

Children, violence and vulnerability 2024

What do children and young people think about the police?



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Main findings and summary



Executive Summary

The Youth Endowment Fund surveyed over 10,000 teenage children (aged 13-17) in England and Wales about their experiences of violence.

The findings are detailed across five reports, each focusing on a different aspect.

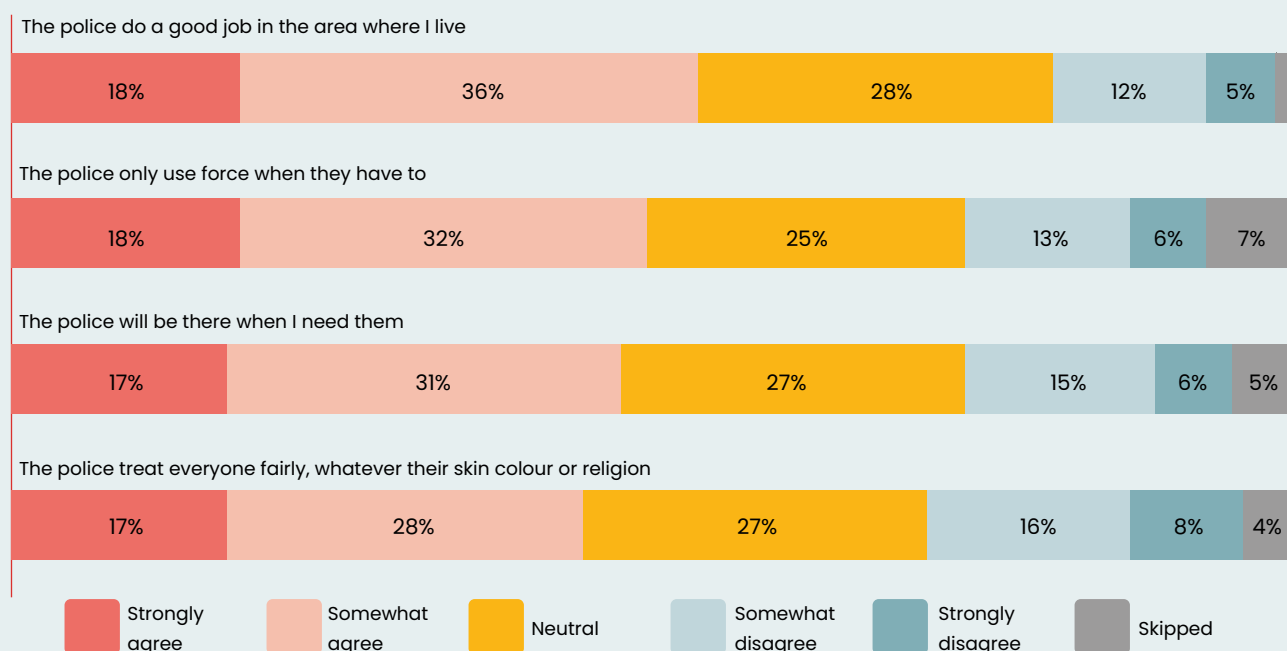
In this report, we look at teenage children’s views and experiences of the police.

Here’s what we found.

Opinions of the police differ according to children’s experiences.

Teenagers’ views of the police shift as they get older and gain more exposure to policing. Over half (54%) of 13-17-year-olds believe the police do a good job in their local areas. Similar proportions feel the police use force appropriately (50%) and are available when needed (47%). Only 45% think the police treat everyone fairly, regardless of race or religion.

The proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who agree or disagree with the following statements about the police



Age plays a significant role in shaping perceptions. Thirteen-year-olds consistently express the most positive views, while 16–17-year-olds are more critical of police conduct.

Interestingly, Black teenagers (63%) are the most likely to agree that the police do a good job locally, compared to 54% of White children, 52% of Asian children and 50% of mixed ethnicity children.

However, Black (39%) and mixed ethnicity (36%) children are far less likely to believe the police treat everyone fairly than White children (47%). When it comes to the use of force, Asian (47%), Black (42%) and mixed ethnicity (39%) children are also less likely to agree that police use force only when necessary when compared to White children (52%).



I think I have mixed feelings about and towards the police. I think there are a lot of police that have good intentions, but when we're looking at a system, I think it creates a lot of fear when we don't believe a system is made for us.

Taylia, Youth Endowment Fund Youth Advisory Board member



Children with direct experiences of violence tend to have more positive views of the police. For instance, 62% of children who've been victims of serious violence think their local police do a good job, compared to 54% of children who haven't been a victim.

Direct experiences with the police also affect perceptions, but the effect differs depending on racial background. White teenagers who've had contact with the police are more likely to say the police do a good job than those with no direct experience. But this is not the case for teenagers from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Children are mostly supportive of stop and search but don't all agree it's used fairly.

Most teenagers are supportive of the police's power to stop and search, though not all believe it's applied fairly. Overall, 68% of 13-17-year-olds support stop and search, and 72% believe it helps prevent knife crime. However, only 56% think that stop and search is used fairly. Younger teenagers (aged 13-15) are generally more supportive of stop and search than older teenagers (aged 16-17). Racial differences also emerge, with White children more likely to view stop and search as both effective and fair than their Black, Asian and mixed ethnicity peers.



I don't think I would say stop and search is necessarily bad. I don't think most people would agree that stop and search is bad. But I think it's about it being proportional. What are we trying to achieve? And are we proportionally using it fairly and correctly in certain areas? There's naturally a power imbalance between the police and young people. Are we doing it out of power? Are we doing it to incite fear? What are we actually trying to achieve when we're carrying out stop and searches? So, I wouldn't say they are bad, I think we just need to be a bit mindful about how we're using stop and searches.



Taylia, Youth Endowment Fund Youth Advisory Board member

Children who've been stopped and searched have had mixed experiences.

The experiences of those who've been stopped and searched also vary significantly by ethnicity. White teenagers who've been stopped and searched are more likely to have had a positive experience, with 74% agreeing that the police were polite and 70% feeling they were treated with respect. In comparison, 56% of Asian, Black and mixed ethnicity teenagers who've been stopped and searched agree that the police were polite, and 51% agree that they were treated with respect. Similarly, 73% of White teenagers agree that the police explained why they were being stopped, compared to 55% of Asian, Black and mixed ethnicity children.

Headline findings

Opinions of the police differ according to children's experiences.

1 in 2 children think the police do a good job.

54% of 13-17-year-olds think the police do a good job in their areas. 50% think the police only use force when they have to. 47% think the police will be there when they need them. 45% think the police treat everyone fairly. Older children are less likely to hold positive views of the police.

Children with direct experience of violence have more positive views of the police...

Children who've been affected by serious violence – as both victims and perpetrators – are more likely to think the police do a good job in their areas (62% & 69%), only use force when necessary (55% & 64%), will be there when needed (54% & 66%) and treat everyone fairly (57% & 66%).

...as do children who've had contact with the police.

White children who've had any interaction with the police over a suspected offence are more likely to agree that they do a good job (61%), are there when needed (55%) and treat everyone fairly (54%) compared to those who haven't had police contact. This is not the case for Black, Asian or mixed ethnicity children.

Children are mostly supportive of stop and search but don't all agree it's used fairly.

7 in 10 support the use of stop and search, but fewer think police use it fairly.

68% of 13-17-year-olds think the police should be able to carry out stop and search. 72% think that stop and search helps prevent people from carrying knives. 56% think that the police use stop and search fairly.

Older children and children from Asian, Black and mixed backgrounds are less supportive.

65% of 16-17-year-olds agree that the police should be able to carry out stop and search, compared to 70% of 13-15-year-olds. 59% of Black children, 63% of Asian children and 63% of mixed ethnicity children agree that the police should use stop and search, compared to 70% of White children. Black (49%) and mixed ethnicity (49%) children are less likely than Asian (54%) and White (57%) children to think stop and search is used fairly.

Children who've been stopped and searched have had mixed experiences.

1 in 8 who've been stopped and searched say the police didn't explain why.

11% of 13-17-year-olds say they've been stopped and searched by the police in the past year. 70% think the police were polite, and 66% think they were treated with respect. 68% say the police explained why they'd been stopped, but 13% disagree, and 13% are unsure.

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to say the police treated them with respect.

57% of Asian, Black and mixed ethnicity children think the police were polite when stopping them, compared to 74% of White children. 56% say the police explained why they'd been stopped, compared to 73% of White children. 51% say they were treated with respect, compared to 70% of White children.

But children who've been stopped and searched are more likely to support its use.

74% of those who've been stopped and searched agree that the police should be able to carry out stop and search, compared to 68% of all 13-17-year-olds. They are also more likely to agree the police use their powers fairly (62% vs 56% who haven't been stopped and searched) but are no more likely to think that stop and search prevents weapons carrying (70% vs 72% who haven't been stopped and searched).

Methods and detailed findings



About this report

What we wanted to find out

This is our third annual survey into young people's experience of violence. This year, we surveyed over 10,000 children aged 13–17 in England and Wales about their experiences over the past 12 months – compared to 7,500 last year. The greater number of responses provides more confidence in the findings.

This year, we're publishing the findings of the survey in five separate reports, covering:

1. [Who is affected by violence?](#)
2. [What role does social media play in violence affecting young people?](#)
3. [How are boys and girls affected by violence?](#)
4. [What do children and young people think about the police? \(this report\)](#)
5. [Who has access to positive activities, youth clubs and trusted adults?](#)

This is the fourth report in this year's series. It covers young people's views of the police, including how they use force, how fairly they treat people and whether they do a good job; young people's views of stop and search and whether it should be carried out; and how young people who were stopped and searched were treated by the police.

What we did

This year, a total of 10,387 children aged 13–17 responded to our survey. As with last year, this was an online survey. This year, we worked with a new surveying partner – Savanta. The survey took 15 minutes on average to complete and was live between 22 May and 2 July 2024. Questions typically related to children's experiences over the past 12 months.

To ensure the results were nationally representative, we did two things. Firstly, we set quotas for key groups. These were age, gender, ethnicity, region and socioeconomic status. The quotas were based on each group's share of the population using Census 2021 population estimates for 13–17-year-olds. Secondly, the results were weighted using the same characteristics to ensure they aligned exactly with their national population totals. For more details, see the [technical report](#).

How children were kept safe when taking part in the survey

Children were invited to take part in the survey and were made aware of the types of questions that would be asked. Anyone could refuse to take part if they wished. For all children aged under 16, a parent or guardian had to consent. Participants could drop out of the survey at any time. Participants were asked to complete the survey on their own and in a safe place where their responses could not be seen. Questions were presented so that responses would not remain visible once they'd been selected to protect their privacy. And it wasn't possible to look back at previous responses once questions had been answered. At the beginning and end and throughout the survey, participants were signposted to relevant support services.

Approach to reporting results

The smaller the number of responses, the less confident we are in the results. For this reason, no results are reported where the total number of responses to a particular question was less than 50. All group comparisons mentioned in the report are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level unless otherwise noted.

What to bear in mind when reading the findings

Like all research, our survey has some limitations. We're trying to understand what children across England and Wales have experienced. While our sample of 10,387 13-17-year-olds is large (for context, the Office for National Statistics' [Crime Survey of England and Wales](#) reached 1,528 10-15-year-olds in 2023/24 and has consistently reached around 3,000 young people in recent years), it still represents a small proportion of all children in the country. It's important, therefore, to remember these limitations when interpreting the results:

- Weights are applied to ensure that the results are broadly representative of the national populations of England and Wales. However, the weights applied only cover a limited number of factors.
- Like most surveys, those who respond are self-selecting. Respondents had the option not to take part. Applying weights helps to address this, but the self-selecting nature of the respondents may have biased the results in a way weighting couldn't account for.
- The sample size is significantly larger than last year's survey and other surveys of this kind. However, when we look at the results for some smaller subgroups (e.g. by region, ethnicity and age), these individual groups can be small. This makes it hard to make generalised conclusions for some smaller populations.
- The subject matter (children's experiences of violence) is sensitive. While we ensured the framing of the questions was suitable for children, it's possible that some may have been unwilling to respond openly and honestly, particularly about things they may have done.
- Caution should be taken when making comparisons between this year's survey and last year's. We cannot rule out that changes made to question order, survey length or respondents to the survey affected comparability between years.

What we found

Opinions of the police differ according to children's experiences.

Only one in two children think the police do a good job.

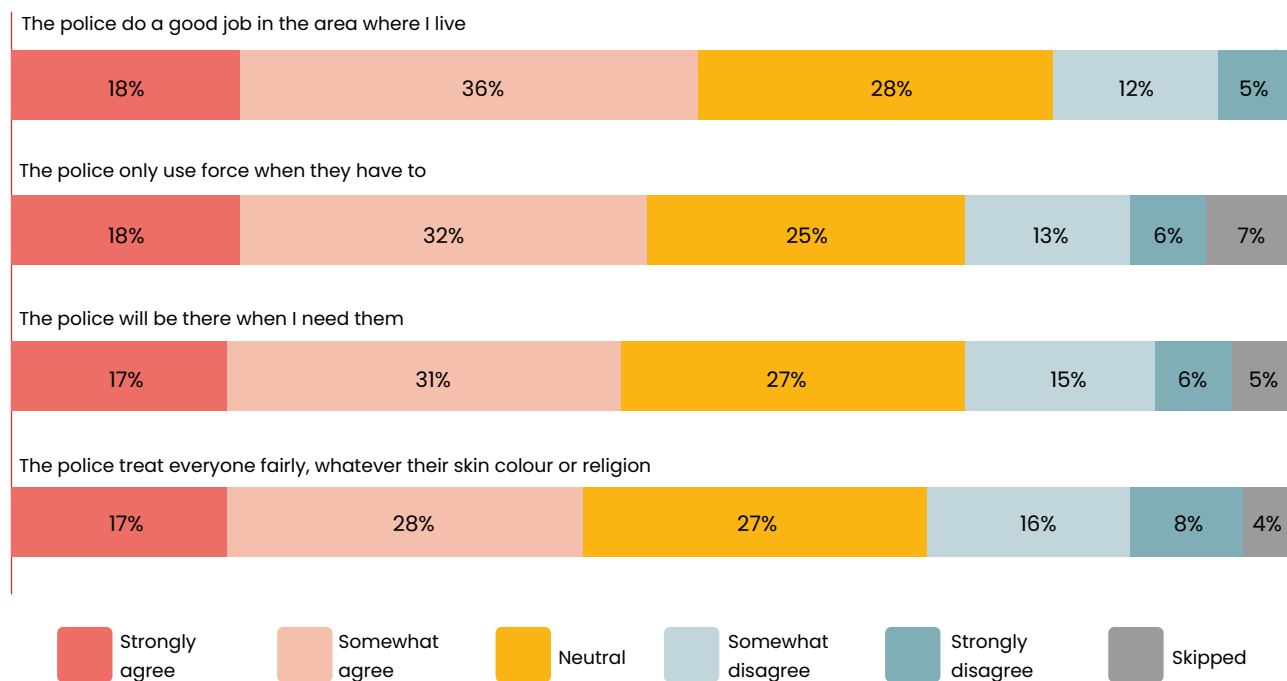
Just over half (54%) of 13-17-year-olds surveyed agree that the police do a good job in their local areas, while 17% disagree and 28% are unsure. A similar proportion expresses positive views when asked about other aspects of police conduct: Fifty per cent feel that the police only use force when necessary, 47% believe the police will be there when needed and 45% think the police treat everyone fairly, regardless of skin colour or religion.

How these findings compare to other surveys

Our questions about the police were adapted from the Mayor of London Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) [Youth Survey 2021-22](#). Out of the 11,874 11-16-year-olds in London who were surveyed, 31% agreed that the police do a good job in their areas, 43% agreed that the police would be there when needed and 24% agreed that the police treat everyone fairly. The approval ratings we found are considerably higher.

The 2024 [Crime Survey of England and Wales \(CSEW\)](#), covering a nationally representative but older sample of 1,677 16-24-year-olds, reported estimates that are more similar to what we found: 52% agreed that their local police do a good job, 62% agreed that the police can be relied on when needed and 57% agreed that the police treat people fairly. Another survey by [Crest Advisory](#) of 1,542 10-18-year-olds from across the whole of the UK found a similar proportion (55%) trusted the police to treat people fairly.

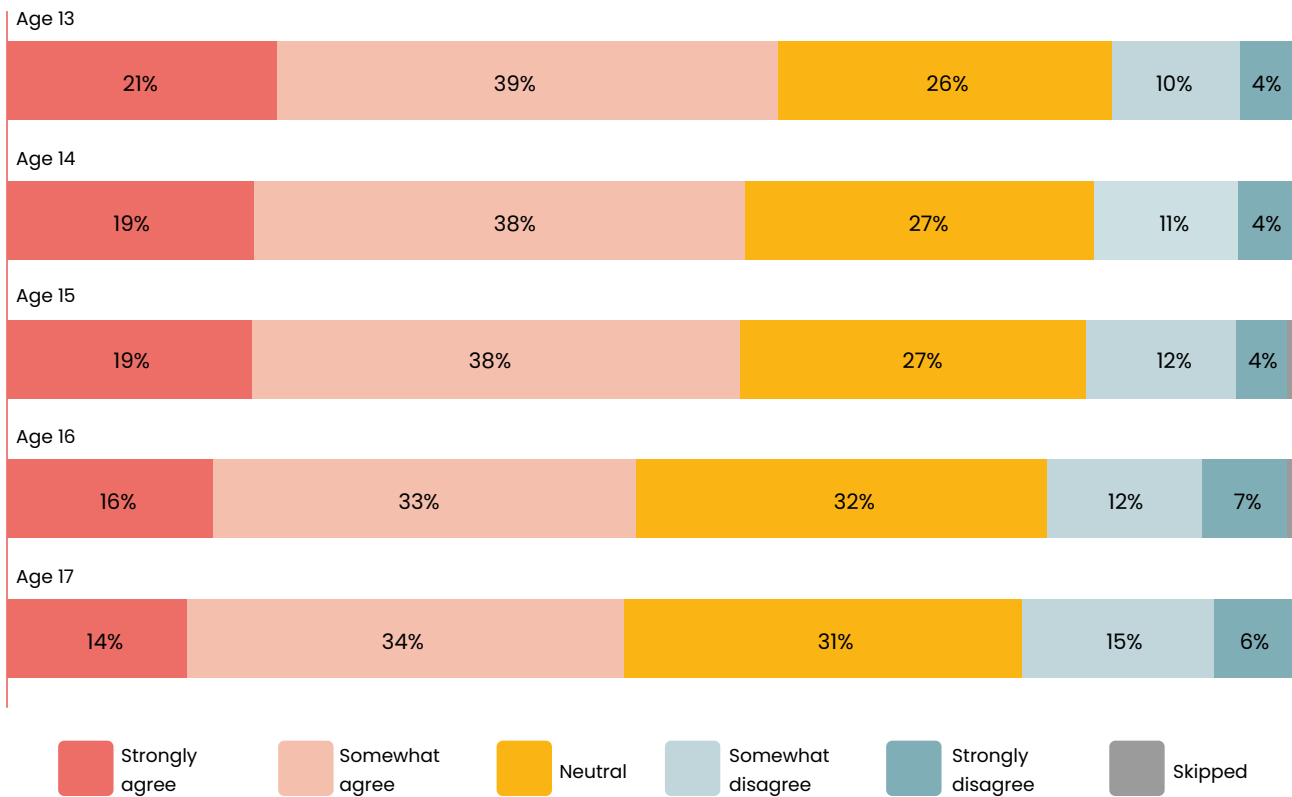
Figure 1.1: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who agree or disagree with the following statements about the police



Boys and younger children hold more positive views of the police.

Boys are more likely to express positive views about the police across all questions than girls. Fifty-six per cent of boys agree that the police do a good job where they live, compared to 52% of girls. This difference is even more pronounced when it comes to perceptions of fairness, with 49% of boys agreeing that the police treat everyone fairly, compared to only 42% of girls. The older children are, the less positive their perceptions of the police. Thirteen-year-olds consistently show the most positive attitudes, while 16-17-year-olds express the least favourable views. This is particularly noticeable among girls. Only 34% of girls aged 16-17 agree that the police treat everyone fairly, and 39% believe that the police will be there when needed. These figures are significantly lower than those for girls aged 13-15, where 48% and 51% somewhat or strongly agree with those two statements, respectively.

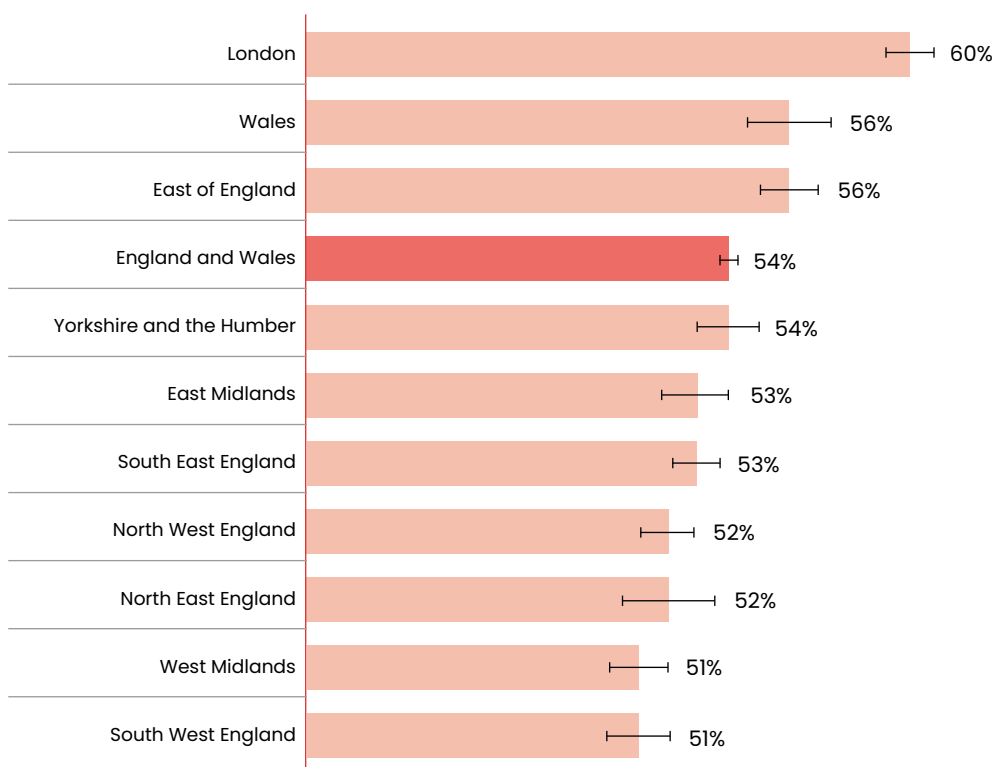
Figure 1.2: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who agree or disagree that the police do a good job in the area they live by age



Children living in inner-city areas are more likely to think that the police do a good job.

Teenagers living in inner-city areas (60%) are more likely to agree that the police do a good job than those from suburban (53%), town (51%) and village (53%) settings. Children from inner-city areas are also more likely to agree that the police treat everyone fairly (51% vs 44% of children living in towns, for example), will be there when needed (54% vs 44% of children living in towns) and only use force when they have to (53% vs 48% of children living in towns).

Figure 1.3: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree that the police do a good job in the areas they live by region



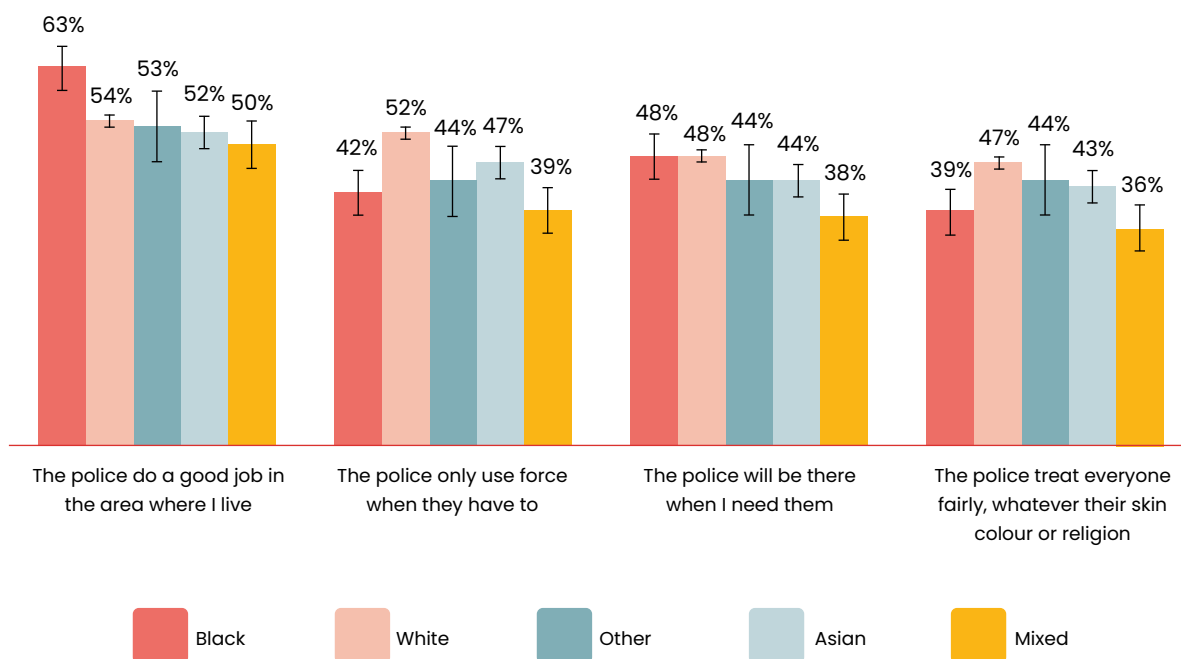
Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

Children in London (60%) are more likely to think the local police do a good job than those in most other regions, but views are more similar when comparing cities between regions. For example, 59% of children in cities in the East of England and 58% in cities in the North East think the local police do a good job, compared to 56% and 52% for each region, respectively.

Black children are more likely to agree that the police do a good job but less likely to agree that they treat everyone fairly and use force only when necessary, compared to children of other ethnicities.

Children from Black backgrounds are the most likely to agree that the police do a good job in the areas they live in – 63% agree, compared to 54% of White children, 52% of Asian children and 50% of children of mixed ethnicity. However, along with children from mixed ethnicity backgrounds (36%), children from Black backgrounds (39%) are significantly less likely to agree that the police treat everyone fairly, compared to White children (47%). Asian (47%), Black (42%) and mixed ethnicity (39%) children are also less likely to agree that the police only use force when they have to, compared to White children (52%). Mixed ethnicity children are the least likely to believe that the police will be there when they need them (38% vs 44% of Asian, 48% of Black and 48% of White children).

Figure 1.4: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who agree with the following statements about the performance of the police by ethnicity



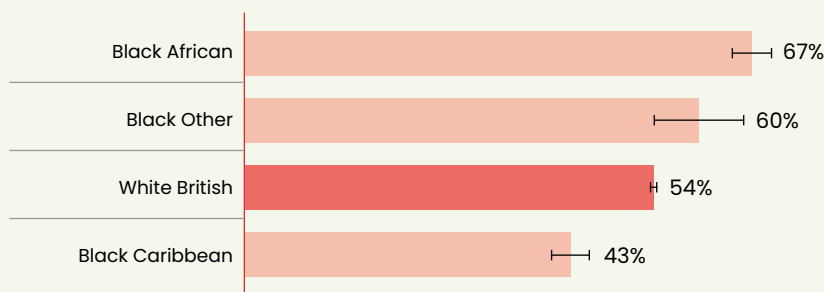
Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

How does this compare to other surveys?

National data shows that Black children are disproportionately represented at all stages of the justice system, including stop and searches and arrests. Other surveys of children often find that Black children have particularly low levels of trust in the police. Surprisingly, in last year’s survey, we found that children from Black backgrounds (57%) were more likely to agree that the police kept them safe from violence than White children (49%). This year, we wanted to explore this finding further by asking more detailed questions about children’s views and experiences of the police. We found again that overall, Black children had a more positive view of police performance – 63% say they do a good job in the areas they live in, compared to 54% of White children. However, we now see a more nuanced picture, with children from Black and other minority ethnic backgrounds generally being less supportive of how the police interact with the public.

Our finding that Black children are less likely to agree that the police treat everyone fairly is in line with what other surveys have found. The CSEW found a similar pattern with those over the age of 16 – while Black respondents were more likely to think that the police do a good job, they were less likely to believe that they treat everyone fairly (48%) when compared to White respondents (57%). Other surveys of children, such as the one done by Crest Advisory, find that children from Black backgrounds are even less likely to trust the police to be fair (19%) than we found in our survey (39%).

Figure 1.5: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds from Black backgrounds who agree that the police in their local areas do a good job



Note. ‘Black African’ and ‘Black Caribbean’ groups combine children from Black and mixed White and Black backgrounds to account for small sample sizes. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

To understand the results further, we broke them down by more detailed ethnicity and by location. We found that Black children’s positivity about the police was mainly driven by children from Black African backgrounds. Children from Black Caribbean backgrounds are less positive. Due to small sample sizes, we combined children from Black and mixed White and Black backgrounds. Forty-three per cent of Black Caribbean and mixed White and Black Caribbean children think the police do a good job in their area, compared to 66% of Black African and mixed White and Black African children.

We also see differences depending on where children live. Black children in London (51%) are less likely to think the police do a good job compared to Black children in the rest of England and Wales (67%) and White children in London (65%).

Views of the police differ by vulnerabilities to violence.

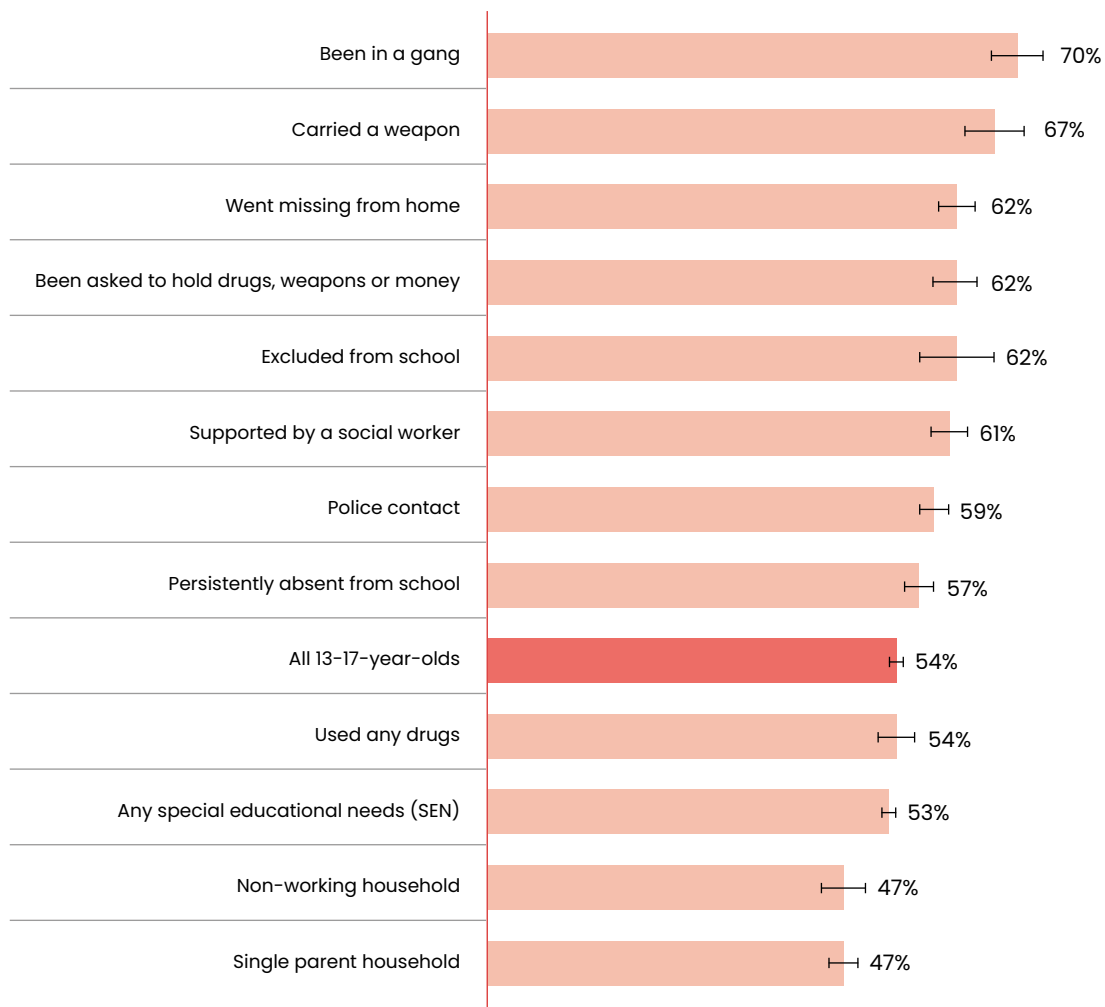
Teenage children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to be positive about the police than those more economically advantaged, but children most at risk of violence or exploitation tend to be more positive than the average.

For example, children living in social housing (43%), with a single parent (47%) and in households where no parents or guardians are in work (47%) are less likely to believe the police do a good job than those living in owned homes (58%) and in two-parent (57%) and working (55%) households. Children eligible for free school meals (FSM) don’t follow the same pattern – they’re more likely to agree the police do a good job (57%) than those not eligible (54%). But FSM may be a less reliable indicator of household income, as some secondary schools offer universal FSM regardless of household income ([e.g. Tower Hamlets](#)).

In contrast, children with other potential vulnerabilities to violence tend to be more positive about the police. For example:

- Children who've been supported by a social worker in the past year (61%) are more likely to agree the police do a good job than those who've never had a social worker (53%).
- Children excluded from school in the past year (62%) are more likely to agree than those who've never been excluded (55%).
- Children most at risk of violence, including those who reported being approached to hold drugs, weapons or money (60%); who've been missing from home for a night (62%); and who've carried a weapon (67%) or been in a gang¹ (70%), are significantly more likely to agree the police do a good job than average (54%).

Figure 1.6: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree that the police do a good job in the area they live by vulnerabilities to violence



Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

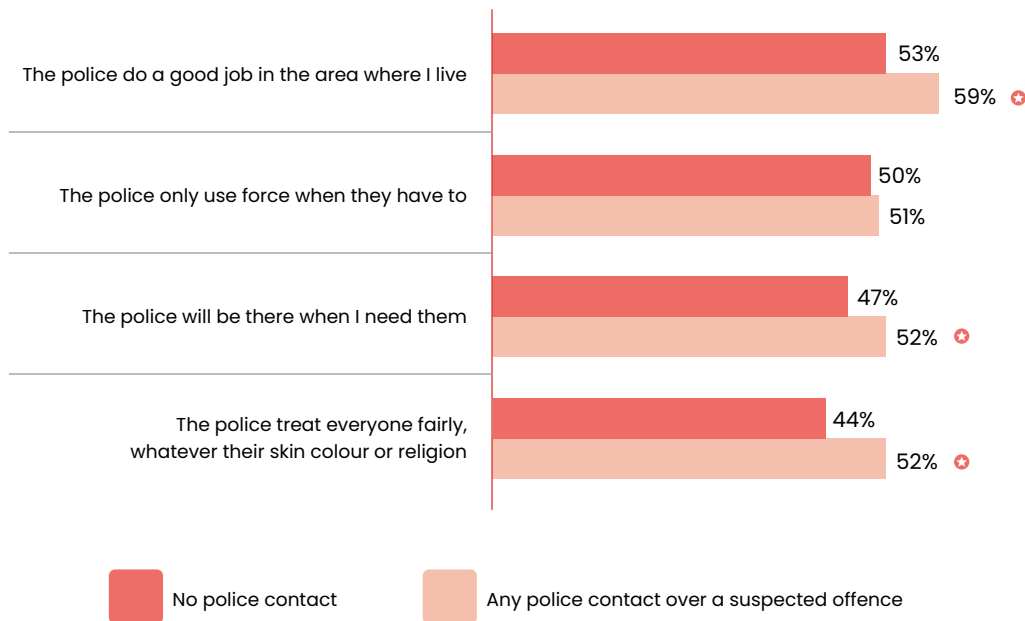
¹ We used the following definition of being in a gang: “By a ‘gang’, we mean a group of young people who think of themselves as a gang, probably with a name, and are involved in violence or other crime.”

Children who've had contact with the police are more positive about them.

On average, teenage children who've had some form of contact with the police (i.e. having been stopped and searched, searched by a school police officer, arrested or any other contact over a crime they were thought to have committed) are more positive about the police than those who've had no contact. For example, 59% of those who've had police contact think the police in their areas do a good job, compared to 53% of those who've had no police contact.

However, this is not the case for children from Black and Asian backgrounds, and there's some evidence of the opposite relationship. For example, 59% of Black 13-17-year-olds who've interacted with the police agree the police do a good job, compared to 65% of those who haven't interacted with the police, although the difference isn't significant.

Figure 1.7: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about the police by whether they've had contact with the police



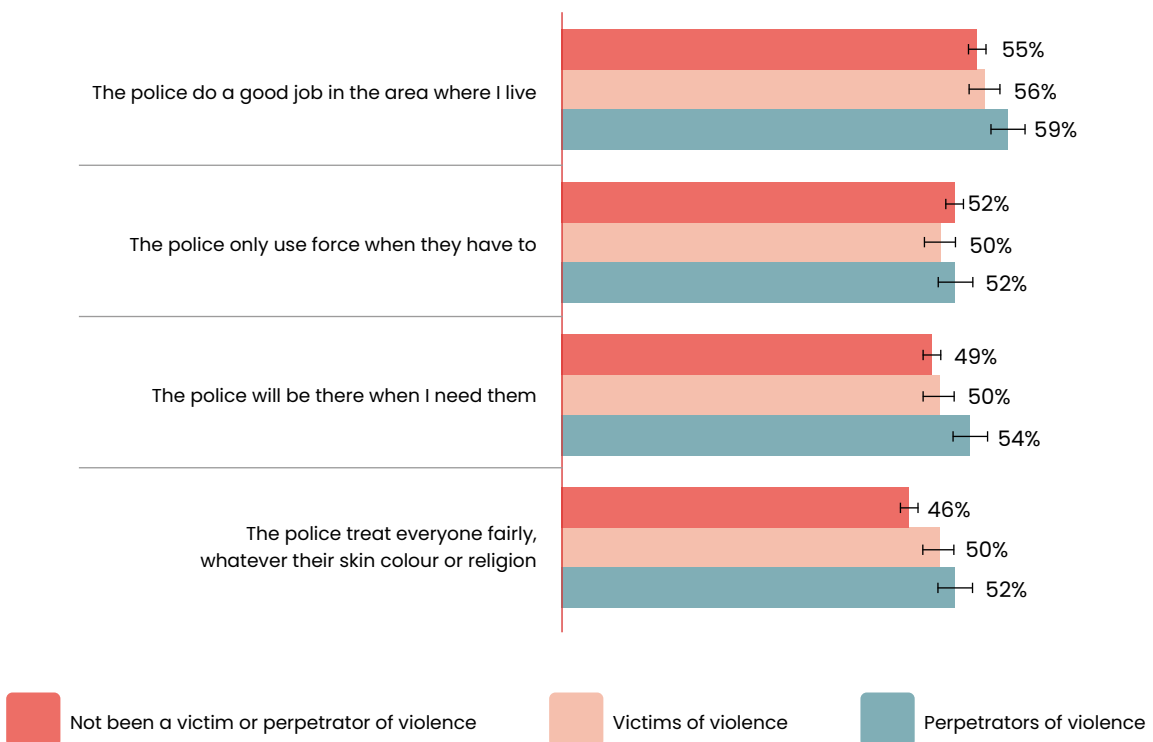
Note. Stars beside the bars indicate where estimates for the two groups are significantly different from one another at a 95% confidence level.

Children with direct experiences of violence have more positive views of the police.

Children who've been victims of violence in the past year are more likely to agree that the police do a good job (56% vs 54% who haven't been victims), will be there when they need them (50% vs 47% who haven't been victims) and treat everyone fairly (50% vs 44% who haven't been victims). These differences are significant but relatively small.

Interestingly, children who say they've perpetrated violence are also more likely to agree that the police do a good job (59% vs 53% who haven't perpetrated violence), will be there when needed (54% vs 46% who haven't perpetrated violence), treat people fairly (52% vs 44% who haven't perpetrated violence) and only use force when necessary (52% vs 49% who haven't perpetrated violence).

Figure 1.8: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about the police by experiences of violence



Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

Why do children with experience of the police hold more positive views about them?

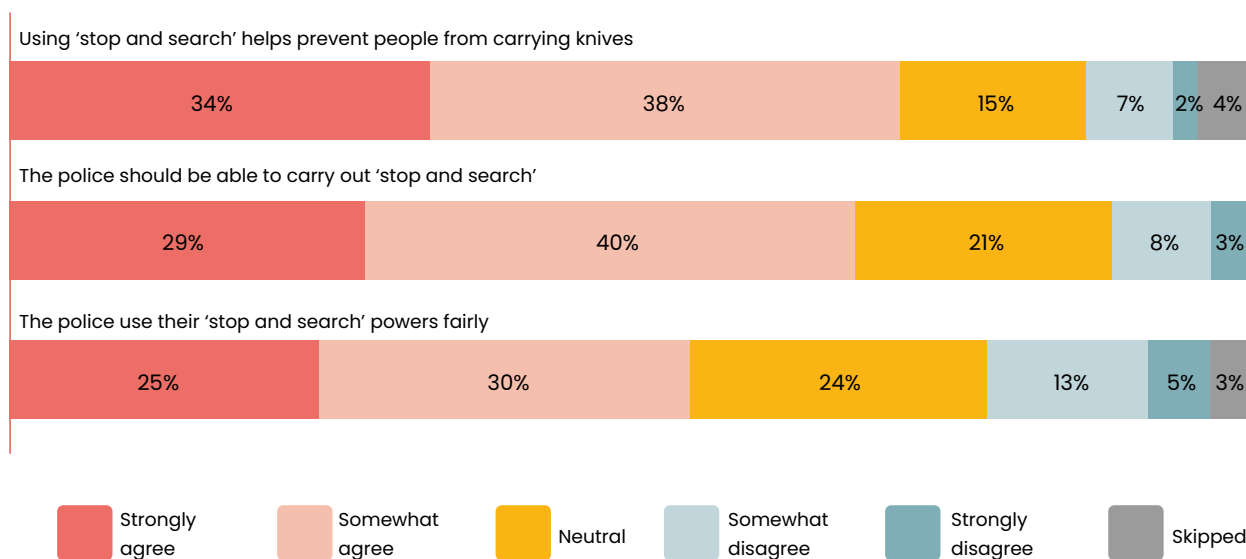
Our finding that children who've had contact with the police are more positive towards them may come as a surprise. However, this is somewhat supported by MOPAC's [Youth Survey](#) of children in London. They found opinions depended on what the experience of the interaction with the police had been like. Forty-five per cent of those in the MOPAC survey who'd had contact with a police officer felt it had been positive, and those children were more likely to trust the police (58%) than those who'd had no police contact (46%).

Children are mostly supportive of stop and search but don't all agree it's used fairly.

Seven in 10 teenage children agree the police should be able to carry out stop and search.

The evidence on the impacts of stop and search is mixed – there's some evidence it can be effective at reducing crime, but concerns remain around its potential negative effects on mental and physical health and public attitudes towards the police, and its disproportionate use on Black people. Opinions on the police's use of stop and search also tend to be very mixed. This year, we wanted to know more about what teenage children across England and Wales think. Overall, 68% of 13–17-year-olds agree that the police should be able to carry out stop and search. Eleven per cent disagree, and 21% aren't sure either way. A similar proportion (72%) agree that stop and search helps prevent people from carrying knives, while 9% disagree and 15% aren't sure. But fewer (56%) agree that the police use their stop and search powers fairly. Eighteen per cent disagree, and a quarter (24%) of all 13–17-year-olds aren't sure either way.

Figure 2.1: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who agree or disagree with the following statements about stop and search



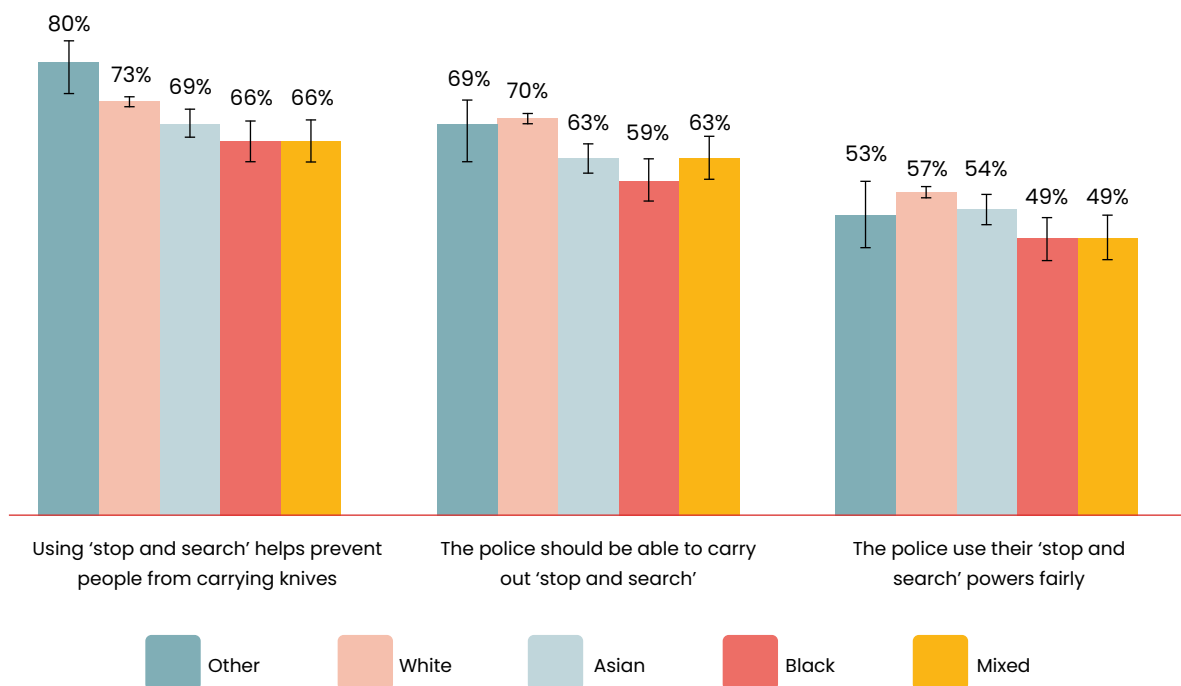
Boys and younger children are more likely to support stop and search.

Consistent with our findings on children’s broader views of the police, younger teenagers (aged 13–15) are more likely than older ones (16–17) to express positive views about stop and search. They’re more likely to agree that the police should be able to use it (70% vs 65%), that it’s effective in preventing weapon carrying (73% vs 69%) and that it’s used fairly (58% vs 51%). Boys are also more likely than girls to agree that the police should be able to use stop and search (70% vs 67%) and that the police use those powers fairly (58% vs 53%).

White children are more likely to hold positive views of stop and search.

White children are significantly more likely to agree that the police should be able to use stop and search (70%) and agree it’s effective at preventing weapon carrying (73%) than Asian (63% and 69%, respectively), Black (59% and 66%, respectively) and mixed ethnicity (63% and 66%, respectively) children. White children (57%) are also more likely than Black (49%) and mixed ethnicity (49%) children to agree that police use stop and search fairly. Children from Asian backgrounds are more split on whether stop and search is used fairly. Fifty-four per cent agree that it’s fair – a similar proportion to children from White backgrounds – but 21% disagree – a significantly higher proportion than White children (16%).

Figure 2.2: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about stop and search by ethnicity



Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

Children who are more vulnerable to violence are more likely to support stop and search by the police but less likely to believe it's effective.

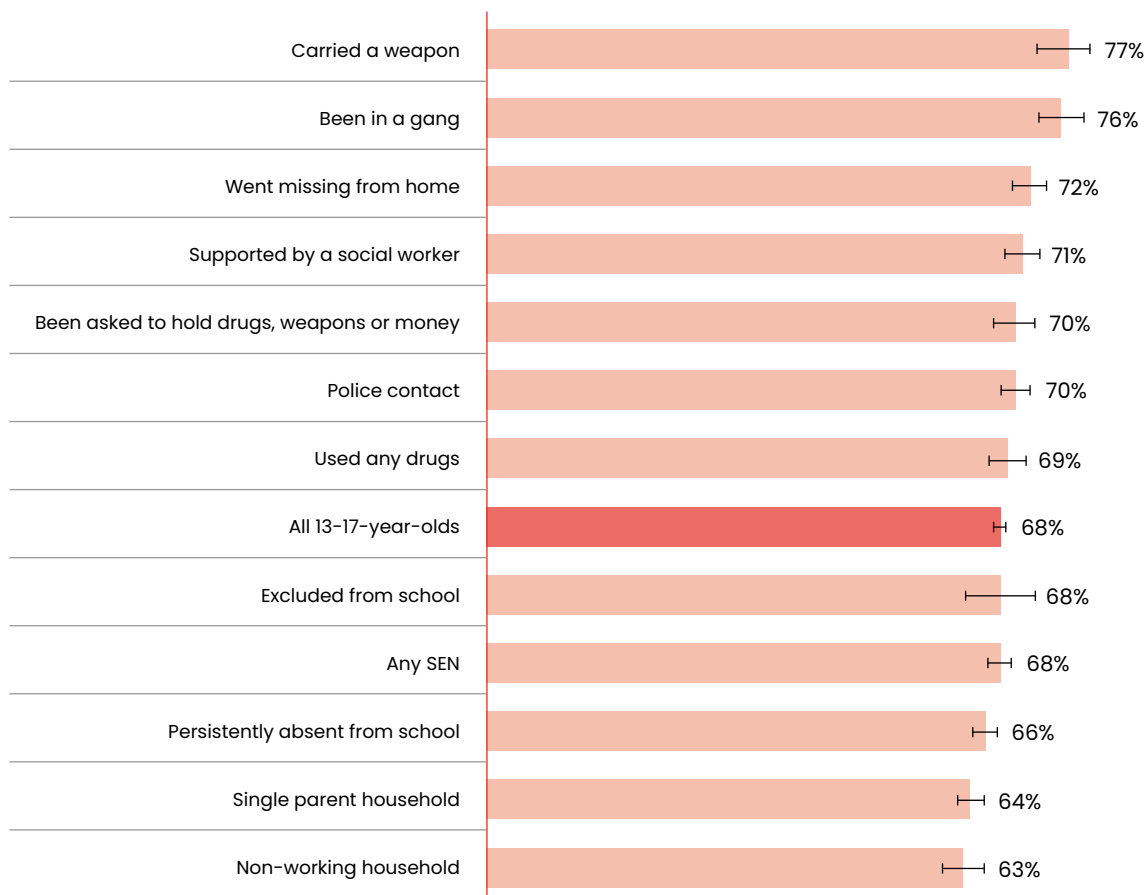
As with overall views of the police, children from less socioeconomically advantaged households are less likely to be supportive of stop and search, whereas those at greater risk of being affected by violence are more likely to be supportive. For example, children living in social housing (61%), with a single parent (64%) and in non-working households (63%) are less likely to agree the police should be able to carry out stop and search than those living in owned homes (72%) and in two-parent (70%) and working (69%) households. They're also less likely to agree that stop and search is used fairly and is effective at preventing knife carrying.

In contrast, children with other potential vulnerabilities to violence tend to hold more positive opinions about stop and search. For example:

- Children supported by a social worker are more likely to agree with stop and search (71%) and think it’s used fairly (60%) compared to those who’ve never had a social worker (69% and 55%, respectively).
- Those most at risk of violence, including children who’ve gone missing from home (72%), been in a gang (76%) and carried a weapon (77%), are more likely to support stop and search than all 13-17-year olds (68%) and are more likely to believe it’s used fairly (60%, 66% and 68%, respectively) than all 13-17-year-olds (56%).

But, despite being more likely to agree that the police should be able to use stop and search, those at risk of violence also tend to be more sceptical that stop and search is effective at preventing knife carrying. Seventy-two per cent of all 13-17-year-olds agree that using stop and search helps prevent people from carrying knives. This falls to 66% of children who’ve been approached to hold drugs, weapons or money and 62% of children who’ve been excluded from school in the past year.

Figure 2.3: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree that the police should be able to carry out stop and search by vulnerabilities to violence



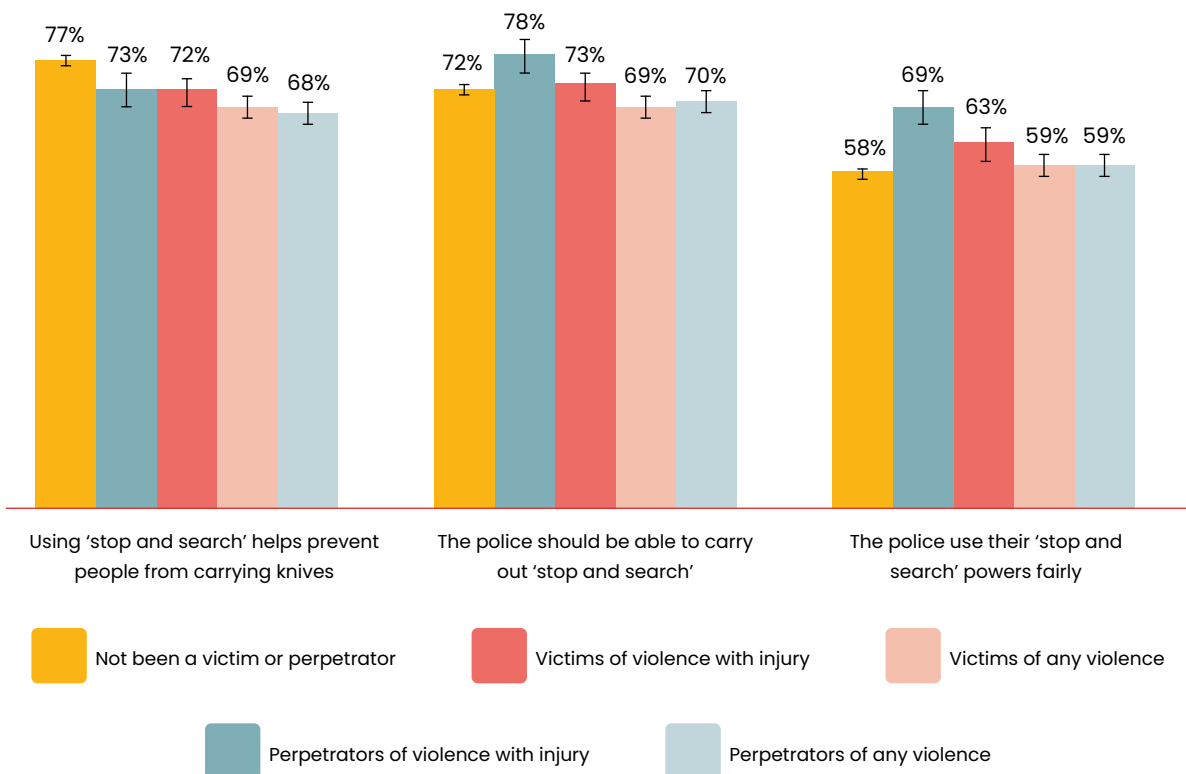
Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

Children with experience of violence are more likely to support stop and search.

Teenage children who've been a victim of any violence in the past year are more likely to believe it's used fairly (59% vs 55% who haven't been) but less likely to believe it helps prevent knife carrying (69% vs 73% who haven't been). Those who've been a victim of violence with injury are even more likely to support its use (73%) and believe it's used fairly (64%).

Children who've perpetrated violence show a similar pattern – they're more likely than those who haven't perpetrated violence to believe it's used fairly (59% and 55%, respectively) but less likely to believe it's effective at preventing knife carrying (68% and 73%, respectively).

Figure 2.4: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about stop and search by experiences of violence



Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

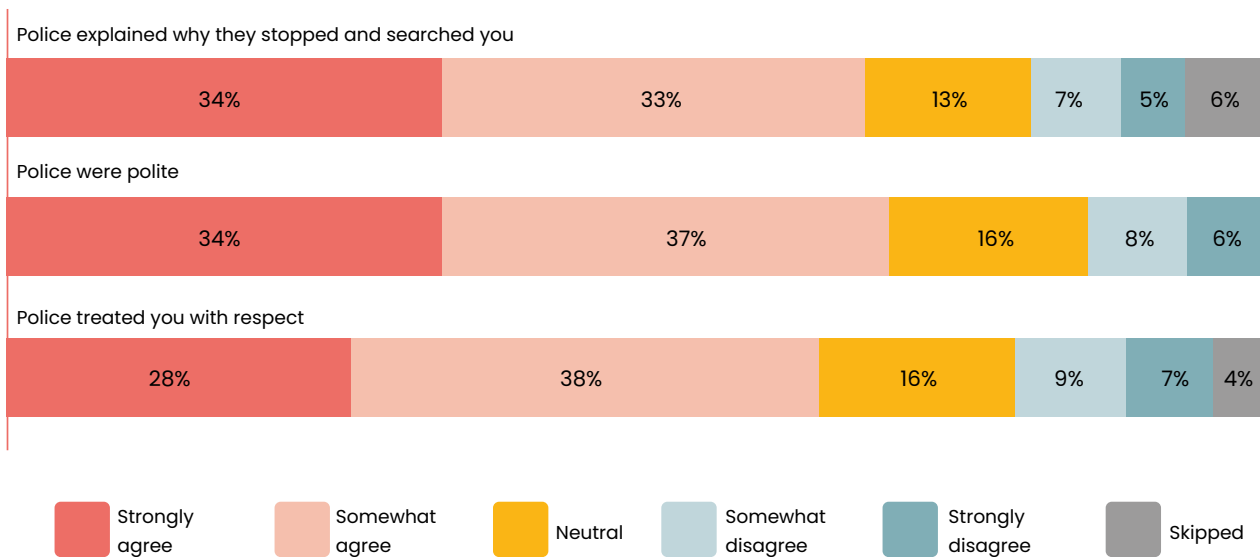
Children who've been stopped and searched have had mixed experiences.

The majority of children who were stopped believe that the police were polite and respectful.

One in five 13-17-year-olds say that in the past year, they've had some form of contact with police: 5% were arrested, 10% were searched by school police officers, 10% were contacted for another reason about a crime they were suspected to have been involved with, and 11% were stopped and searched.

Of those who've been stopped and searched, 70% agree that the police were polite. Fourteen per cent disagree, and the remaining 16% are unsure. Two-thirds (66%) agree they were treated with respect, while 15% disagree. And 68% agree that the police explained why they'd been stopped and searched, while 13% disagree. It's worth noting here that explaining the reason for a search is a requirement that police must follow when exercising their stop and search powers.

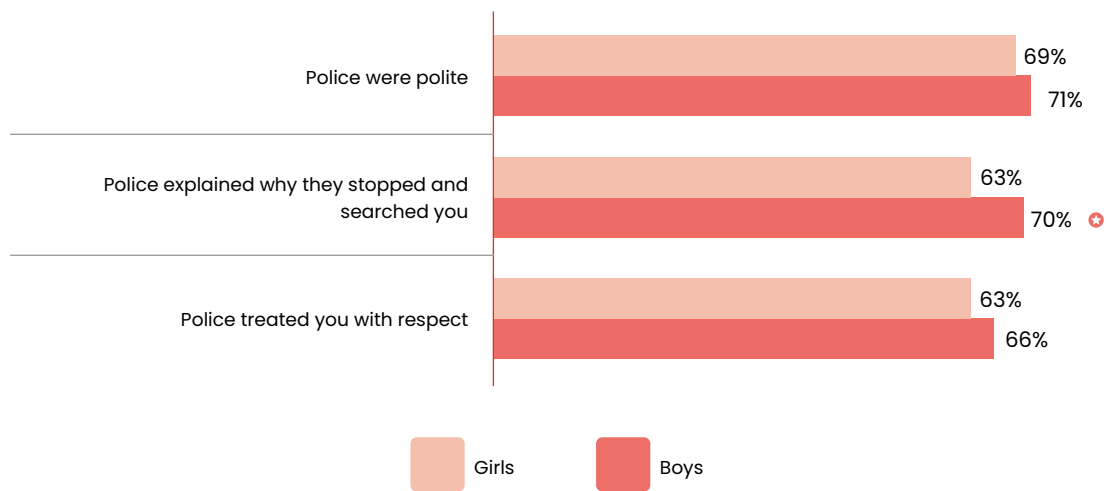
Figure 3.1: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who have been stopped and searched who agree or disagree with the following statements about the experience



Girls are less likely to say the police explained why they'd been stopped and searched.

Seventy per cent of boys aged 13-17 who've been stopped and searched agree that the police explained why they did so, in contrast to only 63% of girls. Boys are also more likely to agree that the police were polite and treated them with respect, although these differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 3.2: Proportion of children who have been stopped and searched who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about the experience by gender



Note. Stars beside the bars indicate where estimates for the two groups are significantly different from one another at a 95% confidence level.

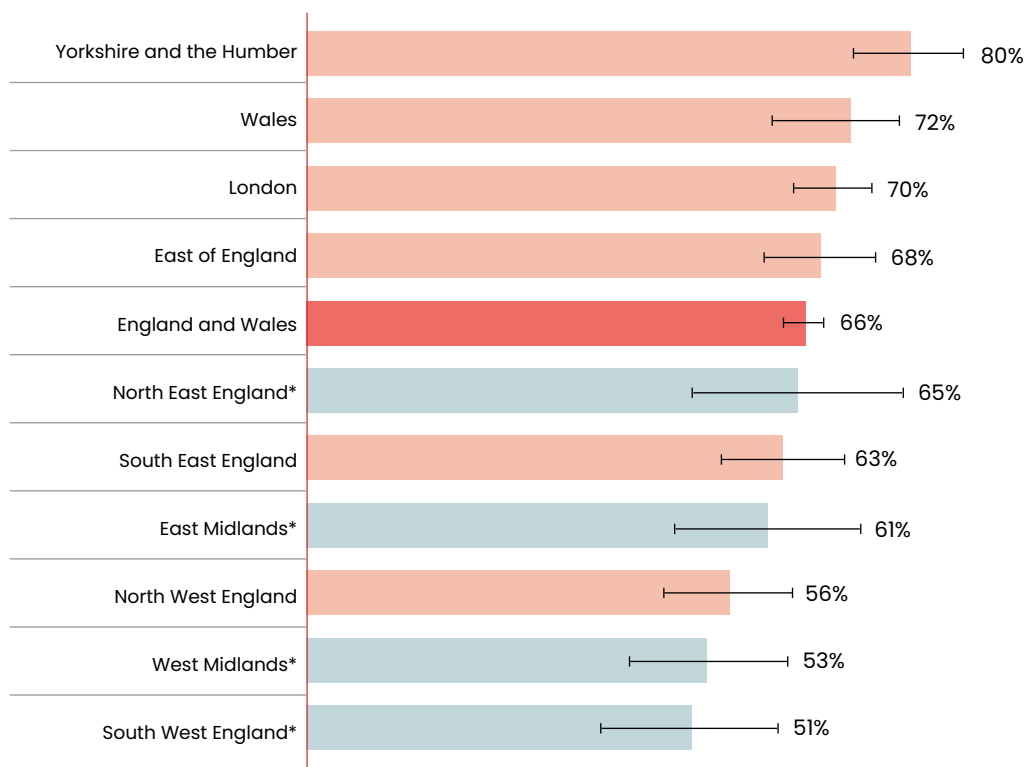
Younger children have more positive views of their stop and search experience.

Younger children are more likely to have positive views about their experience of being stopped and searched than older children. For example, 76% of 13-year-olds who've been stopped and searched agree that the police were polite, and 72% agree they were treated with respect. This compares to 64% of 16-17-year-olds who agree the police were polite and 58% who say they were treated with respect. Regarding why they were experiencing a stop and search, 72% of younger children agree that the matter was explained by the police, while only 61% of 15-year-olds agree on the same.

Children from inner-city areas who've been stopped and searched are more likely to have positive views of it.

Teenage children in London (77%) who experienced stop and search are more likely to state that the police were polite than those in Wales (67%), Northwest England (66%) and West Midlands (56%). They are also more likely to agree they were treated respectfully (70%) than those in Northwest England (56%) and West Midlands (53%). Children in Yorkshire (80%) are significantly more likely to agree that they were treated respectfully than the average across England and Wales (66%).

Figure 3.3: Proportion of children who have been stopped and searched who somewhat or strongly agree that they were treated with respect by region



*Light blue bars represent small (<50) numbers of respondents, so they should be interpreted with caution

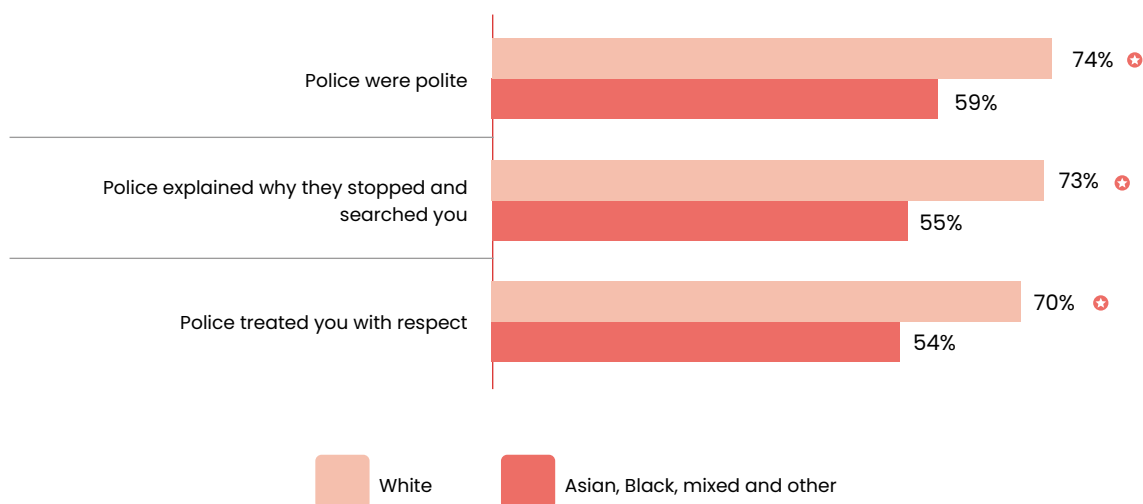
Note. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals – this reflects the range we expect the estimates to fall within.

In line with this finding, teenage children from inner-city areas are more likely to report having had positive experiences of stop and search than those living in suburban areas or towns. For example, 76% of children living in inner-city areas who were stopped and searched agree that the police were polite, and 73% think that they were treated with respect. In contrast, 64% of teenagers from towns who were stopped and searched say the police were polite, and only 59% think that they were treated respectfully. Additionally, inner-city teenagers (74%) are more likely to agree that the reason for the stop and search was explained to them than teenagers from towns (61%).

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to say the police treated them with respect.

White children who were stopped and searched are significantly more likely to be positive about the experience than children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Seventy-four per cent of children from White backgrounds agree that the police were polite, compared to 64% of children from Asian, Black, mixed and other ethnic backgrounds. Seventy per cent of White children think they were treated with respect, compared to 54% of children from Asian, Black, mixed and other ethnic backgrounds. And 73% of children from White backgrounds agree that the police explained why they were stopped and searched, compared to 54% of children from Asian, Black, mixed and other ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 3.4: Proportion of children who have been stopped and searched who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about the experience by ethnicity



Note. Stars beside the bars indicate where estimates for the two groups are significantly different from one another at a 95% confidence level.

How does this compare to other survey results?

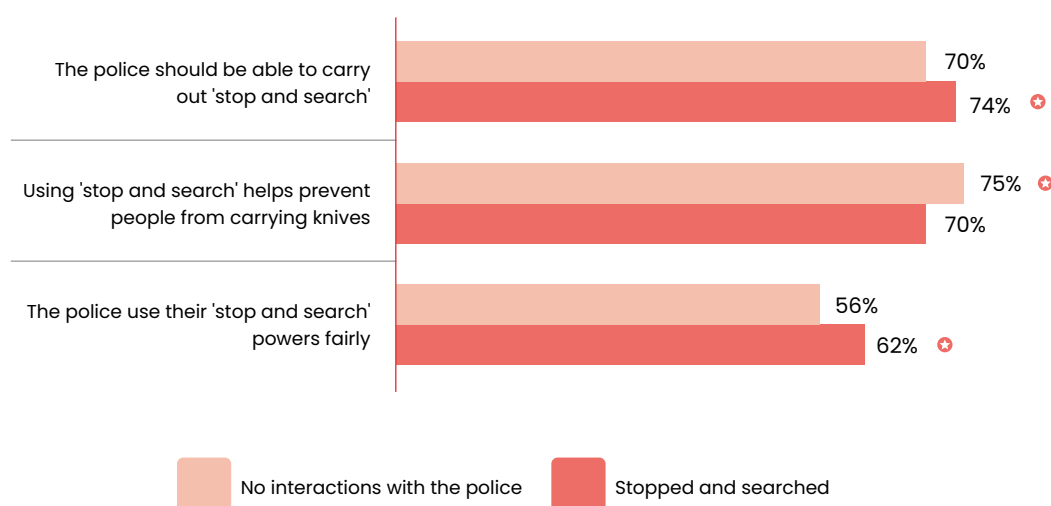
The teenage children responding to our survey who've experienced stop and search are more positive about the experience than some other surveys have found. For example, [Crest Advisory](#) found that children who've been stopped and searched by the police are less likely to trust them (58%) compared to those who haven't (74%).

However, the differences we found by ethnicity (that children from minority ethnic groups report less favourable experiences of being stopped and searched compared to White children) are in line with other research. For example, MOPAC’s Youth Survey found that 40% of Black, Asian and minority ethnic 11-16-year-olds felt the police were polite when they stopped them, compared to 58% of White children. Thirty-eight per cent thought the police treated them with respect, compared to 62% of White children, and 45% said the police explained why they were stopped, compared to 61% of White children.

Most children who’ve been stopped and searched support its use.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of those who’ve been stopped and searched agree that the police should be allowed to carry out stop and search. This is more than the 70% of teenagers who’ve not had any interactions with the police and believe the same. Those who’ve been stopped and searched are also more likely to believe the powers are used fairly (62%) than those with no experience of the police (56%). But they’re less likely to agree that stop and search helps prevent people from carrying knives (70% vs 75% of those with no police contact).




Figure 3.5: Proportion of 13-17-year-olds in England and Wales who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements about stop and search by whether they’ve been stopped and searched



Note. Stars beside the bars indicate where estimates for the two groups are significantly different from one another at a 95% confidence level.



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