

Joint Living in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Meeting Monday 13th June 2022

Introduction

This document provides background material for the Scrutiny Commission meeting taking place on 13th June 2022. It sets out the role of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in overseeing the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and details our response to the Local Safeguarding Practice Review - Child Q.

Role of MOPAC

Oversight of police services in the United Kingdom is delivered through a system of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC). In London the Office of the PCC is held by the Mayor of London.

The Mayor of London is required by law to produce a plan that explains how the police, community safety partners and other criminal justice agencies will work together to reduce crime.

The Police and Crime Plan reflects the Mayor's manifesto and priorities for making London a safer city for all Londoners and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is the strategic oversight body tasked with devising the Police and Crime Plan and ensuring that it is delivered over the Mayor's term in office. (*Three years - due to COVID delaying the election the term was reduced to three years*).

<https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/building-safer-london>

MOPAC is led on a day-to-day basis by a Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC), Sophie Linden, who is accountable to the Mayor for:

- the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan;
- for ensuring oversight of the police; and
- driving effective criminal justice and crime reduction services across London.

Operational policing decisions remain the responsibility of the police, not the Mayor. This is an important principle of the UK system of policing.

Oversight of the MPS

The Mayor, through MOPAC, oversees the work of the MPS and holds the Commissioner to account on behalf of Londoners. This means ensuring the MPS is effective in its work, has the confidence of Londoners and that it is efficient in the use of its budget.

This is achieved through formalised oversight meetings that allow the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to hold the MPS to account.

The Oversight Board, chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, oversees the development of key strategies and the most significant issues which arise from them; those strategies being primarily:

- The Police and Crime Plan
- The budget and medium-term financial strategy
- The MPS's business plan to deliver service, including the transformation programme, as well as digital, workforce and estate plans.

The Oversight Board is responsible for:

- Oversight of efficiency and effectiveness
- Scrutinising MPS delivery against the Police and Crime Plan on behalf of the Mayor, and performance against agreed priorities
- Undertaking, at the request of the DMPC, assurance on key priorities and specific issues of concern to the public and Police and Crime Plan.

Any significant policing issues are discussed at the Board and extraordinary meetings can be called should there be a requirement. Police performance is considered at every meeting and some areas, such as use of force, are subject to an annual focussed 'deep dive' review. The MPS's use of strip searching and use of force were most recently considered by the Oversight Board in April 2022

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor meet regularly with the Commissioner and senior police officers to discuss policing in London. This includes any serious issues that are impacting communities. Through these meetings the Commissioner and MPS senior team can be held to account for matters relevant to Londoners.

More detail and minutes from each of the oversight meetings can be found through the following link. <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/governance-and-decision-making/oversight-board>

MOPAC also operates the largest Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme in the United Kingdom, which enables trained members of the public to visit detainees in police custody unannounced to ensure their welfare, rights and entitlements are being upheld. MOPAC ICVs pay particular attention to the use of force and strip searching, and to the experience of vulnerable detainees, including children. They report their findings and these are collated by MOPAC to inform our oversight of the MPS, concerns about the use of strip searching have been identified and escalated through this route.

MOPAC has a highly skilled and experienced Evidence and Insight team who conduct detailed data analysis, research and evaluations. MOPAC's formal oversight is underpinned by regular monitoring and examination of a variety of policing and crime data, which aids our understanding of police performance, service user satisfaction and public attitudes towards the MPS. This enables the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to hold the MPS to account on behalf of Londoners.

To aid transparency and accountability, a variety of data is published on the MOPAC website and can be found here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/policing/action-plan-dashboard-general-stats> - <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics>

Strategic Response to Child Q Serious Case Review

Strip searching has been considered as part of our ongoing oversight of the MPS and more recently MOPAC has been working closely with the MPS to ensure the deep concerns arising from the case of Child Q are listened to and that appropriate action is taken. A recent inspection report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services had also raised concerns about the volume and disproportionality (in terms of ethnicity and age) of strip searches in custody making this work pertinent and relevant across policing at a national level.

As soon as the Mayor was made aware of the case of Child Q, a number of immediate steps were taken:

- The Mayor asked the Commissioner for a full account of what happened in this case and what actions the MPS have taken since to ensure officers are aware of their duties and responsibilities and are accountable for their actions. *The Mayor's full statement in response to Child Q can be found at Appendix A.*
- The Mayor wrote to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) raising his concerns that they take the safeguarding report into account when considering whether to lay misconduct or gross misconduct charges against the officers. The IOPC have now confirmed that they will seek gross misconduct charges.
- The MPS's response to the outcome of the Child Q safeguarding review was put on the agenda for the April 2022 meeting of the MOPAC-MPS Oversight Board. This was to ensure the learning has been effectively captured and to provide assurance that the MPS is taking the necessary steps to ensure this cannot happen again and to rebuild trust that has been damaged right across London and not just in Hackney.
- The case of Child Q was also considered at the MOPAC Disproportionality Board that brings criminal justice (CJS) partner together to tackle disproportionality across the system. The purpose for doing so was to collectively consider good practice in dealing with children in the CJS, to

better understand how adultification bias might be presenting in other parts of the system and how organisations are/should respond to this particular concern. Partners also discussed what relevant data they are collecting that might be included in the MOPAC Action Plan Dashboard to maximise transparency and accountability to Londoners.

- The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime wrote to the Chief Executive of the London Safeguarding Children's Partnership seeking assurance that the learning from this case is recognised and effectively disseminated across the capital. The Partnership convened a meeting to discuss and confirmed their commitment to working together to ensure the learning is implemented across educational establishments.
- The role of the MOPAC's Independent Custody Visitors who visit police detainees in custody and monitor issues such as the use of strip searching, was reaffirmed to ensure they pay attention to the use of strip searching, particularly involving children, during their custody visits.

As a result of the above and a review by the MPS which looked specifically at this case and the wider impact it has across London, the following arrangements have been put in place:

- MOPAC will hold the MPS to account for delivery against their action plan in response to Child Q which examines not just this individual case but the how the MPS work to respond to the pan-London issues raised. This will take place through the Oversight Board and regular meetings with senior officers.
- London wide MPS data on strip searching will be routinely published to enable transparency and accountability.
- Strip searching will be the subject of an annual deep dive at MOPAC-MPS Oversight Board.
- The Intimate Searches Policy, which applies to all officers and governs the use of strip searching, has been reviewed and will include a requirement for more senior authority before one is conducted and the completion of a safeguarding report in each case.
- To ensure front-line officers understand their role and potential for bias, a new pilot training package on racial bias and adultification has been developed by Hackney Children's Safeguarding Partnership, as part of the compulsory training received by officers in Hackney. The MPS hope to roll out similar training to all frontline officers across the organisation in partnership with other public and community sector experts.

Mayor's Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing

[The Mayor's Action Plan](#) (the Action Plan) has been developed with communities to address community concerns, particularly from Black Londoners, about disproportionality in the use of certain police powers including stop and search, the use of force and taser. It contains real, measurable and practical steps for improving trust and confidence in our police, developed in partnership with communities.

The Action Plan predates the case of Child Q but focuses on the areas listed below, which are relevant to the concerns arising from the case of Child Q:

- better use of police powers
- Working together to make Black communities safer
- A police service that represents and understands Black communities
- Holding the Police to account for what they do.

Key areas of work within the Action Plan:

The Action Plan identified legitimate concerns about the impact of Safer Schools Officers on children, despite our survey work indicating that many parents and wider community members support their existence. These concerns have been amplified as a result of the case of Child Q and are already being addressed as part of the Mayor's Action Plan. The MPS has been tasked to conduct a review of the role of Safer Schools Officers to ensure their work has no disproportionate impact on Black students. The MPS is due to publish a report on this work shortly.

MOPAC is working with community leaders and young people across several pilot areas in London to develop a new scrutiny framework so that local communities – and especially those most affected by stop and search and policing - can effectively hold local police to account. A vital component of this work is that the outcomes of this scrutiny are transparent, accessible and meaningful. This work is built on months of consultation during which the ideas and experiences of young people and youth leaders directly informed the delivery of this work.

MOPAC have also commissioned a Black-led community organisation to undertake a much wider and more in-depth co-production programme with communities across London to determine what the future of local community-police engagement should look like. It will also examine how under-represented communities can take a more active role in leading this work to improve trust and confidence between communities and the police.

Learning and development are important factors in building positive culture and attitudes within the MPS. MOPAC has invested in community-led training and familiarisation programmes for officers, with expert community organisations and those with lived experience of over-policing embedded in officer training. A pilot is also underway with over 200 officers across different teams with a focus on delivering stop and search cultural equity workshops.

MOPAC has expanded the role of Independent Custody Visitors in London through a new process enabling ICVs to look through complete custody records. These records detail the detainee's full journey through custody, helping to reveal issues and challenges that previously were not identified.

For further information, updates and opportunities to get involved in our work to build trust and confidence in the MPS, please contact:

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