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APCC Scrutiny Questions Response June 2025**1. How is the force ensuring overall that all forms of searches are compliant with statutory codes of practice, namely Codes A and C of the Police & Criminal Evidence Act?**

All searches conducted by officers are recorded on the Niche recording system. Data from those searches is then captured and analysed which is then reviewed at a bi-monthly meeting chaired by an ACC. There are also scrutiny panels, quarterly auditing and weekly dip sampling processes in place to ensure compliance with statutory codes of practice.

- **How does the force ensure that processes outlined in these Codes have been followed, or whether training is required for officers to confidently follow them? Does the force conduct audits, or dip-sampling?**

Officers are taught how to conduct searches under Code A and Code C, and then this is refreshed yearly on their Officer Protection courses.

Use of Force scrutiny panels review a number of stop/searches conducted by officers, these panels take place monthly, and feedback is provided. Where there are concerns, supervisors or referrals to Professional Standards Department (PSD) are made.

In Custody, monthly audit and weekly dip samples are carried out routinely for Code C searches. It has recently been agreed that searches in Custody (Sec 54 PACE) that are conducted at the desk will also be reviewed by the scrutiny panel to ensure consistency.

- **Where non-compliance is identified, how is this recorded, and how are lessons learnt for future improvement?**

Use of Force scrutiny panel's grade the searches viewed to check the effectiveness. Learning is fed back to the individual, their supervisor or is referred to PSD.

Yes, this is something that is available in each audit dataset; it can be readily viewed and scored for compliance.

Ares's of improvement are then identified and tracked through the Continuous Custody Improvement Group meeting through direct liaison with the Custody Performance lead.

- **What evidence is there that custody records provide a comprehensive and accurate reading which justifies the rationale behind a search in custody?**

Rationale is captured by the Custody Officer. The detail is subjective, and officers are encouraged to document as much information as possible to justify their action. The audit will then examine their rationale for the search.

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2. Can the force provide data on the number of strip and intimate searches conducted since 2018, including relevant information.

Relevant data could include:

- the sex and ethnicity of the child.
- whether the searching officer was of the same sex.
- whether the search was carried out in public view (in the cases of more thorough and strip searches being conducted outside the police custody suite).
- whether an appropriate adult was present.
- whether handcuffs were used, how long were they used, and why.
- intended purpose of the search versus the outcome (e.g., whether objects that the child was suspected to be concealing were discovered through the search).

	Juvenile Arrivals	Juvenile Strip Searches
Apr-23	109	4
May-23	98	1
Jun-23	124	1
Jul-23	164	4
Aug-23	118	1
Sep-23	112	2
Oct-23	116	1
Nov-23	109	2
Dec-23	118	1
Jan-24	109	5
Feb-24	112	2
Mar-24	117	6
Apr-24	108	6
May-24	100	5
Jun-24	105	1
Jul-24	107	8
Aug-24	105	4
Sep-24	89	5
Oct-24	97	3
Nov-24	77	3
Dec-24	66	3
Jan-25	87	2
Feb-25	113	6
Mar-25	96	6
Apr-25	107	1

The data set does not contain the sex or ethnicity of the child, or whether the searching officer was of the same sex (although this is the requirement in PACE and is adhered to in Force).

It also doesn't cover whether the detainee was handcuffed, the length of time used or reasons why. This is because it would require each custody record to be physically checked to obtain the answer and it has not been possible to facilitate that request.

The data is based on strip searches in Custody, none of which are in public view.

Appropriate adults were present at all searches and the related offence for which they are searched is captured.

3. What percentage of strip searches and intimate searches of children locally are conducted without an appropriate adult present?

0% in custody- All had an appropriate adult present.

Under PACE Code C, a strip search of a child can only be conducted without an appropriate adult, unless "where there is a risk of serious harm to the detainee or others."

An appropriate adult in the case of a strip or intimate search is not required, if the child signifies in the presence of an appropriate adult that they do not want one to be present during the search, and the appropriate adult agrees.

In this case, an appropriate adult is still required to be present in order to sign a statement in the presence of the child, stating that they do not wish them to be present for the search.

- **In cases where's there's an immediate risk of serious harm, is the Chief Constable reassured that this threshold has been met?**

Yes, there is structure in place and procedures to be followed (PACE) to ensure when serious immediate harm is identified, the process is followed correctly. An example of when this might be required is if the child is in the act of deliberately harming themselves there and then.

- **Whenever the force has been unable to secure an appropriate adult, is sufficient information recorded within the rationale to an acceptable standard?**

There are no occasions when Custody have been unable to secure an Appropriate Adult.

- **Is the appropriate adult the same sex as the child being searched?**

An Appropriate Adult may be of different sex, if specifically asked for by a detainee, an example would be if a male child asked for their mother to be present, although as a rule the AA is normally the same sex.

- **How satisfied are you that your custody officers are seeking to comply with PACE, and ensure that an appropriate adult is present for police encounters with children, wherever possible?**

Satisfied, this is recorded in the Custody Record. There are regular Inspector reviews when a child is in Custody, and this is governed by PACE.

Furthermore, there are regular dip samples and audits completed to ensure process is adhered to. All audits are reviewed by senior management within Criminal Justice.

- **How does the force plan to disseminate and embed forthcoming changes to the PACE Codes (see above)?**

Once the Force has been notified that there will be changes, those changes will be reviewed and implemented. Appropriate communication will be made with officers across the Force, and the new changes will be taught on Custody courses and on refresher training dates.

- 4. What level of officer authorisation is currently required to authorise a strip search of a child?**

In some force areas, searches exposing intimate parts of children must be authorised by an Inspector, whilst in other areas Superintendent authorisation is required.

Custody Ops Inspector, as per PACE.

- 5. When children are subject to a search which involves more than the removal of outer clothing, are the searching officers of the same sex as the child?**

All section 54 Custody searches will be the same sex, this is referring to P1/Drugs search completed out of public view

PACE Code A and C states that the police officer carrying out a search which involves the removal of outer clothing (more thorough search), exposure of intimate parts (strip search), or examining body orifices (intimate search) must be of the same sex.

- **How is the force monitoring this?**

This is completed by the monthly audit and weekly dip samples by reviewing Custody records.

- **How satisfied are you that your force is compliant with PACE in this regard? If opposite sex officers conduct the search, has a clear rationale been recorded?**

It is business as usual to ensure same sex officers conduct these searches

- 6. PACE Code A states that a search conducted outside a police station which includes more than the removal of outer clothing must not be conducted in public view (but also, not in a police vehicle). Is the force collecting data on compliance with this, and how high is the compliance rate?**

Yes, data is collected. Searches that remove more than the outer clothing are not routinely conducted outside of the Custody Suite. Any search conducted is recorded on the stop search record and in Niche.

According to the Children's Commissioner's report, the proportion of strip searches conducted within public view, increased over time, from 2% of all searches in 2018 to 2022, up to 8% in 2022, and 10% in 2023.

- **How satisfied are you that the force is compliant with PACE Code A?**

Satisfied- When comparing the 2% in public view data from 2018 to 2022 from the Children's Commissioner summary – Leics was found to be 3%. We had 30 records and 1 hadn't recorded where the strip search was conducted (not that it was in public view), the remaining 29 listed them as not in public view.

In 2023, the Children's' Commissioner summarised a rise to 8% and 10% - in Leics, our data submission showed all the strip searches after a stop search were not conducted in public view, 0%.

- **In instances where a child is subject to a search which involves more than the removal of outer clothing and takes place within public view, how is the force collecting information on the reasons given as to why?**

This would be recorded within the stop search record. Data has only been provided up to 2023 as detailed above. The data submission to cover period 1 Jul 23 to 30 Jun 24 is currently being worked on.

7. How are officers encouraged to spot the signs of vulnerability in children that they have encountered whilst conducting any form of search?

Officers are required to complete online training packages and are taught about vulnerabilities when stop/search training on their officer protection course. Where vulnerabilities are believed, it may be relevant for the officer to submit a Public Protection Notice (PPN) so that safeguarding measures can be put in place to support the child.

Police forces were asked by the Children's Commissioner which, if any, of the following key characteristics of additional vulnerability are routinely recorded under stop and search powers and for strip searches conducted in custody:

- whether the child is looked after
- a child in need
- has special education needs or disabilities (SEND)
- is neurodivergent or have medical vulnerabilities
- is a potential victim of child criminal, or sexual exploitation.
- has poor mental health

On average, police forces routinely recorded only two out of seven vulnerability characteristics for searches conducted under stop and search.

Six out of 44 police forces (14%) routinely recorded all characteristics of vulnerability, while 26 forces (59%) failed to routinely record any additional characteristics.

- How are the vulnerabilities identified by the Children's Commissioner's report recorded by the force?

Trauma informed practice is prevalent in custody and Custody staff have previously received training by Barnardo's, the children's charity, on how to identify ACES in children. This is now covered in lesson plans with TLA training.

All children are seen by our Health Care Practitioners who may make records of vulnerability which help to inform the care plan. This will be narrated in medical notes, within the care plan free text and within detention logs. Characteristics can be anything related to medical, mental health, diagnosed disorder. Where appropriate, flags will be generated on the custody record for future monitoring. Where someone is arrested for a violence related offence, we will refer to violence intervention workers based in the Custody suite.

- What proportion of children searched are referred to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs, and how is this recorded?

All children (strip searched or not) are seen in Custody by the Liaison and Diversion support team who are NHS England staff(L&D), and where required referrals will be made to appropriate safeguarding hubs. Figures in terms of amounts of referrals are not currently captured by L&D.

The Force also require officers to complete Public Protection Notices (PPN) when vulnerabilities are identified when dealing with incidents. These referrals are then triaged and referrals made for appropriate support.

- 8. How many complaints are received by the Professional Standards Department with regards to incidents where children have been subject to any form of a search?**

Between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2025 there were four public complaints which related to the searching of persons under 18 years of age.

- **Are officers who are subject to complaints able to continue as authorised to conduct these searches whilst the complaints are investigated?**

Each individual case is assessed on its own merits. Restrictions will normally only be placed on individuals where there is an 'indication' of misconduct/criminal offences. Therefore, in most cases there will not be restrictions.

- **How is learning from complaints fed into continuous professional development for the officer concerned and the wider team? How satisfied are you that your officers are learning from the lessons that are identified?**

Individual learning identified from public complaints is delivered to the individual officer by their line manager. A record of this learning is held on Centurion for future reference. If the learning is delivered by the Reflective Practice Review Process (RPRP) then a record is also held on the individual's annual PDR. The complaint's history is reviewed for each officer when new complaints are made to consider if there are patterns of behaviour or previous learning has not been effective.

Organisational learning is fed into the Getting It Right First Time meeting (GIRFT) currently chaired by the Head of Crime. This meeting is attended by senior managers from across all departments who are tasked with implementing the learning and reporting back to the meeting for the actions to be signed off as completed.

- 9. How is the mental well-being of all children subject to a search which involves more than the removal of outer clothing managed by officers?**

The Children's Commissioner has recommended that the Home Office develop a programme of research in order to inform future guidance, consulting with psychologists and other professionals to incorporate trauma-informed practices, with the aim to minimise the mental health impacts on children.

- **How are officers debriefing with the child after a search, to explain what has happened and ask the child how they are feeling?**

Nothing specific during their time in custody

- **Are children subject to searches sign-posted to support?**

Not specifically, although L & D or HCP referral is compulsory for juveniles

- **How are officers made aware of the potential mental health impact a search can have on children?**

Other than this being discussed on the Officer Protection Course, there is nothing else specifically taught to officers.

- 10. Does strip searching feature in your force Race Action Plan in terms of monitoring disproportionality in relation to race and ethnicity?**

According to the Children's Commissioner Report, in 2022-23 Black children in England and Wales were disproportionately more likely to be strip searched compared to national

population figures (over four times more likely), while White children were disproportionately less likely to be searched (around a quarter as likely).

- **If race or ethnic disparities are identified, what actions has the force taken to address this?**

Disproportionality is captured as a key workstream within the Police Race Action Plan. The force has a bimonthly Legitimacy meeting chaired by the ACC Operations and attended by key senior leaders from across our Academy, the EDI team, Local Policing and Specialist Ops. That forum provides a mechanism for the ACC to track and respond to disproportionality across a range of measures to include stop search, strip search and the Use of Force. Where race or ethnic disparities are identified these are addressed by this forum.

During the 2023-2025 Peel Inspection HMICFRS made the following observations in regards to our use of coercive powers:

The force uses internal and external scrutiny of the use of force and stop and search powers to improve performance. Leicestershire Police understands the importance of public confidence in its use of coercive powers, such as stop and search and use of force. There are strong internal scrutiny processes in place to make sure officers use their powers correctly. These include supervisor reviews, dip sampling by senior officers and tactical scrutiny panels. This scrutiny includes the review of body-worn video (BWV). The outcomes of these scrutiny processes feed into an overarching governance board chaired by the assistant chief constable. Representatives from professional standards and the officer safety training department are among the members of the scrutiny panels. In these meetings we saw how the force uses identified learning to give feedback, both positive and negative, to officers. And how any issues identified cause changes to how the force trains officers in the use of coercive powers. The force has a well-established coercive powers group, with an independent chair, which provides external scrutiny. The force also recognised that there wasn't enough external scrutiny of BWV to confirm legitimate use of coercive powers, so it has set up a new group specifically to review BWV. This group has broad membership from hard-to-reach communities, has a clearly defined function and has a pathway to supply feedback to the force. As this group is newly formed, the force will need to make sure it becomes fully adopted as part of their external scrutiny processes.

- **What steps has the force taken to address any potential 'adultification bias' that may be impacting on Black and other ethnic minority children?**

In respect of potential adultification bias the TLA have established relationships with the College of Policing and regional teams who ensure learning and best practice is shared and disseminated. The current and new curriculums also include a specific lesson on black history, which has been extended in terms of time for the new PCEP route following an initial trial with a current cohort.

11. How satisfied are you that all forms of searching are covered by Officer Safety training (both initial and refresher training)?

- **Is there a focus on taking children -centred approach within the training?**

Officer safety training covers the searching of children and young adults. Officers are encouraged to consider their powers being used and the consequence of using force when stop searching

individuals. Specific training is provided for when searching teenagers, a training need highlighted by utilising Force data, which evidenced that 15-17yr olds are a group who are being searched considerably more, a trend seen over the past 3 years.

- **Does training follow relevant College of Policing APPs?**

Skills trainers encourage officers to use their powers in conjunction with the National Decision-Making model (NDM) to justify actions and aid with the decision making. Officer safety training adheres to College of Policing (CoP) APP and guidance, and also force policy, which ensures that the officers have the best learning experience, and ultimately ensures the public receive the best service.

- **Does training include simulation exercises to explore the searching of children in practice? How satisfied are you that the voice of the child is sufficiently reflected in the force's training and guidance?**

The voice of children is not reflected in the training manual provided to us by the CoP, however it is recognised in Force that this is a gap, and consideration is being given to highlight to officers the adverse childhood experiences that children and young persons have when stop/strip searched.