

Independent Ethics Panel – Juveniles and the use of Strip Search powers

Assurance Report	Report Author
Independent Ethics Panel	Interim Chair
	Date of the Report
	17 October 2022

Urgent:	No
Security Classification	Official

Exceptions

The Independent Ethics Panel (IEP) assists the Commissioner in understanding the progress being made in delivering the 'Fair Treatment' strategic priority of his Police and Crime Plan and in providing assurance in relation to PCC and Chief Constable statutory responsibilities.

- 1.1 The IEP received a report from South Yorkshire Police on Juveniles and the use of Strip Search at its meeting on 7 October 2022.
- 1.2 The report followed a request to SYP from the Chair of IEP in the wake of reports which attracted widespread negative commentary about the "Child Q" case, a girl who had been strip searched in her school in London. The request was for information about the use of this particular power in relation to juveniles in South Yorkshire in the 12 months to June 2022. The report is as follows:
 - 1) IEP received information about local practice concerning juveniles who were stopped and searched and subjected to a Strip Search within weeks of the request being made
 - 2) Stop and Search took place on about 12,418 occasions in the period under review. IEP notes FOUR instances when a Stop and Search led to a Strip Search being conducted on juveniles in this period
 - 3) IEP welcomed the suggestion by DCC Forber that SYP report to IEP twice a year about the use of this power

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- 4) IEP also welcomed the one page briefing document provided by CI Gilmour to secondary schools in Sheffield. This explains Stop and Search in accessible language. IEP has requested that the document be sent to all schools and post-16 institutions across South Yorkshire
- 5) IEP is seeking re-assurance that when strip searches are conducted – in custody or elsewhere - an appropriate adult is present and that this is logged
- 6) IEP notes that there are rare and exceptional circumstances that it may not be possible to wait for the presence of an appropriate adult
- 7) IEP notes that further detail arising from its request is being pursued and that this will be the subject of an update to IEP and a subsequent report to PAB
- 8) IEP is in a position to offer re-assurance to the Police and Crime Commissioner that it has found that Strip Search in relation to juveniles is used sparingly. There is no indication that its use is unnecessary, unlawful or disproportionate
- 9) IEP appreciates the promptness with which SYP has responded and its readiness to engage fully with the issue. It also appreciates the active support of staff from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Recommendations

The Commissioner is recommended to consider the contents of the report and comment on any matters arising.

Report author details

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Signed:

M Lewis

Date:

17 October 2022