

# Real Rights: young people engaging with law enforcement



London, England



The Real Rights project has been developed by Baker McKenzie and the Global Initiative on Justice with Children to provide young people – especially young people of colour, minority and vulnerable populations – with specific guidance for interactions with law enforcement. Thanks to the Real Rights project and the pro bono work of over 1,500 volunteer professionals, we have created a clear and accessible data base of answers to child questions when they are in contact with the police – from initial contact, questioning, to stop and report.

If you are interested to support us in this project, click on the "Feedback" button provided in each city page or email [realrights@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:realrights@bakermckenzie.com).

## Rights:

What rights do I have when I encounter law enforcement?

### Question Asked

- Stopped By The Police On The Street, Now What?
- When Can Police Search Your and Your Surroundings?
- Reasons Police May Detain or Arrest You
- The Difference Between Police TELLING Me What To Do And Asking Me To Do Something
- Do Police Need a Warrant to Arrest You?
- How Do You Know If You Are Under Arrest?
- What to Do After Being Warned of Your Rights
- Police Questioning You
- How do I Contact A Lawyer and When?
- Do Police Always Have to Tell the Truth?
- How do I make a complaint if I have questions or feel my rights have been violated?
- What if I feel I was a victim of discrimination or racism?
- How can I respond to circumstances involving discrimination?
- What can you do if the police perform an improper search? Or I was improperly detained?

## Stopped By The Police On The Street, Now What?

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

- Stay calm. It is not a good idea to run. Speak carefully and clearly. Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law.
- It is not a good idea to touch the officers. Keep your hands where the police can see them.
- It is not a good idea to resist, even if you're innocent or if you think the police are acting unfairly or unlawfully. [Your rights and responsibilities | Metropolitan Police](#)

[back to top](#)

## Can the police arrest you for refusing to answer questions?

- It is normal for the police to ask questions when they are doing their job. There may be an incident or an ongoing investigation.
- If you don't answer a question from a police officer, it is not against the law. However, if you choose not to answer a question, this may increase a police officer's suspicion of you, and may potentially lead to your arrest. For example, you may get stopped when you are lawfully riding your friend's bike. The police officer then tells you a bike like that has just been reported stolen. You probably should explain to the officer so that you can be done with their investigation. If you don't answer the questions, the officer may believe you are hiding something and may arrest you to allow the officer to investigate further.
- Similarly, you may get stopped by an officer patrolling in a crime hotspot and they may ask you why you are in the area. You don't have to give a reason, but it might be good to explain if you did nothing wrong.

You should use your judgement when considering whether it is appropriate to answer questions from the police. [Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights)

## What if the officers do not identify themselves?

- Plain clothes police officers should identify themselves as a police officer if they are interacting with you in doing their job.
- However, there may be some instances where the police may choose not to identify themselves. If someone in plain clothes claims to be a police officer, then you can ask them to produce their "warrant card". [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code A para 3.8](#)]

## What if an officer just begins speaking to me but does not order me to do anything?

Police officers are allowed to use and record information which you provide in casual conversation. If you're at a protest or similar event, a police officer may try to start a conversation with you and gather information about you or others. But just because they're in a police uniform, it doesn't give their questions any additional power. If you don't want to talk to them, you are free to stay silent and walk away, as you would with anyone else. [Do I have to answer police questions? - Liberty \(libertyhumanrights.org.uk\)](https://libertyhumanrights.org.uk/do-i-have-to-answer-police-questions/)

## What if the officer is not in uniform or identified as an officers but I think it is one?

Plain clothes police officers should identify themselves as a police officer if they are interacting with you in the execution of their duty. However, if they do not identify themselves and do not claim to be an officer, there is no way to force them to identify themselves. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code A para 3.8](#)]

## Can I tell police I do not want to speak without a lawyer?

You have a right to free legal advice before being questioned by the police, so you may wish to refrain from responding to any questions until you have spoken to a lawyer. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.58](#); [European Convention on Human Rights Art 6](#)]

## If I sit down, am I resisting?

Just sitting down is not resisting arrest. However, if you use physical force to willfully obstruct the arrest, you may be subject to assault claims. [Police Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/26/parts/1)

### **If I am stopped in a group, and some kids run, can I run?**

Stay calm and respectful. It is not a good idea to run even if other people run, it may make things worse. [Your rights and responsibilities | Metropolitan Police](#)

### **Can I tell others (siblings, for example) to run?**

No. You may be subject to the offense of obstructing a police officer by trying to help other to run away from the police. It does not make a difference if the other people are your siblings. [Police Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

### **If the officer's language is not my first language, can I tell them without waiving my rights?**

If English is not your first language, and you do not understand why you have been stopped, the police must take reasonable steps to provide you with information in your own language. [Your rights and responsibilities | Metropolitan Police](#)

If you are under arrest, The officer must also let you see a written notice telling you about your rights. You can ask for this notice to be written in your own language, or for an interpreter to explain it. [\[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 3.2\]](#)

### **If I did not do anything, can they stop me?**

Yes, they can. A police officer has powers to stop and search you if they have 'reasonable grounds' to suspect you're carrying: illegal drugs, a weapon, stolen property, or something which could be used to commit a crime, such as a crowbar.

You can only be stopped and searched without reasonable grounds if it has been approved by a senior police officer. This can happen if it is suspected that: serious violence could take place, you're carrying a weapon or have used one, or you're in a specific location or area.

[Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **When Can Police Search Your and Your Surroundings?**

### **Proposed Information**

It is important to follow this advice:

In most circumstances, the police will need reasonable suspicion that you are in possession of an illegal item. [\[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.1\(3\)\]](#)

The police cannot search you purely based on your age/ race/ nationality/ religion or any previous involvement with the police. [\[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code A para 2.2B\]](#)

The police do not need reasonable suspicion to search you if they are in the process of searching a designated area. An area might be designated if there is evidence that serious violence has or may take place there. [\[Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 s.60\]](#)

The police also have the power to search you following your arrest. Anything found during this search may be used as evidence against you.

[Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **What if a police officer wants to search my phone?**

- This depends on the search power used.

If the police believe the mobile phone is stolen, they may search the phone in order to obtain the IMEI number. However, they cannot use this as an opportunity to look through your messages, etc. [\[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.19 - 21\]](#)

- Under the Terrorism Act, the police have the power to look through pictures on your phone. [[Terrorism Act 2000 s.43](#)]
- The police may also seize your phone following your arrest or if they have a warrant (court order) to search your phone.

### **What if a police officer asks me for my password to my phone?**

You don't have to. The police the power need permission from a judge to issue a notice to a person requiring that they disclose their PIN or password. [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

### **What if they tell me to give them my password or other access to my phone?**

You don't have to. The police the power need permission from a judge to issue a notice to a person requiring that they disclose their PIN or password. [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Do I have to give them my device password if they demand it from me if I am not under arrest? What if they just ask for it?**

You don't have to, no matter they are demanding or just asking. The police the power need permission from a judge to issue a notice to a person requiring that they disclose their PIN or password. [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

### **What tools can police use to search me? What technology? (Facial recognition, hidden cameras, finger print searches, etc.)**

They can use all of the technologies above. Although people have complained about the invasion of privacy, they can do all of these unless the law change in the future. [London Police Are Taking Surveillance to a Whole New Level - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

### **Can they search my backpack or other item I am carrying?**

They can if they have reasonable grounds to think that in the backpack there are illegal drugs, a weapon, stolen property, or something which could be used to commit a crime, such as a crowbar. [Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Can they take my picture or record me?**

If you are in the public, they can.

Additionally, Officers do not need your consent to record you using their body worn camera.

Police officers will not routinely have their cameras on whilst patrolling, and are expected to use their judgement when deciding what incidents should be captured.

If you wish to receive a copy of the footage, you should make a "subject access" request to the relevant police force.

[How and when BWV cameras are used | Metropolitan Police](#)

### **Can they ask me where I am going and why?**

They certainly can, but you don't have to answer because you have the right to silence. It's your call to answer these questions or not. [Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# Reasons Police May Detain or Arrest You

## Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

- The police may arrest you because they suspect you of committing (or having committed) a violation of the law, or if they suspect that you currently have evidence of a crime.
- Sometimes police have a warrant for an arrest. You should be clear on what kind of warrant is being presented to you if that is the case.
- It is a good idea to review any paper from police/warrant carefully, to ensure you understand what exactly is covered.
- If arrested, you may be charged with a felony for a more serious crime (with potential jail time of one year or more), a misdemeanor for a less serious crime (with jail time of less than one year) or a violation.
- If the police arrest you, they also have the right to search you. Anything found during this search may be used as evidence against you.

[Police powers of arrest: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/police-powers-of-arrest-your-rights)

### **What if I did not do anything illegal, must I speak with the police and answer questions?**

- If you don't answer a question from a police officer, it is not against the law. However, if you choose not to answer a question, this may increase a police officer's suspicion of you, and may potentially lead to your arrest. For example, you may get stopped when you are lawfully riding your friend's bike. The police officer then tells you a bike like that has just been reported stolen. You probably should explain to the officer so that you can be done with their investigation. If you don't answer the questions, the officer may believe you are hiding something and may arrest you to allow the officer to investigate further.
- Similarly, you may get stopped by an officer patrolling in a crime hotspot and they may ask you why you are in the area. You don't have to give a reason, but it might be good to explain if you did nothing wrong.

You should use your judgement when considering whether it is appropriate to answer questions from the police. [Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights)

### **What if they tell me something they are investigating that is wrong? Must I correct them?**

You don't have to, you can remain silent, but you should not actively lie or mislead the police. [Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights)

### **What if an officer just begins speaking to me but does not order me to do anything?**

Police officers are allowed to use and record information which you provide in casual conversation. If you're at a protest or similar event, a police officer may try to start a conversation with you and gather information about you or others. But just because they're in a police uniform, it doesn't give their questions any additional power. If you don't want to talk to them, you are free to stay silent and walk away, as you would with anyone else. [Do I have to answer police questions? - Liberty \(libertyhumanrights.org.uk\)](https://libertyhumanrights.org.uk/do-i-have-to-answer-police-questions/)



## **What is the legal difference between talking to them if they do not tell me I am under arrest, versus after they inform me that I am under arrest?**

If you are questioned about a crime and you have been cautioned, but you are told that you are not under arrest, this is a "voluntary interview". You do not have to take part in a voluntary interview and the police must tell you that you are free to leave at any time. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 10.2](#)]

If you are arrested, you will usually be taken to a police station for questioning.

Still, you do not have to answer questions put to you by the police. It is a good idea to discuss this with a lawyer before beginning any interview. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 10.4](#)]

## **The Difference Between Police TELLING Me What To Do And Asking Me To Do Something**

### **Proposed Information**

It is important to follow this advice:

You can always reject a request to voluntarily do something. You cannot refuse if the police order you to stop or search you, this is not voluntary. You can always ask the police if they are giving you an order. [Your rights and responsibilities | Metropolitan Police](#)

## **What is the difference between the police deciding to search me or my belongings (phone, person, backpack) and me agreeing to the search?**

A police officer has powers to stop and search you if they have 'reasonable grounds' to suspect you're carrying: illegal drugs, a weapon, stolen property, or something which could be used to commit a crime, such as a crowbar.

You can only be stopped and searched without reasonable grounds if it has been approved by a senior police officer. This can happen if it is suspected that: serious violence could take place, you're carrying a weapon or have used one, or you're in a specific location or area.

You should not agree to a search if you do not want to be searched and they don't have reasonable grounds or senior approval to search you.

When a police officer chooses to use a legal power to conduct a search, you cannot refuse the search. If you try to obstruct a search, then the officer may choose to use reasonable force to restrain you. However, you are allowed to politely challenge an officer when he/she is giving you the grounds of the search if you do not think they are valid.

If you feel that you were unlawfully searched or the officer acted inappropriately during the search, then you should make a complaint to police station that the officer is attached to.

[Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **What if they tell me to give them information versus them asking and me providing answers voluntarily?**

There is no significant difference. If you don't answer a question from a police officer, it is not against the law.

You should use your judgement when considering whether it is appropriate to answer questions from the police. [Police powers to stop and search: your rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# Do Police Need A Warrant To Arrest You?

## Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

- No. A warrant (court order) is not required to arrest someone. Instead, police are required to have reasonable grounds to suspect that you're involved in a criminal offence. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.24](#)]
- Police have the power to arrest a person anywhere at any time if they have a reasonable suspicion that you are involved in a criminal offence and they have reasonable grounds to believe that your arrest is necessary. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.24](#)]
- There must be some reasonable, objective grounds for an officer's suspicion that you are involved in a crime, based on known facts and relevant information. It is unlawful for police officers to discriminate against, harass or victimise any person on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief or sex and sexual orientation. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code G para 2.3A](#); [Equality Act 2010](#)]

### If I did not do anything, can they stop me?

You can ask for the reasons why you are being stopped and searched and what the police officer is expecting to find. This is information that the police officer should tell you. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code A s.5 note 2](#)]

However, the police do not need a specific reason for stopping you whilst you are cycling or driving. Failing to stop for a police officer in uniform may be a criminal offence. [[Road Traffic Act 1988 s.163](#)]

### Can I ask for the reason they stopped me?

You can ask for the reasons why you are being stopped and searched and what the police officer is expecting to find. This is information that the police officer should tell you. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code A s.5 note 2](#)]

However, the police do not need a specific reason for stopping you whilst you are cycling or driving. Failing to stop for a police officer in uniform may be a criminal offence. [[Road Traffic Act 1988 s.163](#)]

### Can I advocate for another young person stopped by police if we are stopped together?

You can say what you want, but because you are not a lawyer, it is probably a better idea to contact a lawyer before making any statements to anyone in a criminal case or investigation. This applies even if you are told that police officers only want to question you and/or you are only a witness.

### If I think the stop is unjustified, what can I do?

If you believe the stop is unjustified and you feel the police is harassing you, there are steps you can take to address it.

During your interaction with the police, if an officer is wearing a bodycam, you can request that it is turned on to record your interaction.

When an incident occurs, it is sensible to take full details of what took place, including date, time, location, CCTV, officer details (names, badge numbers, physical appearance), witnesses, conversation and actions of all participants, etc. with great detail.



After the incident, contact law enforcement HQ to learn the process for filing a formal complaint. No need to give your name or any identifying information.

Generally, if you have a complaint about how the police have treated you this would be handled by your local police force (which can be found through the main website - <https://www.police.uk/pu/find-a-police-force/>).

Alternatively, a complaint can be sent directly to the Independent Office for Police Conduct ("IOPC") (<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/complaints-reviews-and-appeals/make-complaint>), but it will be referred back to your local force and the IOPC will not be involved in the initial response (unless it involves an incident of serious injury or death, in which case the IOPC may be involved from the start).

If you would like another person to make a complaint on your behalf, then you must give them your written permission unless they are your parent or guardian and you are under the age of 16.

There is no time limit for making a complaint, but you should expect that if significant time has passed it may be more difficult for the police to carry out a full investigation.

Once you submit a complaint, you should be informed of the formal process starting and be provided with a copy of the record. The police officer complained about will also receive a copy of this (but your name will be anonymised). As the investigation progresses, you should be provided with updates where appropriate.

Police forces are expected to deal with complaints in a reasonable and proportionate way. This may involve an investigation which should generally take no longer than 12 months. Once complete, they will issue you with the outcome and you may request a review. This review could either be by the local force or the IOPC.

The outcomes of a complaint can vary greatly, but include:

- an apology
- return of seized property
- amendments to records databases
- changes to force policies
- individual disciplinary or criminal sanctions against the officer(s) involved

If the harassing behaviour does not stop after you file a formal complaint, consider filing a civil rights lawsuit. Consult a lawyer that specializes in this area.

See Also: [Guidance on the police complaints system](#)

### **Can I get the officer's identifying information for a future complaint?**

Yes. An officer is required to display their badge number, which you can ask to see if it's not shown. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code A para 3.8](#)]

## **How Do You Know If You Are Under Arrest?**

### **Proposed Information**

It is important to follow this advice:

- You are under police custody if you do not feel free to leave an officer's presence, or if a reasonable person in your shoes would not feel free to leave.
- If the following happens, you are likely under arrest under the law:

[back to top](#)

- an officer handcuffs you;
- an officer forcibly holds you down;
- an officer puts you into the back seat of a police car; or
- an officer warns you about your rights.
- An officer only has to warn you of your rights before the police question you. This means an officer can arrest you before warning you of your rights.
- An arrest without rights warnings is still a valid arrest; it just may mean that evidence collected from it is not admissible in court later.
- You must be told by the arresting officer that you have been arrested, even if this may feel obvious from what is happening. You have the right to ask if you are being arrested if you are not told this. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.28](#) & [Code G para 2.2](#)]

### **What if I do not know if I am under arrest?**

You have the right to ask if you are being arrested if you are not told this. You must be told by the arresting officer that you have been arrested, even if this may feel obvious from what is happening. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.28](#) & [Code G para 2.2](#)]

### **What is the difference between detention and arrest?**

Detention may only last for as long as it is reasonably required to permit a search, while arrest usually last longer.

The police have powers to detain people they have arrested on suspicion of committing a crime. If you are arrested, the police may detain you whilst they gather evidence and investigate the crime. There are limits on how long the police can detain you without "charging" you. [know your rights z-card.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

### **If I am handcuffed, am I arrested?**

If you are handcuffed, this probably means you have been arrested. However, you should know this already because a police officer must tell you if you are being arrested. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.28](#) & [Code G para 2.2](#)]

The police must have an objective reason for using handcuffs, for example, to prevent you from escaping or trying to escape, or to prevent violence.

### **If my liberty is restricted, am I under arrest?**

Police may use reasonable force in certain circumstances, which may make you feel like your liberty is being restricted. If lawfully detained, you may also feel this way. However, this does not necessarily mean that you are under arrest. A police officer should always tell you if you are being arrested. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.28](#) & [Code G para 2.2](#)]

## **What To Do After Being Warned of Your Rights**

### **Proposed Information**

It is important to follow this advice:

- You can use your right to remain silent or any of your other rights (e.g., the right to an attorney) by saying that you want to use that right.

- You are also able to waive your rights (that is, not use them) by, for example, saying 'Yes, I understand my rights but I am ready to talk to you.' This is not a good idea without a lawyer present.

Make sure you know what you're doing in giving up your rights. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.58](#); [European Convention on Human Rights Art 6](#)]

### How do things change if I am read my rights by police?

- If a police officer suspects you of being involved in a crime, they must "caution" you prior to asking you any questions about the crime. If an officer cautions you, they will say the following: "You do not have to say anything. But, it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence." [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 10.5](#)]
- If the police want to ask you questions under caution (i.e. after saying the statement above) before arresting you, they must specifically tell you that you are not under arrest. They must also inform you of your right to speak to a lawyer and that there is no obligation to take part in any voluntary interview. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 10.2](#)]
- If you are later arrested, you will be told that you are under arrest and cautioned again. You may then be taken to a police station, held in custody in a cell and then questioned. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 10.4](#)]

### Does it matter where I am when the police read me my rights? (street, station, police car, etc.)

The place does not matter but the timing does: the police must read your rights before asking you any questions about the crime. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code C para 10.5](#)]

## Police Questioning You

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

- You are not required to make a statement, answer police questions or participate in a police investigation, and you never have to go anywhere with the police unless they have arrested you.
- If police have arrested you and if you are under the age of 18, police are required to immediately notify your parent, caretaker or legal guardian. [Being arrested: your rights: When you're arrested - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### Am I required to make a statement?

You are not required to make a statement, answer police questions or participate in a police investigation, and you never have to go anywhere with the police unless they have arrested you.

### Must police notify my guardian?

If police have arrested you and if you are under the age of 18, police are required to immediately notify your parent, caretaker or legal guardian.

## Must I confess?

You are not required to make a statement, answer police questions or participate in a police investigation. You have no obligation to confess to a crime and you are not required to report to the police a crime that you have witnessed or heard about.

## What adults can I ask to be with me?

The police must try to contact your parent, guardian or carer if you're under 18 or a vulnerable adult.

They must also find an 'appropriate adult' to come to the station to help you and be present during questioning and searching. An appropriate adult can be:

- your parent, guardian or carer
- a social worker
- another family member or friend aged 18 or over
- a volunteer aged 18 or over

[Being arrested: your rights: When you're arrested - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/being-arrested-your-rights)

You can also, of course, ask a lawyer to be with you.

## Who do police have to contact if I am a legal minor?

If police have arrested you and if you are under the age of 18, police are required to immediately notify your parent, caretaker or legal guardian.

## How do I Contact A Lawyer and When?

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

- You should always contact a lawyer before making any statements to anyone in a criminal case or investigation.
- This applies even if you are told that (i) police officers only want to question you and/or (ii) you are only a witness.
- While you do have to wait until you attend court to get a lawyer appointed if you cannot afford your own lawyer, you should still ask for a lawyer as soon as you are questioned or arrested by the police. If you are arrested, you have the right to remain silent and to not speak until your lawyer is present. [[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 s.58](#); [European Convention on Human Rights Art 6](#)]

## What if I am just a witness?

You should always contact a lawyer before making any statements to anyone in a criminal case or investigation, even if you are only a witness.

## Do Police Always Have To Tell The Truth?

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

- Not always. The police cannot blatantly lie to you in an interview in such a way as to give you a false impression about possible evidence, leniency or charges against

[back to top](#)

you. However, that does not mean that police must disclose all possible evidence, nor does it mean they have to explain the meaning of any evidence they might have.

- The police may lie to you during the course of an investigation, including lying about the strength of the case they have against you and particular evidence they have in their possession.
- Sometimes police will lie to try and get you to talk more. [interviewing-suspects-v7.0.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

### Can the police lie to me?

- Yes. The police may lie to you during the course of an investigation, including lying about the strength of the case they have against you and particular evidence they have in their possession.
- Sometimes police will lie to try and get you to talk more. [interviewing-suspects-v7.0.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

### Do I have to tell the police the truth?

You are not required to make a statement, answer police questions or participate in a police investigation. But if you choose to talk, you should not lie to the police. It is never a good idea to give false information to the police. Even if you are responsible for something or have information that they want, it may not be a good idea to share it without a lawyer present.

## How do I make a complaint if I have questions or feel my rights have been violated?

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

You have a right to complain if you feel your rights have been violated.

There are a few ways in which you can make your complaint:

- You can fill in an online complaint form on the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)'s website ([IOPC Complaints Form \(egressforms.com\)](#)) and the IOPC will send your complaint to the police force involved.
- You can fill in an online complaint form on the Met Police's website (<https://www.met.police.uk/fo/feedback/tc/thanks-and-complaints/>).
- You can dial 101 to make a complaint by telephone.
- If you want to complain in person, you can go to your local police station and speak to the on-call duty officer. You can bring someone with you.
- With your permission, someone can make a complaint on your behalf.

If you're unsure about anything, you can contact the IOPC by phone on 030 0020 0096 or email [enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk) or on Twitter @IOPC\_Help You can also send an email to this address: [enquiries@mopac.london.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@mopac.london.gov.uk).

There are some steps you can take during or just after the incident(s) to maximise the chances of your complaint being dealt with properly:

- Carefully write down the details of the incident(s). Record the date, time, location, police officer'(s) details (names, badge numbers, physical appearance), police car's

registration number, witnesses (names and numbers), conversation and actions of all participants, etc. in as much detail as possible.

- If you suffer any injuries, take pictures, obtain medical records, or otherwise document the injuries and any medical treatment. Your notes will be used as the basis for any formal complaint you may file later.
- If you can, film the incident on your phone. This could be used as evidence in your case/ complaint. Members of the public and the media do not need a permit to film or photograph in public places and police have no power to stop them filming or photographing incidents or police personnel.

You should include the following information in your complaint:

- Your personal details, including date of birth, age and where you were born
- Your contact details
- Details of the complaint including what it is about, when it happened (date and time of day), where it happened and who was involved.
- The details of any witnesses

You should make the complaint as quickly as possible while it is fresh in your mind.

## What if I feel I was a victim of discrimination or racism?

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

If you feel you have been a victim of discrimination or racism, you should make a complaint via the usual channels.

The Equality Advisory & Support Service may also be able to help you. You can contact them by the following methods:

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Telephone: 0808 800 0082 (Mon-Fri 9am-7pm and Sat 10am-2pm)

Address: FREEPOST EASS HELPLINE FPN6521 E

Website: [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

In addition, you may have a legal claim and may want to consider contacting a lawyer to assess your case and provide you with legal advice on your options. Please see the following links for suggestions as to how to find a lawyer:

[https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice\\_information/i-need-a-lawyer/](https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice_information/i-need-a-lawyer/)

[For young people - Youth Justice Law in England and Wales \(yjl.org.uk\)](http://yjl.org.uk)

## How can I respond to circumstances involving discrimination?

### Proposed Information

It is important to follow this advice:

If you feel you have been a victim of discrimination or racism, you should make a complaint via the usual channels.

The Equality Advisory & Support Service may also be able to help you. You can contact them by the following methods:



Textphone: 0808 800 0084  
Telephone: 0808 800 0082 (Mon-Fri 9am-7pm and Sat 10am-2pm)  
Address: FREEPOST EASS HELPLINE FPN6521 E  
Website: [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

In addition, you may have a legal claim and may want to consider contacting a lawyer to assess your case and provide you with legal advice on your options. Please see the following links for suggestions as to how to find a lawyer:

[https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice\\_information/i-need-a-lawyer/](https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice_information/i-need-a-lawyer/)

[For young people - Youth Justice Law in England and Wales \(yjlc.uk\)](http://www.yjlc.uk)

## **What can you do if the police perform an improper search? Or I was improperly detained?**

### **Proposed Information**

It is important to follow this advice:

If you consider that you have been subjected to an improper stop and search, your first port of call should be to make a complaint.

You can also contact your local community stop and search monitoring group. These groups comprise local independent members of the community that monitor police use of stop and search in every London borough. Their role is to hold the police account and scrutinise the use of stop and search. You can contact your local group here: [Contact your local Stop and Search Community Monitoring Group | London City Hall](#)

You may also wish to obtain legal advice if you feel that your rights have been violated. Please see the following links for suggestions as to how to find a lawyer:

[https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice\\_information/i-need-a-lawyer/](https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice_information/i-need-a-lawyer/)

[For young people - Youth Justice Law in England and Wales \(yjlc.uk\)](http://www.yjlc.uk)

## Disclaimer

The materials and content provided on this website are for general information only and are not intended as legal advice. Although we strive to provide accurate and up to date legal information, we cannot promise it is error free or that it is suitable for your specific concerns. Therefore, you should contact an attorney to obtain legal advice for any issue specific to your situation. If you use the materials and information provided on this site or links to other websites, it does not create an attorney-client relationship between us or any providers of information you find on this website, and we take no responsibility for any information linked to this website.

The materials and content are provided as-is with no warranty of any kind. We disclaim all express and implied warranties, including the implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for particular purpose. Under no circumstances will we or our contributors be liable for any consequential, indirect, incidental, special or punitive damages or lost profits, whether foreseeable or unforeseeable, under any legal theory. Some states do not allow the exclusion of implied warranties or the limitation of incidental or consequential damages, so the above limitation and exclusions may not apply to you.

Please note that the Real Rights Platform is in development and does not represent the final version of the work product. We will continue to update this Real Rights Platform as updates and edits are received across the globe.

Baker McKenzie International is a Swiss Verein with member law firms around the world. In accordance with the common terminology used in professional service organisations, reference to a "partner" means a person who is a partner, or equivalent, in such a law firm. Similarly, reference to an "office" means an office of any such law firm.

Law is generally described as of December 2022.

[back to top](#)