

# JOSIE'S STORY



When something terrible happened to us the police had to come and see me, my dad and brothers at our house.

One of the things I keep remembering is **the way the police were standing**, looking big, with their hands tucked into their vests. It's not something anyone else does. It felt quite **scary and strange**.

I sat on the sofa, while they were standing asking me the questions. I didn't like this.... Especially as they sat down to speak to my dad!

I would have liked to have known beforehand who was going to come and see me and maybe what their gender was.



The next thing that happened was when I was in assembly and someone from the office came to get me to see a social worker.

I was in Primary 7 so that meant I was sitting on the benches at the back. Everyone turned around when I was called. It was **really embarrassing**. I wasn't expecting anyone to come and see me so this was a total shock.

Everyone was wondering where I was going - and so was I! When I think about it, it's quite funny that the assembly was about our rights. **They didn't think about my rights** as a young person.



We went to one of the classrooms that gets used for music. There was a table in the middle of the room. The social worker sat down and asked me questions. She didn't make eye contact with me, which made me feel **really nervous**.

She kept **asking the same questions** about my family. I answered clearly the first time and the second and the third, she'd even brought the person I didn't want to see to school. **She made me feel unsafe**.

The whole time she was with me she kept taking notes. Why couldn't she just talk to me?

It was really stressful and unhelpful.



Things are amazing and calmer now. I'm moving into a new home soon with my dad and brothers, I'm **so excited** for this. I really enjoy spending time outdoors at the park with my friends, or at the stables riding my horse Reece.

I've been going to Children First for a while now and I'm sharing my story because **I want things to be easier** for other children.

## Josie's advice to adults

If you work with children or young people when things are difficult, make sure we know you are coming and when. This is helpful for us to understand why and what you might want to know.

If you're coming into our homes, sit down next to us so you're at the same height. We're not the same size, so please remember that.

When you visit, do you really need to wear a uniform? Also, for police officers - try and keep your hands out of your vest.

Please don't pull us out of an assembly or class, in front of others.

And when we do meet, take time to get to know us, look into our eyes and don't take notes the whole time.

If you take any of this advice, it will help make children & young people **feel safe, seen and heard!**

