



Response Date:01/05/2024

2024/449 - Child strip search practice

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

In September 2023, the IOPC recommended that the Home Office undergo a substantial review of the powers set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and PACE Codes A and C relating to searches of children involving exposure of intimate parts (EIP). This was in order to ensure children are better safeguarded, especially from trauma relating to the humiliating and invasive procedure that EIP involves. The Home Office accepted this recommendation and made clear that strip search powers should not be used as a matter of routine.

This March, the IOPC made a further ten recommendations to the Home Office, National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing following several investigations at police searches on children involving EIP. Many of the recommendations refers to the collection and monitoring of data, which as the Children's Commissioner of England's report has shown, has been severely lacking in detail over the past few years. It is crucial that this data is collected and is collected accurately to ensure that when the law has been broken, this is disciplined rather than brushed under the rug.

Could you provide information on how the IOPC recommendations are being implemented in your local police force, specifically relating to the collection and monitoring of data for child strip searches?

Since the Childrens Commissioners recommendations and the subsequent IOPC recommendations we have implemented the below:

1. Additional guidance and awareness to all officers and supervisors surrounding the expectations and requirements when conducting searches of young people exposing intimate body parts.
 - Considering each search is Proportionate, Legal, Accountable, Necessary and Least Intrusive
 - Insp Authority needed and recorded.
 - Guidance on search location – never on school premises
 - Appropriate Adult requirements
 - Same sex officer searching to that of young person.
 - Accurate recording and safeguarding referral submission.
2. Built additional scrutiny into our internal stop and search performance governance. We have developed data capture of Under 18 searches exposing intimate body parts both 'In Custody' and 'Out of Custody' settings and these are subject of review and scrutiny through our performance governance structures that include IAG.
3. We are engaging with the National Stop & Search Delivery Group to support work and developments towards the recommendations set.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 01/05/2024