



Home Office

# TACKLING YOUTH KNIFE CRIME

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR POLICE



# Ministerial Foreword



Thanks to effective policing and partnership working in local areas, knife crime remains a rare occurrence on our streets. However, we must continue to improve how we work together so that we can drive knife crime down further still.

Knife crime is a serious crime. In 2007/08, about a third of all homicides involved a sharp instrument and among those aged 19 years and under, the number of sharp-instrument homicides doubled between 2005/06 and 2007/08. We must continue to target the most vulnerable groups through effective multi-agency work.

When implemented properly, multi-agency work can tackle knife crime effectively. For example, when the police and local hospital in Cardiff worked together to share data on hospital admissions for knife wounds, the targeted policing which this information enabled led to a reduction of 40% in accident and emergency admissions with knife wounds. The benefits of this partnership were felt by all groups who were party to it.

I would like to thank those who played a key role in the Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) from the outset. DAC Alf Hitchcock, ACC Bob Evans and the 14 forces worked impressively hard towards the aim of reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by knife crime.

Having seen the successes of TKAP we are now moving into Phase 2 under the leadership of Chief Constable Keith Bristow (Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Strategic Lead) and Assistant Chief Constable Susannah Fish (ACPO Operational Lead). In March 2009 we announced an extra £5 million to tackle knife crime and increase targeted police action to address the minority of young people who commit serious violence, regardless of the weapon involved. We have also expanded the programme from the 13–19 age group to 13–24 and increased the number of areas involved from 14 to 16.

This guidance uses learning from TKAP and police forces to identify approaches to multi-agency working to target those 13–24-year-olds most at risk of becoming knife crime victims or offenders.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the top of the 'n'.

**Rt Hon. Alan Johnson MP**  
**Home Secretary**

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# Overview

## INTRODUCTION

We are determined to get knives off our streets.  
One incident is one too many.

The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) was developed by the Home Office, working closely with other government departments and key stakeholders including local government, police forces, community groups and practitioners in affected local areas.

TKAP will sustain and build on existing cross-government and community work; this includes the lessons learned and success achieved by the Tackling Gangs Action Programme and Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) to reduce the number of teenagers killed or seriously wounded and increase public confidence that our streets are safe.

The first phase of TKAP was launched by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary on 5 June 2008. In the first nine months we focused nearly £7 million of resources on rapid, concentrated work to tackle teenage knife crime in 14 areas of the country.

In March 2009 TKAP was extended for a further year, with an extra £5 million to tackle knife crime and increase targeted police action to tackle the minority of young people who commit serious violence, regardless of the weapon involved.

TKAP has been extended to include 13- to 24-year-olds (previously 13- to 19-year-olds), and to a further two forces, taking the total to 16 forces. This work runs alongside the Youth Crime Action Plan.

## HOW THIS GUIDE CAN HELP

The guide will help police to engage with key partners including:

- the local community;
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs);
- children's services, schools, colleges and Safer School Partnerships;
- health services; and
- trading standards.

This guide will help you to:

- share and use available data effectively;
- identify an emerging knife-carrying population/knife crime problem;
- identify the range of partners you should work with in your area; and
- consider options for tackling the problem (including prevention-based, targeted work with at-risk individuals, risk assessment, mediation, enforcement and community reassurance).

The nature and extent of knife crime varies across England and Wales, so the approaches discussed in this guide are not prescriptive. The guide reflects learning from around the country and is designed to be used as a starting point for developing strategies to address your local issues.

Copies of this guide and further case studies of effective practice are available from: [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tackling\\_knives.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tackling_knives.htm)

## **BACKGROUND TO THE TACKLING KNIVES ACTION PROGRAMME**

TKAP was set up in June 2008 to tackle knife crime<sup>1</sup> in 10 police force areas and was expanded to 16 areas, including the British Transport Police, in March 2009.<sup>2</sup>

The programme recognised that partnership working at local and national level is crucial to tackling knife crime. Enforcement alone cannot solve this problem, and only through a partnership approach can we crack down on knife crime in the short term and, more importantly, put in place longer-term solutions.

TKAP has sent out a clear message: if you carry a knife you are now more likely to get caught, be prosecuted and receive a tough punishment. It has accelerated prevention-based educational programmes, in addition to positive and diversionary activity to stop young people becoming involved in knife crime, and to reassure the public that we are doing all that we can to keep knives off our streets.

TKAP forms a key element of YCAP. TKAP and YCAP represent a renewed drive on serious youth violence. With the added investment in TKAP, this now includes making a greater commitment to tackling the public's fears about the impact of knife crime on local communities, building on the successful work of the police and local agencies in our earlier targeted programme.

The vast majority of young people are law-abiding and make a positive contribution to their communities, but the minority who are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour have a devastating impact. The £100 million YCAP has a triple-track approach of:

- better prevention;
- more support to address the underlying causes of poor behaviour; and
- tough enforcement.

In working with partners, the police need to ensure that tackling knife crime work is aligned with broader youth crime activity. This means ensuring that YCAP initiatives such as Family Intervention Projects, Operation Staysafe, after-school police patrols and street teams are focused on young people at risk of involvement in serious youth violence and other crime.

TKAP supports existing local partnerships in understanding the nature and extent of knife crime in their area and in the planning of a strategic response.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'knife crime' when used within this document encompasses offences which involve the offender carrying or using knives or other bladed instruments in a criminal act. These offences include violence against the person (homicide, wounding with/without intent and assault) and the possession of a knife/knives.

<sup>2</sup> For TKAP Phase One, the police force areas were: Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Merseyside, Metropolitan, Essex, Thames Valley, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Northumbria, South Wales, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Bedfordshire and the British Transport Police. Kent and Hampshire joined the programme for Phase Two.

## TKAP PHASE ONE

Phase One of TKAP has had a clear impact on the ground, with successes including the following:

### ENFORCEMENT

TKAP has sent out a clear message that if an individual carries a knife, they are more likely to get caught, prosecuted and receive a tough punishment:

- Across TKAP areas, 1,150 extra search arches and wands have been given to police forces. Over 220,000 Stop and Searches for offensive weapons were carried between June 2008 and June 2009, and over 5,500 weapons were seized and removed from the UK's streets.
- Provisional figures for the number of searches conducted in the ten TKAP Phase One areas that resulted in an offensive weapon being found fell from 4% in June 2008 to about 2% in March 2009.
- The age at which individuals can buy a knife has been raised from 16 to 18 years.
- The maximum sentence for carrying a knife has been doubled from two to four years.
- In Phase One TKAP areas, custodial sentences for possession of knives or other offensive weapons increased by 23%: 747 in January to March 2009 compared with 607 for the same period in the previous year.
- The number of cautions issued for possession of an offensive weapon fell by 36%, from 1,205 in the first quarter of 2008 to 774 in the same period of 2009. The equivalent figure for non-TKAP areas was 31% (from 1,189 to 825).<sup>3</sup>
- By June 2009, the Youth Justice Board's Knife Possession Prevention Programme was running in 12 pilot areas. The programme aims to help young people convicted of knife-carrying to understand the consequences of their actions. It is being extended to all Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) within TKAP areas, with an additional 85 YOTs to go live by the end of September 2009.

## EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

Effective prevention relies on multi-agency working. Local authorities, the police and other stakeholders have invested considerable effort in developing structures and partnerships to facilitate multi-agency work, from the strategic level – involving Children's Trusts and CDRPs – to front-line work such as Safer School Partnerships.

Education has helped to spread the message to young people that carrying a knife does not protect them; rather, it is more likely to be used against them:

- TKAP forces have run, with partners such as ambulance services, weapons awareness sessions in schools and youth clubs to make young people aware of the devastating impact of knife crime on themselves and their communities.
- The Home Office launched a three-year £3 million advertising campaign with the message 'It Doesn't Have to Happen'. Viral adverts online and on mobiles have received 13 million views. Billboards have been displayed in 85 community sites across the country. We have reached millions of 10–16-year-olds, with evaluation showing that 73% said the adverts had made them less likely to carry a knife.
- The Home Office is working with the organisation Be Safe to offer over one million young people access over the next five years to workshops on the dangers of weapons. Over 95,000 young people attended the weapons awareness sessions between April 2008 and March 2009.
- Over 5,300 Safer School Partnerships now exist, with dedicated police officers allocated to one school or a group of schools.
- Funding of £1 million was provided to TKAP areas to deliver extra positive activities on Friday and Saturday nights in areas where crime and anti-social behaviour are a concern. Monitoring information from the local areas shows that 5,000 young people had benefited from this by the end of December 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Ministry of Justice (2009) *Knife crime sentencing brief January to March 2009 England and Wales*.

- By the end of TKAP Phase One, 21 major retailers had signed up to our six-point commitment to stop the illegal sales of knives to those under 18. Some of these, such as Asda and John Lewis, have gone even further and removed knives from their websites completely (except cutlery sets). We are continuing to examine how to combat underage knife sales and will encourage prosecution of those who continue to sell knives without having proper age verification systems in place.
- Over 1,700 Test Purchase Operations for underage sales of knives were conducted between June 2008 and the end of TKAP Phase One, with indications that failure rates are falling.
- The Home Office has provided support for parents who are concerned about their children carrying knives through an education leaflet and by encouraging them to call parenting organisations such as Parentline Plus to get confidential advice.
- The Crimestoppers text service for young people to report knife carriers has been rolled out in the TKAP areas, allowing them to text information anonymously.
- Action days have been held across the TKAP areas to raise awareness of the dangers of weapon carrying, and £4.5 million will be provided over the next three years to support up to 150 local community groups working with young people to reduce gun, gang and knife crime.

## FUNDING

As well as £5 million announced to continue TKAP, we are also providing £2.3 million to third sector organisations working with young people and victims' families.

## DATA SHARING

We know data sharing works and, in addition to existing measures, further developments have been made in tackling violent crime. Healthcare professionals play a key role in this by sharing anonymous data with their CDRPs.

- As part of TKAP, regional public health groups have been working closely with Primary Care Trusts, the Government Offices and police forces to address knife crime in areas across England and Wales.
- The Department of Health has updated the NHS Operating Framework to require key hospitals to identify and share information effectively in order to support local action on reducing violent crime, especially knife crime. By the end of TKAP Phase One, 61 hospitals in TKAP areas were regularly sharing data on knife injuries with the police, in compliance with data regulations – this is almost three times as many as in June 2008.

From June 2008 to March 2009, provisional figures indicate that there were 29% fewer admissions to hospital for stab wounds among teenagers in the nine English TKAP areas compared with the same period the previous year. The equivalent provisional figures for non-TKAP areas indicate an 18% reduction.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Source: The NHS Information Centre (2009) *Provisional Monthly Hospital Episode Statistics (HES): special topic of interest. Sharp object admissions to the end of April 2009.*



# Section 1: Understanding your youth knife crime problem

The first step in tackling knife crime in your area is to work with partners to establish the scale and nature of the problem. The information in this section will help you to engage key partners in tackling knife crime, and support your partnership in making an assessment of the scale and nature of knife crime in your area. It will also outline how you can share information and data with partners to develop a multi-agency response to knife crime in order to reduce the risk and harm to our communities.

Once you have established the nature and extent of the knife crime problem in your area, the next step is to plan your partnership's response. This section outlines the considerations for a multi-agency strategy to deliver that response.

## 1.1 ENGAGING PARTNERS TO ESTABLISH A MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY

Multi-agency partnership working is key to tackling all forms of crime, including knife crime. An effective programme of action involves going beyond an enforcement approach and working with a range of individuals and organisations. While each of the TKAP areas has organised its multi-agency approach differently, they each engage in partnership working to make the most of the information and resources available from a wide range of agencies and other relevant bodies to ensure that the risk and harm caused to individuals and communities is reduced.

Key partners include all responsible authorities contributing to CDRPs and CSPs, but it is important in particular to recognise the contribution of:

- local schools;
- local health services;
- the local authority;
- the third sector;
- the local Youth Justice Board; and
- the private sector.

### Case study

## Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) produced a knife crime strategy entitled 'Tackling knife-enabled crime in Greater Manchester'. It recognised the importance of a joint approach with partner agencies to address youth knife crime, so GMP set up a Strategic Governance Board.

There were four main themes of the strategy: intelligence, prevention, enforcement and reassurance. Activity under each of these strands was designed to achieve medium- and long-term reductions in knife crime offences and to reduce the public's fear of knife crime.

The Strategic Governance Board helped to focus activity on:

- sharing of effective practice between police divisions, partners and the Home Office;
- effective management of the varied funding streams within the programme; and
- performance within the force to achieve the planned outcomes of crime reduction and a reduced fear of knife crime.

The Board included six divisions within GMP that were identified as having a knife crime problem, the Specialist Operations and Corporate Communications branch within the force, British Transport Police, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Government Office North West, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive, the Crown Prosecution Service, Greater Manchester Police Authority, Trading Standards, Greater Manchester Against Crime (GMAC) and the National Health Service.

Your approach with partners needs to recognise that their strategic aims, targets and deliverables may vary from yours, as shown by the key messages below.

Key messages for engaging with children's services are:

- Protecting young people from knife crime is key to children's services' role in delivering the Every Child Matters framework. Young people will not be healthy and safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution or achieve economic well-being if they are either victims or perpetrators of knife crime.
- Children's services can help to identify, at an early stage, vulnerable children who are at risk of offending or other poor outcomes because of problems faced by them or their wider family.
- Police should work with local authorities and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to ensure that safeguarding approaches work for young people at risk of involvement in knife crime, either as victims or offenders.
- Schools are vital in being able to identify young people at risk of involvement in knife crime. Police should work with and share intelligence with schools so that together they can keep young people safe.
- Young people who harm others as perpetrators of knife crime have often been victims themselves.

Key messages for engaging with health services are:

- Health services are in a unique position to collect information on violence as some people who attend A&E do not also go to the police.
- Collecting and sharing information can be managed in the context of a busy A&E – it does not need to consume precious time of senior medical staff.

- If information is collected and shared appropriately with CDRPs or CSPs there is clear opportunity to reduce the amount of violence which hospitals have to deal with – the Cardiff model was associated with a 40% reduction in A&E attendance due to violent assault. (See page 18 for more information on the Cardiff model.)
- There are broader benefits to health and well-being associated with tackling violence and promoting safer communities.

## 1.2 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENTS

Your CDRP or CSP should complete a Strategic Assessment and Problem Profile when forming a multi-agency response to knife crime. Multi-agency working arrangements range from virtual teams to dedicated, co-located teams. The type of response your area decides on will depend on the scale and nature of the knife crime problem faced.

Knife crime needs to be managed holistically – you should work with all the partners and appropriate resources that are available to you. You should link your knife crime strategy into your partners' strategies and programmes of work that support reducing violence and abuse – for example, programmes on alcohol abuse or poor parenting.

A CDRP or CSP Strategic Assessment is an overarching assessment of all crime and disorder within an area, within which, if appropriate, violence should be assessed and the planned response documented. The statutory framework requires partnerships to include the following components in a Strategic Assessment:

- analysis and understanding of the levels and patterns of crime and disorder;

- changes in the levels and patterns of crime and disorder since the last Strategic Assessment;
- analysis of why these changes have occurred;
- deploying resources effectively and presenting value for money;
- setting clear and robust priorities for the partnership; and
- developing activity driven by reliable information that takes into account the views, and meets the need, of the local community.

CDRPs and CSPs may find it useful when developing a Strategic Assessment and implementing the delivery of Partnership Plans to consider using the Home Office document *Delivering Safer Communities: Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships*. This toolkit is aimed at practitioners responsible for preparing and overseeing a partnership's Strategic Assessment.

More information about this issue can be found on the crime reduction area of the Home Office website:

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/Developing%20a%20Strategic%20Assessment.pdf](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/Developing%20a%20Strategic%20Assessment.pdf)

### 1.3 PROBLEM PROFILES

Problem Profiles have emerged from policing practice guided by the National Intelligence Model, which aims to ensure the effective targeting of resources based on information and intelligence. Your local CDRPs and CSPs should undertake a Problem Profile of violent crime within their area and plan to review and refresh the profile on a regular basis.

A Problem Profile should seek to:

- provide a clear picture of a problem;
- show evidence of information analysis;
- make recommendations based on the analysis; and
- enable partnership members to justify actions and allocate appropriate resources.

Home Office guidance on completing a Problem Profile can be found in *Tackling Violent Crime Programme: Guidance for problem profile analysis*. This is available at <http://crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tvcp/tvcp02problemprofileguidance.doc>

Although intelligence about knife crime can differ from other high impact crimes such as gun crime due to its often chaotic and spontaneous nature, intelligence can be used to understand a developing problem or to manage risk and community tensions. Consider a menu of options for the collection of intelligence that may not either be obvious or involve traditional assets and tactics.

Consider what information you have regarding the scale, nature and drivers of knife crime in your area, for example, fear, drugs, gangs, deprivation, lack of positive role models, media, alcohol, the link to anti-social behaviour, parenting, territoriality or mental health.

Intelligence may be criminality focused or community focused.



Criminality-focused intelligence could be used to evaluate criminality and/or victimisation patterns, for example providing a profile of:

- the offences involved within this area of criminality, such as offence type and weapon types;
- who is involved in knife crime within the community;
- locations and times of offending;
- the age of offenders and victims;
- the ethnicity of offenders and victims;
- gangs and gang activity within the community; and
- activity set up to respond to youth violence across the partnership.

Community-focused intelligence will provide vital information relating to the perception of or development of a knife crime problem. The community may feel that young people within the area may be carrying knives. This may lead to community tensions as well as other young people carrying knives in order to protect themselves. Consider surveying young people and the wider community to gauge their perception of knife crime in order to assist in the development of your strategic response.

## **1.4 INFORMATION GATHERING AND DATA SHARING**

Good intelligence informs prevention, risk management and enforcement. Early identification provides opportunities for positive interventions and diversion opportunities. Police forces should have clear information sharing and gathering protocols with key agencies such as schools, hospitals and children's services. These relationships are critical for establishing the true nature and scope of the local and national picture.

As a partnership consider how best to understand the broader intelligence picture in relation to knife crime. Data from partners should be shared, analysed and interpreted effectively and managed holistically with current police intelligence about any escalation of violence or crime data showing either an upward trend in violent attacks, or information about a previous incident that could lead to retaliation.

- Consider what intelligence is already available about knife crime and the individuals who may carry and use knives. How is your force effectively using this data as part of a knife crime strategy?
- Work with health services to understand the pattern and nature of A&E admissions resulting from knife injuries. Use this data to help you to identify key venues, routes and times of the day/week/year when youth knife violence is likely to occur and compare this with police data.



Case study

West Yorkshire

West Yorkshire Police worked closely with its regional Crimestoppers team to launch a marketing campaign with Galaxy Radio involving four different radio adverts and a mini-site hosted on Galaxy’s main website with internet banner advertising. The mini-site contained an advert produced by local children from Farnley, Leeds. As well as being hosted on the Galaxy site, a DVD of the advert has been:

- included in West Yorkshire Police weapons awareness inputs in schools;
- provided to partners such as healthcare organisations and YOTs for use on plasma screens in public areas; and
- broadcast via Bluetooth at young people’s events as well as outside schools.

To date, over 22,000 West Yorkshire schoolchildren have been reached during the TKAP period. This initiative has seen a 75% increase in intelligence relating to knife carriage.

For more information, please visit [www.gameover4knives.com](http://www.gameover4knives.com).

- Work with schools to identify young people at risk of knife crime involvement either as victims or offenders. Schools and Safer School officers can be key in identifying emerging tensions which may lead to knife violence and key routes/transport hubs which can be targeted to ensure that young people get home from school or college safely.
- Consider the use of hi-tech crime units to seek intelligence of both online retailers and purchasers of knives. Although there is legislation relating to the sale of knives by retailers to people under the age of 18, online retailers may be selling knives either unlawfully or unknowingly to people under the prescribed age. Intelligence gathering and online policing may be vital in understanding the supply of knives to young people within your community.
- Does your partnership use Crimestoppers and other information mechanisms to encourage people to report information regarding individuals who carry/use knives?

1.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Views and opinions from the community can provide information about people’s concerns and their knowledge of what is being done to deal with local issues. Effective community engagement is essential for the collection of valuable community intelligence. A number of mechanisms already exist for identifying concerns of the community and its youth, including:

- day-to-day engagement of Neighbourhood Policing Teams;



- specific community engagement activities being undertaken by responsible authorities, co-operating bodies and others to fulfil their requirements;
- national and local surveys about knife crime;
- intelligence gained during previous partnership projects (e.g. Day of Action); and
- public meetings.

As well as gathering information, community consultation can also be used to test hypotheses behind changes in performance and gain initial feedback on potential priorities after you have prepared your Strategic Assessment.

When conducting community consultation activities, some important factors to consider include:

- making clear why you are consulting;
- explaining how the information will be used;
- promoting opportunities for the public to be involved in community safety;
- ensuring that there are clear mechanisms to take actions based on community views;
- providing feedback on the action taken; and
- feeding back any information gathered that is relevant to other individual partners so that appropriate actions can be taken.

## 1.6 YOUTH CONSULTATION MECHANISMS

Mechanisms such as Youth Forums provide a platform to empower young people to participate actively in society and represent their interests. Youth Forums regularly ask young people what they think about issues that affect them, from health to sport and music to the environment, and can provide information about fears and concerns and their knowledge of what is being done to deal with specific issues.

### Case study

#### Merseyside

Merseyside Young Transformers – in partnership with Merseyside Police, the Home Office, the Tutu Foundation UK and the *Liverpool Echo* newspaper – bridges the gap between funders and local grassroots organisations to help disaffected young people transform their lives.

Money is distributed to community groups in Merseyside to canvas young people's opinions of knife crime. Programme Leader, Cathy Elliott, said:

“The money we've received from the Home Office through Merseyside Police allows us to work alongside the police, local community groups and most importantly young people, to try and establish the underlying perceptions of knife crime. We want to hear from young people on their concerns and ideas for change, and respond by supporting work carried out on the front line of communities in line with feedback from the young people.”

Local delivery partners work together to direct community groups and young people to complete a survey created to facilitate the research element of the programme and ensure that monitoring data are collected and fed back to donors and partners.

For further details, please contact Cathy Elliott on 0151 966 3594 or e-mail at [cathy.elliott@cfmerseyside.org.uk](mailto:cathy.elliott@cfmerseyside.org.uk).

## **1.7 HOSPITAL ATTENDANCE DATA**

With only a proportion of violent crime reported to the police, A&E attendance data is an essential addition to establishing the true scale of any knife crime problem. This can be achieved by A&E departments sharing anonymised data with CDRPs and CSPs in order that police and other partners are able to target interventions effectively.

This data should be analysed and processed effectively in order that maximum opportunity is gained by the police and other partners. Information relating to location, time of incident and injuries sustained will help to support a wider intelligence picture in relation to knife crime.

Depersonalised A&E information is pivotal in directing assault reduction initiatives in collaboration with the police and local authority partners. An example of effective data sharing with an A&E department can be seen within the Cardiff model on page 18. This model enabled much more effective targeted enforcement activity as well as more effective licensing of pubs and other night-time economy venues, which has resulted in Cardiff seeing a 40% reduction in A&E department admissions since 2002.

Hospitals can play a critical role in helping to tackle violent crime by sharing information in the following ways:

- Information on assault type, time and location can be collected by reception staff or nurses in A&E.
- It can then be aggregated and anonymised by an analyst to provide a comprehensive picture of violent crime in a particular area.
- This picture can be shared with partners in the CDRP or CSP.
- Partners in CDRPs or CSPs can use this key information to focus a variety of interventions (e.g. local criminal justice, public health, licensing, planning permission) to tackle violence.

Hospitals can also provide support to victims including education about possible triggers such as alcohol, and refer victims to other services such as counselling.

The Department of Health is committed to promoting data sharing in TKAP areas and as a result the NHS Operating Framework includes a commitment that all hospitals in TKAP areas should share information with CDRPs or CSPs wherever possible in order to support local action to reduce violence.

With regard to sharing personal data, the General Medical Council has issued interim guidance on reporting knife crime. This advises doctors that if they are treating the victim of a stabbing they should under most circumstances share information with the police – even if it may not be possible to obtain consent. This interim guidance is due to be formally published in summer 2009.

Case study

## The Cardiff model

A document entitled *Effective NHS Contributions to Violence Prevention: The Cardiff Model* (2007) identifies a three-tiered care approach for emergency departments to assist in the prevention of violent crime:

- staff can share anonymised information about violent attacks including the type of weapon used and location;
- prevention can be achieved by taking the opportunity to educate the victim about violence and possible triggers, including alcohol; and
- prevention can be achieved, where appropriate, through prompt referral to a mental health professional to treat post-traumatic stress or to a counselling service.

Vital to this is including in the NHS Operating Framework a requirement that key hospitals identify and share information effectively in order to support local action on reducing violent crime – especially knife crime.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows health professionals to disclose confidential information to the police where they believe that such disclosure could assist in preventing a crime or assist an investigation. Section 115 is generally considered permissive, not mandatory, i.e. individuals have the power to disclose information but are not obliged to do so.

Have you been the victim of violence?

Want to help reduce violence in your community?

OK!



**How?**

All you have to do is fill in a simple questionnaire which will provide anonymous assault data to agencies who work towards reducing violent crime.

**When?**

Whenever a victim of assault enters an Accident and Emergency Unit, a Minor Injuries Unit, or is treated by the Ambulance Service.

**Why?**

Not all assaults are reported to the police. The purpose of the questionnaire is to provide a fuller picture about the extent of violent crime in Kent. This will assist crime prevention agencies in working to tackle the causes of violent crime.

**The questionnaire is completed anonymously and is confidential. Patients cannot be identified from the information on this form.**



# Section 2: Planning your response

Once you are clear about the scale and nature of your problem, you need to work with partners to understand the existing response, identify gaps in provision and develop a plan to plug those gaps.

## 2.1 WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Partnerships might decide to operate their response through the existing strategic framework set by CDRPs or CSPs and Children's Trusts and include both the local police and the local authority. In YCAP areas, you could consider whether your youth knife crime activity should be integrated within the strategic framework already driving delivery of YCAP. The local authority's involvement will vary according to your local problem and, as well as engaging with children and young people's services and YOTs, you might discuss with them whether they could include, for example, anti-social behaviour teams, Family Intervention Projects (FIPs), housing teams, Safer School Partnerships, schools and further education colleges. Beyond local authorities, other key partners include Youth Offending Institutions, the Prison Service, Probation Service, Primary Care Trusts, Hospital Trusts and others.

Engagement of all partners will ensure the effective use of data and expertise. A definitive partnership process should be in place and be utilised accordingly. Delivering this process will require the effort of all partners in ensuring continuous engagement. Regular feedback should be provided in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the process and how the expertise and data of all involved is being used to reduce the harm to communities as well as any organisational benefits to those involved.

## 2.2 SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION

At times, it will be necessary to share personal information, i.e. information that identifies an individual. It is important that practitioners at the front line understand when and how personal information can be shared legally and professionally. The cross-government information sharing guidance focuses on supporting front-line staff who have to make case-by-case decisions about sharing personal information. It outlines seven 'golden rules' for information sharing and provides

further guidance in the form of seven key questions about information sharing to inform decision making. The guidance, training materials, case examples and other supporting materials are available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/informationsharing](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/informationsharing).

### Case study

#### Lancashire

"Be Sharp Think Sharp" is an innovative education programme developed by Lancashire Constabulary's Armed Response Unit working with the North West Ambulance Service and local education authorities.

The 25 minute presentation couples facts with shocking graphics of knife wounds. It deters students by informing them of the wider implications of carrying a knife, which could lead to a criminal record and the loss of friends and future career opportunities.

The presentation informs students of the facts and corrects false positive ideas about carrying knives. A police video shows how police catch knife criminals and includes vision of a youth being paralysed with a Taser.

They also use a two-litre bottle of water and red dye to represent 40% of the blood in a young person's body. The police empty the bottle to show how quickly a person can lose blood when stabbed.

Students are also taught practical steps to take if faced with a knife attack. They are instructed in basic first aid as well as what to do if they see someone with a knife.

**Case study continued**

Over the last 15 months, the team has reached over 45,000 students – nearly half of all high school students in the Lancashire force area. They aim to reach every high school pupil by the end of the 2009/10 school year.

**2.3 ACTIVITY MAPPING**

You should work with delivery partners to enable a joined-up and coherent approach to ensure that young people are presented with a co-ordinated and consistent message about knife crime and its consequences.

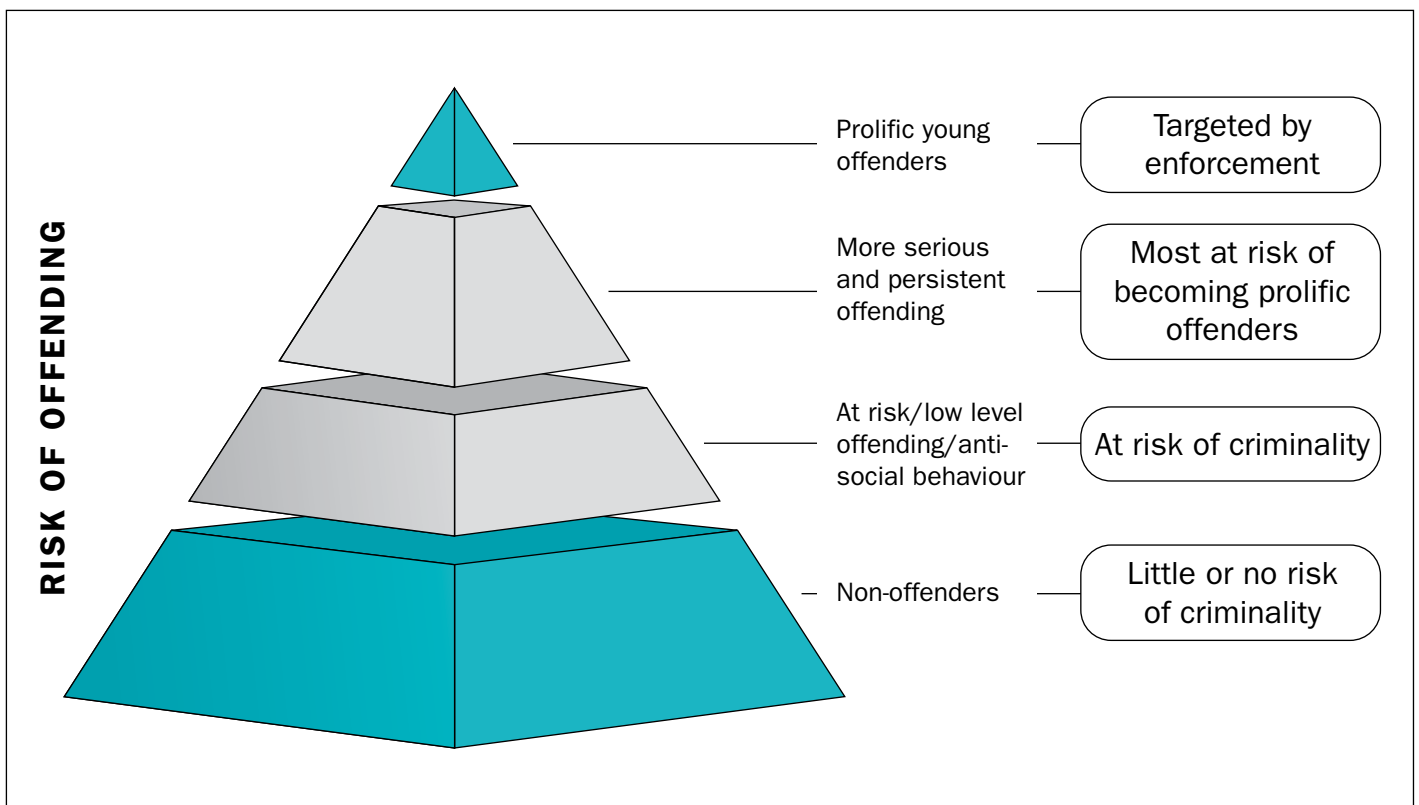
Given that only 5% of young people commit half of all youth crime,<sup>5</sup> targeting those most at risk with effective initiatives and programmes of activity can reduce the likelihood of offending behaviour. The diagram below illustrates the different target groups your partnership may wish to consider when planning the scope and nature of your area’s response activities.

Many third sector organisations provide education and engagement activity to divert individuals away from knife crime and violence. Partnerships need to be clear on what is being provided locally and that it matches the identified problem.

Mapping exercises are a potentially useful way for partnerships to assess the nature and design of existing initiatives and activities to address knife crime in their area. Initiatives and activities can then be grouped into categories and ranked as high, medium or low according to the frequency with which they operate.

Your partnership needs to answer the following questions in order to understand the nature of your problem. Responses to these questions will help to build your Problem Profile:

- How many knife crimes are committed in your area?
- What are the ages of the offenders?
- At what time are these offences committed?



<sup>5</sup> Youth Crime Action Plan 2008, HM Government.

- Where are these offences committed?
- What reasons have knife offenders given for carrying a knife?
- What is the offending history of knife crime offenders?
- Have the offenders previously spent time in detention?
- Are the offenders under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they commit offences?
- Are the offenders members of gangs? (Where the response is positive, consult the Home Office guidance on tackling gangs, *Tackling Gangs: A Practical Guide for Local Authorities, CDRPs and Other Local Partners* at [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet012a.pdf](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet012a.pdf))

## 2.4 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE THIRD SECTOR

Action should be taken to consider how you can take a strategic approach to your relationship with the third sector. This should include having a dialogue with the sector about how best to work with young people. Involving the third sector in this type of discussion can enable you to find the most effective solutions and can also help you to gain community support; this may also lead to greater community intelligence to help inform your wider intelligence picture.

Even where resources are scarce or diminishing, an open discussion about how best to manage those resources can reap results in terms of making the right decisions and bringing the community with you.

You might want to discuss the following:

- What are the needs of young people in your area?
- What resources are available to respond to these needs?
- What provision(s) already exist that can be used to target young people – are there organisations that provide positive diversionary activities or targeted work with young offenders to meet their needs?
- How can you jointly make best use of the resources available locally?

More information about the third sector can be found via the following links:

- Office of the Third Sector  
[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector.aspx)
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations  
[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)
- National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning  
[www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=6583598](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=6583598)

## 2.5 YOUR STRATEGIC RESPONSE

Your strategic response to tackling knife crime should consider:

- Enforcement
- Prevention
- Reassurance.

The rest of this guide sets out key approaches to each of these areas of activity.

## Section 3: Enforcement

Every possible lawful use of legislation and tactics to tackle knife crime should be considered, and you should think broadly about the range of partners and activities that might be able to help.

### NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

**We're  
getting  
tough  
on knife  
crime**



To reinforce the message that the community will not tolerate the carrying of knives or knife-related violence, you should consider the benefits of intelligence profiling of individual offenders. Intelligence-led enforcement activity based on a clear analysis of the local problem is critical and can include prolific offenders being profiled, prioritised and targeted through local tasking and co-ordination processes.

The deployment of properly briefed high-visibility patrols has a significant impact on reassuring the community and disrupting criminal activity.

Consider the use of all possible tactics, for example:

- legislation and engagement with statutory agencies such as Trading Standards on activities such as Test Purchase Operations;

- working with retailers to reduce opportunities for young people to purchase knives; and
- encouraging retailers to be aware of the law regarding the sale of knives and alerting them to the consequences of breaking it?

All of the above questions should be considered with members of the partnership such as Trading Standards, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

You should consider the benefits of intelligence profiling individual offenders. Prolific offenders can be prioritised and targeted through local tasking and co-ordination processes.



An informed tasking and co-ordination process should consider areas such as:

- prioritising warrants for those suspects who have a police national computer (PNC) warning marker for weapons;
- proactively targeting those individuals whom intelligence suggests carry weapons through Stop and Search; and
- using safety arches or metal detector search techniques (for example, on transport networks, at sporting events and in shopping malls).

#### Case study

### Northumbria

The Northumbria Police anti-knife crime campaign used a range of tactics to drive down the possession and use of knives during violent incidents.

A two-week knife amnesty saw more than 600 knives handed in at police stations throughout the force area. Northumbria Police also delivered a campaign of high-visibility policing in 10 'hot spot' knife crime areas. The campaign was designed to crack down on knife crime, reassure the public and establish the level of public concern across the Northumbria Police area.

Two teams of uniformed officers patrolled identified hot spot areas and spoke with members of the public, telling them about the campaign and enforcement plans and completing questionnaires to gather their views.

The officers then conducted Stop and Search activity in the same hot spot areas using knife wands. The public were made aware of the campaign, the locations of specific activity and the dates of activity through a media campaign.

During the campaign, the team conducted 180 Stop and Searches and 1,500 people completed a questionnaire. Of those people surveyed, 1% reported being a victim of knife crime and nearly 5% had been witnesses to knife crime. Knife crime was fourth on the list of local issues about which people were concerned. It came behind 'intimidating and loud young people', 'intimidating and loud adults' and 'drinking and drunkenness'.

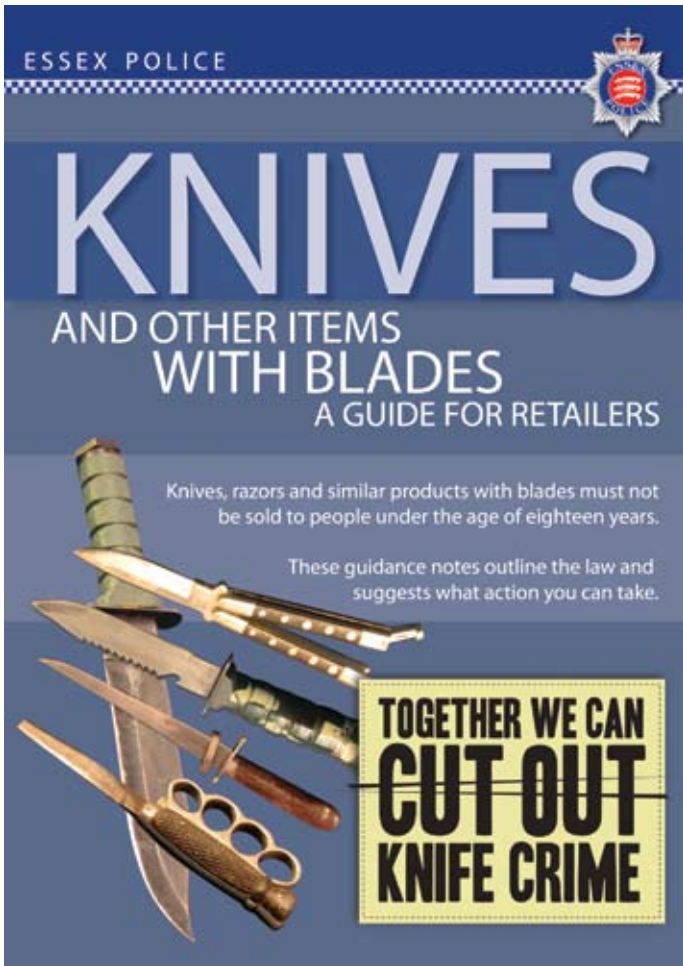
Local Criminal Justice Boards should, where appropriate, be encouraged to adopt a premium service for knife crime through the existing positive prosecutions policy and by fast-tracking the accused through the criminal justice system.

One of the key features of any knife crime strategy should be to prevent offenders travelling with knives. Partnership working between the British Transport Police, local forces and local bus and rail companies will provide a potent force to stop those who carry knives from using the transport network.

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships/partnerships001.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships/partnerships001.htm)

### 3.1 TRADING STANDARDS AND TEST PURCHASE OPERATIONS

Under the supervision of joint working between the police and Trading Standards officers, it is vital that the law on knife sales is enforced to protect young people. Ensuring responsible retailing and conducting Test Purchase Operations should be a feature of local Basic Command Unit operations. Encouraging retailers to be aware of and follow the law concerning the sale of knives will enable them to self-regulate the sales of knives to individuals.



By working with Trading Standards, it may be possible to reduce the sales of knives to young people within your area. This may seem obvious; however, knife and bladed-object legislation can sometimes be misinterpreted or misunderstood. The police, CPS and Home Office will be able to assist in enhancing knowledge about the sale and use of knives.

To support this, in December 2008 the Home Office announced the launch of a six-point commitment on knife sales to be signed by retailers as part of TKAP.

<http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/Retailers-say-no-to-knife-crime>

#### Case study

### Bedfordshire

Working with Trading Standards, Bedfordshire Police ran an enforcement operation to identify outlets suspected of committing offences in relation to the sale of knives. The young people involved in conducting test purchases were volunteer cadets.

The operation drew on the expertise of the Bedfordshire Police Special Constabulary, with Trading Standards leading the initiative.

The operation was designed to give reassurance to the public and to educate retailers on the danger and implications of selling knives to young people.

To ensure a proportionate approach and to maximise the educational aspects, retailers guilty of a 'first offence' received a written warning and a follow-up visit from Trading Standards. There would only be a prosecution if there was more than one failure at the location.

The operation ran from January to March 2009, during which time 74 shops were visited (some on more than one occasion). There were 16 underage sales, of which six were prosecuted and 10 were given warnings. The operation received media coverage.

In addition, two posters were produced in partnership with Trading Standards for distribution to Bedfordshire retailers.

The operation was deemed a success, and similar Test Purchase Operations, conducted jointly with Trading Standards, are planned as part of TKAP Phase Two.

The work of TKAP has secured the sign-up of 21 major retailers to the six-point commitment to stop the illegal sales of knives to those under 18. Some of these, such as Asda and John Lewis, have gone even further and removed all knives (except cutlery sets) from their websites completely. The Home Office is continuing to examine further ways to combat the risk of underage knife sales and will encourage prosecution of those who continue to sell knives without proper age-verification systems in place.

The six points of the commitment are:

1. to provide training and support to staff on the sale of knives, and keep a register of completion of training;
2. to clearly display to the public signs stating that knives are not for sale to under-18s;
3. to ensure that display and storage of knives minimises the risk of theft;
4. to ensure that till prompts are in place to remind staff at the point of sale;
5. to enhance safeguards on internet sales to address attempted underage sales of knives; and
6. to monitor attempted underage sales and share information with local police and other partners.

#### Case study

### British Transport Police

British Transport Police (BTP) deployed officers at significant transport hubs across south London in October and November 2008 to target anti-social behaviour, knife crime and youth violence on the transport networks and to create a safer environment for people travelling and working on the railways. More than 70 BTP officers were involved in Operation Chicago, which was held in the lead-up to Halloween and Guy Fawkes Night.

As well as carrying out patrols, police were on hand to offer crime reduction advice. Officers also handed out details of an anonymous texting service to young people as they passed through knife arches, encouraging them to text information about friends who may be carrying knives to the police.

Players and coaches from Millwall Football Club attended Lewisham railway station as positive community role models, to promote a healthy lifestyle and warn against the dangers of carrying weapons. Officers from London Ambulance Service were also on hand to show young people the consequences of knife attacks and offer advice on first aid for knife-point injuries.

The actress Linda Robson supported the efforts of BTP by visiting the operation at Clapham Junction. Mrs Robson's 16-year-old son Louis cradled best friend Ben Kinsella in his arms as he died from horrific stab wounds following an attack by a group of youths in north London earlier in 2008. Only eight weapons were recovered during the operation, an indication that the BTP's deployments of mobile metal-detecting arches – known as Operation Shield – are proving a useful deterrent.

In the autumn of 2008, Operation Chicago resulted in 1,345 young people walking through the knife arch, 2,122 Stop and Searches, 203 arrests and eight weapons recovered. The success was such that this has now become a regular operation in south London and part of core BTP action on combating serious youth violence.

## Case study

**West Yorkshire**

West Yorkshire Police have developed an in-house test purchase capacity in each of the area's Basic Command Units. An educational approach to Test Purchase Operations was adopted, with the following features:

- Test Purchase Operations are conducted in store. Where logistically possible, prior to the test purchase, a plain clothes officer enters the store and invites the retail manager to observe from a distance.
- Whether the retailer passes or fails, the result of the operation is instantly fed back to the store manager and assistant involved.
- Where a failure occurs, a first-time informal warning is issued and action agreed with the store to improve standards.
- Where further failures occur, the incident is referred to the CPS for a charging decision to be made.
- All retailers test purchased, regardless of whether they pass or fail, are referred to Trading Standards who then deliver a responsible retailers input to promote best practice and assist retailers in tightening up procedures.

To date, 244 Test Purchase Operations have been conducted with only 16% of stores failing. Since Christmas 2008, no store has failed a knife crime test purchase.

In addition, a scoping exercise was completed of all major retailers' internet sites, including eBay retailers based in the West Yorkshire force area, for vulnerability to underage sales. A number of stores were referred to Trading Standards for responsible retailer inputs due to issues around payment, delivery and advertising methods.

For further details, please contact West Yorkshire Police by e-mailing [stephen.emmett@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:stephen.emmett@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk).



## Section 4: Prevention

The minority of young people who carry/use knives do so for a variety of different reasons, with common themes including fear, protection, status and respect. As a result, any prevention strategy must be multi-faceted and engage with young people to find out why they are carrying knives. One of the key strands of work in TKAP is empowering communities to work with local agencies to take action to prevent violence and knife crime, and offering support to parents to challenge their children's behaviour.

Effective prevention work relies on multi-agency working. Local authorities, the police and other key stakeholders have invested considerable effort in developing new structures and partnerships that facilitate multi-agency work, at strategic level, involving Children's Trusts and CDRPs or CSPs, to front-line work such as Safer School Partnerships.

Prevention messages should be carefully designed to minimise the risk of heightening fear and apprehension within the community. Give consideration to managing these prevention messages in conjunction with positive stories.

In planning an effective partnership prevention strategy you might consider the following questions:

- Can you offer schools and further education colleges assistance in diverting young people into positive activities and away from carrying knives or becoming involved in knife crime?
- Can you provide key partners with data and intelligence in response to them sharing their knowledge with you? For example, can you alert schools to intelligence suggesting that rivalry between two schools is escalating, or that a particular pupil is known to carry a knife or be involved in knife-related criminal behaviour? Good two-way intelligence sharing will help to strengthen your partnership and enable all partners to support each other in developing the most effective possible response.

- Have you considered targeting your local authority services that support young people and their families, for example, tailored parenting support programmes, access to mentors and positive role models for children and young people at risk to help resist wider negative influences?
- Can you link your knife crime strategy with other organisations' strategies to reduce violence and abuse and/or risk factors that contribute to violence and abuse, such as exposure to poor parenting or having poor mental health?
- Have you considered the use of social marketing resources and Community Champions to raise awareness and promote anti-knife messages to target groups, while signposting them to third-party support groups and other information?

You should consider using education programmes targeted at those groups identified as most at-risk, working in combination with effective social marketing and media campaigns.

Many third sector organisations are working to provide education and a diversion from knife crime. You need to be clear on what is being provided locally and work with these organisations as well as statutory partners to develop a joined-up and coherent approach.

Case study

## Talking to Byron – National Youth Theatre

Since February 2009 the National Youth Theatre has been delivering a new anti-knife crime initiative **Talking to Byron** in schools and pupil referral units in Hackney, Newham and Lambeth.

Funded by the Home Office and delivered in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and Be Safe, **Talking to Byron** sets out to explore some of the complex underlying issues around young people and knife crime through the process of making theatre and active engagement.

The initiative is delivered by experienced facilitators and young actors with a specific insight into the mindset and perceptions of their peers and aims to:

- Use dramatic techniques to challenge and change young people's attitudes, assumptions and perceptions of the risks and consequences of carrying a knife;
- Empower young people through drama-based consultation, dialogue and debate and promote alternative approaches to personal safety;
- Encourage relationships between young people based on positive values rather than fear based defence strategies;
- Signpost where young people can go for further advice and help, to report concerns and to seek support as an outlet to alleviate peer pressure.

*“Talking to Byron has been developed as part of an exchange of ideas and practice with young people, teachers, project partners and external practitioners over a number of years. The form and content of the programme is influenced by the unique and ever fruitful collaboration between National Youth Theatre staff, NYT members, our associate artists and young people engaged through participation in our social inclusion work.” – Peter Collins, National Youth Theatre.*

The programme has been designed for teachers and young people aged 12–16 and includes an online resource pack for teachers, INSET training in each borough and a drama workshop, based either in curriculum time or after school to assist with meeting the Extended Schools agenda.

For further details visit [www.nyt.org.uk](http://www.nyt.org.uk) or contact Peter Collins, Associate Director, Creative Learning, NYT on [peter.collins@nyt.org.uk](mailto:peter.collins@nyt.org.uk)

Case study

## Essex

As a Youth Participation Worker for Essex Police, Dan Rankin works with young people in a range of settings – from schools to youth clubs and beyond. Dan deals with a number of issues in his role, and using his knowledge of the local context he worked to address youth knife crime by getting involved with TKAP.

Dan worked with a group of young people from Southend Youth Council to apply for funding so that they could make a film. The film would be used by those young people to spread positive anti-knife crime messages to other young people.

The result was a short but powerful film, which was launched in Southend town centre in March 2009. The film is now used in schools in Essex as part of anti-knife crime lessons taught by teachers and Safer Schools officers. The film can be seen here: [www.2smart.co.uk/knives](http://www.2smart.co.uk/knives).

As well as producing the film, the young people carried out street marketing activity, where they talked to other young people about knife crime and handed out ‘Say no to knives’ stickers and wristbands, which were specially developed to support this initiative.

**Case study continued**

Dan believes that it is really important that young people talk to each other about knives: “It’s all very well for police officers, adults and parents to say ‘don’t carry knives’, but it’s the peer-to-peer interaction that really works. If young people tell each other that carrying knives isn’t right, the message is much more likely to reach those who need to hear it.”

Location and offender profiling are both effective ways of targeting resources. Using resources such as the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) system will assist you to understand what drives young people to get involved in knife crime. By understanding these triggers you can then work closely with relevant agencies including the third sector to help prevent re-offending, and provide early opportunities for positive intervention and diversion. This process will include individuals highlighted as priority and prolific offenders.

**Case study****Liverpool****Aim**

The Violent Offender Management (VOM) Unit aims to reduce violent behaviour by working with partner agencies to assess the risk of dangerousness of violent young offenders, restrict their potential to inflict harm and provide structured intervention to stimulate and promote positive behavioural change.

**Structure**

The Unit includes resources and staff from youth offending services, police, probation and the local authority. This ensures effective information sharing, partnership working and ‘buy-in’ by key agencies to manage violent offenders. Working with the Unit is a chartered forensic psychologist who provides academic research and guidance on the development of a structured intervention package to promote positive behavioural change.

The Liverpool VOM Unit has developed processes to address gaps within the current offender management structures operated by key VOM Unit partners and enhanced the operational delivery of these structures.

Partner agencies and the third sector are utilised through offender management action plans. The Unit has worked in partnership with Connexions, Progress2work, Addaction, registered social landlords and The Prince’s Trust.

Case study continued

**Overview**

The focus is on providing agencies with a structured intervention package to stimulate and promote positive behavioural change, and on monitoring and evaluation of high-risk young people who may or may not currently be reached by Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement or Prolific and other Priority Offender processes. The Unit provides a learning environment to enable the offenders to change their behaviour and engage in a more positive lifestyle.

**Changing Places +**

Using a cognitive behavioural intervention programme called Changing Places+, the VOM Unit provides young people displaying violent behaviour with an opportunity to undertake intensive offender behaviour work, designed to develop self-awareness and self-control, promote positive social skills, teach problem-solving skills, increase self-esteem and decision-making, and reduce or eliminate violent behaviour.

VOM Unit staff deliver programme modules that include sessions on knife crime, gang involvement, alcohol and drug use and criminal careers. Evaluation of the programmes includes psychometric evaluation of participants.

The Unit takes a maximum of 20 cases based on current resource levels of 10 cases per probation/youth offending services case manager. The low number of cases ensures a consistent and high level of one-to-one management. Referrals are made from a variety of sources; for example, offenders released from custody on a Young Offender Institute Licence and Detention and Training Orders have attendance on the VOM Unit programme as a condition of the Order.

The VOM Unit also accepts voluntary referrals.

**Results**

None of the offenders who have completed the programme have committed any offences since engaging with the Unit. Since leaving the programme, 50% have re-entered full-time vocational training courses, 25% have found full-time employment and 25% have returned to full-time education. The Unit has helped individuals to obtain health and safety training certificates and sought out vocational courses or job opportunities as part of the programme.

For further details, please contact Ian Noble on 0151 566 4836 or e-mail [Ian.Noble@merseyside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Ian.Noble@merseyside.pnn.police.uk).

A structured approach can co-ordinate the efforts and skills of all agencies to improve the effectiveness of a multi-agency prevention strategy.

Prevention strategies need to take into account the fact that the drivers for knife crime can be present early in childhood and exert an influence throughout life (a life course perspective). Wider socioeconomic and environmental factors can also influence levels of youth violence. Effective prevention must use interventions that stop violence before it starts (primary prevention) and that work with those who are at risk of violence (secondary prevention). Effective interventions to tackle violence and abuse focus on early intervention across a range of factors. These can improve levels of health and well-being among children and young people and tackle the risk of youth crime.

Interventions include:

- improving parenting (including improving maternal mental health);
- targeting support to at-risk families (for example, FIPs);
- early identification and treatment of childhood/adolescent conduct disorder;
- preventing school-based violence and bullying; and
- tackling alcohol/drug consumption (especially in young people).

This guidance is not seeking to duplicate existing local multi-agency approaches but to suggest ways to supplement and enhance them to ensure that they identify issues specific to knife crime.

#### Case study

### South Yorkshire

POINT7 is a powerful educational programme created to give young people a better understanding of the consequences of carrying a knife.

During the session, young people are shown CCTV footage of an actual knife incident and the weapons seized. The law relating to weapons is explained, they are shown examples of injuries inflicted by guns and knives and the circumstances are described. Warnings are given before and during the event and participants are not obliged to participate in the more graphic elements of the session.

The audience is split into groups, with each having a member of school staff, a youth offending service worker, a Police Community Support Officer and a youth worker.

Each group views three scenarios where actors play the following roles: a witness to an incident, a youth arrested for carrying a BB gun and a parent whose son was killed in a firearms incident. Each character describes how the incidents affected them and changed their lives, and then the young people come together to discuss the scenarios.

At the end of the session, the young people are shown a video montage of young victims. Participants are asked to remember what they have experienced and to consider what positive action they can take.

POINT7 is an emotional learning experience to help young people to consider the dangers and consequences of carrying a weapon, to improve their understanding of the criminal justice system and to explore the impact of violent crime on victims.



### **4.1 SAFER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

A Safer School Partnership (SSP) is a formal agreement between the school and police to work together and, with other agencies, reduce crime and improve behaviour in and around schools. This will involve a police officer or police community support officer working on the school premises full or part time.

All SSPs aim to ensure:

- the safety of pupils, staff and school site;
- early identification, support and, where necessary, challenge of pupils at risk of offending;
- help for young people to deal with situations that may increase their risk of becoming victims and to provide support to those who do;
- improved standards of pupil behaviour and attendance;
- more positive relations between young people and the police, and between young people and the wider community; and
- that issues or behaviour beyond the school site negatively impacting on pupil safety are tackled.



Decisions about whether to have an SSP and its priorities should be jointly made between schools and the police, based on local need and within the context of neighbourhood policing.

Where the SSP has knife crime prevention as one of its specific objectives, it can have considerable benefits to the pupils and operational policing. For example, the SSP officer could have a role in helping educate pupils about the dangers of carrying knives, as well as about screening or searching for weapons if a need for this is identified. The Government has made clear that it wants SSPs to become the norm in schools throughout England and ensure that every school has an allocated police contact.

### **4.2 WORKING WITH THIRD SECTOR GROUPS**

Third sector groups, including faith-based organisations, can help your partnership to engage young people through the provision of advocacy, positive activities, life skills or education. Such groups can be more flexible in responding precisely to the needs and concerns of young people in the local community. It is important to identify who these groups are and to consider whether they might need support to build their capacity to work with young people.



## Case study

**West Midlands**

Birmingham's National Indoor Arena hosted the UK's first 'U R A Star' concert for schools in March 2009. One of the biggest shows ever staged for schools, the concert tackled a range of teen issues, from gangs and knife crime to teenage pregnancy, sexual health and self-esteem, and was seen by 5,000 school children.

Birmingham was chosen as the host because of its unique demographics: nearly a quarter of the population is under 16 years old – three points higher than the national average; a third of Birmingham's under-16s come from lone parent families; and one in five 16–24-year-olds have no formal qualifications.

The creator of the event, and its headline artist, was social entrepreneur 'Witness', who uses music to speak to young people about the issues they face.

Excerpts from the highly regarded *Tooled up for Schools* DVD were played to the audience. The DVD, produced by West Midlands Police, explores the issues and impact of knife crime, and is supported by an education programme within schools. A visual roll-call of the young people killed by knife and gun crime in 2008 moved the crowd to a spontaneous extended round of respectful applause.

Pupils from schools across Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry attended the show, which was supported by West Midlands Police, the Home Office, Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, South Birmingham PCT and the Youth Offenders Trust Service.

## Case study

**Thames Valley**

The Leys Community Development Initiative (CDI) is a charity working to develop and co-ordinate projects to bring long-term benefit to the community of The Leys, a housing estate on the south-east edge of Oxford.

After local Problem Profiles identified a growing issue linking drugs, local gangs and potential use of weapons, the CDI, Thames Valley Police and local young people came together to deliver the Blackbird Leys Community Development Conference for local young people and their parents.

In delivering two annual conferences in 2008 and 2009, the conference team worked with partners including Mothers Against Violence, Nightsafe, the local neighbourhood policing teams, Oxford City Council's community safety team, local businesses, Oxford United Football Club, the youth offending service, probation and Safer Schools officers.

Case study continued

The event included offenders, victims and family members of victims sharing their personal experiences. During the event, there were workshops with young people and parents on local issues and these were followed up with focus groups after the event.

Plans are under way for a 2010 conference, with a focus on tackling youth violence and breaking down historical barriers between young people and the police. Feedback from the two conferences suggests that they had a big impact on young people in terms of their own responsibility and on parents is showing the role they can play in preventing youth violence and anti-social behaviour.

### 4.3 ADVERTISING AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS – ‘IT DOESN’T HAVE TO HAPPEN’

Getting the message out to young people that carrying knives is not acceptable and doesn’t make them safer is an important part of the ‘It Doesn’t Have to Happen’ campaign. This is a successful national advertising campaign developed by and for young people about the physical and emotional consequences of knife crime. The campaign targets 10–16-year-olds with messages and adverts designed to make them think twice about carrying a knife.

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/stopknifecrime/](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/stopknifecrime/)

[www.direct.gov.uk/talkaboutknives/](http://www.direct.gov.uk/talkaboutknives/)

Case study

### It Doesn’t Have to Happen

In support of the It Doesn’t Have to Happen (IDHTH) campaign, the Forster agency, in co-ordination with the Home Office, has delivered a number of regional events across England and Wales to respond to regional needs. Activities include the following:

#### Lancashire

Work with drama students and tutors from Preston College to develop street theatre scripts performed at Preston Flag market and shopping centre. To support the street theatre, peer-to-peer activity to engage young people with anti-knife crime messages also took place. The local youth offending service and YOTs helped promote and support this event.

#### Merseyside

In March 2009, Forster delivered IDHTH-branded youth engagement activity at the Merseyside Youth Conference, providing training in peer-to-peer activity for Safer School Partnership officers to enable them to incorporate IDHTH into their work and support police in delivering key IDHTH messages via Bluetooth.

#### South Wales

Beginning with a peace march, partners held a youth event culminating with a gathering featuring workshops dealing with conflict resolution and the fear of knife crime. In addition, work took place with 80 school police liaison officers to deliver IDHTH messages as well as promoting the young people’s IDHTH campaign toolkit.

#### Essex

Workshops and training delivered for police community support officers and YOTs on ways of engaging young people on knife crime, linking this to local youth bus projects in Basildon and Harlow. Essex Constabulary sourced an appropriate group of young people to be trained in peer-to-peer activity to support this work.



## Case study continued

**Results**

To date:

- over 70,000 young people have visited the Bebo minisite for IDHTH;
- 2.2 million young people have seen adverts on websites;
- 2.8 million young people have heard the radio adverts;
- viral video adverts have been viewed 9.6 million times;
- partnerships with youth radio stations have engaged almost 1,000 young people in workshops which have developed their skills in music, fashion and art;
- 90,000 postcards have been distributed via stakeholders, retailers and cinemas;
- over 80 large billboards have run with photos of young people saying ‘no to knives’;
- mothers have also been targeted via women’s magazines and advice leaflets, as a result of which there has been a 12% increase in the number who would consider raising the issue with their children; and
- the campaign adverts have already reached millions of 10–16-year-olds with evaluation showing that 73% said the adverts had made them less likely to carry a knife.

For more information regarding Forster and the stakeholder toolkits, visit [www.bebo.com/itdoesnthavetohappen/](http://www.bebo.com/itdoesnthavetohappen/)

**4.4 RISK MANAGEMENT**

Location and offender profiling are effective ways to map areas and individuals at risk, and thus are effective in targeting resources. Being well informed about individuals managed under the IOM process and the nature of their offending can enable you to target the highest risk offenders.

Case study

## London

Camden's Youth Engagement Team (YET) is a dedicated team of diverse officers with the sole purpose of reducing serious violence among young people across the borough under the age of 20. The YET acts as a tactical response and resource for expert knowledge in relation to serious youth violence and gang-related activity across the borough.

While short-term policing responses to serious youth violence tend to focus on enforcement-led operations such as Stop and Search, Camden YET also aims to allow for the development of longer-term, engagement-based approaches through Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (YISP) referrals.

### Aims

- Improving the relationship between the police and young people by building up trust and respect for one another.
- Providing intervention methods for offenders and making referrals where appropriate.
- Mentoring young people who are at risk of becoming involved in serious youth violence (the YET leaves its contact details with every young person it comes into contact with).
- Working in partnership with the local authority and other agencies by implementing projects/initiatives, i.e. diversion workshops, after-school clubs, sports competitions, music events, careers day, work placements, apprenticeship schemes etc.

### Promoting alternatives

Camden YET is equally concerned with young people becoming potential victims as potential perpetrators of serious violence and seeks to engage in early intervention with identified young people, directing them towards alternatives to offending and safeguards from victimisation.

### Results

During an eight-month period between July 2007 and March 2008, the YET arrested 113 suspects who were involved in serious youth violence for offences including attempted murder, grievous bodily harm with intent, violent disorder, possession with intent to supply Class A drugs and robbery.

When Operation Blunt 2 (an anti-knife crime operation run by the Metropolitan Police Service) was launched in May 2008, Camden YET changed its working approach from being enforcement led to developing engagement opportunities with young people across the borough. This was achieved by engaging with young people outside youth clubs, estates and parks and during after-school patrols at crucial times of the day. The purpose of this was to reduce the risk of serious violence and to provide reassurance to the young people and the wider community. By taking this new approach, the YET successfully disbanded five active youth gangs heavily involved in serious youth violence and disorder across the borough. This resulted in a 49% reduction in serious youth violence in September 2008 compared with 2007. The YET continues to use a mixture of both enforcement and engagement activities to reduce overall youth violence.

For further details, please contact Superintendent Raj Kholi on 020 8733 6307 or e-mail [raj.kholi@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:raj.kholi@met.pnn.police.uk)

The creation of 'safe places' and 'safe routes' home from schools should be central to the thinking of CDRPs and CSPs. The most common location for victimisation incidents among 10–15-year-olds is in school or college, and for 16–25-year-olds, a pub, bar or nightclub or the street. The cyclical pattern of individuals being repeat victims and repeat offenders is well established. The majority of individuals who commit an offence have in the previous 12 months been a victim of personal crime, compared with about a fifth of those who have not.

The YCAP is a comprehensive, cross-government analysis of current and proposed activity to tackle youth crime. It sets out a 'triple track' approach of enforcement and punishment where behaviour is unacceptable, non-negotiable support and challenge where it is most needed, and better and earlier prevention.



The package of measures includes:

- using appropriate legislation to remove young people at risk from the streets at night (Operation Staysafe);
- increased high-visibility police patrols during after-school periods;
- street-based teams of police and youth workers to divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- placing YOT workers in custody suites so that young people can be directed to the most appropriate service as soon as possible.

TKAP forms a key element of the broader YCAP. TKAP and YCAP represent a renewed drive on serious youth violence, and, with added investment in TKAP, will include making a greater commitment to tackle the public's fears about the impact of knife crime on local communities, building on the successful work of the police and local agencies.

All YCAP areas that are also part of TKAP should consider how they can prioritise serious youth violence in their YCAP work to get the most out of the overlaps between TKAP and YCAP. This means ensuring that

YCAP initiatives such as FIPs, Operation Staysafe, after-school police patrols and street teams are focused particularly on young people at risk of involvement in serious youth violence and other crimes, where this is necessary.

The vast majority of young people are law-abiding and make a positive contribution to their communities, but the small element involved in crime and anti-social behaviour can have a devastating impact. The £100 million YCAP has a triple-track approach of:

- better prevention;
- more support to address the underlying causes of poor behaviour; and
- tough enforcement.

The police will need to work with key partners to ensure that tackling knife crime work is aligned with broader youth crime activity.

#### 4.5 OPERATION STAYSAFE

Operation Staysafe involves the legitimate removal of children and young people, who may be classed as vulnerable and at risk of significant harm, from the streets and public parks. It involves both the police and local authority children's services working together to identify young people at risk, take them to a place of safety and then ensure that their ongoing safety is secured.

Operation Staysafe is based on provisions in the Children Act 1989. The police can take children and young people into 'police protection' under Section 46(1), where a constable has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm. The constable may remove the child or young person to suitable accommodation or 'place of safety'. This power is based on a subjective judgement by the individual officer.

For more information on Operation Staysafe, which has often operated as part of local delivery of YCAP please visit:

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/)



### 4.6 COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) provides a mechanism for assessing the full range of a young person's needs and engaging relevant agencies to provide support based on a 'team around the child' approach. If someone who comes into contact with a child, either as part of their job or as a volunteer, identifies or suspects that a child's needs are not being addressed, they should seek the consent of the child, young person or family to use the CAF. If a child is found to be carrying a knife, he or she may have more needs than would be addressed through a response that solely focused on knife crime. In such a case, the CAF may be appropriate.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/caf/cafframework/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/caf/cafframework/)

### 4.7 SCHOOLS OFFERING ACCESS TO EXTENDED SERVICES

By 2010 all schools should be offering access to a core offer of extended services comprising a varied menu of before- and after-school activities (combined with childcare in primary schools) and during school holidays where there is demand; swift and easy access to specialist support services; parenting support; and community access to school facilities. Already over 80% of schools are providing access to the core offer.

The core offer of extended services can help to tackle some of the underlying causes of youth crime. The activities, for example, provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in diversionary activities which are fun and delivered in a safe environment. Through community access, schools may, for example, open up their facilities for young people on

**KNIVES or LIVES? You decide!**

**SAY NO TO KNIVES**  
www.zsmart.co.uk/knives

**FACTS & CONSEQUENCES**  
The possible consequences of carrying a knife are:

- You have a false sense of security
- You attract trouble and get stabbed yourself
- You get arrested for carrying a knife
- You end up with a criminal record
- You injure someone
- You end up in prison
- You kill someone

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- It is illegal to carry a knife in school.
- It is illegal for anyone to carry a knife without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.
- You could influence your friends by not carrying a knife, doing your bit to make the streets safer.
- It is illegal for anyone to carry a knife as a weapon. You could face four years in prison.
- Carrying a knife will mean you will be arrested and end up with a criminal record that could affect your whole life, future job prospects, going to college or university and travelling abroad.
- One in three knife related injuries are caused by the victim's own knife.
- Essex doesn't have the knife problem seen in other areas – and with your help we can keep it that way.
- Essex Police has 19 safety anyways and 80 wands which can detect whether people are carrying a knife. These are being used across the county.
- You can die from just one stab wound.
- Most knives carry invisible bacteria. If you are stabbed this bacteria can get into the wound and cause infection which if left untreated can spread around the body and can kill you.

**WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP KEEP KNIFE CRIME OUT OF ESSEX?**

- The best method of staying safe is to not carry a knife!
- If you think someone is carrying a knife – stay away from them.
- If you know, or believe, someone is carrying – report it by calling Essex Police on **0300 333 4444** or **999** in an emergency or call Crimestoppers without anyone knowing on **0800 555 111** or through their website [www.shednews.co.uk](http://www.shednews.co.uk)

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I AM CAUGHT CARRYING A KNIFE?**  
The maximum sentence for carrying a knife is 4 years in prison.

**A true life story...**  
Ann Oakes-Odger is a tireless campaigner against knife crime and a great supporter of Essex Police's ZSMART roadshows. Her life has been deeply affected by knife crime after her son Wesley (pictured here) was stabbed to death at a cash point in Colchester in 2005. Since then Ann has been doing all she can to raise awareness of knife crime and the devastation it can bring.  
For more information on Ann and the work she does within schools visit [www.KnifeCrimes.org](http://www.KnifeCrimes.org)

**COMPETITION!** Visit [www.zsmart.co.uk](http://www.zsmart.co.uk) and check out the three faces that Wesley drew when he was a young boy. All you have to do is create a body for each face. Our winner will receive a selection of art equipment and a £50 WHSmith voucher.

**FACTBOX**  
**Knife Crime**  
Knives have lots of important uses as part of everyday life. However carrying a knife that can be used as a weapon is against the law. People who carry knives often carry them for self defence – this is still against the law, and is not a good idea. If you carry a knife you're more likely to be arrested, and one third of people who use a knife as a weapon end up getting hurt by their own knife.  
**FACT:** A knife is illegal for anyone to carry as a weapon. The maximum penalty is up to 4 years in prison.

**find out more at**  
**WWW.ZSMART.CO.UK**

Friday and Saturday evenings. Other elements of the core offer can help influence young people not to become involved in crime – for example, targeted parental support and access to specialist services for families and young people most at risk.

For more information about extended services and how they can help, view the ‘Accelerated Extended Schools Resource Kit’ at:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/aeskit/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/aeskit/)

This summarises the activities of and the lessons learned by 12 local authorities which took part in a project to accelerate extended services in crime hotspot areas.

#### 4.8 POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP); high-quality activities for young people aged 8 to 19 who are at risk of poor outcomes, social exclusion and crime, including knife crime.

There is clear evidence that positive activities can play a role in reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour. The Green Paper *Youth Matters* and its accompanying statutory guidance sets out national standards for positive activities and how local authorities should secure access to and publicise their local offer – often referred to as the ‘youth offer’.



#### 4.9 TARGETED SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Local authorities can offer targeted services to facilitate early identification of children and families with support needs and to provide early action to prevent problems occurring. The support provided might be parenting support (advice or more formal parenting classes) for families who are struggling to manage their children’s behaviour, through to more intensive whole-family interventions for families with more complex needs.

All local authorities are being provided with extra resources to provide targeted parenting and family support. Recent commitments in the *Children’s Plan: One Year On*, the *Youth Crime Action Plan* and the *Youth Taskforce Action Plan* set out the ways in which government is supporting local authorities to develop a spectrum of targeted interventions for families at risk. The national roll-out of ‘Think Family’ is encouraging all services to better co-ordinate support and to intervene early. As from April 2009, all local authorities will receive extra funding to introduce ‘Think Family’ reforms as part of the YCAP funding noted above.

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan)

#### 4.10 YOUTH INCLUSION PROGRAMMES

Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) operate in 110 of the most deprived/high crime neighbourhoods in England and Wales and are aimed at 8–17-year-olds who are at high risk of involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour. Young people on the YIP are identified through a number of different agencies, including the YOT, police, local authorities, schools, neighbourhood wardens and anti-social behaviour teams.

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/crpinit/crpinit9.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/crpinit/crpinit9.htm)





#### 4.11 YOUTH INCLUSION AND SUPPORT PANELS

YISPs aim to prevent anti-social behaviour and offending by 8–13-year-olds (up to 17 in some areas) who are considered to be at high risk of offending and anti-social behaviour. There are currently around 220 YISPs nationally. They are multi-agency planning groups that offer early intervention based on assessed risk and need. Parenting support in the form of contracts and programmes is offered as part of a range of tailored interventions.

#### 4.12 KNIFE POSSESSION PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

Knife Possession Prevention Programmes have been designed to tackle knife carrying among 10–17-year-olds who offend. The programmes are currently operating in the TKAP areas with young people who are charged with knife possession offences.

Programmes are delivered as a component of an order (e.g. Referral Order/Action Plan Order) and enable YOTs to address specifically the issues around knife carrying. By targeting the intervention, it is expected that the young person will understand the impact of knife-carrying and change their behaviour, thereby reducing the likelihood of re-offending. The programme framework was devised by experienced practitioners from YOTs and specialist providers. YOTs retain the ability to deliver the scheme flexibly.

Across the UK, YOTs are working with partners to develop the modules to support the programmes, particularly those relating to working with:

- healthcare professionals and Primary Care Trusts;
- victims' families or organisations;
- offenders; and
- third sector organisations.

#### 4.13 FAMILY INTERVENTION PROJECTS

FIPs offer intensive support to vulnerable families, backed up by the possibility of sanctions such as eviction to ensure that families engage. Key workers who work with families use assertive and persistent approaches and do not take 'no' for an answer. Evidence shows that FIPs are successful in turning around the lives of the most challenging families whom other services have often written off. Research into the impact of the first 327 families to complete a FIP found that:

- 49% of families had four or more anti-social behaviour problems at the start of the intervention; by the end this was down to 4%;
- the proportion of families exhibiting poor parenting had halved from 60% to 32%; and
- 58% of families were the subject of one or more housing enforcement actions at the start of the intervention; by the end this was down to 14%.

# Section 5: Reassuring the community, witnesses and victims

## 5.1 REASSURING YOUR COMMUNITY

As with many crime types, the fear that knife crime creates exceeds the probability of becoming a victim. High-visibility policing provides reassurance, particularly when used in combination with clear messages about how your force is tackling knife crime, and helps to address many of our communities' concerns. However, consideration should be given to balancing these messages, as discussed below.

Working with partners, you may wish to reassure communities by using various media resources to communicate the facts about knife crime. You might consider:

- using local independent advice, such as an Independent Advisory Group, which can act as both a critical friend and a direct link to community perceptions. Clear terms of reference are essential;
- agreeing partnership objectives for community reassurance;
- using local surveys to inform the partnership of the perception of knife possession and use. Consider publishing these surveys to reinforce the reassuring message;
- a clear understanding of the messages and means of communication that are most effective in delivering reassurance to different parts of the community; and
- working with the media to ensure that they understand those messages and work with you to communicate them.



When violence does occur consideration should be given to:

- using restorative justice and mediation-based approaches in order to prevent disputes further escalating into violence; and
- supporting victims and witnesses in order to encourage the reporting of offences and to create a wider understanding of the local knife crime profile.

It is vitally important that the work of everyone involved in tackling knife crime is communicated to the community. This section highlights the range of options you may wish to consider before doing so.

## **5.2 A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC**

Developing a strategic framework for community reassurance is one way to ensure a long-term and sustainable approach to tackling knife crime.

It guarantees senior-level buy-in and provides a reference document that all parties can look to for guidance. Ideally a strategic approach should engage all parties involved in delivering the solution.

Information and guidance on successful community engagement and reassurance activities can be found at [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/policing17.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/policing17.htm)

## **5.3 DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIONS FOR A CRITICAL INCIDENT**

A critical incident is any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community. Some categories of knife crime are likely to fall under this definition.

Community tensions and fear are often at their peak during the first 48 hours after a critical incident. A critical incident policy should be adopted and used effectively in order to put in place the appropriate command structure, but also to manage the threat that the community feels to their sense of security after the incident. It is also important that the community sees how the local authority and other bodies are working together with the police when a critical incident occurs.

Running alongside the command structure is the Community Impact and Conflict Prevention Assessment, which serves to monitor community intervention and community tensions. The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) provides guidance on the management of critical incidents entitled *Practice Advice on Critical Incident Management*. See [www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/critical\\_incident\\_management\\_17x08x07.pdf](http://www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/critical_incident_management_17x08x07.pdf)

### **Case study**

## **Nottinghamshire**

Nottinghamshire Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams worked with local secondary schools to conduct high-visibility after-school patrols to reassure young people and the community. This allowed local officers and Police Community Support Officers to become involved with schools via after-school activities, resolving bullying issues, being made aware of exclusions, preventing inter-school fights, conducting Stop and Searches and gathering intelligence. Parents, pupils and teachers were very supportive; in some cases the headteachers accompanied officers on the patrols.

Linked to this work were Staysafe operations, in which police officers, the youth service, the YOT and the emergency duty team workers patrolled together and interacted with young people on the streets in their own communities. The areas of operation were selected through analysis of intelligence, identifying 'hot spots' linked to anti-social behaviour and crime. In two operations, the patrols engaged with over 160 young people, and four children were removed to a place of safety under the Children Act 1989.

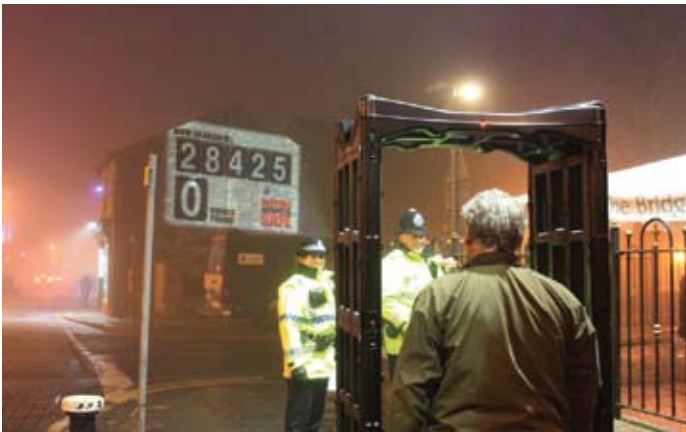
During this activity there was a reduction in the number of calls to the force control room compared to the corresponding evenings in the preceding three weeks. Nottinghamshire Police wanted to ensure that TKAP was sustainable, and continues to support school patrols and Operation Staysafe through the work being delivered as part of YCAP.



### 5.4 HIGH-VISIBILITY POLICING

High-visibility policing provides reassurance, particularly when used in combination with clear messages about how the force is effectively tackling knife crime and helps to address many of our communities' concerns. It is important that, during periods of intensive enforcement activity, the reasons for this extraordinary policing approach are explained to communities.

Many Neighbourhood Policing Teams have officers who are either embedded within or have a direct link to schools. Whenever enforcement activity relating to schools is being considered, such officers should be involved in the planning process in consultation with the school or further education establishment.



Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Community Support Officers are a long-term commitment to improving the characteristics of an area. They offer an invaluable source of local intelligence and the opportunity to reinforce messages. For example, following a Test Purchase Operation, the local Neighbourhood Policing Team can conduct subsequent visits to retailers to ensure that focus on prevention is not lost.

All Neighbourhood Policing Teams have a process for establishing and acting on issues of local concern. Where knife crime is or is perceived to be a particular problem, this can be flagged as a neighbourhood priority. This gives the opportunity to work with local partnerships to take positive action. It should be remembered, of course, that poorly managed communications may simply exacerbate unfounded fears.

### 5.5 USE OF THE MEDIA

As with many crime types, the fear that knife crime appears to create exceeds the probability of being a victim of knife crime. The majority of young people never carry or use weapons and steps must be taken to counter the impression that, for example, 'everyone carries a knife'. Working proactively with the media can encourage them to respond positively to initiatives that address knife crime and provide an opportunity to highlight action that is being taken.



### 5.6 REASSURING VICTIMS AND WITNESSES AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

#### 5.6.1 WITNESSES

Witnesses are vital in providing assistance to the police and giving evidence at trial. In communities where serious violence is prevalent, witnesses can be reluctant to come forward, often through fear for their safety. This fear may be real or perceived, but the effect is that in some cases serious violent crimes have remained unsolved because of a lack of evidence to identify a suspect or bring charges.

It has been recognised that more needs to be done to improve the protection available during an investigation, a trial and beyond. The current Coroners and Justice Bill seeks to achieve this objective by introducing a new order granting a witness anonymity for criminal investigations into homicides caused by knives or firearms.

A witness anonymity order would enable the police to give a witness early assurance of anonymity during an investigation, whether or not the witness subsequently gives evidence. It also could be used where a potential witness is unwilling to make a statement without the assurance of anonymity.

National guidance on tackling intimidation and a framework of action available to police and other criminal justice agencies is available at <http://frontline.cjsonline.gov.uk/guidance/victims-and-witnesses>

### 5.6.2 VICTIMS

Being a victim is a profound emotional and psychological event – it can lead to debilitating personal insecurity, confusion and uncertainty. The overlap between young victims of crime and young offenders confirms that by addressing victimisation you are also addressing the wider issue of youth offending.

*The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime* sets out services victims can expect from the criminal justice system. For a full breakdown of the spectrum of services available to people affected by crime please visit <http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

### 5.6.3 RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative justice can be a powerful tool in reducing re-offending by bringing victims, offenders and communities together to decide on a response to a particular crime. Youth Offending Services routinely apply restorative justice principles of Responsibility, Restoration and Re-integration to assist victims, offenders, Safer Community Partnerships and Local Criminal Justice Boards to:

- give victims a greater voice in the criminal justice system;
- allow victims to receive an explanation and more meaningful reparation from offenders;
- make offenders accountable by allowing them to take responsibility for their actions; and
- build community confidence that offenders are making amends for their wrongdoing.

Safer School Partnerships are in a strong position to develop restorative approaches to tackle offending behaviour, bullying and victimisation.

# Section 6: Resources and other useful information

## **Community Cohesion Impact Assessment and Community Conflict Prevention Tool**

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitycohesiontool](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitycohesiontool)

## **Crimestoppers**

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

## **Department for Children, Schools and Families**

[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

## **Department for Health – *Framework for Violence and Abuse Prevention***

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_091772](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_091772)

## **Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships**

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships/partnerships001.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships/partnerships001.htm)

## **Home Office**

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

## **Information Commissioner’s Office *Framework code of practice for sharing personal information***

[www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data\\_protection/detailed\\_specialist\\_guides/pinfo-framework.pdf](http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data_protection/detailed_specialist_guides/pinfo-framework.pdf)

## **Information Sharing Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships**

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm)

## **Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners and Managers**

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/informationsharing/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/informationsharing/)

## **Safer School Partnerships**

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/)

## **Tackling Gangs Action Programme**

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet012.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet012.htm)

## **Tackling Knives Action Programme**

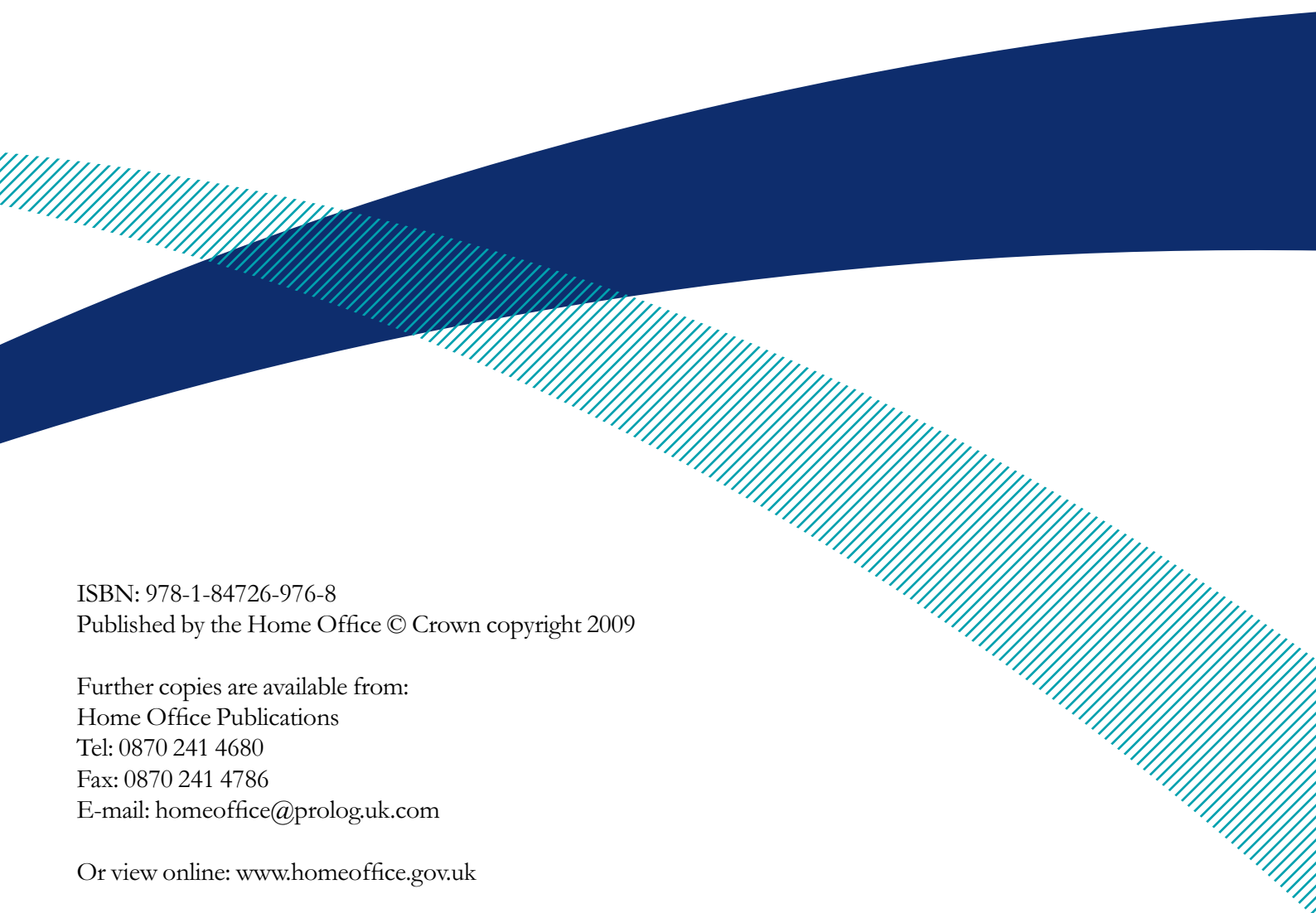
[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tackling\\_knives.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tackling_knives.htm)

## **Youth Crime Action Plan**

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/)

## **Youth Justice Board – *Knife Possession Prevention Programme***

[www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/ReducingReoffending/KnifePossessionPreventionProgramme/](http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/ReducingReoffending/KnifePossessionPreventionProgramme/)



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