

Policing, Children and Violence

Summary of recommendations



Treat children as children

1 Translate child-centred policing into everyday practice.

Why? Child-centred policing supports violence prevention, builds trust and improves safeguarding, but practice remains inconsistent.

Recommended actions:

- A. Set clear expectations for interactions with children in your force.
- B. Reinforce these expectations through leadership, supervision and training.
- C. Create safe, structured opportunities for children to shape local policing.

2 Audit how you safeguard children to prevent violence.

Why? Good safeguarding can prevent violence, but police interactions with children do not consistently lead to effective safeguarding.

Recommended actions:

- A. Publish a force-wide safeguarding standard for children.
- B. Scrutinise safeguarding practice, including the use of custody for children.
- C. Improve safeguarding performance and address disproportionality.



Focus on what works

3 Take a problem-oriented policing approach.

Why? Problem-oriented policing (POP) is effective in reducing violence.

Recommended actions:

- A. Enable data-informed POP by supporting analysts and strengthening data quality (particularly in relation to VAWG and ethnicity).
- B. Develop high-quality POP plans with partners and local communities.
- C. Choose evidence-based responses that are tailored to your violence problem.
- D. Monitor POP activity and address areas for improvement and disproportionality.

4 Stop harmful approaches and deprioritise unevidenced approaches.

Why? Limited resources should be directed to approaches with the best chance of reducing violence.

Recommended actions:

- A. Conduct an annual assessment of your local violence prevention activity.
- B. Stop delivering approaches that are likely to increase violence (including prison awareness programmes and boot camps).
- C. Deprioritise approaches where impact on violence is unknown (including knife education programmes, media campaigns and police in schools).

5 Improve the quality of stop and search.

Why? Good quality stop and search practice is more likely to reduce violence. Poor quality practice can lead to unfairness and damage trust in policing.

Recommended actions:

- A. Scrutinise stop and search of children, driving improvements in the strength of grounds and quality of interactions.
- B. Monitor, publish and address racial disproportionality in stop and search of children.
- C. Provide refresher training on stop and search to frontline officers.



Do diversion well

6 Build an effective and fair out-of-court resolution approach.

Why? Out-of-court resolutions (OOCRs) can reduce violence, but they are often used ineffectively and unfairly.

Recommended actions:

- A. Establish an OOCR protocol for children with your local youth justice service(s).
- B. Monitor your OOCR approach for children and address areas for improvement and disproportionality.