

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Professionalism and Trust Committee	Dated: 02/02/2026
Subject: Annual Custody Update	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Diverse engaged communities, providing excellent services.
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:	Commissioner of City of London Police
Report author:	Detective Superintendent Anna Rice, Head of Criminal Justice Services

Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide members with an annual report in relation to custody functions and activities within the City of London over the past 12 months.

The report provides data relating to annual demand, vulnerability data and information on Use of Force, juveniles and strip searching. It also provides updates in relation to custody culture and training.

The report includes an overview and update on some of the measures implemented since the previous HMICFRS inspection in 2019 and ongoing improvement activity and future plans.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the Police Authority Board meeting in June 2024, it was proposed and agreed that the force would provide an annual report on custody matters. This would specifically include relevant data relating to equality, diversion and inclusion to ensure members had appropriate oversight and is to coincide with the annual Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) report. The force previously provided members with an annual report on custody matters in November 2024.
2. The report covers the period January 2025 to December 2025 and includes relevant data where available.

Current Position

3. Custody Services sit within Criminal Justice Services, Specialist Operations. This dedicated custody cadre is staffed by 15 trained Custody Officers (Sergeants) and 10 Dedicated Detention Officers (police staff) and is overseen by a Custody Management Inspector, supported by a Police Constable.
4. The dedicated Cadre has professionalised the service provided within custody and led to increased focus on supporting vulnerable detainees and young people, the development of an effective performance framework and continuous improvement and training for officers.
5. Following the 2018 HMICFRS custody inspection, 23 areas for improvement were identified. Since this time, significant progress has been made against these outstanding recommendations which have now reduced to one AFI relating to the analysis of custody EDI data, to ensure that outcomes for all detainees are fair. This AFI is close to sign off, as part of a wider force-wide working group to improve the capture and analysis of EDI data.
6. The development of a bespoke Power Bi custody dashboard will support the sign off of this AFI and allow more effective scrutiny of data and disproportionality. This is anticipated to be live in Spring 2026.
7. CoLP did not receive the anticipated HMICFRS custody inspection in 2025. HMICFRS have now ceased this programme of standalone inspections and custody inspections will now form part of the PEEL framework. However, it is possible, given the length of time since the previous inspection, that this may be conducted separately ahead of the next full PEEL inspection. The Custody Management team alongside the Service Improvement team have continued to undertake proactive work to make improvements prior to inspection. This has included reviewing and benchmarking against other force custody inspection

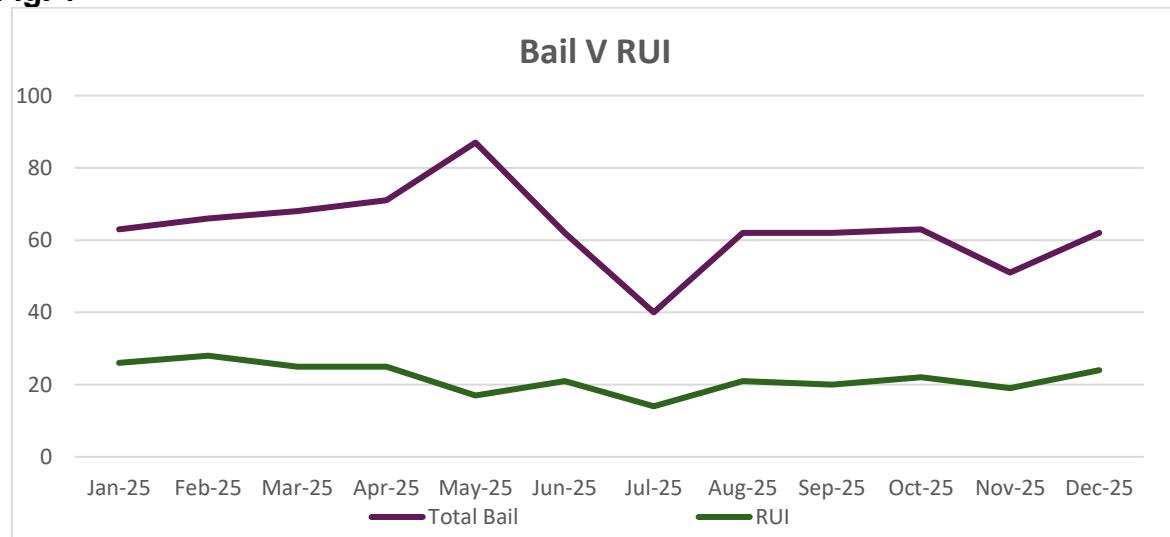
reports, reality testing of custody activities and enhanced qualitative assessment of custody records and CCTV.

- Following the BBC Panorama Documentary focussing on activities within Charing Cross Custody Suite, CoLP used this as an opportunity to reflect on our practices and the impact and importance of the role and highlight and reinforce our strong positive and professional culture within the Custody team through a range of activities. Whilst the documentary was extremely disturbing and disappointing, CoLP are confident this does not reflect the services or attitudes present within our own custody team.

Overall Custody Demand

- The total number of detainees held within Bishopsgate Custody in 2025 was 2363. This is a 7% reduction from 2024 calendar year total (2542), however month on month this is relatively consistent, averaging 198 detainees (211 in 2024). (**See Fig 2**). The reduction in overall custody demand is consistent in the overall YTD reduction in recorded crime for the City of London (6.9% as of 06/01/2026), and an 23% annual increase in the number of voluntary attendance cases. This indicates that officers are utilising alternatives to arrest where possible which is and consistent with PACE and national direction.
- Bail demand continues to remain high with a low use of Released Under Investigation (70% bail to 30% RUI) consistent with the pattern seen since statutory bail changes in 2022 removed the presumption against bail. (**See Fig 1**). With the Leveson Criminal Courts Review 2025 recommending either the removal of RUI or placing it on a statutory footing, this will place increased demand in terms of increase bail and RUI management.

Fig. 1



- CoLP do not have a dedicated bail manager post and as such this has historically led to inconsistencies in driving effective bail and offender management across

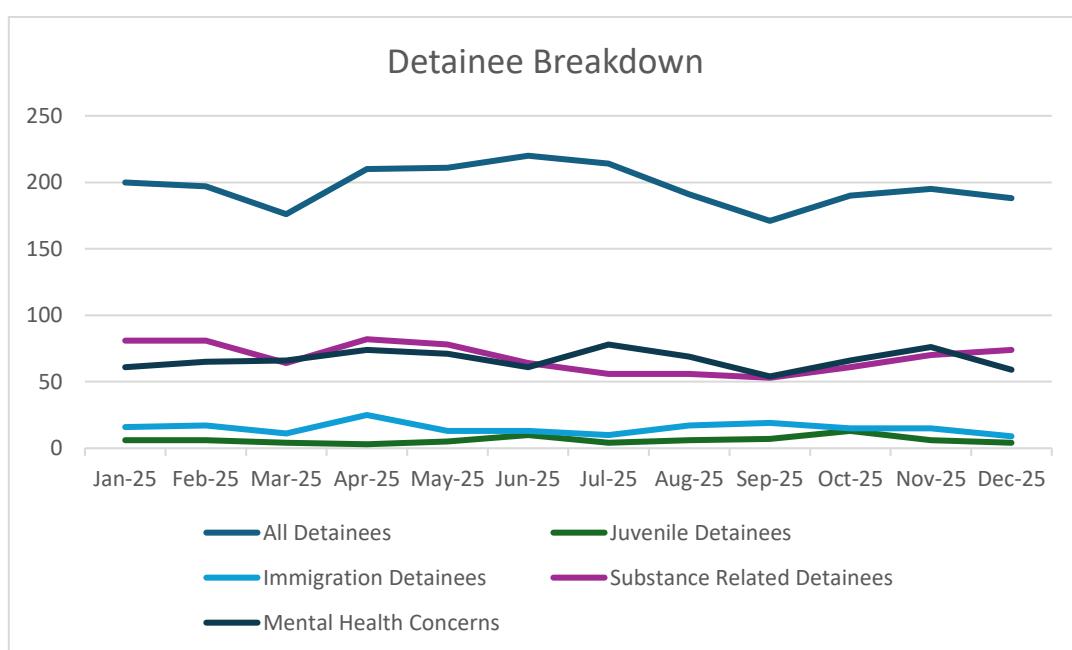
the force and has increased the administrative and procedural burden on the custody staff.

12. To resolve this, a 6-month pilot has been agreed for Spring 2026 to re-introduce the Bail Manager role through re-purposing of a custody sergeant post to dedicate to bail management. The ambition of the dedicated post is to manage the forecasted increase in bail management following the Leveson recommendations and likely increase in offenders in the community due to the national sentencing reviews and prison reform. It will allow focussed support and training for investigators to manage offenders on bail effectively and compliance with legislative timescales, reduce the number of offenders on RUI, or reverting to RUI and relieve the administrative burden on the Custody Officers.

Breakdown of Demand

13. The level of complexities and vulnerabilities of detainees remains broadly consistent, with these detainees placing additional requirements on custody staff. Fig. 2 demonstrates the breakdown of categories of detainees with specific additional needs and vulnerabilities:

Fig. 2.



14. The overall number of juvenile detainees continues to remain consistent and on an average month less than ten juveniles pass through custody. The average age of juvenile detainees in 2026 was 15 years. The youngest detainee was twelve years old.

15. Consistent with 2024 data, over 30% of detainees present with mental health concerns each month and 35% with substance related issues (**Fig 3**) with on average over 50% of detainees being referred to the Healthcare Professional

(HCP) and/or Liaison and Diversion services. (Fig 4 – L&D data not yet available for Dec)

Fig. 3.

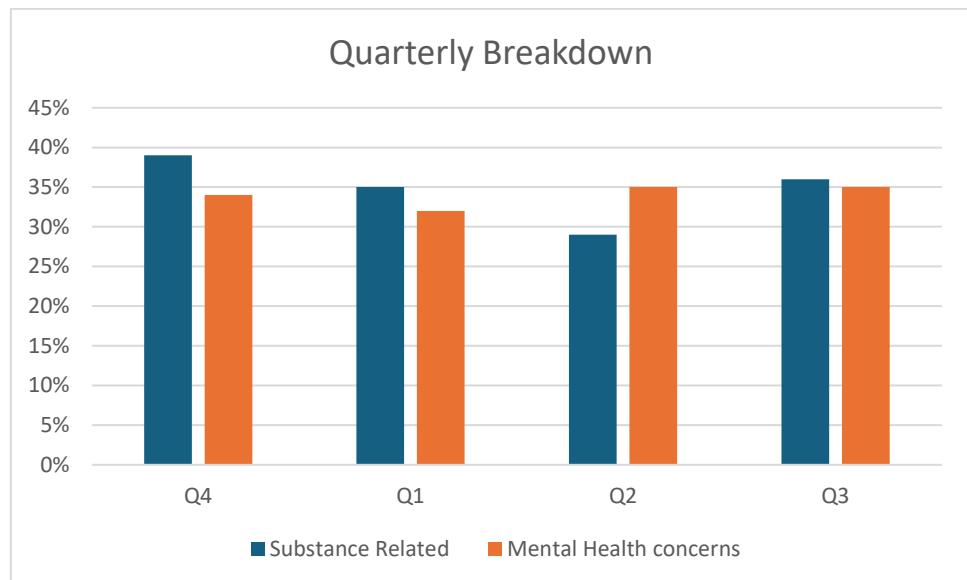
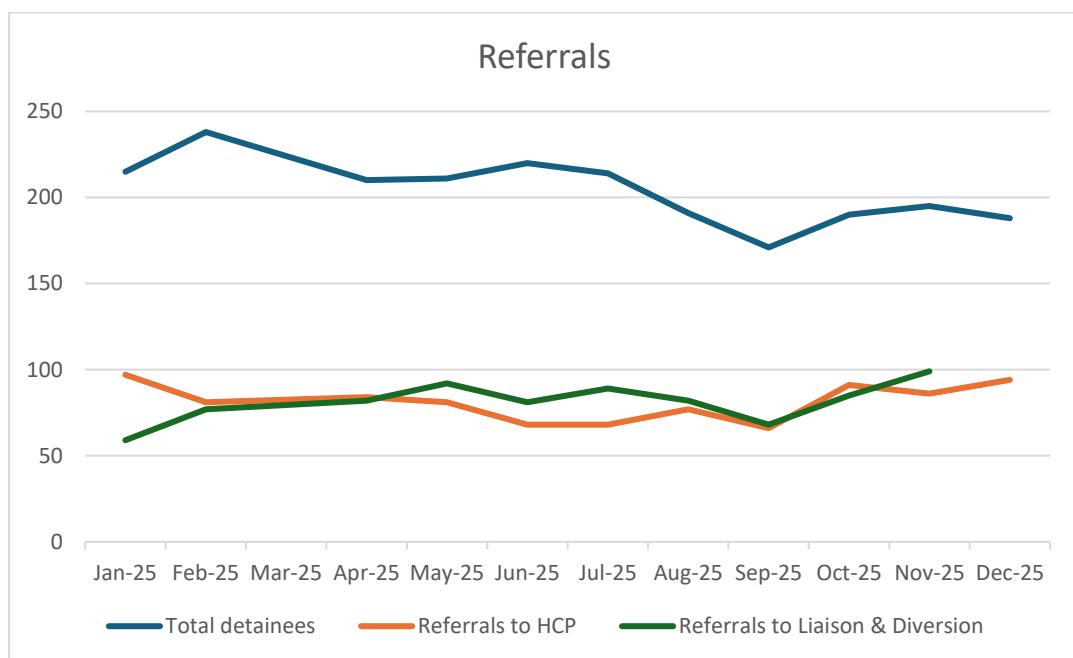


Fig 4.



16. PHL Group are contracted to provide an embedded healthcare service within custody. Detainees have access to this service 24/7 and custody officers are responsible for ensuring they are referred to the HCP (Healthcare Professional) when they present with medical concerns or mental health issues. The PHL contract, which is now in its fourth year, has been extremely successful, with PHL consistently meeting 100% of their Key Performance Indicators.

17. In addition, the East London NHS Trust are commissioned by NHS London to provide the local Liaison and Diversion services for those presenting in custody with mental health concerns. This is not a 24/7 service however email referrals can be made out of hours. The Liaison and Diversion services will assess and refer individuals to appropriate additional support where required. NHS London have recently reviewed provision per custody suite based on demand, which will see coverage for Bishopsgate Custody slightly reduced, but continued to be supported by email referrals.

Vulnerability

18. The custody environment can be an extremely overwhelming place for detainees, and this, coupled with the often chaotic or complex lifestyles of those that are arrested, places some detainees in a vulnerable position.

19. CoLP continues to build on the ongoing work to support vulnerable detainees with embedded Samaritan provision and bespoke referral pathways to support agencies.

20. COLP are further strengthening the response and support for children in custody, developing specific 'child centric' processes which will include bespoke additional reviews for juveniles in custody to reduce the time spent in custody and ensure children and young people are afforded appropriate support and diversion on leaving. This is in line with national work to reduce detention times for children.

21. Although Home Office Funding for Drug Testing on Arrest ceased in 2024, CoLP have been working closely to review the memorandum of understanding with Turning Point to ensure appropriate support is available individuals in custody who have substance misuse problems or test positive on arrest. This increased support should be agreed and embedded by the end of this financial year. To complement this, bespoke pathways are in place with a number of drug and alcohol charities for those seeking support once they leave custody.

Equality Data and Disproportionality

22. The only outstanding recommendation following the 2018 HMICFRS inspection relates to effective scrutiny of equality data, to ensure the force has effective governance processes in place to review outcomes for those coming through custody and monitor disproportionality.

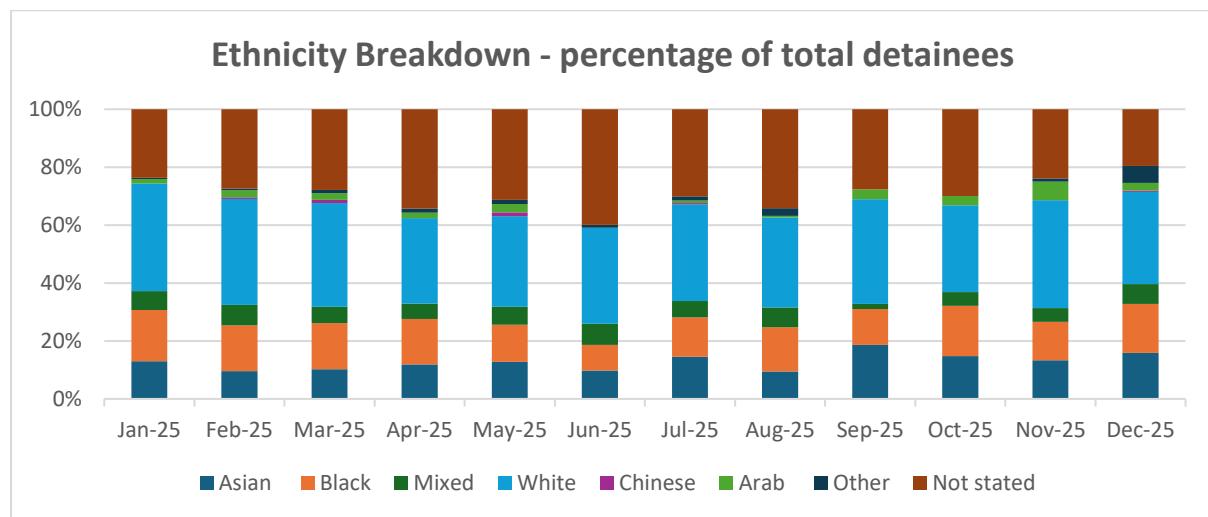
23. A custody performance dashboard is in place which includes data over a range of metrics extracted from the Niche system. This includes some EDI data and data relating to use of force, strip searching and juveniles in custody. The majority of this data is currently manually extracted and analysed to allow scrutiny at the monthly Custody Management Meeting. Additionally, this reports into a quarterly Custody Management Group, chaired by the Superintendent in Criminal Justice Services and attended by partners including the Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) Chair and Police Authority Compliance Lead.

24. There is still work to be done to ensure accurate recording of equality data on custody records (as part of force wide improvements in recording equality data on Niche) and to improve and automate the range of metrics that can be scrutinised in respect of equality and disproportionality. A working group has been established to resolve this, and it will form part of the Power Bi dashboard due in 2026. This work is being overseen through the Operational Improvement Board.

25. As shown in **Fig. 5**, the largest percentage of detainees define themselves as white, followed by black then Asian. This is broadly consistent month on month. Where there have been variations from these trends, deep dives have been undertaken –To date no specific links/concerns have been identified.

26. On average around 10% of detainees are recorded as ‘not stated’ on the custody record. Further work is underway to understand why this proportion is so high and to ensure ethnicity is recorded effectively.

Fig. 5

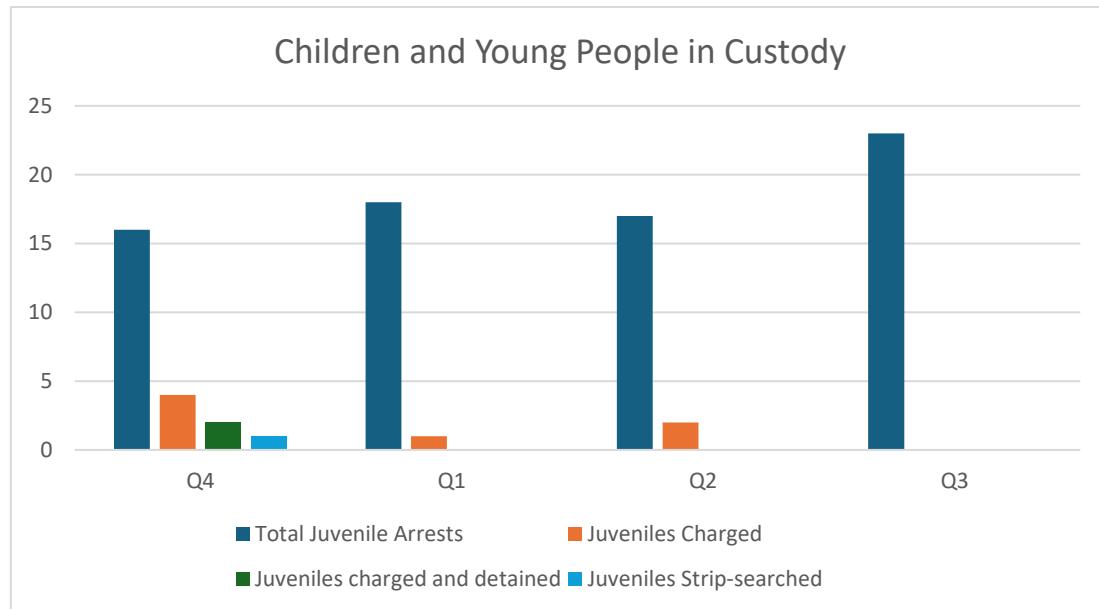


27. The ethnicity of children and young persons detained in custody is also monitored on a monthly basis. However the number of children detained is so low, there are no identifiable peaks/trends, and it is consistent with overall detainee demographics.

28. **Fig. 6** shows the quarterly breakdown of children and young people in custody who are charged and remanded and the number strip searched. This is consistently low. Children and young people (CYP) made up 3% of detainees in 2025. 25% fewer CYP were detained in 2025 in comparison to 2024 (74 compared to 99). Only two CYP were charged and detained over the past twelve months which is consistent with 2024 and extremely low. The reduction in CYP detained is a reflection of ongoing work to encourage officers to consider alternatives to custody for young people and reduce CYP arrest. It mirrors the

overall reduction in the number of detainees in custody and reduction in crime rates.

Fig. 6.



29. Every CYP detention record is scrutinised as part of the monthly custody quality assurance process to ensure policy has been adhered to and appropriate safeguards have been put in place for the young person, such as the presence of an appropriate adult, and ensuring sufficient grounds are recorded in line with PACE for any authorised strip search. The result of this QA is fed into the Custody Management Group via the Custody Manager's report. Any specific feedback for officers or staff is dealt with directly with the individual or shared as wider learning through continuous professional development days or the custody newsletter.

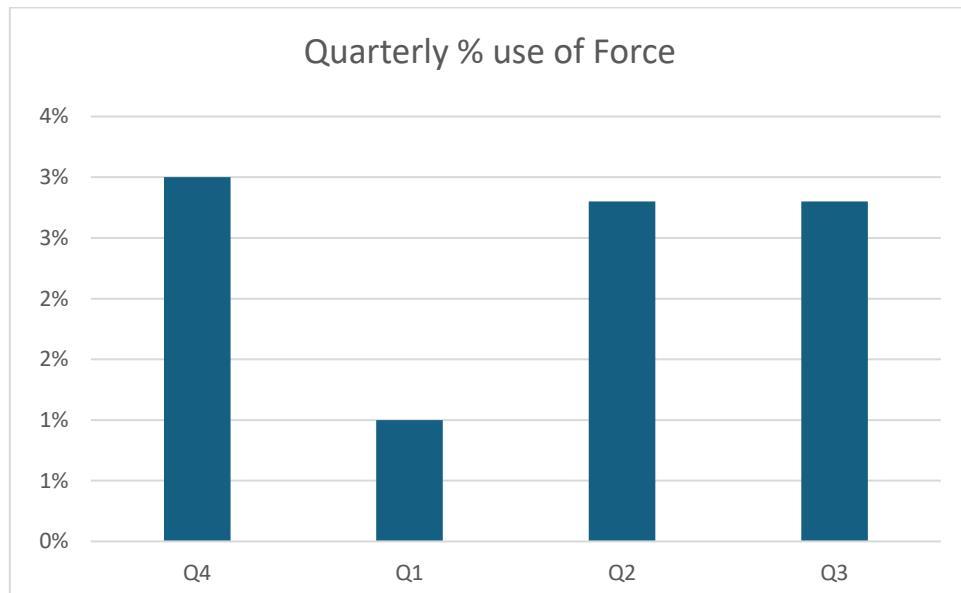
Use of Force and Strip Searching

30. As part of the monthly QA of custody records, the use of force and use of strip searching is monitored. This includes reviewing the detention log entry and rationale for use of force, alongside any available CCTV and completion of the required use of force form and reviewing rationale for strip searches.

31. The results of these findings are reported locally into the Custody Management Group. Overall Force Governance of Use of Force is through the stop and search and Use of Force Steering Group and Tactical group, chaired by the Superintendent of Taskforce. Custody data on both Use of Force and strip search is reviewed and considered in terms of disproportionality and learning at these meetings. Fig. 8. Illustrates the percentage of custody records where a use of force on the detainee has been recorded. This is consistently below 3%. It is difficult to compare to 2024 figures due to manual cleansing that has taken place

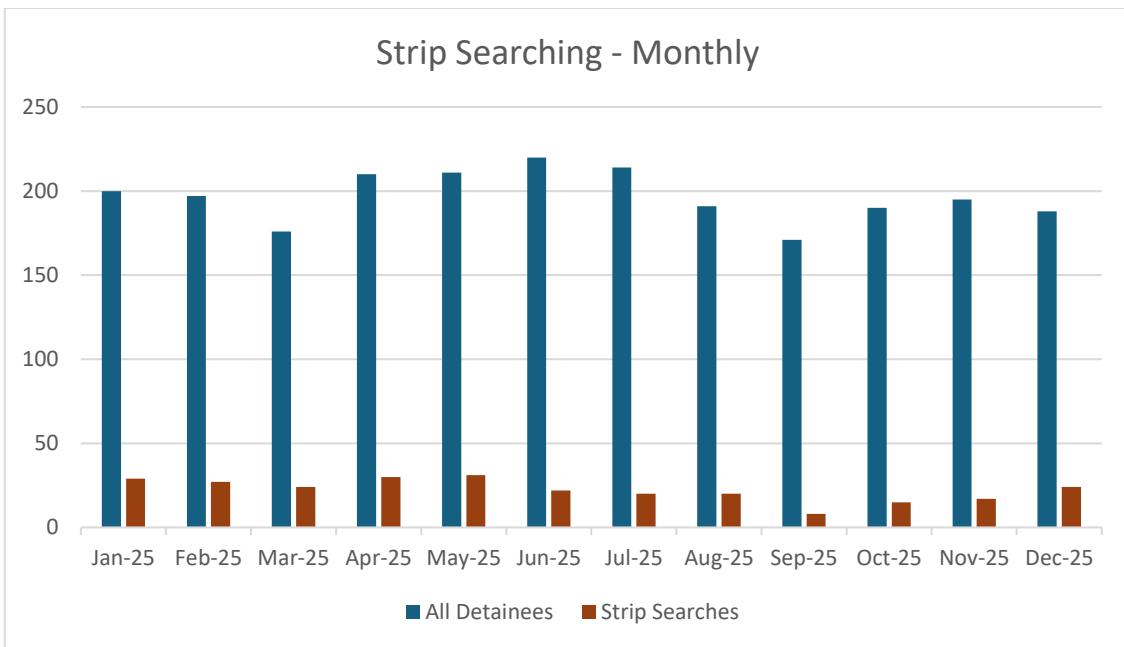
on date due to recording anomalies on Niche, however a significant improvements have been made to compliance of recording through activity driven by the Stop and Search Tactical group.

Fig. 8.



32. The use of strip searching in the CoLP Custody remains consistently low, and under 30 per month. QA has not raised any concerns in terms of application of legislation, dignity or recording. Fig 9 shows monthly numbers of strip searches in comparison to total detainees in custody.

Fig 9.



External Scrutiny

33. In addition to the strong internal governance over custody matters, COLP have developed external scrutiny processes following guidance, for PCCs and police forces to develop and introduce independent Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels (CDSPs).

34. The implementation of CDSPs was presented to the PAB as part of an ICV update report in June 2024 where it was agreed that due to the City of London's unique demographic, we would use our established Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group (IASG) to scrutinise custody data on a quarterly basis.

35. Custody have now been presenting quarterly at the IASG panel. This includes providing data relating to use of force, strip searching and juveniles. This is still an area to develop and mature further, with an ambition for 2026 to include CCTV footage of use of force scenarios for scrutiny, and redacted custody records. Custody will work closely with the IASG and Professionalism and Trust colleagues to ensure we provide the IASG with the information and knowledge they need to effectively challenge and support learning and improvement in custody.

36. In February 2026, custody are presenting to the Youth IASG and will be seeking views and feedback on the custody environment and how this can be improved for young people.

37. In addition to the IASG, custody continue their excellent relationship with the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme, providing another layer of scrutiny and challenge, reporting into this board separately.

Culture and Training

38. Throughout 2025 the programme of training for custody sergeants and DDOs has continued, with mandatory annual refresher training and regular CPD (continual professional development) sessions covering a range of topics, including legislation and policy, dignity and respect, vulnerability and support.

39. In addition, custody staff have specific PDR objectives relating to equity and diversity and are required to complete 2 inclusivity modules per year. This has been closely monitored by supervisors to ensure compliance. In addition, as part of the regular CPD programme, custody staff have received bespoke inputs covering a range of topics to broaden understanding of community needs and perspectives. This has included alcoholics anonymous, homeless charities and VAWG specialists. CPD is designed to ensure it includes relevant learning from national reports (such as Baird and Angiolini) and other updates from the NPCC and College of Policing.

40. Most recently, following the Supreme Court ruling relating to gender, the Custody Management team have worked closely with the Professionalism and Trust Working Group to ensure that relevant policies and procedures are updated in line with NPCC interim guidance whilst balancing our own staff needs and views. This national guidance was produced through extensive consultation and legal advice, to balance the sensitivities and viewpoints of all those involved, whether staff, officers or detainees whilst adhering to legislation and PACE. Custody staff have received interim training, and a detailed training video is currently being produced for 2026.

41. Following the BBC Panorama Documentary, the Custody SLT met each custody team in person, to discuss the impact of the documentary, listen to concerns and reinforce standards of behaviour and conduct. No significant issues have been raised either within the cadre or organisationally in respect of the culture in custody.

42. Custody Management routinely view and monitor CCTV of activities in custody, allowing oversight of how detainees are managed, compliance with legislation, use of force and more nuanced behaviours around attitude and culture. Feedback both positive and negative on any of these areas is provided to specific officers or the entire team where relevant, via one-to-one meetings, team meetings and the regular monthly Custody Newsletter.

43. The complaints process for detainees and others visiting custody are clearly displayed and explained to detainees where required to ensure transparency.

44. Professional Standards have provided a summary of complaints made relating to custody in 2025. Only 4 public complaints (one per quarter) were received relating to custody issues. None related to use of force and were general procedural issues in relation to detention. There were no identified themes and 1 being held that the service provided had been acceptable. There were no conduct investigations relating to custody staff in 2025.

45. In addition, the custody team have received a range of positive feedback from both detainees, ICVs, and other professionals commenting on the professionalism and standards displayed by those in the team. Staff can also nominate members of the team for a quarterly award recognising commitment and dedication to custody activities and the policing plan ambitions. 2 members of custody staff were shortlisted for the recent force awards.

46. Recognising that wellbeing and health play an important role in maintaining a positive and professional culture, this features on every team agenda and custody have a wellbeing SPOC which feeds into the wider SO and organisational wellbeing governance – to ensure that the specific needs of the custody team are considered.

Corporate & Strategic Implications – [Please state ‘none’ if not applicable instead of deleting any of the sub-headings below]

None

[Sub-headings]

Strategic implications – Explain and provide assurance about how this proposal aligns with and will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 (and note any CP performance metrics and associated data), any relevant corporate strategies and any relevant regional / national policies / international agreements.

Financial implications

Resource implications

Legal implications

Risk implications

Equalities implications – Explain how you have ensured the proposal complies with our public Sector Equality Duty 2010 - will the proposals within this report have any impact (positive or negative) on people protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity? If so, this section should address how this will be factored into decision making, including reference to the Equality Impact Assessment if appropriate

Climate implications

Security implications

Conclusion

47. Police custody is a high-risk environment where custody staff are managing a wide range of vulnerabilities on a daily basis and demand has remained consistent across the past 12 months. It is encouraging to see the detention of young people reducing and low use of strip searching and use of force in custody. The dedicated custody cadre, and strong governance processes ensure that custody services are delivered in a professional, sensitive and

compassionate manner in line with the City of London Policing Priorities. External scrutiny of custody activities and EDI data continues to develop and the use of the IASG as an external scrutiny mechanism, will only strengthen our processes. Strong training and engagement with the custody staff will ensure we remain up to date with national policy, legislation and learning, and will maintain the culture of professionalism, openness and transparency.

Appendices

None

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