

Scotland must urgently audit any strip-searches on minors

A report was issued on Monday by Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza, which showed that 2,847 children were strip-searched in England and Wales from 2018 to mid-2022.

Foyso Choudhury MSP said: "It is deeply concerning that children as young as 8 years-old are being strip searched by the Police, with 52% of searches taking place without the ordinarily legally required appropriate adult present.

"This is a dereliction of safeguarding responsibilities and must be urgently addressed.

"It is incredibly concerning that the report found that black children were up to six times more likely to be searched than the overall child population.

"Not only are state institutions failing to protect children but they are also shown to be perpetuating racial prejudices and targeting black children from a young age.

"Whilst these findings apply in England and Wales, it is important that we take note here in Scotland and urgently audit the number of searches undertaken on minors.

"We need to ensure that Police Scotland are not, too, undertaking inappropriate and dangerous strip searches on young children, particularly without an appropriate adult present.

"We also need to ensure that there is no racial disparity in Police Scotland's activities, as can be seen in the report's assessment of England and Wales.

"Many people already report racial profiling in stop and

search practices in Scotland, in places such as airports.
“Urgent review is needed now to ensure Scotland is holding itself to higher standards and is protecting our children-not endangering them.”

