



Response Date:23/02/2026

2026/207 - Police searching policies

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

- 1. Has this force implemented the NPCC draft interim search guidance (published on 22nd May 2025 Police search guidance following Supreme Court decision).**
- 2. If so, what date was the draft interim search guidance implemented in this force.**
- 3. Provide a copy of any communication (from chief officer team, legal dept, training dept, force lead for searching, HR dept or Equalities dept) given to staff with regard to the implementation of this guidance and include date circulated/sent.**
- 4. If not, what policy/guidance is being followed by this force in relation to searches exceeding those of the most basic type*? Please provide a copy of the policy/guidance with regard to such searches. Stipulate whether these are only being undertaken by an officer of the same sex** as the person being searched. If not, please provide details of the circumstances in which a search of this nature may be undertaken by an officer not of the same sex.**

***Searches involving the removal of jacket, outer clothing and gloves, more normally termed as 'more thorough searches **Same sex meaning the same biological sex as determined and observed at conception/birth.**

Please see the attached.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 17/02/2026

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Implementation of NPCC Interim Search Guidance Following Supreme Court Ruling

Following the publication of the [NPCC's interim guidance](#) on searches involving members of the transgender community—and searches conducted by transgender officers and staff, North Wales Police is now adopting the guidance as force policy.

The guidance, issued in response to the recent Supreme Court decision, makes clear that thorough searches, including those that involve exposure of intimate body parts, should be carried out by officers or staff of the same biological sex as the detained person.

It also outlines limited circumstances in which a detainee may request to be searched by someone of their lived gender. These requests will be accommodated where operationally viable and with the appropriate written consent.

In recent weeks, we have sought to consult with those impacted internally and externally.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team has led on an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), gathering and reviewing relevant material, and capturing the views of people affected.

In addition, we have initiated a Task and Finish Group made up of key internal stakeholders including relevant Staff Networks and Staff Associations. This work has been vital in helping us understand the potential impact of the guidance and how best to implement it.

After careful consideration, the Chief Officer Team supports adopting the guidance, while continuing the Equality Impact Assessment to enable a sensitive and inclusive implementation.

Adoption of the guidance is intended to provide clarity and support to staff, particularly in operational application.

The EIA work completed so far, along with the insights gathered by our Task and Finish Group, has been instrumental in shaping our understanding of what we fully recognise as a sensitive and emotive issue.

While many of the broader issues are still being worked through nationally, we believe that continuing both the EIA and the Task and Finish Group locally will be essential to ensuring a thoughtful and inclusive approach.

Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman said: "This guidance is based on legal advice and has been developed after seeking views across policing as well as those of partners.

"Our aim is to ensure we are implementing the law in a pragmatic and consistent way. We remain committed to supporting all our officers and staff as we implement this guidance in a way that upholds dignity, fairness, and respect for everyone."

The guidance was published onto the intranet on 23 May 2025

Interim Guidance – Searching by Transgender officers and employees of the Police and the Searching of Transgender detainees.

As an interim measure and following extensive legal advice and engagement, police will undertake searches exposing intimate parts (EIP) or more thorough searches in accordance with PACE which states that these searches must be conducted with officers of the same biological sex as the person being searched.

Policing remains committed to serving all members of the public with fairness, dignity, and respect, including the Trans community. The police have a duty to respect Article 8 rights. Therefore, as far as operationally viable, where an individual whose lived in gender is not the same as their biological sex expresses a preference to be searched by an officer of their lived gender, efforts will be made to ensure an appropriate officer is identified to conduct the search. In such circumstances, the search would require the written consent of the authorising officer, the person detained and the particular officer/s conducting the search.

Additional Information

Who will a trans officer search?

A trans officer will search in line with biological sex.

Can a trans officer or member of staff be exempt from searching?

A trans officer can be exempt from searching. There will be no career detriment to the officer or member of staff.

Will a trans officer be given a lawful order to search?

No

Can a transgender officer search a detainee not of the same biological sex if the detainee agrees?

No - The purpose of the proposed consensual regime is to preserve the integrity and dignity of trans detainees who are in custody where the alternative of a PACE search might amount to an interference with their Art 8/Art 3 rights. The same does not apply to an officer.

Can a transgender officer search a trans detainee?

Yes if both the officer and the detainee are of the same sex this complies with the interim guidance. If the officer and the detainee are of different biological sexes, both the officer and the detainee would need to consent with the search.

Can a detainee refuse to be searched by a trans officer?

Yes as is current operational practice officers will be swapped out if a detainee refuses the search by a trans officer.

Can an officer or member of staff refuse to search a trans detainee?

Yes and there will be no career detriment to the officer or member of staff.

Can a lawful order be given to search a trans detainee?

No

What if a trans detainee consents to the search by an officer of their lived gender but then retracts consent?

The search will then need to be completed by an officer of their biological sex.

Can a trans detainee ask for a separate area search depending on anatomical presentation?

Yes a trans detainee can ask for a separate area search. (One half of their body to be searched by one biological sex officer and the other half of their body to be searched by a different biological sex officer.)

What if a trans detainee wants to be searched in line with lived gender but no officer can be found who is willing to conduct the search?

The detainee should be placed on a constant watch until a willing officer is found. Should this not occur within a reasonable time or the risk be deemed too great, the search will be completed by officers of the same biological sex.

What if the sex of the detainee cannot be determined?

A conversation should be undertaken with the detainee to establish sex for the purpose of a search. If the detainee engages, act as per questions above. If the detainee will not engage, conduct the search in line with documentation or presentation until sex can be established.

Published May 2025.

Summary of Search Scenarios

To accompany the Interim Guidance – Searching by Transgender officers and employees of the Police and the Searching of Transgender detainees published May 2025.

Type of Search	Item being searched for	Who can search	Location
Stop/Search (JOG)	- illegal drugs - a weapon - stolen property - something which could be used to commit a crime.	Officer of any sex can search a detainee of any sex.	On the street
Amend to More Thorough Search (more than JOG) but not revealing intimate parts)	- illegal drugs - a weapon - stolen property - something which could be used to commit a crime.	Officer must be the same biological sex as the person being searched unless only headgear or footwear is removed. If the detained person advises they are trans, they should be asked who they would prefer to be searched by. An officer who consents to conducting the search should be found. It must be recorded that the search has been conducted following a consensual regime with confirmation from detainee and officer conducting the search. If an officer cannot be found in a timely manner or consent is not provided by the detainee, the search will be conducted in line with biological sex.	Out of Public View where searched person cannot be seen by anyone who does not need to be present nor a member of the opposite sex.
Stop & Search Exposure of intimate parts (EIP) not in Custody (Exposure of Intimate Parts or EIP))	- illegal drugs - a weapon - stolen property - something which could be used to commit a crime.	Officer must be the same biological sex as the person being searched. This is a visual search only and the officer must not touch any of the intimate parts being exposed. Authorised by Supervision.	Nearby police station or other nearby safe location, not in a police vehicle

		The detainee should not normally be required to remove all their clothes at the same time. For example, a person should be allowed to remove clothing above the waist and redress before being required to remove further clothing, subject to necessity in the circumstance. If the detained person advises they are trans, they should be asked who they would prefer to be searched by. An officer who consents to conducting the search should be found. It must be recorded that the search has been conducted following a consensual regime confirmation from detainee, officer conducting the search and the authorising officer. If an officer cannot be found in a timely manner or consent is not provided by the detainee, the search will be conducted in line with biological sex.	
Search after arrest	• which could harm themselves or others, • assist with escape, • be evidence of an offence • and to prevent the destruction of any evidence of an offence.	Officer must be the same biological sex as the person being searched. If the detained person advises they are trans, they should be asked who they would prefer to be searched by. An officer who consents to conducting the search should be found, It must be recorded that the search has been conducted following a consensus regime. If an officer cannot be found in a timely manner or consent is not provided by the detainee, the search will be conducted in line with biological sex.	Custody

Strip Search in Custody following arrest	• which could harm themselves or others, • assist with escape, • be evidence of an offence • and to prevent the destruction of any evidence of an offence.	Officer must be the same biological sex as the detainee. This is a visual search only and the officer must not touch any of the intimate parts being exposed. Authorised by Custody Sergeant. The detainee should not normally be required to remove all their clothes at the same time. If the detained person advises they are trans, who they would prefer to be searched by. An officer who consents to conducting the search should be found. It must be recorded that the search has been conducted following a consensus regime. If an officer cannot be found in a timely manner or consent is not provided by the detainee, the search will be conducted in line with biological sex.	Custody
Intimate Search	• which could harm themselves or others, • assist with escape, • be evidence of an offence • and to prevent the destruction of any evidence of an offence.	Conducted by a Health Care Professional and the detainee must consent to the search. Authorised by Custody Inspector The detainee should not normally be required to remove all their clothes at the same time. The officer in the room must be the same biological sex as the detainee. If the detained person advises they are trans, they should be asked who, other than the HCP, they would prefer to be present during the search. An officer who consents to being present should be found. It must be recorded that the search has been conducted following a consensual regime.	Medical premises

Juveniles

[Children and young persons | College of Policing](#)

Intimate Searches

An intimate search of a child or young person may take place only in the presence of an appropriate adult of the same sex, unless the child/young person expressly asks for an appropriate adult of the opposite sex, who is readily available. The search may take place in the absence of the appropriate adult if the juvenile specifically requests this, provided the appropriate adult is present when the request is made and the adult agrees. The decision should be recorded and signed by the appropriate adult.

Strip search (search involving the removal of more than outer clothing)

Unless there is risk of serious harm to the child/young person or another, an appropriate adult must be present for a strip search if it involves exposure of intimate body parts. It can only take place in the absence of the appropriate adult if the child/young person has specifically requested this and the adult agrees. The decision should be recorded and signed by the appropriate adult.