

# **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY PANEL**

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Report of	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE</b>
Subject	<b>UPDATE ON CHILD CENTRIC APPROACH IN CUSTODY AND CHILD SEARCHING</b>
Date	<b>25<sup>TH</sup> June 2025</b>
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## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This paper is written to enable an update to the Ethics and Transparency panel of the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner on the child centred custody approach.
- 1.2 Leicestershire Police is committed to providing an outstanding service to the communities of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, and strives to ensure that high standards are met, maintained, and progressed in all that we do.
- 1.3 Following the publication of numerous enquiries, reviews and academic reports, Leicestershire Police recognised the need to improve services within the Custody department for children.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 There are approximately 100 children coming through the Custody department each month, and it is believed that with improved scrutiny, those numbers can reduce, and for those that do come in, their experience can be improved.
- 2.2 To oversee and drive the changes, a governance group has been established with multiple partners, including Probation, Youth Services, VIP and the Prevention Directorate amongst others, which is chaired by the Force Lead for Criminal Justice.
- 2.3 The embedded presentation captures the initial proposal and future vision, which is now being worked towards



Children & Women  
in custody presentation

### **3.0 Progress since Last Panel Meeting around the Custody Child Centred Approach.**

3.1 The custody department continue to work with internal and external partners to achieve two aims.

1. Reduce the number of children in custody; and
2. Improved the experience of children if they have to be in custody.

3.2 Activity since the last panel meeting includes the following.

- Increased scrutiny around the necessity to bring a child into Custody through the PACE Inspector. Inspector now act as a triage function for children coming into custody.
- Working towards an unofficial 12hr PACE clock for children. Currently we are operating well below the 12 hours at 8:56 hours as reported at the last Layer 4 Board in May. This metric is one of our strategic KPIs.
- Shift pattern changes in Custody which provides Sgt resilience at Keyham Lane (Go live Sept 25). This resilience will also enable us to give extra training to staff designated to work at Keyham in support of the child centred approach. In the new pattern there is a training day every 10 weeks which will enable us to bring in SMEs and discuss best practice with Sgts.
- Keyham Lane Police Station identified as the Force Vulnerability Suite (Go live Sept 25). This will include a children's cell block (4 cells) away from adults and the potentially frightening noise of a suite and we have re-painted in calming colours and included chalk boards on one wall in all children's cells for children to use as a distraction. This has proved really helpful in the Met, and we hope to achieve the same here in Leicester.
- Further discreet booking in room identified at Keyham Lane, and we have liaised with private companies for furniture and fittings for the discreet booking room to reduce adverse childhood experiences in Custody.
- Visit to the MET completed to compare best practice.
- Implementation of female SME input with childhood lived experience on all new Custody courses and refreshers.
- Better partnership working with support groups, introducing a supportive positive pathways pilot to children referred via Liaison and Diversion teams.
- Relationship building with "Leaders Unblocked" a youth group, who are facilitating children to visit Custody so that we can obtain their views on improving facilities for children.
- The planning and implementation of a Children's passport, which enables Custody Sgts and support workers to instantly see what support

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services are in place for children coming into Custody, and who to contact for up-to-date information and to pass on information, so no child is viewed through a single CJS lens.

- Remand Strategy meeting reintroduced with local authority to review every remanded child into Custody.
- Liaison with the National Custody Portfolio lead, to identify best practice around recognising neurodiversity and supporting those with this whilst in Custody, this includes research on approaches to neurodiverse screening which we hope to implement for all children.
- Working with partners to identify Lived Experienced Workers to support positive pathway referrals in Custody (i.e. building better relationship programmes).
- Examination of the use of Professional mentors in custody to support children.

3.3 Whilst this is a lot of work and in varying stages of achievement we have a positive group of partners, all very much engaged in the child centred approach. We also have a dedicated Insp. Insp Kevin Mistry to help drive the implementation and evaluation of the above over the next 12 months or so.

### **4.0 A Female centric Approach in Custody**

4.1 Similar to children, Leicestershire Police recognise that women can be vulnerable for a whole host of reasons, and that their time in Custody is an opportunity to provide support to them.

4.2 As an update for the panel, Leicestershire Police are currently in the process of reviewing its offer to women in terms of support and how best we can improve services to them. There is also an objective to reduce recidivism within this group.

4.3 To achieve this, we are in the initial stages of implementing a multi-disciplinary pilot aimed at women who are first arrivals (never been in Custody before) and those who are classified as low risk by Probation.

4.4 Risk groups that are deemed medium to high already have support in place, however, these particular groups identified for the pilot do not, and an opportunity to improve services presents itself.

4.5 The pilot is being finalised but will focus on working with female detainees to channel and expedite partnership support to them via referrals to community-based services.

4.6 We are being supported by Leicester University who are providing innovative advice and guidance via an Associate Professor in Criminology, and they will also be completing an independent evaluation for us.

4.7 The pilot will run for approximately 12 months, with support offered to all women in Custody, but enhanced support offered to the pilot group.

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4.8 In order to support the pilot, and improves services to women, the following actions have been completed to date.

- Shift pattern changes in Custody which provides Sgt resilience at Keyham Lane (Go live Sept 25).
- Keyham Lane Police Station identified as the Force Vulnerability Suite (Go live Sept 25).
- A specific wing will be allocated for female detainees at Keyham Lane.
- Women custody detention officers will be on every shift to support the Custody SSgts
- Implementation of female SME input with lived experience on all new Custody courses and refreshers.
- Women's hygiene packs are now within every cell allocated to a female detainee, and risk assessed out. Rather than forcing a woman to have to ask for them.
- Discussion with Probation to have an embed based at Keyham Lane to support the pilot, so that early interventions, criminal justice outcomes and support can be considered expeditiously.
- Women focused training to be delivered to Custody Sgts by Probation on Professional Development days in Custody.
- Active participation in the PCC led Whole System Approach to reducing Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System.

4.9 Whilst we are at the early stages of our women centric approach it does fit with Home Office plans to focus on Women in the CJS and indeed with continued work done by the NPCC and other forces nationally. As the pilot progresses, updates will be provided to this panel should this be requested.

### 5.0 Responses to the APCC Scrutiny Questions on Child Searches

5.1 The panel has asked the force to provide replies to the questions in the APCC scrutiny document. These are presented in full at Appendix A below.

### 6.0 Conclusion

#### Appendix A.



APCC Scrutiny  
Questions Response J

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#### Person to Contact

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