

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub-Committee (Community and Children's Services) – For Information	12/05/2022
Police Authority Board – For Information	25/05/2022
Professional Standards and Integrity Committee – For Information	25/05/2022
Subject: City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) Child Q Practice Review	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2 and 3
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services Paul Betts, Assistant Commissioner, City of London Police	For Information
Report author: Chris Pelham AD People, Department Community and Children's Services DCI Claire Cresswell, City of London Police	

Summary

In 2020, Child Q, a Black female child of secondary school age, was subject to a strip-search by female police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The search, which involved the exposure of Child Q's intimate body parts, took place on school premises, without an appropriate adult present, and with the knowledge that Child Q was menstruating. The school is in Hackney. As a result, a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review was initiated by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP). The report was published in March 2022. [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) concluded that Child Q should never have been strip-searched. The review found that there was an absence of a safeguarding-first approach to the practice of many of the professionals involved that day. The report also concluded that racism was 'likely an influencing factor' in the strip-search, and that there was a high level of probability that practitioners were influenced by 'adultification' bias. This is where Black and Global Majority children are held to adult standards, but their white peers are less likely to be.

The review makes eight findings and 14 recommendations for practice improvements. Some relate to process, data and guidance: police engagement in the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) process (R1), MPS data on strip searches (R2), updating the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on searching, screening and confiscation (R3 & R10), updating the MPS guidance and local policy around Appropriate Adults and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) (R4 & R11), and both national police and MPS guidance on strip-searching children (R6), addressing the stop and search guidance (R9).

Other recommendations focus on how the system works. There is a recommendation for the MPS Central East Basic Command Unit (BCU) around engagement with their local stop and search monitoring group (R7) and, the importance of referring children to, or seeking advice from, children's social care where there are concerns about substance misuse (R8). Four recommendations are addressed to the CHSCP. These are likely to have a wider relevance and transferability to other local areas. Three recommendations relate to professional development: ensuring that Child Q and the review is referenced with a specific focus on reinforcing the responsibilities of practitioners to advocate for and on behalf of the children they are working with or who are in their care (R5), develop an awareness-raising programme across schools and colleges about stop and search activity by the police (R12) and, multi-agency 'adultification' training actively focusing on practitioners from school and the police (R13). Recommendation 14 relates to developing an anti-racist charter and practical guides that support the eradicating of racism, discrimination and injustice across its local safeguarding arrangements.

In April, Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner, wrote to all partners of the CHSCP inviting them to map their safeguarding arrangements in respect of the findings and recommendations set out in the review (see Appendix 2).

This report updates Members on the review process, and sets out the initial response and plans to address the recommendations from the City of London Police (CoLP) and City of London Schools, and Community and Children's Services.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2020, Child Q, a Black female child of secondary school age, was subject to a strip-search by female police officers from the MPS.
2. The search, which involved the exposure of Child Q's intimate body parts, took place on school premises, without an appropriate adult present, and with the knowledge that Child Q was menstruating.
3. As a result, an LCSPR was initiated by the CHSCP. The report was published in March 2022.
4. [*Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q*](#) (Appendix 1) concluded that Child Q should never have been strip-searched. The review found that there was an absence of a safeguarding-first approach to the practice of many of the professionals involved that day.
5. The review makes eight findings and 14 recommendations for practice improvement. It concluded that racism was 'likely an influencing factor' in the strip-search and that there was a high level of probability that practitioners were influenced by 'adultification' bias. This is where Black and Global Majority children are held to adult standards, but their white peers are less likely to be.
6. In April, Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner, wrote to all partners of the CHSCP inviting them to map their safeguarding arrangements in respect of the findings and recommendations set out in the review (Appendix 2).
7. This report sets out the initial response to the recommendations from the CoLP and City of London Schools, and Community and Children's Services.

The Purpose of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR)

8. The purpose of the LCSPR is to:

"identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Learning is relevant locally, but it has a wider importance for all practitioners working with children and families and for the Government and policymakers. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving.

Reviews should seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. They are not conducted to hold individuals, organisations or agencies to account, as there are other processes for that purpose, including through employment law and disciplinary procedures, professional regulation and, in exceptional cases, criminal proceedings. These processes may be carried out alongside reviews or at a later stage.

Employers should consider whether any disciplinary action should be taken against practitioners whose conduct and/or practice falls below acceptable standards and

should refer to their regulatory body as appropriate.”

[Working Together 2018, Chapter 4, page 8](#)

9. The [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel](#) (CSPRP) is a national body, not a local one. It is an independent panel responsible for commissioning national reviews of serious child safeguarding cases.
10. When a serious incident becomes known to the safeguarding partners (the Council, the Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group), they must consider whether the case meets the criteria for a local review. This is done through a process known as a Rapid Review.
11. The outcome of the Rapid Review is subsequently submitted to the CSPRP. In Child Q’s case, this was done on 15 January 2021. The delegated decision to instigate the review was made by the CHSCP’s Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner (ICSC) and ratified by safeguarding partners in line with the CHSCP’s written safeguarding arrangements.
12. The CSPRP met on 26 January 2021 and wrote to the CHSCP on 2 February 2021. Its response is covered in paragraphs 1.7-1.10 of the report of the Review.

The Timeline of the Review

13. The [statement](#) from Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner, provides an overview of the timeline of the review:
 - **11 January 2021:** Child Q first came to the attention of the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner and a Rapid Review meeting was convened two days later.
 - **15 January 2021:** The Rapid Review report and the decision to instigate the LCSPR was submitted, as required by statutory guidance, to the CSPRP.
 - **26 January 2021:** The National CSPRP considered the case on 26 January 2021 and responded on 2 February 2021. This response stated: “We noted your decision to carry out a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) but would encourage you to think carefully about whether one is necessary as we felt that this case was not notifiable and did not meet the criteria for an LCSPR.” Despite this suggestion, an LCSPR was initiated and work began at pace.
 - **February–March 2021:** Lead authors were confirmed, a reference panel identified, and a forward plan of key interviews developed. The CHSCP was mindful of the impact on Child Q and, while the family were quickly notified of the review, it was right not to interrupt the immediate support services being provided.
 - **By mid-April 2021:** The review completed interviews with Child Q, her family and the school teachers.

- **May 2021:** The headteacher and Local Authority Designated Officer were interviewed.
- Over the next three months, the review continued to press the MPS for access to the officers involved, or at the very least, their statements. Due to the nature and range of complaints, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) had become formally involved.
- **6 July 2021:** The ICSC wrote to the Director General of the IOPC, explaining the situation and asking if he could reconcile the issue of access. The CHSCP was made an 'Interested Party' to the IOPC investigation. This allowed for the lawful sharing of relevant information, which was received in October 2021.
- While eventually resolved, the difficulties encountered in obtaining information from the police was the reason for the review making its first recommendation for the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the IOPC.
- Work followed, and advice from the reference panel, research and data allowed for findings and recommendations to be focused and developed.
- **From January 2022:** Fact-checking and final rounds of engagement were carried out, including with the family (and their solicitor), the reference group, the MPS and the IOPC.
- **March 2022:** The review was published.

City of London Police (CoLP)

14. Following the March 2022 publication of *Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q*, the CoLP conducted its own internal review of juvenile strip-searches. A senior member of the Professional Standards Directorate conducted a detailed review of all juvenile strip-searches undertaken during the last three years.
15. In the period March 2019 to March 2022 there were nine strip-searches of juveniles undertaken by CoLP officers. The juveniles were all male and aged between 15–17 years old. Three searches were as a result of a further search conducted under Code A PACE 1984. All others were conducted within the custody suite after detention and were authorised post-arrest. Seven of the strip-searches led to a positive outcome (a prohibited item being found).
16. A full report was completed for review by the Assistant Commissioner Betts who is strategic lead for this portfolio. The report will be considered by the City of London Police Renewing and Rebuilding Trust and Confidence Board (chaired by Assistant Commissioner Betts) which will oversee a number of identified learning points. The Board next convenes on 19 May 2022. This will include the consideration of all the recommendations relevant to the police from the *Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q* report.

17. A detailed communication has been compiled and made available to all officers to remind them of their powers and the key considerations when undertaking searches, particularly those that are more intimate in their nature, and also those where juveniles are being searched. It details the relevant legislation and provides guidance on process and recording to ensure that all officers comply with the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and Force policies. The communication also discusses 'adultification' and safeguarding considerations that officers must bear in mind. It sets out clear expectations relating to safeguarding and available resources within the Force to support officers in their decision making. This communication has also been sent to all Directorate Heads to disseminate to all Inspectors to ensure that teams receive briefings from their supervisors on this matter.
18. The CoLP review identified changes to the inputting of data to improve our record keeping and audit trail of rationale for relevant decisions. These have been allocated to appropriate leads in the Force to implement.
19. The CoLP has several internal and external working groups providing oversight and scrutiny to stop and search and strip-searches. These include:
 - Professional Standards and Integrity Committee of the Police Authority Board. As part of its remit, this Committee reviews data relating to stop and search and use of force. The committee scrutinises trends and findings and provides feedback, challenge, and asks for further information where required to allow them to intrusively oversee the use of the tactic by the Force. Every Committee Member was given the opportunity to patrol with a uniformed officer from the Local Policing team to witness a stop and search being conducted so that they could better understand the process.
 - Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group. This group considers the details of individual stop searches and whether there was a lawful reason for the stop, and whether the grounds for the stop were justified. They can view Body Worn Video to better assess the search. They 'dip sample' 10% of searches monthly and also look at trends quarterly. Relevant training was provided to all members to assist them in reviewing stop searches.
 - At an operational level within the Force, line managers provide significant scrutiny. First line supervisors reviews every stop and search record. Additionally a structured dip sampling process requires every level of supervisor completes a review of a minimum number or percentage of searches each month.
 - Statistics on stop and search are presented to the quarterly City of London Police Stop and Search Working Group where they are reviewed against set criteria such as the disproportionality index, positive outcomes and grounds given for the search.

- The HMICFRS conducts reviews of stop searches carried out by the Force. The previous dip sample review established that 92% of searches had acceptable grounds. This placed the Force in the top six forces in England.
- The Force has committed to reviewing all strip-searches of juveniles quarterly. This will be conducted by the Senior Force Leads for stop and search, and custody management.

City Of London Schools and Community and Children’s Services

20. The City of London Corporation has one maintained primary school – The Aldgate School – and 10 sponsored academies as part of the City of London Academies Trust. It also supports three independent schools.
21. In its pursuit of educational excellence, the City Corporation has drawn these schools together, collectively known as 'the City of London Family of Schools'.
22. In addition to the 'Family of Schools', there are two schools and one college located in the City of London – St Paul's Cathedral School, Charterhouse Square School, and David Game College.
23. As noted above in paragraph 6 of this report, Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner, wrote to all Partners of the CHSCP in April inviting them to map their safeguarding arrangements in respect of the findings and recommendations set out in the review (see Appendix 2). This went to all CHSCP schools across Hackney and the City of London and was forwarded to all schools in 'The Family of Schools'.
24. Schools physically based in the City of London operate under the CHSCP governance arrangements. These schools meet on a termly basis as part of the City of London Safeguarding Education Forum – this is hosted by Community and Children’s Services, chaired by the Assistant Director, People, and includes attendance from the City schools’ Designated Safeguarding Leads, as well as officers from Community and Children’s Services, and the Lead Advisor for Safeguarding from the CHSCP.
25. City of London Education Trust schools (Family of Schools) , based in other local authority areas, will operate under their own local authority area Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. However, to provide opportunities to strengthen safeguarding arrangements across the CoL education footprint, the Family of Schools are invited to attend the City of London Safeguarding Education Forum.
26. The next Safeguarding Education Forum in June will be dedicated to reviewing the learning and development requirements for all schools linked to the findings of the report.
27. A more detailed report on the Family of Schools response to Child Q will be presented to the Education Board in June.

28. The following points illustrate some of the actions that the schools have engaged in (or will engage in), in response to the review findings:

- The Aldgate School leadership have reviewed the report and shared learning with senior leaders.
- Significant work has been undertaken by The Aldgate School in relation to anti-racism, safeguarding, and the curriculum.
- Across the Family of Schools, senior leaders have read and shared the report with their leadership teams.
- Reminders have been sent to senior leaders and all staff regarding search policies within schools.
- The review findings have been shared in assemblies with all year groups.
- Staff briefings have been undertaken regarding the case of Child Q.
- Some schools have confirmed that they have written to parents to offer reassurance and an opportunity for further conversations.
- Schools have reviewed the current practice around serious child safeguarding cases in their school in light of the Child Q report.
- Schools have initiated reviews of their current practice and state that they will continue to work with the local Safeguarding Partnership as required.
- Schools noted that they continue to ensure that they use appropriate systems to record all types of police searches.
- Where relevant, schools note that they will continue to liaise with their Safer School Police Officer to ensure that their policy and practice-based systems are up to date.
- Schools will ensure that they include specific items relating to 'adultification' in future training, and explore whole-school activities relating to this topic.
- One school noted that their Senior Leadership Team had reviewed the Child Q report, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) led a whole-staff briefing and disseminated a PowerPoint presentation to every class, so they are aware of their rights. The safeguarding team also dropped in to each class to take any questions.
- The DSL and Deputy met with the Student Council on 25 April 2022 to discuss their views on Child Q and what steps to take to reassure Council members.

29. In addition to the schools, colleagues in Community and Children's Services have also engaged in activities following the publication of the review, including:

- Across Community and Children's Services, Senior Leaders have attended a CHSCP-commissioned 'adultification' learning and development session in June 2021.
- There is an expectation that all frontline staff will attend CHSCP-commissioned training regarding 'adultification' in the coming year.

- Reflective briefing sessions took place with staff in the People Directorate following the publication of the report. These were chaired by the Children Social Care Systemic Therapist and provided a safe and supportive environment for staff to consider the findings of the review, and help reflect on and process the difficult messages related to adultification, gender and race.
- Over the last 18 months, staff in the People Directorate and Community and Children’s Services have been engaged in anti-racism development work. This has included: running systemic group-based reflective sessions; action learning sets; establishing a book club for staff that provided the opportunity to work through the book *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad over 25 weeks; our Independent Reviewing Service provided a video message for our children in care and care leavers providing information on how they can receive support from CoL on any issues that are impacting them directly; and managers presented our anti-racism work to the DfE.
- The CoL Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group, jointly chaired by Children’s Social Care and the CoL Police, reviewed the findings from the report at the April meeting. The implementation of the recommendations by partner agencies will be reviewed via the MACE group to help strengthen safeguarding arrangements specific to child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Finally, the CHSCP has extended an invitation to all CoL Safeguarding Partners, including CoL schools, to attend the three-day Hackney Anti-racism conference in May 2022.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

30. Financial implications – there are no financial implications regarding this report. Future training, learning and development activity will be financed within service budgets.
31. Resource implications – as stated above.
32. Legal implications – no legal implications specific to this report.
33. Risk implications – implementation of learning from the recommendations will be reviewed as part of the CHSCP governance arrangements. Any concerns regarding compliance will be escalated through this mechanism.
34. Equalities implications – this report has raised issues in respect of the need to review and ensure effective anti-racist policy and practice is in place across partner agencies. CoLP and CoL schools will be addressing equalities issues and learning from this case as part of their action planning.
35. Climate implications – no climate implications specific to this report.
36. Security implications – no security implications specific to this report.

Conclusion

37. Following the strip-search by MPS officers of Child Q in a Hackney school in 2020, an LCSPR was initiated by the CHSCP. The report was published in March 2022.
38. [The review – *Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q*](#) – concluded that Child Q should never have been strip-searched. The review found that there was an absence of a safeguarding-first approach to the practice of many of the professionals involved that day.
39. The report also concluded that racism was ‘likely an influencing factor’ in the strip-search and that there was a high level of probability that practitioners were influenced by ‘adultification’ bias. The review made eight findings and 14 recommendations for practice.
40. CoLP and City of London Schools have carried out a range of activities to understand and share learning with colleagues from the review.
41. This report has highlighted activity to date and the plans for future learning.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – *Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q - March 2022*
- Appendix 2 – Mapping Recommendations Template

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