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Police powers: Strip searching

Summary

As part of a standard stop and search, police officers can require those being searched to remove an outer coat, jacket, or gloves. Officers also have legal powers to require individuals to remove more clothing. This is commonly referred to as “strip searching”.

Strip searches are recognised as a highly intrusive interaction with the police that can be embarrassing and demeaning for those searched. There is heightened scrutiny on how police are using these powers because of recent high profile cases. Public debate has focuses on the negative, long-lasting and potentially traumatic affect searches could have if not conducted in line with the guidance.

This briefing provides an overview of the principles and procedures the officers must follow when conducting a strip search; the available evidence on the use of strip searches; and debate about the impact of these searches.

What is strip searching?

Strip searching does not necessarily denote nudity or exposure of intimate body parts, though it can involve this. Strip searches can range from the removal of a T-shirt to the removal of all clothing.

The police can conduct these searches under their stop and search powers. However, unlike with a standard search, officers must take the individual to another location from where they have been stopped to conduct the search out of public view. For less exposing strip searches, this may happen in a police vehicle. The police can also strip search individuals who have been detained in custody following their arrest.

Data on strip searches

There is no centrally held data on strip searches so there is limited evidence on how many the police conduct, the characteristics of those searched and reasons for searching them, and the outcome of strip searches (such as whether anything was found).

The [Government confirmed](#) in 2022 that police forces have been asked to provide data on strip searches to the Home Office on a voluntary basis. The first round of this data is expected to be published at the end of 2022.

1 Police powers to conduct strip searches

If the police have reasonable grounds for suspecting someone has a dangerous or prohibited item¹ on them, and it was not found during a standard search,² officers can require individuals to remove clothing to search them. These are commonly referred to as “strip searches” and there are two distinct types:

- **More Thorough Searches (MTS searches):** where an officer requires the individual as part of a stop and search to remove more than an outer coat, jacket, or gloves (for example a T-shirt).³
- **Searches Involving Exposure of Intimate Parts of the Body (EIP searches):** where an individual is required to remove all or most of their clothing.⁴

The police also have powers that allow them to conduct ‘intimate searches’, where an officer conducts a physical examination of a person’s body orifices (other than the mouth).⁵ An intimate search may only be carried out on a person after they have been arrested. This type of search is not permitted

¹ Such as an offensive weapon or “controlled” drug (ie drugs that are illegal to produce, supply and possess under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971).

² Either as part of a stop and search encounter or on arrest and detention. Note a person does not have to be arrested for police to conduct a strip search. During a standard stop and search police officers can require people to remove their outer coat or jacket, gloves, headwear, or shoes in public. For more, read the Library’s briefing: [Police powers: stop and search](#).

³ Home Office, [PACE Code A](#), para 3.5 and 3.6

⁴ Home Office, [PACE Code A](#), para 3.7

⁵ [PACE Code C](#) (PDF), Annex A, para 1

under any circumstance under stop and search powers.⁶ Intimate searches are **not** discussed in this briefing.

1.1

General principles for conducting strip searches

Statutory guidance on the procedures and principles police must follow to conduct strip searches legally are in [paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of PACE Code A](#) and [paragraph 11 of PACE Code C, Annex A](#).

The College of Policing (the body responsible for professional standards in policing) also maintains Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on [stop and search](#), which provides further guidance to police officers on conducting strip searches lawfully and effectively.⁷

Officers should consider the sensitivity and vulnerability of the individual being strip searched and make every reasonable effort to secure their co-operation, minimise their embarrassment, and maintain their dignity.⁸ Further rules and guidance include:

Reasonable, necessary, and proportionate

There **must be reasonable grounds** to justify an MTS or EIP search. How thorough a search and the extent of clothing removed must not be excessive. In assessing what is proportionate officers must bear in mind the grounds for suspecting an individual and the item being searched for. For example, officers should consider how strong the reasonable grounds are; the approximate size of the object they are searching for; and how likely it is someone could conceal it.⁹

Strip searches **must not be treated as routine** extension of a less thorough search simply because nothing was found during an initial, standard search.¹⁰

Offices should take **no longer than is reasonable** to conduct the search. If a person must be moved to another location for a search, this must be within a reasonable travelling distance of the place where they were stopped. What is

⁶ College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016

⁷ APP is official police guidance. Police officers are expected to have regard to APP when on duty. However, there may be circumstances in which it would be legitimate for them to deviate from it. See: House of Commons Library, [Introduction to police powers](#), section 1.3

⁸ Home Office, [PACE Code C, Annex A](#) (PDF), para 11

⁹ As above

¹⁰ Home Office, [PACE Code A](#), para 3.7

reasonable can depend on the mode of transport used for travelling to the alternative location.¹¹

1 Searches without reasonable grounds

When certain pre-conditions are met, senior police officers have legislative powers to authorise uniformed officers to search people within a specific locality and time for offensive weapons without having reasonable grounds for suspecting the specific individual. This power is known as ‘no suspicion search’ or ‘section 60 search’.¹²

There is no specific restriction on the nature of section 60 searches, so officers can conduct an MTS or EIP search under this power. However, the extent of the search must still be ‘reasonable’ taking into account the item being searched for. For example, if the search is for a large weapon that cannot be as easily concealed under clothing, an officer should not need to search an individual as extensively as they might for a small item that could be hidden anywhere.¹³

Privacy and dignity

Any search involving the removal of more clothing than an outer coat, jacket, gloves, headwear, or shoes **must not be conducted in view of the public** or where anyone who does not need to be present can see.¹⁴

MTS searches not requiring someone to expose intimate body parts (eg requiring a person to take off a T-shirt) can take place for example in a police van, as long as it’s out of public view.¹⁵ However, EIP searches must be carried out at a nearby police station or other nearby location out of public view. EIP searches cannot take place in a police vehicle.¹⁶ An empty street, regardless of whether anyone else at the time is in view, is still a public place and therefore not permitted for any type of strip search.¹⁷

Searches must be conducted by an officer of the **same sex** as the person being searched and must not be made in the presence of anyone of the opposite sex unless the person being searched specifically requests it.¹⁸

¹¹ College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016.

¹² See section 1.2 of the Library’s briefing: [Police powers: stop and search](#).

¹³ College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016

¹⁴ Home Office, [PACE Code C](#), Annex A, para 11(b)

¹⁵ Home Office, [PACE Code A](#), para 3.6

¹⁶ Home Office, [PACE Code A](#), para 3.7

¹⁷ College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016.

¹⁸ Home Office, [PACE Code A](#), para 3.6. Annex L of [PACE Code C](#), Establishing Gender of Persons for the Purposes of Searching, sets out further guidance for police officers, pp88-90.

Officers should also complete the search **as quickly as possible**¹⁹ and those who are being searched should not 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 removing further clothing.

Oversight and governance

There must be a least **two people present** for a strip search in addition to the person being searched.

[APP guidance issued by the College of Policing](#) states that officers should **consult with a supervisor** before conducting EIP searches. The officer should discuss the reasons why such a search is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances. This is intended to support good decision-making and provide suitable challenge to ensure appropriate use of police powers. However, consulting with a supervisor is not a legal requirement. A search may therefore still proceed without consultation, for example if an officer cannot get hold of a supervisor and still decides the search is necessary. If this is the case, the officer should record the steps they took to contact a supervisor.

If officers are wearing **body-worn cameras**, they should continue to keep them turned on but should cover the camera or direct it away from the person whenever intimate body parts are exposed so that audio recording remains activated during the encounter.²⁰

Strip searches conducted on children

Any strip search of an individual under the age of 18 that involves the exposure of intimate body parts must take place in the presence of an [appropriate adult](#). The only exception to this is cases of urgency, where there is risk of serious harm to the child or to others, or where the child has said they do not want the adult to be present during the search and the adult agrees. If this is the case, a record must be made of child's decision and signed by the appropriate adult.²¹

Police officers cannot act as an appropriate adult. If no appropriate adult is available at the scene, officers should consider taking the child to another location where one will be available, such as their home. While conducting the search, officers should always be mindful of the particular practical and communication needs of children.²²

The Children's Commissioner for England obtained data from the Metropolitan Police Service on EIP searches conducted by the force on

¹⁹ College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016

²⁰ As above

²¹ Home Office, [PACE Code C](#), Annex A, para 5

²² College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016

children (aged 17 or under) between 2018 and 2020. In 23% of cases across that period, there was no appropriate adult confirmed as being present.²³

2 Data on the use of strip searches

There are currently no centrally held official statistics on strip searches conducted by the police.²⁴ This makes it difficult to build an accurate picture of its use including how frequently it is done, details of those strip searched, and outcomes of the searches (for example whether anything was found or, if conducted under stop and search powers, whether it resulted in a linked arrest).

In response to a written question in April 2022, the Government said it had recently introduced strip searches to its Annual Data Requirement for forces. This means police forces will begin to provide data on strip searches to the Home Office on a voluntary basis. The first round of data on this is due for publication towards the end of 2022 for the year 2021/22.²⁵

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has been critical of how forces maintain and monitor their own records on strip searches and their understanding of the effect they can have.

In 2015, when the Inspectorate (then HMIC) asked forces about searches which involved the removal of more than outer clothing (including strip searches), only four were able to provide any information. HMIC concluded it was clear “these searches are happening without proportionate and necessary levels of supervision and scrutiny” and encouraged forces to increase their “transparency and accountability relating to these highly intrusive searches.”²⁶

In May 2022, the Justice Gap magazine reported that 31 out of 43 police forces responded to FOI requests by [Radio 4's File on 4](#) on their use of strip search.²⁷ The responses collectively showed that over 13,000 children under the age of 18 have been strip searched since 2017. More than half of these searches were reportedly conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service and a disproportionate number were conducted on Black and Mixed-race children.²⁸

²³ The Children's Commissioner, [Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service - new analysis by the Children's Commissioner for England](#) (PDF), 8 August 2022, p6

²⁴ Whilst forces individually collect data on strip searches this is not collected and monitored by central Government and doesn't form part of the Home Office's official statistics.

²⁵ PQ 159048, [on [Body Searches: Children](#)], 25 April 2022

²⁶ HMICFRS, [Police forces failing to understand the impact of stop and search](#), 24 March 2015

²⁷ BBC File on 4, [Searching Questions](#), 29 May 2022

²⁸ The Justice Gap, [Around 50 children strip searched by the police every week – and most are black](#), 25 May 2022.

In August 2022, the Children’s Commissioner released data obtained from the Metropolitan Police Service on EIP searches conducted by the force on children aged 17 and under using their stop and search powers. The data showed that between 2018 and 2020, EIP searches were conducted on 650 children. 25% of those children were between 10 and 15 years old.²⁹

The data also showed that more than half of all boys who experienced an EIP search were Black in each of the years across this period. Young Black boys aged 16 or 17 made up 42% of EIP searches on children under 17 across this period. In 2018, this disproportionality was greatest, with 75% of EIP searches conducted on boys by the force having been conducted on Black boys.³⁰

Which powers are used to strip search and who is affected?

Strip searches conducted under detention and custody powers

A 2018 inspection of Metropolitan Police Service custody suites found “the numbers of strip searches were high and included many children and a significantly higher proportion of black and minority ethnic detainees”.³¹ Data later released by the Metropolitan Police in response to an FOI request showed that across 2019 to 2021, the force conducted 92,426 strip searches on detainees arrested and held in custody. This included 5,279 conducted on youths under the age of 18. Of these, 75% were from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.³²

Strip searches conducted under stop and search powers

Figures released in March 2022, in response to London Mayor Question Time, showed that under stop and search powers, across the same three-year period (2019-2021), the force carried out 23,524 More Thorough Searches.³³ 6,931 were conducted in 2021 and 4,286 of those (62%) involved exposure of intimate body parts. Further breakdown of the data shows that in 2021:

²⁹ The Children’s Commissioner, [Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service - new analysis by the Children’s Commissioner for England](#) (PDF), 8 August 2022, p6. Note: this data only applies to searches that involved the exposure of intimate body parts, not More Thorough Searches. It also only applies to searches conducted under stop and search powers and does not include EIP searches of children arrested and detained in custody.

³⁰ As above

³¹ HMICFRS, [Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in Metropolitan Police Service: 9–20 July 2018](#) (PDF), January 2019, p10

³² Metropolitan Police Service, [FOI release: Age, gender and ethnicity of detainees who were strip searched from 2019 to 2021](#), 27 March 2022

³³ MQT 2022/0501 [on [Strip search data](#)], 24 February 2022

- **Ethnicity:** 2,395 (34%) of all More Thorough Searches were carried out on Black people compared to 1,433 on White people. Ethnicity was not recorded in 1,682 of cases.
- **Gender:** The majority (95%) were carried out on males. Over 4,000 of which involved exposure of intimate body parts. The force conducted 272 More Thorough Searches on females. 182 involved exposure of intimate body parts.
- **Age:** Where age was recorded, the highest group to experience More Through Searches were aged 21-30. However, age was not recorded in 52% of these searches (3,577 searches) and in 57% of searches that involved exposure of intimate body parts.

3

The impact of strip searches

Recent high-profile cases have generated debate over the effect of strip searches on those who experience it. Together these cases have put the police under heightened scrutiny for their use of this power particularly on children, Black people, and women.

Recent controversies involving strip searching

In December 2020, a 15-year-old Black girl ('child Q') was strip searched by the police over suspicion that she had drugs in her possession.³⁴ The search took place at Child Q's school while she was menstruating and without an appropriate adult present. No drugs were found. In March 2022, the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership published the outcome of a safeguarding review into the incident. The review concluded "there was no reasonable justification" for the strip search to have occurred³⁵. It has been widely acknowledged that the strip search of Child Q should not have happened and the police have issued an apology.³⁶

2 The location of strip searches on children

In 2021, location was recorded in 269 EIP searches conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service using their stop and search powers on children aged 17 and under. Data released by the Children's Commissioner showed that of these 269 searches:

³⁴ House of Commons Library, [Child Q and the law on strip search](#), 14 April 2022

³⁵ City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) (PDF), March 2022

³⁶ Metropolitan Police Service, [Apology offered to Child Q in Hackney](#), 18 March 2022

- 57% happened at a police station;
- 21% at a home address; and
- 22% happened “at another location”.

Recording practices meant that the force was not able to determine where exactly the EIP searches that took place “at another location” were conducted. The Children’s Commissioner said this lack of information was “concerning” and “demonstrates a lack of appropriate oversight of police practice in the strip searching of children.”³⁷

Shortly after publication of Child Q’s Safeguarding Review, in May 2022 there was widespread media coverage of another case involving the Metropolitan police. A 15-year-old Mixed-race girl, known as ‘Olivia’, was arrested in December 2020 and while in police custody she was strip searched over suspicion she was concealing weapons. Olivia’s mother said she told officers Olivia had autism, learning difficulties and a history of self-harming.³⁸ Reportedly six officers were involved in handcuffing Olivia (who was also menstruating at the time), cutting away her underwear and strip searching her. The police have also been accused of conducting the strip search in the presence of male officers.³⁹

These cases followed an apology issued by the Metropolitan Police Service in 2021 to Dr Koshka Duff for the “sexist, derogatory and unacceptable language used” when she was strip searched by officers.⁴⁰ Dr Duff was arrested and detained in 2013 for obstruction after intervening in the stop and search of another individual and offering them a legal advice card.

When Dr Duff was taken to a custody suite and refused to give details about herself, female officers were authorised to conduct a strip search because they could not ascertain who she was or if she was potentially carrying anything dangerous or prohibited. Dr Duff’s clothes were cut away leaving her completely naked and officers were accused of searching her roughly and restraining her in way that Dr Duff said left her with injuries. CCTV footage showed officers later joking with each other about Dr Duff and the strip search.⁴¹

³⁷ The Children’s Commissioner, [Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service - new analysis by the Children’s Commissioner for England](#) (PDF), 8 August 2022, p6

³⁸ BBC File on 4, [Searching Questions](#), 29 May 2022

³⁹ BBC News, [Teenage girl traumatised after police strip-search, says mum](#), 24 May 2022

⁴⁰ The Guardian, [Met apologises to woman for ‘sexist, derogatory’ language in strip-search](#), 24 January 2022

⁴¹ BBC News, [Koshka Duff: Met apology to woman over language in strip search](#), 24 January 2022

Trauma

These cases have highlighted the potentially harmful and traumatic impact of intrusive searches, particularly on children, women, and vulnerable people, if standards are not met.

Child Q and her family spoke to the City and Hackney Safeguarding Review about the traumatic effect the incident had on her. Child Q said she no longer felt safe, and her mother described her as a “changed person”. She stated that Child Q was not eating or communicating as she used to and suffered panic attacks at school.⁴²

Olivia’s mother described Olivia as “distraught” and said the experience had a devastating impact on her mental health leading to her becoming “quite reclusive” and attempting suicide.⁴³

Dr Duff also talked about the incident where she was strip searched as “degrading and painful” and a “very violating and humiliating experience”.⁴⁴ She said it left her with multiple injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, and that she suffered from panic attacks for months following the experience.⁴⁵

Strip searching children: Discipline vs safeguarding

In Child Q’s case, the safeguarding review found the police and school staff lacked a “safeguarding first approach”, leading to intervention that was “disproportionate and ultimately harmful” to Child Q.⁴⁶ The review said that even if there had been concern Child Q was in possession of drugs, rather than taking such a disciplinary response, her safety and welfare should have been the priority. Practitioners should have considered what potential risks there were to her: for example, if she was being exploited and what help and protection she might have needed.⁴⁷

Similarly in Olivia’s case, the police were accused of not accounting for her welfare, vulnerability and the safeguarding needs that were raised by her mother regarding autism and a history of self-harm.⁴⁸ Olivia’s mother said the bladed/sharpened items she had on her were for that purpose, but charges were still brought against her for possession of bladed weapons. She was

⁴² City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) (PDF), March 2022, pp11-12

⁴³ BBC News, [Teenage girl traumatised after police strip-search, says mum](#), 24 May 2022

⁴⁴ BBC News, [Koshka Duff: Met apology to woman over language in strip search](#), 24 January 2022

⁴⁵ As above

⁴⁶ City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) (PDF), March 2022, p15

⁴⁷ As above

⁴⁸ For example: Asbali, N., [The cases of Child Q and 'Olivia' proves that policing needs to change](#), 26 May 2022

later found not guilty after magistrates accepted the items were used for self-harming.⁴⁹

Current guidance states that all searches of children under 10, regardless of the extent of the search, should be referred to a safeguarding team as a priority.⁵⁰ Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Laurence Taylor, said he acknowledged strip searches can cause young people “distress” and that the force was working hard to take a “safeguarding first” approach to:

consider whether the child being searched could be a vulnerable victim of exploitation by others involved in gangs, County Lines and drug dealing or if they might be concealing weapons as they are at risk of self-harm.⁵¹

The safeguarding review into Child Q’s case recommended stronger guidance for officers that emphasises the need for appropriate adults in strip searches of children and the importance of children’s safeguarding needs.⁵² In August 2022, the Children’s Commissioner supporting this recommendation, calling on the Home Office to amend PACE Codes A and C to:

to make it clear that strip searches of children should only be used when absolutely necessary ... [and] place a greater emphasis on a police officer’s duty to safeguard children during strip searches.⁵³

The Children’s Commissioner also recommended increased training for police officers on child safeguarding. They said the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the coordinating body for UK police forces, should scrutinise this training and work with the Children’s Commissioner on “a broader framework for child protection in policing practice.”⁵⁴

In response to Child Q’s case, the Metropolitan Police will pilot a new policy in two London boroughs where any strip-search of a child will need to be approved by an inspector.⁵⁵

Ethnic disparities and racism

Child Q’s case, and later Olivia’s, prompted debate about whether Black people in particular, and people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds, are disproportionately subjected to strip searches.

⁴⁹ BBC News, [Teenage girl traumatised after police strip-search, says mum](#), 24 May 2022

⁵⁰ College of Policing, APP on stop and search: [Legal application](#), 29 September 2016

⁵¹ BBC News, [Teenage girl traumatised after police strip-search, says mum](#), 24 May 2022

⁵² City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) (PDF), March 2022, p21

⁵³ The Children’s Commissioner, [Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service - new analysis by the Children’s Commissioner for England](#) (PDF), 8 August 2022, p7

⁵⁴ As above

⁵⁵ BBC News, [Child Q: Met Police changes strip-search policy in two London boroughs](#), 1 April 2022

The safeguarding report into Child Q's case concluded that racism and "adultification bias" was likely an "influencing factor" in the decision-making of officers that day and why the treatment of Child Q escalated to a strip search.⁵⁶ "Adultification bias" refers to a type of stereotyping where Black children are seen as less innocent and vulnerable than other children because they are perceived as more "adult-like". As a result, they are more likely to be viewed as a threat or a risk, rather than a child in need of support.⁵⁷

Though there are no official statistics to monitor strip searches conducted by police, the evidence from inspection reports and FOI data releases indicates that that Black and Mixed-race people are more likely to be strip searched.⁵⁸

The response to recent strip search controversies

Child Q's experience generated strong reactions and protests were held in East London to show support for Child Q and call for change in the way strip search is used on children and Black people.⁵⁹

The Metropolitan Police has confirmed that the Independent Office of Police Complaints (IOPC) is investigating four officers for gross misconduct relating to the search of Child Q.⁶⁰ The IOPC is also investigating the search of Olivia. The Government has said it is taking this matter "extremely seriously"⁶¹ and is awaiting the outcome of the IOPC's investigation before it responds.

Since then, strip searching by the Metropolitan Police Service came under public attention again. Media outlets reported that the force had referred a further eight cases involving strip searches of children to the IOPC for separate incidents. The incidents all involved the exposure of intimate body parts and took place between December 2019 and March 2022.⁶² A statement from the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, responding to the news stated that the Metropolitan Police have "been asked by City Hall to conduct a review of all strip searches of children to ensure lessons are learned."⁶³

Those in policing have highlighted that strip search is a necessary and important power for the police where there is suspicion of drugs or an object that could cause harm, including for cases that involve children. In response

⁵⁶ City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) (PDF), March 2022, p32

⁵⁷ Davis, J., and Marsh, N., "Boys to men: the cost of 'adultification' in safeguarding responses to Black boys, *Critical and Radical Social Work: an international work*, 5 August 2020, p. 255

⁵⁸ See section 2 of this briefing.

⁵⁹ The Guardian, ['It can never happen again': hundreds gather in support of Child Q](#), 20 March 2022

⁶⁰ The Metropolitan Police Service, [Work progressing around child searches following Child Q report](#), 15 June 2022. **Note:** The notices from the IOPC inform the officers that they are being investigated for gross misconduct. It does not mean that misconduct has been proven.

⁶¹ Kit Malthouse at HC Deb, [Metropolitan Police: Strip-search of Schoolgirl](#), 21 March 2022, c28

⁶² Evening Standard, [Eight child strip-search cases referred to police watchdog](#), 24 June 2022. **Note:** Two of the cases have been returned to the MPS for the force to investigate.

⁶³ The Telegraph, [More strip-searches of children by police to be examined by watchdog](#), 24 June 2022

to Olivia's case, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Laurence Taylor, told BBC Radio 4 that strip searches are necessary to help keep people safe while in custody.⁶⁴

Others have referred to the use of this power as abusive and questioned its use, particularly on children.⁶⁵ Data obtained by the Children's Commissioner showed that, between 2018 and 2020, 53% of all EIP searches conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service (under their stop and search powers) on children under the age of 17 resulted in no further action being taken. This "low level of successful searches" led the Children's Commissioner to suggest "that this intrusive practice may well not be justified or necessary in all cases."⁶⁶ While the safeguarding review that reported on Child Q's case acknowledged strip searching children has "its place in practice" it caveated that this "needs to be firmly embedded in a culture that addresses the safeguarding needs of children."⁶⁷

London Assembly Member for the Green Party, Caroline Russel, has urged the Mayor of London to end the practice of strip-searching children except in very exceptional circumstances and with strict safeguards in place.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ BBC News, [Teenage girl traumatised after police strip-search, says mum](#), 24 May 2022

⁶⁵ BBC News, [Campaigners say police strip-search of black schoolgirl was 'sexual assault'](#), 16 March 2022

⁶⁶ The Children's Commissioner, [Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service - new analysis by the Children's Commissioner for England](#) (PDF), 8 August 2022, p6

⁶⁷ City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Child Q](#) (PDF), March 2022, p.23

⁶⁸ London City Hall, [News from Caroline Russel: Mayor should end child strip search unless in exceptional situations](#), 23 June 2022

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