



Ministry
of Justice



Easy
Read

The Youth Justice Charter

Part 1: If you are stopped by the
police



An Easy Read version of the
Youth Justice Charter

Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

What is in this booklet

The youth justice system	4
The Youth Justice Charter	5
If you are stopped by the police	9
If you want to complain	36
Find out more	37

The youth justice system



If you are a child aged 10 to 17 years old and break the law, you might have contact with the **youth justice system**.

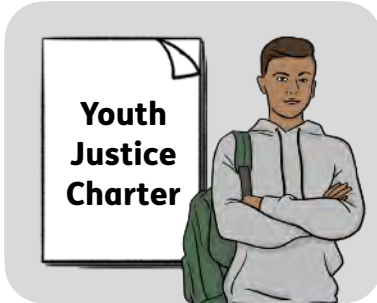


The **youth justice system** is the police, courts, youth justice services and **custody** services.



The law is a set of rules that must be followed to keep people safe and protect people's property. Breaking the law is also called **offending**, or **committing a crime**.

The Youth Justice Charter



The Youth Justice Charter tells you about your rights if you are a child and break the law.



All children have **rights**. You still have these rights, even if you have broken the law.

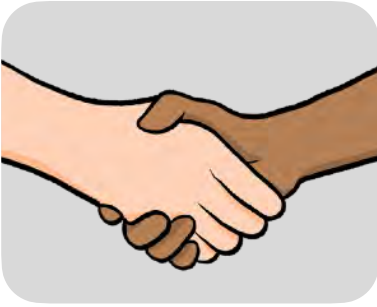
Rights are basic things that every person should have. Like the right to be safe, the right to education, the right to be respected.



The Youth Justice Charter calls them **standards**.

The standards explain how you should be treated by the different people and organisations you have contact with.

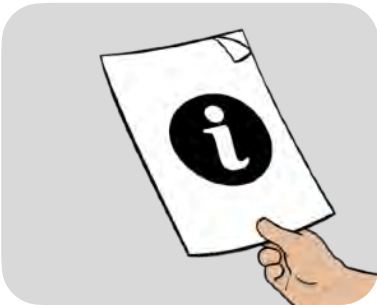
In all parts of the youth justice system you have the right to:



- Be treated fairly.



- Have help with the law, from someone who is on your side.



- Have information to help and support you.



- Be listened to and have what you think taken seriously.

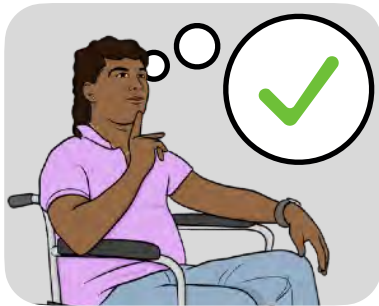


- Be healthy and kept safe.



In all parts of the youth justice system you also have the right to:

- Be able to learn and grow.

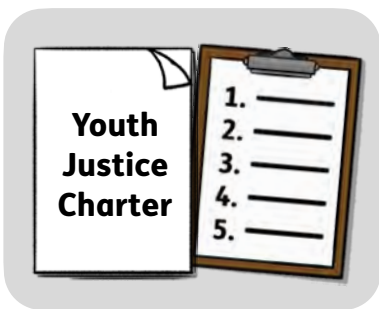


- Be able to make good choices for the future no matter what has happened in the past.



You also have the right to complain if you do not think these standards have been met.

This Charter tells you how to do that.



There are five parts of the Charter and each part has a booklet.



The booklets tell you about the standards when you are:

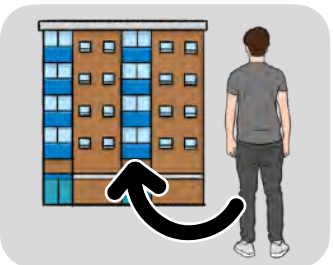
- Stopped by the police.



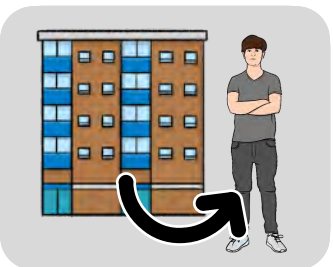
- Going to court.



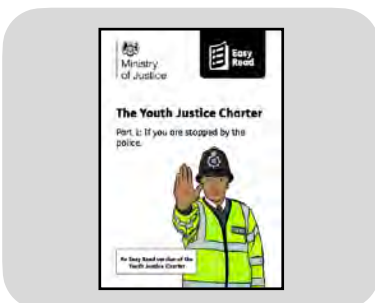
- Being supported by youth justice services.



- Going into youth custody.



- Leaving youth custody.



This booklet tells you about being stopped by the police.

If you are stopped by the police



The job of the police is to keep everyone safe.



The law gives the police powers to help them:

- Solve crime.



- Stop crime from happening.

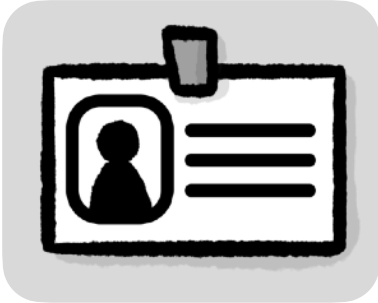


They have to use these powers in the right way.



The police standards tell you how you should be treated by the police.

1. **The police can talk to you at any time, but they must prove who they are.**



If they are not wearing their uniform they must show you their police ID card, called a **warrant card**.

2. **The police can stop and search you but they must tell you why.**



The police can stop you if they think you have something you should not have.



They might record the search on their body cameras.



If they record it, they must tell you.



If they ask you to take off something you wear because of your religion, they should take you somewhere private.



The police must write in their notes that they have searched you. They should give you a copy of the notes, or tell you how to get a copy.

The police should tell your parent or carer if they stop and search you.

3. If the police take you to a police station, they must get an appropriate adult to support you.



An **appropriate adult** is usually someone you know, like a parent, carer or social worker.



If you do not know an appropriate adult, the police will find one for you.

The appropriate adult should:



- Be with you when the police are talking to you.



- Support and help you.



- Make sure you understand your rights.



- Make sure the police are doing their job in the right way.



The appropriate adult should not talk for you.

4. If the police search private areas of your body, they must follow the rules.

Your appropriate adult should be there when the police search you unless:



- It is urgent, or



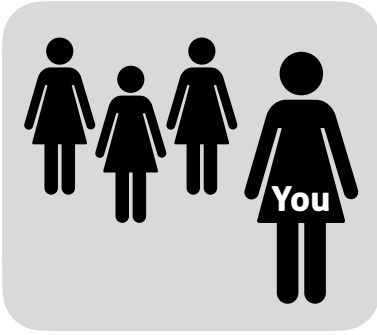
- You do not want your appropriate adult there.



If you do not want your appropriate adult to be there, they need to agree.



When you are searched there must be 2 or 3 people there.



Everyone must be the same sex as you.

But if you have asked for an appropriate adult who is not the same sex as you, they can be there.



The search must be:

- Done as quickly as possible.



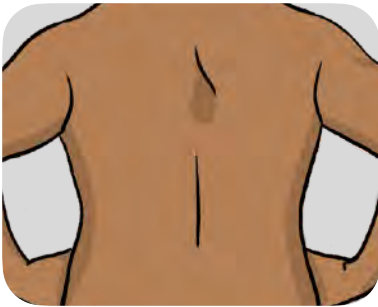
- Done in private.



- Not done in a police car or van.



You must be allowed to put your clothes back on as soon as the search is finished.



You should not have to take off all your clothes at the same time.



If the police record the search, they should not record any of the private areas of your body.

5. If the police want to interview you, they must tell you about your rights.



An **interview** is when the police ask you questions to help with investigating a crime.



The police can only ask you questions if you have an appropriate adult with you.



The police must ask you or your appropriate adult if you want a **lawyer**.

A **lawyer** is someone who knows the law and can give you advice about it. The lawyer works for you, not for the police.



Your lawyer will support you in the interview.



If you want a lawyer, the police cannot interview you until your lawyer is there.

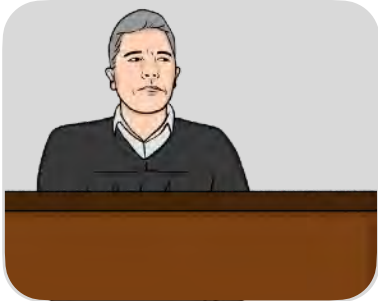


The police will give you a **caution** before the interview.



A **caution** is when the police explain that:

- You do not have to answer their questions.
- Anything you say can be used in court.



6. If you are arrested, the police must explain what is happening and why you have been arrested.



You should not be arrested at school or college unless the police think you could hurt yourself or other people.

You should be:



- Taken straight to a police station, or



- **De-arrested.**

De-arrested means something has changed and you are not arrested any more.

7. The police will look after your health and wellbeing when you are at the police station.



Wellbeing means feeling happy and healthy in your body and mind.



If the police are worried about your health or wellbeing they will ask a health worker to talk to you.



The health worker will tell the police the best way to look after you.

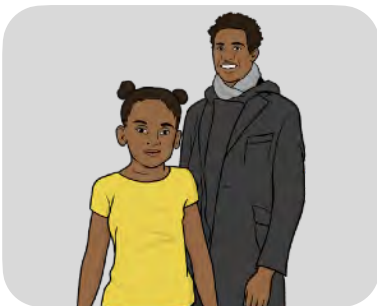


This might be because you have mental health difficulties, learning difficulties, autism or ADHD.

8. The police will only keep you at the police station for as long as they need to and will treat you in the right way when you are there.



The police must try to contact someone who looks after you to tell them where you are.



You should be able to talk to a parent or someone who looks after you.



You should only be put in a cell if there is nowhere else safe and comfortable.



You must not be put in a cell with an adult.



If you are female, you will be looked after by a female police officer.



While you are at the police station you will have:

- Food and water.



- Somewhere to sleep.



- Clothes or blankets to keep you warm.

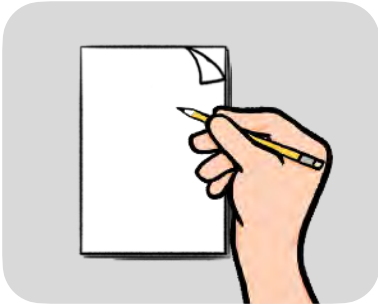


- Sanitary towels or tampons if you are on your period.

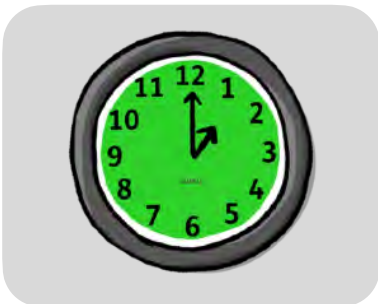


You can ask for:

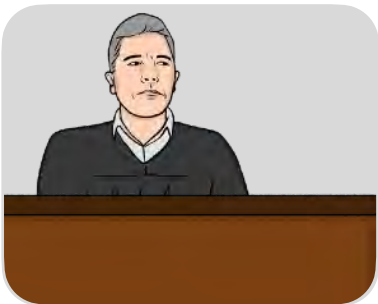
- A book to read.



- Things to draw or write with.



The police can only keep you at the police station for 24 hours before they **charge** you.

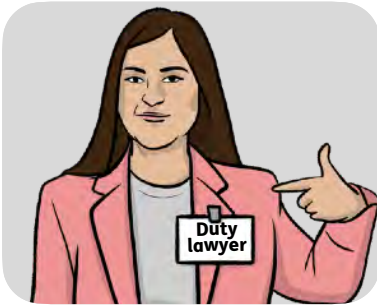


Being **charged** means you will have to go to court and the court will decide what happens to you next.



They can keep you longer before they charge you if you have been accused of a serious crime.

9. You have the right to free advice from a lawyer.



If you do not already have a lawyer, you can ask for the duty lawyer.



You do not need to pay for a lawyer.



The lawyer works for you and not the police.



You can speak to the lawyer in private.



If you have a lawyer, they must be with you when the police ask you questions.

10. You will get help to understand what is happening, if you need it.



If you speak a different language than English or Welsh, the police can arrange for an **interpreter** for you.



An **interpreter** is someone who can change what someone is saying into a language you understand. This could either be a spoken language or sign language.

Your appropriate adult can also help:



- You understand what the police are saying.



- The police understand what you are saying.



You might also be able to get help from an **intermediary**.

An **intermediary** is someone who is not part of the police who can help you talk to each other.

11. If you are offered an out of court disposal, the police will help you understand what that means.



An **out of court disposal** means that you will not have to go to court.



You will have to follow some rules instead.

The police should tell you:



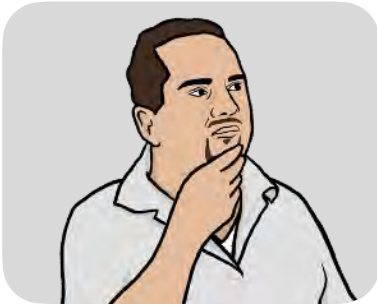
- About the rules you will need to follow.



- What will happen if you do not follow the rules.



An appropriate adult must be with you if you are offered a caution.



You can ask a lawyer or your appropriate adult if you should accept the caution.



You might need to tell someone about your caution in future.

This could be if you apply for a job or you want to go to college.

12. If you are charged with an offence, the police will explain what happens next.



If you are charged with an offence, you will have to go to court.



The police will tell you about any rules you have to follow until you go to court.



While you are waiting to go to court, you usually have a right to **bail**.

Bail is when you are released while the police look into whether you committed a crime. When you are on bail you must return to the police station or court when you are told to, if you do not you are committing a crime.



If you are not charged with committing an offence, the police will let you go.



You might still be under investigation. This means that the police will keep looking into what happened and you might be arrested and charged in the future.

13. If you are not given bail by the police, they will explain why not.

You might not be given bail if:



- The police are not sure where you live.



- You have been charged with a serious crime, like murder.



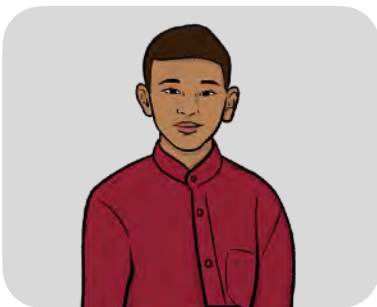
The Council and the Youth Justice Service (YJS) will try and find you somewhere safe to stay.



If they cannot find you anywhere to stay, you will have to stay at the police station. This is called staying in **police custody**.



The police will tell you about the rules you will need to follow.



They will tell you if you have become a **looked after child** for a short time, and what that means.



Being a **looked after child** means that the Council is responsible for where you live and your care.

14. If you have to stay in the police station, the police will tell you how long you will have to stay there and what will happen next.



You might have to stay in the police station until you go to court.



You will usually go to court within 24 hours after you get to the police station.



You will be taken straight to court from the police station.



The first time you go to court will be called a **bail hearing**.

A **bail hearing** is where the court decides if you should be:



- Bailed.

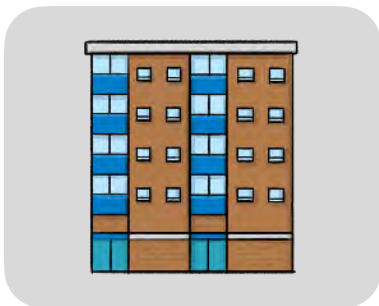


- Remanded to the community.



- Stay in the **youth secure estate**.

The **youth secure estate** is made up of different buildings, like:



- A Young Offender Institution.



- A secure school.



- A secure training centre.



- A secure children's home.

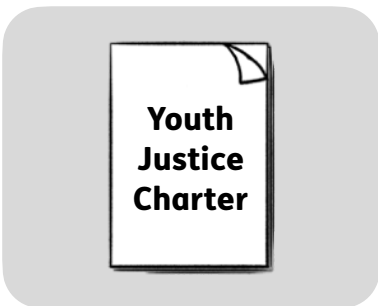
If you want to complain



If you think someone has not followed the standards, you should tell them.



If you do not want to tell them, or are not happy with what they say, you or your parents or carers can make a complaint.



There is information about how to do this in the Youth Justice Charter, in the part called "What to do if these standards have not been met".



To find out more, search the internet for "youth justice charter".

Find out more



You can look at our website here:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice

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