

Room 118, 2nd Floor
Hackney Town Hall
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27th July 2023

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By Email

Steve Noonan,
Interim Regional Director for London,
Independent Office for Police Conduct

Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Investigation - Child Q

Dear Mr Noonan

We write to you, on behalf of the Living in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Commissions at Hackney Council, to raise concerns regarding the continuing delay in the publication of the report of the independent investigation into the conduct of police officers involved in the Child Q incident.

The importance of this case to the public, particularly to Black communities in Hackney and across London, must not be underestimated. The publication of the [Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review](#) (Child Q LCSPR) in March 2022 precipitated widespread feelings of shock, disbelief and anger, as the report concluded that racism was a contributory factor into the strip-searching of Child Q. Many people in Hackney did not see Child Q's experiences as isolated, with a longstanding history of allegations of police racism in the borough.

Following the publication of the Child Q LCSPR, the Living in Hackney and Children & Young People Scrutiny Commissions held two public meetings ([13th June 2022](#) and [25th April 2023](#)) to help provide assurance to the local community that positive and sustained progress was being made across the local safeguarding partnership to address the issues raised by the incident.

As the issues contained in the Child Q LCSPR raised serious questions about the conduct of the police officers concerned, the Scrutiny Commissions welcomed the independent investigation on their conduct and were assured that your office was working as diligently as possible on the investigation to reach decisions in as effective a timeframe as possible.

Given the seriousness of this case, the Scrutiny Commissions also welcomed indications that your office had decided to uplift the investigation from a misconduct investigation to a gross misconduct investigation in June 2022. However, despite the ongoing interest of stakeholders in the outcome of the investigation and media

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reports that the investigation has concluded, there have been no further official updates since this time as to whether disciplinary action will be taken.

As highlighted in the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership's recently published [Child Q Update Report](#), many children and young people across Hackney feel that little has changed in local policing over the last year. Children and young people believe that the police simply do not understand their concerns and have a rightful sense of injustice when they see the disproportional impact of policing within their community. Without positive action and redress there remains an ongoing sense of injustice among children and the wider community, which impacts on the lack of trust and confidence not only in local policing but in those local agencies which are there to support them.

In instances where the standards of local policing are not met, it is vital that communities in Hackney trust that those charged with investigating allegations involving police officers are able to undertake their duty in both a forensic and timely fashion. The length of time taken for the investigation to be completed, and the lack of communication with both the public and key local stakeholders in the meantime, has also served to undermine our own ability to hold the police to account and reassure the local community in relation to the progress made since the incident.

We therefore call on your office to reach a decision on whether or not disciplinary action will be taken against the police officers in question swiftly and, should disciplinary proceedings follow for any of the officers involved, that this process is concluded without further delay.

At the conclusion of these proceedings, we also ask that your office publishes both its full report and an investigation summary in order to maintain and increase public confidence in the police complaints system and the work of your office, and in recognition of the considerable public interest in the case.

The Scrutiny Commissions would welcome a response from your office by **Friday 1st September 2023**.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Soraya Adejare
Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Councillor Sophie Conway
Chair, Children & Young People Scrutiny
Commission

Councillor Clare Joseph
Vice Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Councillor Margaret Gordon
Vice Chair, Children & Young People
Scrutiny Commission

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Cc:

- Philip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney
- Cllr Antoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care, Hackney Council
- Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, Hackney Council
- Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Parks & Leisure
- Dawn Carter-McDonald, Interim Chief Executive, Hackney Council
- Jacque Burke, Group Director Children & Education, Hackney Council
- Paul Senior, Interim Director of Education, Hackney Council
- Rickardo Hyatt, Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy
- Jim Gamble, Independent Chair City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
- James Conway, Borough Commander Central East Borough Command Unit, Metropolitan Police
- Kenny Bowie, Director of Strategy & MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Police & Crime