

# Disciplinary checklist 3:

## Tips on questioning witnesses

### You should:

- Use open / non-leading questions. For example:

Interviewer: “Were you in the office on Monday at 10.00 am?”

Witness: “Yes”

Interviewer: “Who else was there?”

Witness: “Bill and John”

Interviewer: “What happened that morning?”

Witness: “Bill and John started to argue about something that happened in the pub on Friday night and then Bill hit John.”

Rather than:

Interviewer: “Did Bill hit John?”

Witness: “Yes”

- Start your questions with words like “Who, What, When, Where or Why?” as it helps to establish the facts.
- Allow the individual the opportunity to give their version of the events.
- Let them speak even if they are not describing events in order. Do not interrupt unless what they are saying is clearly irrelevant. Encourage them to concentrate on the main facts.
- Revisit the parts of what they have said that you are confused about, have not understood or require more detail about. Identify the gaps in what they have told you and ask about these.
- Challenge any inconsistencies. The inconsistencies maybe in what they are saying or with other evidence or witnesses.
- Summarise back to the witness what you have understood / written down. Use expressions such as “so what I have understood is...is that right?”



There's more to



## You should not:

- Do not be accusatory. Use language such as “*How do you explain the fact that...?*” as opposed to “*I don’t believe you...*”
- Do not just accept unclear or ambiguous statements. Ask for clarification or corroboration.
- Do not ask questions that are not relevant to the issues that are the subject of the investigation (eg personal questions).