

## 17 children strip-searched per year by IOM Police.



### **IOM Police HQ, Duke's Avenue, Douglas.**

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023, we submitted a Freedom of Information request enquiring about the number of strip-searches conducted by IOM Constabulary on children (persons under the age of **17**) over the last 5 years.

Strip-searching involves the child being made to remove clothing and a Police officer then performing an intimate search of body cavities (such as vagina and rectum).

By a FOI response dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023, the Constabulary confirmed that 16 strip-searches of children occurred in 2018, 8 in 2019, 30 in 2020, 22 in 2021 and 11 in 2022.

Alarmingly, this means that on average **17 children per year** have been subject to strip-searches on the Island over the last 5 years.

Clearly, strip-searching is a very intrusive and potentially traumatic experience for those children involved.

This sensitive issue of strip-searching of children was recently highlighted in Northern Ireland where it was revealed that 27 juveniles (defined in N.Ireland as persons under the age of 18) were strip searched in 2021.

17 strip-searches of children per annum on average on the Isle of Man (population 86,000) compares disturbingly with only 27 strip-searches of children in the whole of Northern Ireland (population 1.8 million).

Politicians across the political spectrum in Northern Ireland expressed serious concern about whether the strip-searching of children was necessary and proportionate.

Sinn Fein politician Mrs Linda Dillon commented, *"You never want to see a young person under 18 being strip-searched. All appropriate precautions must be done to ensure that everything is done right"*.

The important issues of whether the strip-searches of children in the Isle of Man were carried out in the presence of an appropriate adult and whether any items of interest were actually found (e.g. drugs) is currently the subject of a separate FOI request, reply pending.

*Please see link below for the IOM Constabulary response dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.*

<https://www.ik.im/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/22.02.23-Large-number-of-children-strip-searched-by-Police.pdf>

*See also link to media reporting of child strip searches in Northern Ireland.*

<https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/psni-changes-strip-searching-policy-following-the-detail-investigation>