

PRESS RELEASE

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Inquiry supports ICVAs work to end “inhumane and unlawful” strip search practices

The unnecessary and frequent use of degrading strip searches and use of anti-rip clothing was condemned in the [Baird Inquiry report](#), released today.

ICVA, a national membership organisation for independent monitoring of police custody, has issued an [update report](#) today on the progress of its recommendations to end intrusive practices and bring enhanced scrutiny of record keeping on strip searches.

The recommendations came from an ICVA review following concern around the national practice of removing the clothing of vulnerable detainees and putting them in anti-rip clothing. ICVA reviewed HMICRS reports, got a legal opinion and worked on a pilot to scrutinise the use of anti-rip clothing with Dyfed Powys OPCC. This resulted in an [initial report](#) setting out recommendations for the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), College of Policing and the Home Office.

ICVA’s Chief Executive, Sherry Ralph, said:

“All detainees should be treated humanely and with dignity. The removal of a detainee’s clothing for welfare purposes, often by force, is unacceptable practice. We welcome the responses to our recommendations so far, but further work must be done to ensure that less intrusive police powers are used to keep detainees safe in custody, and that detainee dignity is preserved in all cases when clothing is removed. We support the recommendations in the Baird report becoming national practice and sharing the report with the Home Secretary.

Additionally, we were extremely disappointed to read of the lack of effective menstrual care for detainees, arrangements for which are now enshrined in PACE codes after an ICVA campaign in 2019. We urge all forces to review their compliance with the statutory Code in this area without delay.”

ENDS

Further information

Sherry Ralph, Chief Executive

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The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) is in place to lead, support and represent local independent custody visiting schemes where local members of the public make unannounced visits to police custody to check on the rights, entitlements and wellbeing of detainees.