

Mark Carroll
Chief Executive
London Borough of Hackney
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street
E8 1EA
020 8356 3021
mark.carroll@hackney.gov.uk

DAC Laurence Taylor
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
Victoria Embankment
London
SW1A 2JL

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Carroll', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Carroll
Chief Executive

