

Bhatt Murphy Solicitors

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IOPC concludes that three officers should face gross misconduct proceedings for the decision to strip search Child Q

In December 2020, Child Q, a black female 15 year old child, was strip searched by police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Following a complaint lodged in relation to the conduct of the officers, an investigation was conducted by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) which has now concluded. The IOPC have determined that three MPS officers should face a gross misconduct hearing for potential breaches of the police standards of professional behaviour relating to duties and responsibilities, conduct, and equality and diversity.

The allegations the three police constables face include that:

- the decision to undertake the strip search was inappropriate
- there was no consultation with a supervisor to obtain authorisation before carrying out the search
- there was no appropriate adult present during the search
- Child Q was discriminated against by officers because of her race and sex

A fourth officer, a police constable, will face a disciplinary meeting relating to there being no appropriate adult present during the search and will undergo a reflective practice review process to consider further learning opportunities.

The IOPC is also calling for a substantial review of policing powers and laws relating to the strip searches of children to improve safeguarding and prioritise the welfare of minors. This includes a series of learning recommendations to the Home Office, National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing (COP) to review and make changes to national guidance, policy and training relating to searches involving the exposure of intimate body parts.

Chanel Dolcy, solicitor for Child Q said: *“Whilst Child Q and her family welcome the decisions reached by the IOPC in relation to the conduct of the officers, they are disappointed that it has taken over two years to reach this stage in the process and that they must wait further still for the disciplinary proceedings to conclude. In the meantime, they urge the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing (COP) to act promptly on the recommendations from the IOPC for a substantial review of police powers and laws so that what happened to Child Q does not happen again. Until that happens, children across the country will remain at risk.”*

NOTES TO EDITORS

Child Q is represented by Chanel Dolcy of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors who can be contacted on 020 7729 1115 or c.dolcy@bhattmurphy.co.uk.

The family does not wish to make any further comment at this stage.