**Police powers to stop and search: your rights**

The police can stop and question you at any time - they can search you depending on the situation.

A police community support officer (PCSO) must be in uniform when they stop and question you. A police officer doesn’t always have to be in uniform but if they’re not wearing uniform they must show you their warrant card.

**Stop and question: police powers**

A police officer might stop you and ask:

* what your name is
* what you’re doing in the area
* where you’re going

You don’t have to stop or answer any questions. If you don’t and there’s no other reason to suspect you, then this alone can’t be used as a reason to search or arrest you.

**Stop and search: police powers**

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
* 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
* you’re in a specific location or area

**Before you’re searched**

Before you’re searched the police officer must tell you:

* their name and police station
* what they expect to find, for example drugs
* the reason they want to search you, for example if it looks like you’re hiding something
* why they are legally allowed to search you
* that you can have a record of the search and if this isn’t possible at the time, how you can get a copy

**Removing clothing: police powers**

A police officer can ask you to take off your coat, jacket or gloves.

The police might ask you to take off other clothes and anything you’re wearing for religious reasons - for example a veil or turban. If they do, they must take you somewhere out of public view.

If the officer wants to remove more than a jacket and gloves they must be the same sex as you.

**Being searched doesn’t mean you’re being arrested.**