

# Tips for when you come into contact with young people



## Key tips

**Remember I am a young person** – this might be my first contact with the police, I might not know my rights, I might be scared, and I might not react the same way as an adult would in the same situation.

**Do not assume my age based on how I look** – I might be younger than you think. Ask me if you are not sure.

**Talk to me in a way I can understand what you are saying** – do not assume I speak English proficiently. Use plain English, but do not talk down to me.

**Do not jump to conclusions** – try to see the full picture, understand my point of view, how I am feeling, and what I need. Try not to make assumptions about my involvement in something until you have some evidence.

**Signpost support that might be available to me** – whether that is an appropriate adult, or support offered by another agency or organisation.

**Make sure I am safe** – if you think I am vulnerable or at risk of harm, ask me if there is anything I need, or anything you can do to help.

**Reflect on your contact with young people** – think whether there is anything you could do differently next time you are in the same situation.



## If you are stopping and searching me or using stop and account

**Be sensitive to where you are stopping me** – do not humiliate me in front of friends, family or work colleagues.

**Tell me why you are stopping me** – use GOWISELY and check I understand what you have told me.

**Tell me if you are recording the stop** on body worn video.

**Treat me with respect** – do not talk down to me or be aggressive.

**Give me a record of the stop** or tell me where I can get it.

**Let me know how I can provide feedback** – tell me how I can make a complaint or provide feedback if you can see I am unhappy.

**If you do not find anything**, apologise or thank the young person for their time and cooperation.



## If you come to my home to deal with a matter involving someone else

**Remember you are entering someone's home and someone's personal space** – people might not always welcome your presence, it might make some people upset, distressed or angry.

**Think about how you deal with the people who are present** – be calm, explain what is happening, treat people with respect, and think about how other people not directly involved are being affected.

**Try to avoid making assumptions** – do not assume everyone in the house is a criminal or involved in what has happened.



## If you think you have seen or dealt with me before

**Do not assume the worst – keep an open mind.** I might not have done anything wrong.

**Do not judge me based on who I am associated with** – there will be people in my family, people I grew up with, or people in my neighbourhood who are involved in things that I am not a part of or that I do not agree with.



## If I am taken into police custody

**Consider whether custody is the right place for me** – try to keep my time in custody to a minimum.

**Make sure I have appropriate support** – provide me with access to an appropriate adult or any other support I might need.

**Explain what my options are** – tell me when I can call parents or carers.

**Explain my rights** – remember it might be my first time in custody.

**Explain how I can contact you** when I am in the cell, when I will get food and drink, when you will check on me, how I can get access to washing or sanitary products, and what I need to do if I am feeling unwell.

**Do not be afraid to ask me how I am feeling** – I might not always be calm and polite but it might help you to identify if I am vulnerable, distressed or struggling to cope with my time in custody.

**If there is noise and disruption** elsewhere in the custody suite, check how it has affected me when it is safe and appropriate to do so.



## If I am a victim of a crime

**Listen** and take me seriously.

**Try to recognise the courage it took for me to tell you about what happened** – avoid shaming and blaming me.

**Keep an open mind** – do not use my past to judge me.

**Make sure you keep me informed** – let me know what to expect from the process, and keep me informed of progress.



## If you want to involve me in oversight and scrutiny of police practice

**Help me to be properly involved** – provide me with suitable support and training, and think about how you can remove the barriers which might stop me being fully involved.

**Respect me, my ideas, and my lived experience** – do not patronise me or talk down to me. Recognise I might have experienced things that you have not, and do not know about.

**Be inclusive** – try to involve a diverse range of young people. Do not just target the obvious volunteers, but look at how young people can remove the barriers to young people's participation.

**Involve young people in the design and delivery of projects** – ask us how we want to be involved, what good looks like for us, and think about how we can benefit from involvement.

**Be realistic about the impact we can have** – help us to understand how we can make a difference, and be realistic about the limitations.



## If I am in crisis

**Treat me with calmness and sensitivity** – recognise I might be scared, afraid, distressed or angry.

**Make sure I am safe** – help me get the support I need, and be solution focused.

**Explain what is happening** – tell me what my options are, what is going to happen next, and what support is available to me.



## If I want to make a complaint or provide feedback about my contact with the police

**Make sure information about how I can complain or provide feedback is easy to access** – this might include being visible on stop and search forms, in custody suites, police station front offices, force websites, or other places where I might find information (either locally or online).

**Let me know who else can provide me with support and advice on how to make a complaint** – signpost to the IOPC and any organisations working locally who can help me to make a complaint.

**Keep in touch with me if I make a complaint** – let me know you have received it, what the next steps look like, keep me updated on progress, and let me know if I have a right of review at the end of the process.

**Be realistic about the outcomes** – tell me what you think is likely to happen next.