case Review in relation to:

- The Initial response and actions taken;
- Lessons learnt and identified priorities for future
- Actions taken (or planned) to engage, involve and reassure the local community and other stakeholders.

Attachments

- Briefings from:
 - (i) Metropolitan Police
 - (ii) London Borough of Hackney and
 - (iii) Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) ***(TO FOLLOW)***

Representing Metropolitan Police - Met HQ & Central East Borough Command Unit

- Borough Commander Marcus Barnett CE-CU
- Area Commander Paul Brogden - Frontline Policing MET Headquarters
- Detective Superintendent Adam Ghaboos - CE-CU
- Chief Inspector Singh Lucky L - CE-CU

Representing London Borough of Hackney

- Mark Carroll, Chief Executive, Hackney Council
- Jacquie Burke, Group Director Children and Education
- Annie Gammon, Director of Education
- Sonia Khan, Head of Policy & Strategic Delivery
- Mayor Phillip Glanville
- Cllr Susan Fajana Thomas, Cabinet Lead for Community Safety
- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Lead for Education & Children's Social Care

Attending Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)

- Kenny Bowie, Director of Strategy & MPS Oversight

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A Joint Living in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission June Meeting

MPS Update

Introduction

The following written submission aims to provide the Scrutiny Chairs with enough information that they are able to execute their duties and facilitate discussion around the three topic areas, namely;

- a) Timeline of events and key findings from Serious Case Review Report for Child Q
- b) Strategic Response to Child Q Serious Case Review
- c) Accountability & monitoring arrangements.

This written submission will follow the scrutiny commission's proposed agenda and is headlined below.

1. Child Q's Serious Case Review recommendations

- 1.1. The Met accepts the recommendations within the safeguarding review and have developed a comprehensive action plan to respond to them. We are committed to learning from this incident and working with partners to ensure that the action the Met takes responds to the criticisms and concerns that have been raised.
- 1.2. In order to respond cohesively, the Met has divided the 14 recommendations into three groups. They are; Local - Central East BCU, MPS – Organisation-wide, and National implications or legislative change required. Each has a lead to drive the change. Each lead reports to DAC Taylor through direct reporting channels or through DAC Taylor's gold group.
- 1.3. CE recommendations lead – Detective Superintendent Adam Ghaboos
- 1.4. MPS recommendations lead – Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jane Connors
- 1.5. Legal and national lead – T/Assistant Commissioner Amanda Pearson.

2. Action plans developed in response to the recommendations

2.1. CE Recommendations

2.1.1. *Recommendation 5: Raising awareness of Child Q.* Locally, the learning from Child Q is raised with all new officers arriving on the BCU and student officers. Work is also underway across the MPS to embed the learning within targeted and relevant training packages. A number of internal briefing documents and communications have been sent across the MPS from DAC Taylor.

2.1.2. *Recommendation 7: Central East BCU should engage with Account and other bodies to review effectiveness and overseen through respective activities.* Account have

declined to engage with CE police despite numerous requests. Account have stated they await the outcome of the IOPC report before reconsidering. Engagement continues with other stop and search monitoring groups.

2.1.3. *Recommendation 8: Where any suspicion of harm arises from substance misuse a safeguarding response is paramount.* A working group is being created between the police and local authority to understand impact and resourcing for any process changes. One proposed plan was to pass details of all instances to the MASH for support service allocation. There has been pushback from the LA for this due to likely demand increase.

NOTE: Over and above the recommendation, CE BCU have trialled the sending of a letter to the child's parents to raise awareness of an incident. This has been done twenty three times since implementation. Contact from one parent was positive and thankful for the letter.

2.1.4. *Recommendation 12: Raise stop and search awareness across schools and colleges.* As previously, mentioned Account have declined to work with the police at this time. Schools officers have previously delivered S&S awareness in schools and this will continue. The primary schools and college input will be reviewed. There is ongoing planning with CHSCP. Schools and neighbourhoods officers are tasked with improving knowledge of those they encounter around stop and search. Further work with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership is underway to deliver this recommendation.

NOTE: Over and above the recommendation, and to support this, a leaflet has been approved which will be provided to all those who are stop and searched to deliver an understanding of the legislation, policies and processes. This will include a QR code that can be scanned with links to local monitoring groups, support groups and services.

2.1.5. *Recommendation 13: Adulthood training.* A three-stage approach has been adopted. Stage 1; Acceptance of the offer of training from the local authority. All safer schools officers will be trained on the 16th June. The LA have 120 additional places available for CE officers over the next calendar year (multi-agency training). This has been agreed and funding secured (£4k). Stage 2; The remaining 1300 officers at CE will need a training package securing and a procurement will be undertaken to identify the right product to deliver. Stage 3; Learning from CE, a procurement process will identify package to be delivered across the MPS.

2.1.6. *Recommendation 14: Anti-racist Charter.* The charter is being constructed by the Local Authority, supported by Central East BCU. DSU Ghaboos is working with the Strategy and Policy department and Community Resilience Partnership at the Local Authority on tackling racism in Hackney. Community insight sessions have been held involving police. Co-production training has also been undertaken between the

police and Local Authority. The NPCC Race Action Plan “Improving Policing for Black People” was launched on the 24th May 2022 and adopted by the MPS. The MPS have also stated a clear ambition to be an active anti-racist organisation. CE BCU was the first to sign up to an Anti-Racist charter with Tower Hamlets.

2.2. Organisation Wide Recommendations

2.2.1. *Recommendation 2: The Met should review its recording system for stop and search.* Data on the Met’s use of MTIP searches, including with breakdowns by borough, age, gender and ethnicity is available on the Met’s public stop and search dashboard. Work is underway to improve the external dashboard. Whilst awaiting update to the external dashboard, BCU commanders have been briefed on sharing data with partners.

2.2.2. *Recommendation 4: The Met should update its guidance on the requirement to engage an appropriate adult.* The Met are reviewing all corporate policy and training concerning all types of stop and search. Clearer direction on appropriate adult’s role in stop and search has been present on the intranet home page since 21st March 2022. Policy change signed off for increased level of supervision from sergeant to inspector and new MTIP policy and process launched on 25th May.

NOTE: Over and above this recommendation, changes to force policy have been implemented on the 25th May because of the work pioneered at CE BCU. These changes are a raising of the authority level for an MTIP search to an Inspector based in the area the search is taking place, and that all MTIP searches for under 18’s require a MERLIN report be created to inform partners of the search and possible need for support.

2.2.3. *Recommendation 9: The Met should engage the College of Policing to explore improvements in guidance concerning reasonable grounds and safeguarding children.* DAC Connors, MPS lead for stop and search, is engaging the college. This is a longer-term piece of work and falls within the remit of the NPCC Stop and Search lead.

2.3. National Recommendations

2.3.1. *Recommendation 6: Relevant police guidance (both local and national) governing the policy on strip searching children should clearly focus on safeguarding children and follow up actions.* T/AC Pearson has raised this at NPCC level. The Met policy follows College of Policing accepted professional practice (APP). The MPS policy is being reviewed as above. In addition, there is a pilot underway at NA BCU that focusses on a safeguarding approach. NB. It should be noted that all communications coming out across the MPS in relation to MTIP or strip search emphasise the importance of putting the child first and taking a safeguarding approach.

2.3.2. *Recommendation 11: Code C of PACE should be strengthened to emphasise the role of the parent / guardian.* There is well-defined guidance within the Codes of Practice governing the involvement of Appropriate Adults in cases when strip searches that involve the exposure of intimate parts of the body are undertaken on children. There is to be engagement with the College of Policing to ensure that this guidance is better articulated to frontline police officers.

2.4. Recommendations 1, 3, and 10 are not within the 'gift' of the MPS but are intended for other organisations.

2.5. When addressing the recommendations, CE BCU have identified extra work that could enhance the performance and desired response. The work and approaches pioneered at Central East BCU have resulted in changes to force policy and are being discussed and monitored by the National Police Chiefs Council.

3. Accountability structures

3.1. At the local level, within CE BCU, the following command structure is in place to ensure improvements and recommendations are delivered:

3.1.1. Gold – BCU Commander Marcus Barnett

3.1.2. Silver – Detective Superintendent Adam Ghaboos

3.1.3. Bronze Engagement – Superintendent Andy Port

3.1.4. Bronze Safeguarding – T/Detective Superintendent Az Odabashian

3.2. A local meeting structure is in place that holds individuals to account for progress of the recommendations. This meeting is chaired by the CE Silver fortnightly.

3.3. A local weekly Gold Group is chaired by BCU Commander Barnett that reviews progress of the recommendations and engagement activity. Actions and timeframes are reviewed and set at this gold group. The outcomes of the Gold Group are then reported up to Commander Brogden.

- 3.4. At the organisational level, DAC Taylor chairs a gold group that meets on a regular basis to discuss progress made and any issues that have arisen in relation to the actions. The ToR of this group include the review of previous incidents, organisational learning and management of issues likely to impact communities across London.
- 3.5. In addition, at the organisational level, accountability is held by the SCRG (Serious Case Review Group). The SCRG are responsible for collating and ensuring delivery against all recommendations following Safeguarding Children's and Adults reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews. These are led by a Met Commander.
- 3.6. Above the organisational level MOPAC hold the Met to account on its response to the CHCSP safeguarding report. Heads of profession across the organisation are in regular contact with MOPAC for their areas of responsibility, and child Q has been raised in a number of spheres. In addition, MOPAC have requested specific responses from the Met, responses have been provided to all requests.
- 3.7. The MPS are also held to account for following Accepted Professional Practice by the College of Policing and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS).

4. Monitoring arrangements, public accountability and Engagement with Monitoring

- 4.1. Locally, monitoring of the recommendations is done within the CHSCP Child Q Review Core Group.
- 4.2. The first meeting of the Child Q Review Core Group was held on 11th May and chaired by Jim Gamble. A tracker is being used to monitor progress and the meeting is attended by a range of partners. The next meeting is on the 13th June. CE Silver and Bronze's attend this group meeting.
- 4.3. A public meeting was held on the 23rd March 2022 and was attended by over 200 members of the public, with question and answer session.
- 4.4. Engagement has continued with individual community groups since the 23rd March. Feedback from these groups has recommended not holding another public meeting. Two main reasons are provided for this; to allow the community time to heal and that there are too many questions police are unable to answer until the IOPC findings are published.
- 4.5. Public Accountability continues with the Community Monitoring Group, Independent Advisory Group, Meetings with the Local Authority at all levels and public forums such as ward panels, schools, and this Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.6. Public accountability continues in the form of the strategic partnership between police, Local Authority and health. BCU Commander Barnett is the executive statutory member for police and was part of the partnership addressing the concerns of Child Q. The Independent chair of the CHSCP holds all strategic partners to account on behalf of the public.

- 4.7. The CE Silver is engaged with the Community Resilience Partnership (Local Authority). This is particularly focussed on linking the recommendations with anti-racism work in Hackney for the medium and long term.
- 4.8. A community insight session was held with CE Silver and Bronze's on the 24th May 2022. Community groups present included: African Community School, Coffee Afrique, Hackney Community Monitoring Group, Hackney Empire, Hackney Marsh Partnership, Hackney Quest, HCVS, Morningside and Gascoyne Youth Group, National Parents Forum, Skyway, Wickers, and Young Hackney. Accountability and moving forward was a large part of this session.

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| Title of Report | Child Q Review: Hackney Council Response | | |
| Author(s) | Sonia Khan, Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery | | |
| Group Director | Mark Carroll, Chief Executive | | |
| Meeting Title | Joint Living in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Meeting | Meeting Date | 13 June 2022 |

PART 1:

An overview of your organisation's response to the Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review report, detailing what actions have been taken and how these will be coordinated with other statutory partners.

Actions and plans to engage, involve and reassure the community and other key stakeholders

Lessons have been learnt from this incident and identify those actions which have been prioritised for change

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| 1 | <p>Council's position in relation to the Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review</p> <p>In the immediate response to the release of the Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (the Review) the Council established a weekly GOLD group, under the Council's Critical Incident Management Structure. This group was in place until the end of April 2022 in order to coordinate immediate responses to the report and the impacts of the report on the child and her family, staff and the wider community.</p> <p>Since May 2022, a Strategic Response Group has met on a fortnightly basis to continue to oversee the Council's response. This is chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Bramble, Cllr Fajana Thomas and key senior officers. A fortnightly group is also in place to coordinate community and stakeholder engagement activity, chaired by the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery.</p> <p>The response which the Council leads sits alongside the formal oversight of the Review's 14 recommendations by the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner (ICSC) and safeguarding partners of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHCSP). The ICSC has been asked to complete a progress report in six to nine months from the report's publication (due in December 2022).</p> |
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| | <p>The Council is not named in any of the 14 recommendations and the oversight of the recommendations is undertaken by the ICSC. The Council’s role focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that partners implement the recommendations with rigour and openness that leads to substantive change and that progress and outcomes are communicated widely. - Understanding and responding to the impact of the Review on staff and communities. - Engaging with the wider issues that are being raised in response to the Review and ensuring that these are recorded, analysed and can inform wider policy responses. - Identifying the national policy issues and engaging with central government departments on key asks directly and through wider campaigns. <p>Many residents do not see this as an isolated incident and the recommendations and the wider conversation that is being generated in response to the Review needs to be seen as a catalyst for wider change to policies, practices, systems and mindsets.</p> <p>The leadership role of Members is key to this work and to the next phase, with the Executive providing steer and direction from the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Bramble and Cabinet Members, all Councillors engaging with residents and through Scrutiny. Much of the work that is reported on, has, however, been undertaken during the recent local election pre-election period.</p> |
| <p>2</p> | <p>Working with partners to support the implementation of recommendations</p> <p>As outlined above, this progress update focuses on the work the Council is doing to support the implementation of recommendations as well as responding to the wider issues. It is only by responding to the wider issues in tandem to implementing the 14 recommendations, that we will have an impact and start to restore trust and confidence in communities.</p> <p>The update in this section of the report covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working with the Metropolitan Police ● Working with Schools ● Public affairs and campaigns work in relation to the Review <p><u>Working with the Metropolitan Police</u></p> <p>1. A shared strategic action plan to restore trust and confidence</p> <p>Following the release of the Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Bramble, Cllr Fajana-Thomas and the Chief Executive (CE)</p> |

[wrote a joint letter to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor](#) on 17 March 2022 and asked him to respond within two weeks and outline the action the Metropolitan Police would take to assure communities that the experience of Child Q would not happen again.

The [Council received a response](#) from the Metropolitan Police on 31 March 2022. This acknowledged the failings in the case, accepted the Review's recommendations, recognised the widespread anger that the case has caused and made a series of commitments to try to become an anti-racist organisation.

The Chief Executive [responded to this letter](#) on 1 April 2022 (the Chief Executive responded on behalf of the Council, as by this point we were in the pre-election period). The letter welcomed the response, but requested that the Metropolitan Police work with the Council and community partners on a shared strategic plan with more specific commitments, dates and outcomes. The request was that the plan would be owned by Hackney Community Safety Partnership which is the local statutory Crime and Disorder Partnership and chaired jointly by the Borough Command Unit Commander and Council Chief Executive. The letter set out the reasons for requesting this plan to ensure that communities have confidence that the proposals will result in meaningful change, that there is transparency and accountability in policing and in this plan and that all voices are listened to and heard. It also sought to anchor this work in the wider context of rebuilding trust and confidence on policing in Hackney and London as a whole.

The letter included an offer to support a more proactive and systematic approach to engagement to help shape the shared strategic plan. A Police Action Plan Board has been established to oversee the development of the plan. The Mayor and Cllr Fajana Thomas provide the political leadership for the partnership work with the Police.

The following actions have been taken and were reported to this Board:

Council officers from the Policy and Strategic Delivery Service have worked closely with the nominated lead from the Borough Command Unit to scope out the work needed to develop the shared Police Action Plan on improving trust and confidence.

The Chief Executive has also met on a weekly basis with Central Command to review progress needed across the Metropolitan Police.

The Council recognised that there were some community organisations and residents who would not want to engage with the Police directly. Whilst this is not a position that can be sustained, there was a need to create a space to hear these voices. A series of three community stakeholder workshops were held in April to gather initial views about the shared police action plan.

One of the key findings from these workshops was that there needed to be more time spent with colleagues in the Metropolitan Police about what meaningful community engagement really means in the context of building trust and confidence.

Two independently facilitated workshops have therefore been held involving senior officers from the Council and the Metropolitan Police (Central Command and Borough Command) as well as a session between community partners, Borough Command and Council officers on relationship building and insight.

This work is now feeding into the development of the shared strategic plan on building trust and confidence in policing. It is important that this plan is iteratively developed with communities, so whilst there is a need to develop a response at pace, it is important that this is open to being shaped further over time.

The Council is also working with MOPAC on the development of the plan to ensure that it aligns with the [London wide action plan](#) on Transparency, Accountability and Trust.

The Police Action Plan Board met for the first time on 27 May 2022 to consider progress and discuss the development of the plan.

The Community Resilience Partnership (which reports to the statutory Community Safety Partnership) meets on 15 June 2022 in a key meeting to help shape the plan. This will be an independently facilitated session involving community partners (including young people), Metropolitan Police, the Council and statutory partners.

This will be followed by the meeting of the statutory Community Safety Partnership on 24 June 2022 which will be asked to ratify the plan. This is chaired by the Council Chief Executive and Borough Commander.

The Cabinet lead for Community Safety, Cllr Fajana-Thomas, who is also the chair of the Community Resilience Partnership, and the Mayor are closely involved in this workstream and sit on the Police Action Plan Board.

2. Revising protocols and guidance on the role of police in schools

Rapid action is needed on the role of police in schools which will revise the:

- Protocols on safer schools police officers
- Guidance on how police work with schools when either the police initiate a visit to schools or the school asks for a police visit.

The working group on the revisions will include the safeguarding partnership, the police, education, headteacher representatives, Councillors.

In the three months after the Child Q incident, guidance was affirmed by the Metropolitan Police to all officers about referring to a more senior officer before carrying out a strip search.

Following the publication of the CHSCP report Hackney Education sent out local guidance in March 2022 on searches to all schools: this preempts the national guidance which is a recommendation in the report.

The working group on the revision of the safer schools police officers (SSPO) protocol has met once and has future meetings scheduled. The aim is to have agreed local additions, endorsed by stakeholders, to the SSPO London wide protocol by end August 2022. Following the first meeting, the Director of Education wrote to secondary schools with interim guidance on police in schools. Also, having reviewed the London wide protocol, it was recommended that the role of parents play a much more significant role in this protocol: Cllr Fajana-Thomas, Deputy Mayor Bramble and the Mayor have written to Sophie Linden (London Mayor's office) to this effect and also met with Deputy Mayor Linden.

Working with schools

Hackney Education have worked closely with the schools community to respond to the review and the wider issues that the review and community response raise. The report into Child Q's experience was released on 14 March 2022. Headteachers, at their conference on 18 March 2022, and in follow up discussion, produced a core statement (see below) and are taking this forward in discussions in their school and settings. Deputy Mayor Bramble provides the political leadership to this work.

1. Immediate actions taken for the child, the school and other children

The school where the incident happened is being supported with additional leadership brokered for this coming period. The school has a wide offer of support for children and staff, involving both our parental involvement systems lead, Young Hackney and Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) teams. The Council is also in the process of beginning to offer "Thinking Spaces" sessions to the schools community, prioritising the school concerned. This is a way of creating therapeutic spaces to work through, and co-design sustainable interventions and ways of working to address themes around racism, children's rights, poverty and adultification.

Other schools have had advice, guidance and materials on talking to and listening to staff and children. Work is underway to ensure that there has been a consistent offer across all schools.

The Council also sent guidance to schools on searches, pre-empting the national

guidance called for in the review.

2. Joining up secondary schools and working on inclusion

The Council recognises that the majority of secondary schools in Hackney are academies and that this can stymie the collaboration needed to ensure consistency of approaches. Secondary schools have been urged to work more closely together with a joint purpose of providing excellent care and safeguarding for every child, with the strongest possible anti-racist approach.

The steps toward this are:

- Meetings with Hackney Education leads and Councillors, secondary academy heads, executive leads and chair of governors to gain joint commitment to the headteacher statement and collaboration, as well as commitment to pupil and parent voice. May/June 2022
- A secondary headteachers conference 1 July 2022 with a focus on best safeguarding, inclusion, anti-racism and early help to prevent exclusions.
- Continued work on our inclusion approaches and framework, going above and beyond statutory
- The development of an interim role to lead on an inclusion charter for Hackney schools with a focus on secondary schools in the first instance

3. Sustained work on anti-racism

We have a number of strands of support which have been a positive influence over time, including the sessions on cultural competence and the diverse curriculum. More work is planned on these.

School staff were also invited to the Council's Four Day Anti-Racism Praxis Conference in May 2022. A further conference with more emphasis on early years, schools and colleges will be set up for Autumn 2022.

The number of training sessions on adultification has been significantly expanded and is available to all schools.

We now need to invest further in leadership of anti-racism in schools and will appoint a new role to lead on this, working with the Children and Family Service lead, Deborah Barnett.

The work of the school improvement team will be reshaped so that anti-racism (commitment to and implementation), tackling disproportionality, the voice and

experience of the black child is the priority within the framework of ensuring a good and improving education for all.

4. Sustained work on the voice of the child across the borough

We plan to build on the Young Futures work and the Youth Parliament work to make sure we can always hear the voice of the child in all our work. This needs to shift to capture the voices and views of children in schools about their schools, most particularly the voices of those who do less well or thrive less well. This will include groups for whom this is a risk: black children, children entitled to pupil premium grant (PPG) and children with SEND.

We will, in liaison with partners, shape our work, possibly including additional staffing, so that we promote the use of the child's voice in and by every school - and to capture children's voices.

5. Sustained work on the voice of the parent/carer across the borough

We will build on the work of the officer who leads on parental voice across the school system. We will work with our engagement team, our Councillors and our community and voluntary sector partners to shape work, possibly including a new role, to capture the voice of parents across the borough about their experience and their child's experience of education. In particular we will capture the voice of those parents/carers who are most likely to experience a sense of exclusion or frustration.

This feedback will shape our actions and those of schools in making sure every parent/carer feels welcomed and supported by their child's school and by the education system in Hackney.

The planned work on clear signposting of advocacy services for parents/carers will be accelerated and expanded.

Deputy Mayor Bramble and Cllr Woodley will play a lead role in this area.

6. Hackney inclusion charter

We will build on the initial headteacher commitment and the national and cross London work on an inclusion charter for schools, as well as the White paper/Green Paper steer to scope how to take forward a Hackney inclusion charter.

We will expect every school to have or be working towards having this charter by April 2023. The approach to this will include having metrics on some key areas.

We will appoint a lead for this work to make rapid progress with our secondary schools during Autumn term 2022.

This will involve governor, school leader, school staff, children and parents input.

We will involve the Hackney Schools Group Board in this work.

Deputy Mayor Bramble and Cllr Woodley will play a lead role in this area.

7. Schools and staffing

We recognise the profound distress caused by this case and other incidents of racism to our black and global majority staff.

We will continue to provide:

- Peer listening sessions (racialised trauma support)
- Information / drop in /Q and A sessions.

We will rapidly implement:

- With HR and our education team reporting/whistleblowing processes which lead to action, building on what is already in place
- Induction and refresher training on anti-racism

We will continue to champion the work led by our Diversity leads so that every black and global majority staff member feels truly valued, welcomed and a sense of pride in their workplace. We expect every staff member to take an anti-racist approach.

We will emphasise through our work with schools their role in championing, recruiting and developing black and global majority staff.

8. Promoting anti-discriminatory practices with school governors

The role of governors in shaping strategy for schools and monitoring impact is key. A range of work is under way including:

1. Diversifying governing boards - expanding the young governor initiative and focusing on black and global majority governors
2. Developing a culture of Inclusive governance in how boards operate as a team, providing support to black and global majority governors
3. Understanding Equality Duties - implementing and accounting for the impact of policies
4. Refining School Exclusions training for governors, jointly facilitated with Hackney Young Futures Champions
5. Extending the development of an anti-racism across training programme for governors
6. Amplifying and ensure pupil and parent voices are include in governors' key decision
7. Strengthening training for school governors on safeguarding

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| | <p>8. Providing training for governors on Adultification</p> <p>9. Hosting our governors conference series in June / July 2022 Tackling Inequalities: focusing on how race and social class impacts on the education experiences of children</p> <p><u>Public affairs and campaigns work</u></p> <p>The Mayor, Cllr Bramble and Cllr Fajana-Thomas wrote to the Home Secretary on 17 March 2022 to ask for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that the Metropolitan Police urgently complies with and responds to the recommendations made by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership report ● Commission an urgent review of policing guidelines and practices around the strip-searching of children to ensure that no child endures the humiliating experience that police officers subjected Child Q to ● Review the law to ensure that no child is strip-searched without their parents/guardians being notified <p>The Mayor also wrote to the Shadow Home Secretary - who raised a point of order in the House regarding the case - and briefed all London Labour MPs and Council Leaders, along with a wide range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The Mayor Deputy Mayor Bramble and Cllr Fajana-Thomas are signatories of the End The Adultification Of Black Girls And Policing In Our Schools. The petition calls for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools to partner with the Black community about how to better safeguard young Black girls. ● Training for schools to be better at inclusion. ● A review of school and teacher services that aim to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, especially Black girls and marginalised children. ● <p>On 20 May, the Mayor, CE and Jim Gamble met with Kemi Badenoch MP, Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Minister of Equalities, to discuss the case.</p> <p>The Secretary of State, Nadhim Zahawi, has written to the council, thanking CHSCP for producing the report, committing to fulfilling the recommendations and has also committed to inviting the council to a roundtable discussion with Baroness Barran and Will Quince. The date has not yet been set.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Outline what lessons have been learnt from this incident and identify those actions which have been prioritised for change</p> <p>In order to set out what has been learnt from this incident and identify actions which</p> |

have been prioritised for change, it is necessary to provide some context. The Council and partners have been focusing explicitly on tackling racial inequality at an individual, system and community level for the last five years. In July 2020, [a motion](#) was passed to work towards being an anti-racist organisation and this has helped strengthen the focus in the organisation on race and racism. Since the motion was adopted, an action plan, based on the commitments has been developed and kept under review, with all the officers responsible regularly brought together to ensure that the synergies and interdependencies are achieved.

The 2018-22 Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Plan set out the [granular data about inequality](#) and a [clear articulation](#) of what is driving inequality and of the actions needed. This was based on the data, resident insight and stakeholder views and focused on the opportunities for change in schools, mental health and youth justice system. It has helped develop a method for understanding inequality that has now been shared across London through the London Councils workstream on tackling racial inequality. With critical challenge from an external panel of evaluators from UEL and Runnymede Trust, we were able to strengthen the focus on institutional racism. This has led to initiating work to look at leadership culture and workforce diversity corporately. There have also been specific workstreams in Children's and Education, who took the lead for the Council's Four Day Anti-Racism Praxis Conference in May 2022.

Hackney Young Futures was set up as an independent commission of the Council (but organised, funded by and accountable to the Council). The Hackney Young Futures Commission (HYFC) carried out extensive and wide ranging insight gathering with young people followed by a period of co-production. It presented its findings to Cabinet in July 2020 and formally published its report in November 2020. The findings reinforce the findings from the Young Black Men Programme, particularly with regards to inclusive mental health support, feeling excluded from regeneration and gentrification, feeling unsafe, trust and confidence in the police and concerns about educational inequality.

There has been a shared priority over the last two years between the Community Resilience Partnership, Young Futures and the Young Black Men programme to work with the Police to address low levels of trust and confidence in policing among young people and particularly young black people. The ask is that they work with us and the community, including Account, to address the issues that have clearly been identified in a series of reports locally and nationally, and proactively to tackle systemic and structural racism and understand the difference between this and tackling individual cases of racism among the police force.

The latest updates on all of this work is in the February 2022 Corporate Plan Update-link [here](#).

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| | <p>Many residents do not see what happened to Child Q as an isolated incident, and do not see this as unique to schools or policing or to policing in schools. The emerging themes so far cover trust and confidence in policing, the culture of schools and safety in schools (and therefore the partnerships around schools including with the police) and institutional racism and how this impacts on trust and confidence in the Council and in partners. From the work the Council has led in recent years, we would, unfortunately anticipate this would be the community response. It raises the urgency of recognising institutional racism and taking action across the system to bring about change in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The recommendations need to be a catalyst to wider change. Our responses cannot be limited to implementation of the 14 recommendations of the Review. Failure to engage with the underlying and wider issues could have a retraumatising impact on communities. ● To achieve change that will be sustained, the recommendations and wider themes requiring action need to be approached with humility, rigour, openness and curiosity. Leaders need to demonstrate a willingness to change policies, practices, systems and mindsets in their respective institutions. We need to challenge assumptions about what a “good school” means or a “fair process” means. ● The focus in Children’s and Education on understanding what racism is and what is needed to tackle it, and to embed this into practice, including through the Anti-Racism Praxis Conference signals what is needed across the Council and the system. ● We need to ensure we can make sense of all of the collective insight, and put in place an appropriate policy response, feedback loops and accountability. |
| <p>3</p> | <p>Set out actions and plans to engage, involve and reassure the community and other key stakeholders (e.g. parents, children etc) in response to concerns arising from the review</p> <p>Engagement with parents, children, staff and partners was identified as a priority from the outset. The Council’s role has been to seek to coordinate activity, which is led by a range of services and partners, to support a move from a reactive mode to a proactive role, informed by a clear stakeholder analysis and to create a framework so that all insight provided can be analysed, synthesised and inform policy responses. Two stakeholder briefings have also been circulated to inform stakeholders about the way the Council was responding and next steps.</p> <p>In agreement with the Mayor and with Cllr Bramble, the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner (ICSC) has led a series of workshops about the Review, the recommendations and how they will be implemented. During these sessions, as well as questions being raised about the review, a wider set of issues have been</p> |

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| | <p>raised, as we would have expected. Workshops have been held for Members and young people reached through youth and community settings. The sessions with youth settings are ongoing. Two sessions for parents, carers and guardians and for school staff were jointly organised with the Council.</p> <p>There has also been specific engagement outlined above in schools and with community stakeholders about the shared police action plan.</p> <p>There have been a series of regular briefing sessions for staff and also sessions led by a specialist for staff experiencing racialised trauma in response to the review.</p> <p>The Council also recognises that there are many conversations being led by residents and community partners and is engaging with partners about this so we can bring this insight into our policy response.</p> <p>A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Group has now been established involving Council officers and partners to oversee the next phase of work, as we move from an initial more open exploration of issues to further detailed conversations about specific insights and solutions needed.</p> <p>Within this next phase of work, the following is planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations with black girls about the impact this has had. The sessions will provide a safe space for these girls to speak about their experiences of living and growing up in Hackney and their experiences of the education system and the Police. The Child Q case has highlighted themes such as the ‘over sexualisation’ and ‘adultification’ of young black girls, who are often treated as older than they are and thus not treated with the level of care and support that is afforded to their peers. • Thinking Spaces is a therapeutic intervention developed and embedded in the London borough of Haringey in the wake of the 2011 England riots as a therapeutically led space for the community. We are scoping out a similar approach, to begin in schools, but expand to engage a wider section of the community. This provides an opportunity to fill a need for an evidence-based, public health approach to communal trauma with a space for healing and collective activism. It is essential that this work is designed by and delivered with the community and the voluntary sector organisations that work closely with them. |
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Accountability and the monitoring structures

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| 4 | <p>Formal accountability for implementation of the Child Q review</p> <p>Progress against the action plan covering the review’s recommendations is overseen by a defined multi-agency ‘Core Group’. This comprises members of the CHSCP’s</p> |
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Case Review Sub Group and includes all safeguarding partners and key relevant agencies. The Core Group is chaired by the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner (ICSC) and held monthly.

Council Strategic Response Group

As outlined above, the Council continues to convene a Strategic Response Group which meets on a fortnightly basis to oversee the Council's response and ensure it has the intended impact. The different work streams that the group oversees have their own boards or sub groups that oversee responses more closely:

Trust and Confidence in Police

A Police Action Plan Board has been established to oversee the development of the shared strategic plan that the Council has asked the Metropolitan Police to work with us on. The group will be chaired by the Council Chief Executive and attended by the Mayor, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Borough Commander Marcus Barnett, Commander Paul Brogden, Commander Ali Heydari and key police and Council officers leading the development of the work. There will also be regular meetings between the Chief Executive and Central Command at the Metropolitan Police.

The plan is to be owned by Hackney Community Safety Partnership which is the local statutory Crime and Disorder Partnership.

The political leadership is provided by the Mayor and Cllr Susan Fajana Thomas.

Strategic objective:

To help build trust and confidence in local policing through progressing strategic actions that are jointly owned by the Police and Council, partners and community stakeholders.

Schools

There are two key activities for the next few months that are detailed above. One is around refreshing guidance on police in schools (both Safer Schools Police Officers and other officers visiting); the other is around gaining commitment from all secondary schools, particularly academies, to the headteacher commitment and what it means for all our secondary schools.

Longer term activities which need to be sustained include developing the work of governors, increasing the role of the parent/carer in secondary schools, increasing the role of pupil voice in all schools and taking forward an inclusion charter for Hackney schools. Throughout all this development and embedding of work there needs to be particular attention to the role of Black and global majority stakeholders in shaping this.

Governors and school improvement partners play key roles in this work of ensuring accountability.

Hackney Schools Board will play a role in creating a forum for a cross section of stakeholders to hear from pupils, parents/carers and headteachers about issues of inclusion and equality.

The political leadership is provided by Cllr Anntoinette Bramble and Cllr Caroline Woodley.

Strategic objective

To build on strengths and change approaches so that the education system in Hackney, as a whole and in each of its parts, works for and cares for every black child and every black parent.

Staff

The Council will continue to take action to support the workforce, building on wider work that had already started to address workforce diversity at senior levels and address the impacts of racialised trauma in the workplace, focusing on:

- How we respond to discriminatory / racist behaviour, recognising it can often be unwitting and covert and therefore difficult to address.
- Supporting managers: Using the inclusive management tool kit that has been put in place we are now in a better place to respond to individuals.
- Expanding the peer support which was already in place to support staff experiencing racialised trauma.

Staff from across the Council and voluntary and community sector were invited to the Anti-Racism Praxis Conference which was held from 9 May - 12 May 2022.

The political leadership is provided by Cllr Williams.

Strategic objective:

To take comprehensive action to recognise institutional racism in the workplace, and work across the system to deliver actions which bring about change, including more diversity at senior levels.

Institutional racism and trust and confidence

Recommendations for the next phase of anti-racism work were agreed by Group Directors in late May and will be discussed further with Cabinet Members in early June. The governance needed for this will be confirmed after this meeting.

Recommendations include a strengthened role for all partners in the borough.

The political leadership is provided by Cllr Williams.

Strategic objective:

To take comprehensive action to recognise institutional racism and work across the system to deliver actions which bring about change.

Coordinating community engagement

A workstream group has been established to ensure that community engagement is co-ordinated and that insights are synthesised so they can inform the policy response. The group will meet fortnightly. The terms of reference are [here](#).

- To provide ongoing information, updates, and a space to be heard and help shape our local response to review recommendations.
- To ensure that insight about the wider issues that are raised by residents through the engagement are captured and that this insight informs a wider policy response to schools, policing, institutional racism and trust and confidence in the state.
- To help restore trust and confidence and avert an escalation of community tensions
- To learn from the engagement and recommend how we create more systematic ways to engage with children, young people and parents.

Mitigating ongoing community impacts and tensions

The Hackney Incident Plan sets out how we respond to civil disobedience. We also need to consider how we might avoid disorder and handle community tensions when they arise. We are scoping out what is needed to engage with communities to address tensions and reassure residents, working closely with Members and partners. This links closely with the community engagement workstream below.

Strategic objective

To ensure that Hackney Incident Plan (HIP) is proactively deployed as the framework for responding to civil unrest and protest. This covers strategic considerations through to coordinated tactical delivery.

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| Special Joint Scrutiny of Child Q June 13th 2022 Item 8 - Accountability and Monitoring Arrangements | Item No 8 |
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Outline

To establish what structures are in place to plan, coordinate and monitor the responses to recommendations and actions set out in:

- The Serious Case Review;
- Correspondence between Chief Executive of London Borough of Hackney and the Borough Commander;
- The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) (when published).

To assess how partners will ensure that such accountability and monitoring structures are open, transparent, and accountable to local communities.

Attending for this item:

- City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Metropolitan Police
- London Borough of Hackney
- MOPAC

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| Special Joint Scrutiny of Child Q June 13th 2022 Item 9 - Summary and next steps | Item No 9 |
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Outline

The Chair (members of the Commission) to summarise:

- Key evidence presented at the meeting:
- Identify those issues which may warrant more detailed scrutiny by individual Commissions (e.g. adultification bias, policing in schools etc).
- Assess whether future scrutiny is required through Joint Scrutiny Commission.

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| Special Joint Scrutiny of Child Q June 13th 2022 Item 10 - Background letters and reports | Item No 10 |
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Correspondence

- (1) Letter from Phillip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney to the Metropolitan Police (17/3/22)
- (2) Letter from Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor at Metropolitan Police to Mayor of Hackney (31/3/22)
- (3) Letter from Mark Carroll, Chief Executive of London Borough of Hackney to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor at Metropolitan Police (1/4/22)

Background Reports

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools \(2021\)](#)
- [When to call the Police – guidance for schools and colleges \(2020\)](#)

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Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence
Taylor

Philip Glanville
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Tel: 02083563373

17 March 2022

Ref: MCO220317—02

Dear DAC Taylor,

Child Q Safeguarding Report

We are writing to you, for your urgent attention, with regard to the case of Child Q, which has been widely reported this week, and because of the effect it has had on our confidence in our local police.

The appalling experience of Child Q, within what should have been the safe environment of her school, has shocked and distressed people not just within Hackney, but across the whole country. It has traumatised or re-traumatised many people, especially within our Black communities, and it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that this is taken seriously, and never allowed to happen again. Child Q should have expected to be treated with dignity, respect and her interests as a child protected. It is clear from the report that the school and police officers failed to do that.

From the outset, the response of Hackney Police to this incident has been unsatisfactory, and the review team faced difficulties in accessing the officers involved and useful data.

We are writing to you to ask for your assurances that all the recommendations for the police within the Safeguarding Report are acted upon by you and your senior leadership team in a manner that is both thorough and urgent.

We would like to ask you to commit to providing a written and public action plan, within the next fortnight, to give a full account of the actions you and your senior team intend to take to respond to those recommendations, followed by a meeting with us to discuss that plan.

With regards to the officers involved in the incident, we are aware, having met with the IOPC and seen their statement, that there is an investigation underway into their conduct, and that you will not wish to act before this concludes. However, we would like your reassurance that you will act robustly and decisively on the findings of the IOPC, and that in the meantime, those officers have not and will not be deployed to work in or with schools or in a context where child safeguarding is involved. We do not feel that the action plan however needs to wait.

The police apology that has already been issued is of course welcome, but is in no way sufficient to reassure either us or the wider community that the lessons of this awful case will be taken on board, and that no other child will have to endure what Child Q suffered and continues to bear the consequences of. When the report was published on Monday, our statement made a clear commitment that we are absolutely focused on making sure the legacy of Child Q's experience results in change. We and our communities expect that same level of commitment and clear communication from the police. None of us are in any doubt that this terrible incident, on the back of others, will have a further significant impact on trust and confidence in the police, which is already too low. That is why a detailed, robust and rigorous response from the police is so crucial.

Hackney Council is fully committed to anti-racism and has been leading work locally and nationally on adultification and anti-racist practice in child safeguarding, and will intensify this work in response to the relevant safeguarding recommendations in the report. Since the findings of this review became clear, we have offered support to Child Q and her family, given additional support to young people affected by this case through our Young Hackney service, written to schools with clear guidance on strip searches and increased adultification training. However, this work can only succeed with the full commitment of our partners, including both schools and the police. The case did not happen in a vacuum, and is part of longstanding engagement between the Council, local police and community on matters of policing and race over many years. It is now time for action.

A failure to do this will further knock the community and our own confidence in our local police – which is already strained following a series of difficult events.

We look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

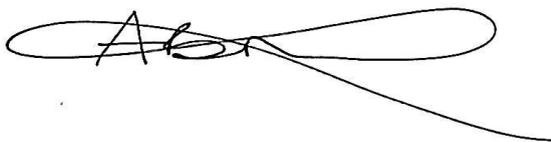
Yours sincerely



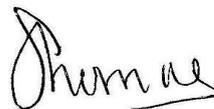
Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney



Mark Carroll
Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney



Cllr Anntoinette Bramble
**Deputy Mayor of Hackney and
Cabinet Member for Education,
Young People and Children's Social
Care**



Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas
**Cabinet Member for Community
Safety**

CC Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London
Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor of London for Policing and Crime
Sem Moema, London Assembly Member for Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest
Diane Abbot, Member of Parliament for Hackney North & Stoke Newington
Meg Hillier, Member of Parliament for Hackney South & Shoreditch

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DAC Laurence Taylor
Frontline Policing

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31 March 2022

Dear Mayor Glanville, Cllr Bramble, Cllr Fajana-Thomas, Mark,

Thank you for your letter of 17th March 2022 in relation to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) response to the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSR) into the incident relating to Child Q and the MPS response. I write to set out some actions here that we could usefully discuss and I would welcome a meeting with you to discuss our approach and to hear your thoughts on how we can ensure we are doing all we can to protect children and build trust in our communities.

I want to start by clearly stating that the MPS acknowledges that events in the history of policing London have led to a breakdown in trust and confidence with some communities. It is of the utmost importance that we address this but recognise it is not easy. We have clearly stated our intention to rebuild trust and confidence and want to work with our communities and partners to help us do this and become a truly anti-racist organisation.

As one of the statutory partners within the Hackney Safeguarding Partnership that commissioned the LCSR, we have been fully engaged with it throughout, accepting that it ran in parallel to an ongoing Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigation.

We are in full agreement with the review that this incident should never have happened. It is more than regrettable and as you noted we have apologised to the child concerned, her family and the wider community. We fully recognise the significant concerns that have been raised regarding the impact such a search can have on those involved.

We acknowledge that the search by female Met officers under Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) did not follow policy. The officers are subject of an investigation by the IOPC of which we await the findings, including with regard to the allegation that the search was racially motivated. Whilst that investigation is underway it would be wrong of me to comment further on that aspect of the report.

What I can say, however, is that the MPS has been deeply affected by the depth of feeling generated by this incident and understand that we need to do something different to address these ongoing concerns.

Our teams will continue to work hard to reduce crime and protect all the communities we serve. I recognise that the events surrounding Child Q have, understandably, generated high emotion and anger and I want to listen and respond to communities to build trust where it has been lost. It is also important to work and train with our partners to bring about this collective change.

In order to respond to your letter I have clustered my response across a number of themes which demonstrate what the Met has been doing since the incident in December 2020, what we have been doing across the organisation to rebuild trust and improve training and our proposals to make Hackney an exemplar for new measures and initiatives.

Leadership

We have taken the response to Child Q extremely seriously, with Chief Officers supporting Marcus Barnett in delivery of both activity locally and more broadly to respond to community concerns. I have personally led the response to ensure clear governance and recognition of the risks associated with this critical incident. Commander Paul Brogden and Commander Alison Heydari have also been closely involved in supporting the Central East Basic Command Unit (CE BCU), which covers Hackney and Tower Hamlets, to engage with communities and build plans to address concerns raised. They will continue to work with and support Marcus in his role as BCU Commander.

Marcus is an extremely capable and dedicated BCU Commander who, as you know, is passionate about his communities and getting our response to Child Q and wider concerns right. In support of him delivering these changes, I will be monitoring centrally and evaluating their success for consideration of a wider roll out across the MPS.

As well as leadership at the local level, the Met Chief Officer team and senior leadership take these issues extremely seriously, reflected through the Met Direction, STRIDE (Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement), Rebuilding Trust Programme and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) plans which set clear direction and expectations across the force.

Learning and Training

We accept the recommendations within the safeguarding review and have developed a comprehensive action plan to respond to them. Clearly this plan will iterate as work develops and is by no means the only activity that will take place. I have requested a review of the protocols associated with officers operating in schools alongside our response to the review. Many of the recommendations reach beyond the Met so will take longer to influence and deliver. However, we have not been waiting for reports to be written and had already taken action to ensure officers and staff have a refreshed understanding of the policy for conducting a 'further search' and advice around dealing with schools, ensuring that children are treated as children.

MPS Policy Review

In February 2021, following this incident, the BCU reiterated the MTIP Policy (More Thorough Search where Intimate Parts are exposed) reinforcing the requirements in relation to appropriate adults. It is important to note that MTIP searches are different to strip searches, which only take place in custody. We understand the concerns and we are reviewing the MPS policy for MTIP searches, particularly in relation to Code C of PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act), and we will incorporate the recommendations and learning in this review

Furthermore, in light of this incident, we are reviewing the MTIP policy in relation to those under 18. This is firstly to ensure that the policy is appropriate and takes account of the safeguarding review, and also that it recognises the fact that a child in these circumstances may be a vulnerable victim of exploitation by others, which unfortunately occurs where children are exploited by gangs, County Lines and drug dealing.

National Implications

In addition to the review of policy and practice, we are engaged with National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) leads for Stop and Search and Children and Young People, together with the College of Policing to ensure the Met is fully aligned with National protocols (our initial work suggests that we already have additional safeguards in place) and that the recommendations for policing more broadly are considered.

Local Control Measures

In order to ensure that we have a very clear control over this type of search, we are introducing a pilot across Hackney and Tower Hamlets (CE BCU) for MTIP searches. This being that, in addition to the current position requiring a conversation with a supervisor and the presence of an appropriate adult, we will now require an *Inspector authority* prior to the search taking place to ensure appropriate oversight of such an intrusive intervention. We will also require a Merlin report to be submitted for all such searches, recognising that our priority is one of safeguarding the child. We will trial this in CE BCU for consideration of rolling it out more widely across London.

Training

The report raises the issue of adultification. We recognise that this is a subject we need to be more alive to and have committed to ensure that 'adultification' training is delivered to all front line officers in CE BCU. The effective partnership approach to this is essential, and as such, we are grateful to take up the offer of this training being delivered by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership. It will raise awareness of structural racism, addressing the misuse of the term 'Streetwise' and re-inforce the need to view children as children with a safeguarding mind-set alongside the use of our lawful powers. We will also ask our Learning and Development Community Reference Group to consider how this might be rolled out across the MPS.

We would welcome the opportunity to conduct further joint training with our partners to improve learning and shared understanding. We want our training to be agile and responsive and will seek to work with communities to inform the best approach.

Peer review

We also plan to conduct peer reviews across the BCU, utilising learning from elsewhere in the force and, where relevant, policing across England and Wales. The Community Safety Partnership will have an important role to play in this work.

Engagement

Already in train

Alongside policy review and training, we recognise the critical role communities play in policing and it is essential that we build trust in those areas where it is lost. Together with our 'traditional' engagement methods, there has also been a significant amount of activity within Central East BCU since Child Q, including;

- *Trading places*; stop and search role play scenarios where young people and police get to change places.
- A virtual application called 'A different view' that gives a young person a realistic experience of an officer's response and duty for stop and search. Just like trading places they get to act in our role.
- Development of a fully functioning and *active IAG (Independent Advisory Group) and SNB (Safer Neighbourhood Board)*; led at Senior Leadership Team level and with clear evidence of dialogue around the impact of recent events and tensions.
- Set up of a *BCU Continuous Improvement Team* which reviewed 796 Stop and Searches in November 20, identifying and implementing areas for improvement such as increased supervision and use of Body Worn Video (BWV). A second review took place in November 2021 which found volumes had decreased but outcomes increased.
- *Cultural awareness training*; provided to all new recruits and Safer Neighbourhood officers with an intention to roll out to all officers in CE BCU. Training is delivered in partnership with community groups and faith leaders.
- Setting up *Police Encounter Panels (PEP's)* to review and scrutinise incidents of community concern as soon as we can after the incident.
- *Innovation Hubs* have been utilised throughout the BCU to give community members a voice in problem solving challenges. One such example brought 30 young people together to discuss the challenge of serious youth violence and listen to their recommendations.
- Development of a comprehensive *Youth Engagement Plan*.
- *Inclusive Leadership training* has been delivered by colleagues at Hackney Council. This is alongside the Inclusive Leadership training that has already been rolled out across the MPS.

In support of local activity, the MPS has a comprehensive plan of activity across the Deputy Commissioner's Delivery Group, the Mayor's Action Plan and activity coordinated through our Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement (CPIE) Department. This sees training rolling out across the Met to address concerns raised in our communities.

These and other activities are all part of our work to ensure the MPS is a truly anti-racist organisation.

Finally, we want to try new initiatives in CE BCU in parallel with the vast amount of work already underway across the MPS. These include;

- The creation of a *child centric stop and search review panel* involving the community and professional partners. The panel will scrutinise search activity, review the BWV, critically evaluate whether there has been a 'safeguarding first' approach and to highlight and raise any identified adultification.
- Where drugs are not located from a S.23 MDA stop and search conducted on a child, the Hackney police MASH team will run a pilot scheme whereby a *letter is sent to the parents* of the child informing them of the police interaction. This is to ensure that we are transparent with the parents in keeping them informed of events involving their child and to maximise the potential 'critical or 'teachable' moments which can make a difference to long term outcomes by reducing missed opportunities to implement safeguarding measures. (This builds on an approach we piloted in Haringey in relation to wider stop and search and a focus on safeguarding children involved.)
- Where there is a MTIP carried out on a child outside of a custody environment, a very detailed Merlin report will be created which will be flagged by the police MASH into Social Services to trigger a *trauma informed response* from the partnership through multi-agency strategy discussion, and if appropriate escalation via the City and Hackney Children Safeguarding Partnership for further scrutiny and challenge.

Transparency

Comprehensive data around the MPS use of stop and search, including MTIPs such as this, is already available to the public via the Met's public stop and search dashboard:

<https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/stop-and-search-dashboard/>

The dashboard data is broken down by borough, stop reasons, search types, outcomes, demographics, ethnicity and proportionality. Significantly and transparently, the dashboard includes data on MTIP searches, broken down by borough, gender, age, ethnicity and outcome rates.

In 2021, the MPS carried out around 4,300 MTIP stop and searches, out of a total of over 228,000 stop and searches. MTIPs were under 2% of all stop and searches.

We continue to scrutinise our data closely to understand any disproportionality, ensure that our policing effort is focussed where harm is most prevalent and learn from what it tells us. We involve community groups in this activity across the MPS to ensure we seek views from beyond the police.

Finally, we are under no illusion that the Child Q incident, together with other high profile incidents, have had a significant impact on the trust and confidence Londoners have in the MPS. Officers and staff throughout the Met are working hard to rebuild that trust. We know we must do so and we are committed to doing all we can.

You will be aware that the Commissioner asked Baroness Louise Casey to lead an independent and far-reaching review into our culture and standards of professional and personal behaviour. I know that this incident is already being factored into Baroness Casey's Review and we support that entirely.

I hope that this letter demonstrates the importance with which we take this work, the energy and commitment to building trust in our communities and the desire to get it right. We cannot, of course, do this alone. Our valued partnerships across the MPS are essential to ensuring the response to children is effective and I hope that we can continue to explore shared opportunities to work.

Yours sincerely,



Laurence Taylor

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DAC Laurence Taylor
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
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1st April 2022

Dear DAC Taylor,

Thank you for your letter to Mayor Glanville, Deputy Mayor Bramble, Cllr Fajana-Thomas and me, which accepts the recommendations of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review into Child Q. As we are in the pre-election period, I am replying on behalf of Hackney Council.

As you recognise, Child Q should have been treated with dignity and respect. She should have been treated as the child she is: her rights as a child, safeguarded; and her position as a child protected by the adults around her that day. It is clear that she was wholly failed, and together we must all make sure that this is never allowed to happen again. Hackney Council accepts the Review Panel's finding that this appalling and humiliating experience was 'likely influenced' by racism.

We welcome your recognition of the pain and anger that the experience of Child Q has caused in our communities, and that it has had a direct impact on their trust and confidence in the Metropolitan Police. The family of Child Q are clear that they too want this to be a moment of real change.

It is important that the most senior leaders in the Metropolitan Police, including Assistant Commissioner Ephgrave and you, have taken responsibility, alongside the Central East Basic Command Unit (BCU), for developing your response to our letter and our call for action.

The issues of racism, and trust and confidence in policing amongst our Black and Global Majority residents go back, as you note, many many years. Action to date has had very little impact, and we all agree that trust and confidence remains too low, particularly in Hackney. We therefore cautiously welcome, in response to our letter and to the treatment of Child Q, your intention to become an anti-racist organisation, and your commitment to training and improvement to avoid adultification bias. This will though, as you recognise, require a significant step-change in the commitment, focus and pace of engagement and action at both the BCU and central Metropolitan Police levels. Specifically we welcome, in your response to our letter and our call for action:

- That Commander Paul Brogden and Commander Alison Heydari will continue to work closely with Borough Commander Marcus Barnett, in a supported leadership role.
- That you accept the recommendations within the safeguarding review and have developed a comprehensive operational action plan to respond to them.
- That you will be reviewing MTIP (More Thorough Search where Intimate Parts are exposed) Policy and introducing a pilot across Hackney and Tower Hamlets (Central East BCU) for MTIP searches, where in addition to requiring a conversation with a supervisor and the presence of an appropriate adult, you will now require Inspector authority prior to the search taking place to ensure appropriate oversight of such an intrusive intervention. And, importantly, that you recognise the safeguarding of the child as a priority.
- Where there is a MTIP carried out on a child outside of a custody environment, a very detailed Merlin database report will be created, which will be flagged by the police Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to Social Services, to trigger a trauma-informed response from the partnership through multi-agency strategy discussion, and if appropriate, escalation via the City and Hackney Children Safeguarding Partnership for further scrutiny and challenge.
- That you are engaged with National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) leads for Stop and Search and Children and Young People, together with the College of Policing, to ensure the Met is aligned with national protocols.
- That you plan to conduct peer reviews across the BCU, using learning from elsewhere in the force and from across the country.
- The intention to establish a child-centric Stop and Search review panel to scrutinise search activity, review body-worn video, and critically evaluate whether there has been a 'safeguarding first' approach, and to highlight and raise any identified adultification.
- That the Hackney police MASH team will run a pilot scheme so that when a search is conducted on a child from an 'S.23 Misuse of Drug Act' stop - and no drugs are found - a letter is sent to the parents of the child informing them of the police interaction.
- That you plan to develop and resource Hackney as an exemplar of new measures and initiatives for other BCU areas and the Metropolitan Police.
- That you have committed to delivering 'adultification' training to all front line officers in the Central East BCU, and to work with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership on this. We also welcome your suggestion that this training is rolled out across the MPS.

- That you are willing to conduct further joint training - with which we would be pleased to work with you.
- That you continue to scrutinise your data to understand disproportionality.
- That the Child Q incident is being considered by Baroness Louise Casey as part of an independent review into police culture and standards of professional and personal behaviour.

We now want to work with you to develop this into a shared strategic plan with more specific commitments, dates and outcomes. This will give us all a firm foundation from which to make real and meaningful change. We suggest that this is commissioned by the Hackney Community Safety Partnership. But, it will require ownership by the Metropolitan Police, centrally through you, and by the BCU, as well as by Hackney Council, and all of our community partners. This detailed plan should be commissioned immediately, incorporating your responses to date.

Whilst we understand that the current IOPC investigation restricts your ability to comment on racism in the treatment of Child Q, Hackney Council accepts the Review finding that it is likely to be a cause. We also believe that if the actions that you propose are going to have the impact that you want, the Metropolitan Police will need to, again, accept that institutional racism - as defined in the Stephen Lawrence Report - is a consistent factor in the relationship between the police and the Black and Global Majority communities, and in their wider experiences. The Stephen Lawrence report defined this as:

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.”

It is clear that councils across London, including Hackney, are building on this definition in adopting their own commitments to anti-racist practice, and communities expect the same of the Metropolitan Police.

We now need to ensure that our communities have confidence that your proposals will result in meaningful change, and it is essential that there is transparency and accountability in policing and in this plan for our residents. Only if all voices are listened to and heard will some of your proposed changes have any impact. The Council is ready to support a move to a much more proactive and systematic approach to engagement. It is vitally important that the insight from this engagement helps shape the shared strategic plan, so that residents can see how their feedback has led directly to change, in the short, medium and longer term. There is a need for urgent action, and we therefore propose over the next few weeks to:

- Hold a safeguarding-led briefing event for parents, carers and guardians, who may have immediate concerns about their children’s safety and wellbeing in schools, to allow them to be updated on the case and to raise questions to key officers

- Bring community partners together in a series of workshops to appraise the police response, help shape the shared strategic plan and identify the ways that they can continue to be involved in the plan
- Support Jim Gamble, Chair of City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Panel, in his engagement with youth groups, helping extend the range of groups involved and ensuring that this insight also informs the shared strategic plan.

We all recognise that this moment demands real change, and so transparency and accountability matters. We therefore want to be clear what the governance and oversight of this work will be. In addition, the Council's scrutiny panels will expect to examine these issues in public with you and the Borough Commander after the local elections and the Council's Annual General Meeting.

We are committed to working with you, the City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Panel, our communities and other partners, to ensure that the appalling treatment of Child Q, and the impact on her family and the wider community is a genuine catalyst for real and substantive change in the relationship between the Metropolitan Police and our Black and Global Majority communities.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Carroll
Chief Executive