



Knife Crime

and PSHE Education

Professionals' Pack

2024

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INTRODUCTION

This pack aims to support education providers to deliver quality PSHE education around knife crime through identifying the curriculum links within the PSHE Associations' Spiral Curriculum and the Department for Education's statutory guidance and developing staff's confidence and competence on the subject matter to support them to facilitate PSHE education on this topic within their own setting.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance states that:

- Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provision when relevant topics are being taught, including violence and exploitation by gangs
- Schools should show flexibility to respond to local public health and community issues to meet the needs of pupils
- Should be addressed sensitively and clearly

Education providers can help raise awareness of knife crime, by discussing the potential consequences of carrying a bladed weapon, educating children and young people on appropriate first aid techniques and challenging perceived 'social norms'



Local Quality Framework

We believe that for PSHE education to be effective it must:

- Be delivered in a safe learning environment based on the principles that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable.
- Have clear learning objectives and outcomes and ensure sessions and programmes are well planned, resourced and appropriately underpinned by solid research and evidence.
- Be relevant, accurate and factual, including using the correct terminology.
- Be positively inclusive in terms of:
 - Age
 - Gender Identity
 - Race
 - Sex
 - Disability
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Religion or Belief
 - Sexual Orientation
- Designed to include the development of knowledge, skills and values to support positive life choices.
- Use positive messaging, that does not cause shame or victim blaming.
- Challenge attitudes and values within society, such as perceived social norms and those portrayed in the media.
- Be reflective of the age and stage of the children and young people and be tailored to the environment and group.
- Utilise active skill-based learning techniques to encourage active participation.
- Ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights, including their right to access confidential advice and support services within the boundaries of safeguarding.
- Be delivered by trained, confident and competent professionals.
- Empower and involve children and young people as participants, advocates and evaluators in the development of PSHE education.

SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A safe learning environment enables children and young people to feel comfortable to share their ideas without attracting negative feedback. It avoids possible distress and prevents disclosures in a public setting and enables professionals to manage conversations on sensitive issues confidently. We have created a guidance document to support professionals to create this safe in their own setting.



No. 01 — Ground Rules

Create in collaboration with the group . As the facilitator role model the agreed ground rules.



No. 02 — Collaborate with DSL

Let them know when the session is being delivered to ensure the correct support is in place should any disclosures be made.



No. 03 — Staff Confidence

Check Staff confidence levels. If anyone is in panic zone it is not safe or appropriate for them or the participants to teach on the topic. This pack should help professionals to move from panic zone to learning or comfort zone



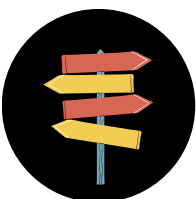
No. 04 — Learning Techniques

Use scenarios and stories to help participants engage with the topic. Refer to the third person rather than you e.g. what could this character do?, or people of about your age....



No. 05 — Difficult Questions

Questions are an important part of learning. Sometimes a child or young person will ask a difficult question. As with all questions the first thing is to value the question whilst either allowing time to consider an appropriate answer or to deflect an inappropriate question.



No. 06 — Signposting

It is absolutely essential, that included in the lesson, is information about different organisations and people that can provide support both within the organisation and outside of it.

A more detailed version of this page is available by emailing either Natalie or Ellie

Do not use scare/fear or guilt tactics

It is a common misconception that if a child or young person is shocked or scared by what they are shown they will avoid the behaviour in the future.

Whilst young people will often say that they like 'hard-hitting' material and that it engages them more effectively, in fact when experienced in a safe setting (in this case a classroom or youth space), shocking images become exciting (in a similar way to watching a horror film or riding a rollercoaster) and this excitement response can block the desired learning. Equally, for anyone who has previously been affected by something similar, it can re-traumatise them or they can block the message as it is too close for comfort, which again prevents the intended learning. It also presents a scenario which is more likely to make young people think 'that won't ever happen to me' than the desired 'that could be me' response.

Scare-based approaches often trap children and young people into choosing between two feared-scenarios – e.g., do I carry a knife because I'm scared of being attacked or do I not carry one because I'm scared of prison? It is more helpful and ethical to help children and young people being into view wider and deeper understandings and motivators, such as helping them to explore and clarify their values.

The adolescent brain is still developing which means that the perception of messaging and how they react to them is different to our experiences as adults. Furthermore, because their brains are still developing, they often live "in the moment;" when an unhealthy situation arises, they'll make decisions based on what they're feeling then and there, instead of making a reasoned, logical decision.

The pre-frontal cortex or critical thinking/reasoning part of the brain is the last section to develop.

You can find out more about the teenage brain [here](#)

Young people should be informed of risks in a balance and measured way through an approach that supports them to make informed, healthy, safe decisions and empower them to believe they can act on "good choices.

Top Tips:

- Evidence shows that shock and scare tactics just don't work.
- Check resources (including external agencies) for images or scenes that might be shocking, harrowing or scary for the age group – remember that children and young people will have a much lower threshold for what might worry them.
- Remember the purpose of the session is to educate not entertain. Just because young people might watch scary films in their own time, does not mean using similar films within PSHE Education will promote learning.
- Make sure there is a range of examples, case studies and consequences, most of which do not focus on the most dramatic or extreme outcomes.

Knowledge, Skills and Values

Topics explored in PSHE education, relate directly to a child's or young person's life, when they might find themselves in a tricky situation or "crunch" moment – and need to make a quick decision; for example, a child who is dared to run across the road by their friends, or a teenager who is being pressured to carry a knife. They will need to recall learning from PSHE education at that moment to help them make a decision.

They will, of course, require knowledge e.g., of the legality (or not) of their actions. However, in order to make a safe decision in the moment, they will also need skills to negotiate with their peers to resist pressure from others, to exit the situation (if they choose to) and access appropriate help or support if necessary. They will need a strong sense of their own values, to make the right decision and the confidence to stick to it.

Knowledge on its own won't necessarily stop someone from trying things. In many cases young people end up in situations where they know what they are doing is "wrong", but they do it anyway, as they lack the essential skills or attributes to help them effectively manage the situation.

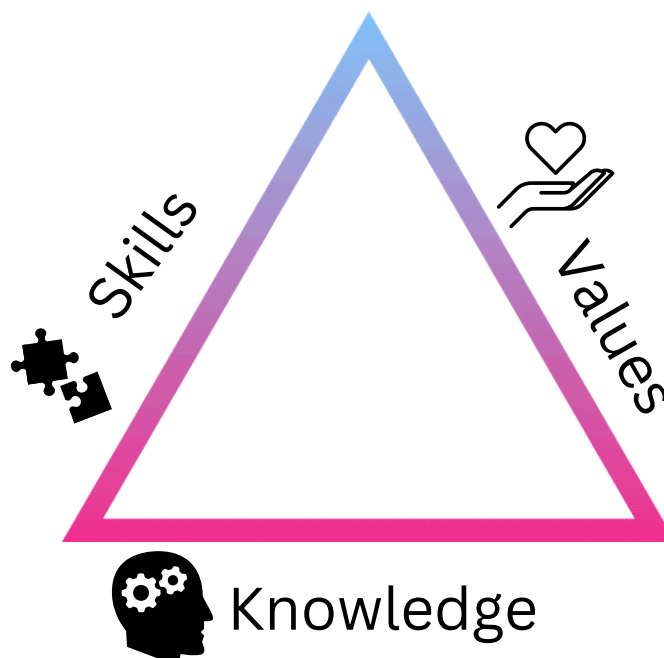
To ensure that sessions are balanced it is important to know the purpose of the activity and create a balanced session that increases or enables reflection on knowledge, skills and values.

The definition of each of these is:

Knowledge: gaining new information on a topic

Skills: gaining new skills on a topic

Values: reflecting on, and potentially altering, your own values in relation to a topic



Trauma Informed Approach

Being Trauma-Informed

It is important to be aware of the risks of educative interventions, if not delivered carefully. PSHE resources – when used with children and young people who have been affected by the topic being covered – can re-traumatise children and young people or induce vicarious trauma – this is defined as the feelings of trauma experienced by a third party when witnessing or engaging with the harm or trauma of another (Eaton, 2017).



The National Youth Agency provides a free e-learning course to help professionals gain a greater understanding of trauma and how it affects mental and emotional wellbeing. The module provides tools and reflection space for professionals to enable them to better support young people in this area.

You can access the course [here](#) – you will need to create a Youth Work One account to be able to access the course.

Top Tips

- Do not use resources that include graphic images, victim blaming or scenes of abuse.
- Ensure that the work is part of a planned, sequential curriculum that builds on prior knowledge.
- Work with your pastoral team to understand if there is anyone who could be affected by this scheme of work. Ask the individuals if they want to be included in the class or if they would prefer to do some other work – explain there will be no explanation given to their absence.
- Use resources only within class-sized groups and not within assemblies.
- Ensure that a trigger/content warning is given beforehand.
- Ensure there is plenty of time for class-based discussions and signposting and that children/young people do not move onto a different topic/lesson before having time to debrief.
- When exploring themes with the participants do not ask “what could x have done to not be a victim of...” or “what signs should they have spotted” this encourages victim-blaming and abuse is never the fault of the child or young person.
- Use distancing techniques – Avoid questions or activities which encourage students to consider their personal experiences, or ask them to put themselves in a particular situation. It is more appropriate to ask “how do you think x is feeling?” or “how would you feel if x was your friend?”. This helps to develop skills of emotional literacy and empathy. You could also ask young people to imagine the response of “a young person, about your age who goes to school around here”
- How can you make it easy for participants to leave the room and communicate this in advance?
- How will you ensure parents/carers have information about this scheme of work to support it within the home?
- You might want to consider a Disassociation Game to close the session. This is a quick, light-hearted, unrelated activity following the plenary on learning from the session. The purpose of this is to help students emotionally detach themselves from the content of the session before they leave.

Tips for Communication

Communication difficulties

Special provision should be put in place to support conversations with children, young people or adult learners who:

- have communication difficulties
- are too young
- are unable to communicate
- cannot or will not explain

You should refer to the child, young person or adult learner's behaviour plan and the information available from any assessments. This may include visual cues to help facilitate discussion, such as picture exchange communication cards.

Mencap has published further information on communicating with people with learning difficulties.

The National Autistic Society has also published tips to communicate more effectively with an autistic person.



LINKS TO PSHE CURRICULUM 11

The table below shows the learning opportunities from the relevant PSHE Association core themes at which can be link to Knife Crime

Primary

PSHE Association:

Key Stage One

H13.	How feelings can affect people's bodies and how they behave
H19.	To recognise when they need help with feelings; that it is important to ask for help with feelings; and how to ask for it
H24.	How to manage when finding things difficult
H33.	About the people whose job it is to help keep us safe
H35.	About what to do if there is an accident and someone is hurt
H36.	How to get help in an emergency (how to dial 999 and what to say)
R8.	Simple strategies to resolve arguments between friends positively
R12.	That hurtful behaviour (offline and online) including teasing, name-calling, bullying and deliberately excluding others is not acceptable; how to report bullying; the importance of telling a trusted adult
R24.	How to listen to other people and play and work cooperatively
L1.	About what rules are, why they are needed, and why different rules are needed for different situations

H16.	About strategies and behaviours that support mental health – including how good quality sleep, physical exercise/time outdoors, being involved in community groups, doing things for others, clubs, and activities, hobbies and spending time with family and friends can support mental health and wellbeing
H20.	Strategies to respond to feelings, including intense or conflicting feelings; how to manage and respond to feelings appropriately and proportionately in different situations
H43.	About what is meant by first aid; basic techniques for dealing with common injuries
H44.	How to respond and react in an emergency; how to identify situations that may require the emergency services; know how to contact them and what to say
R15.	Strategies for recognising and managing peer influence and a desire for peer approval in friendships; to recognise the effect of online actions on others
R17.	That friendships have ups and downs; strategies to resolve disputes and reconcile differences positively and safely
R28.	How to recognise pressure from others to do something unsafe or that makes them feel uncomfortable and strategies for managing this
R29.	Where to get advice and report concerns if worried about their own or someone else's personal safety (including online)
L1.	To recognise reasons for rules and laws; consequences of not adhering to rules and laws

SA3 – Playing and Working Together

<p>Encountering</p>	<p>Respond with curiosity to modelling of ‘good listening’.</p>
<p>Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate good listening and describe how to listen to other people. • Describe times when we take turns in school
<p>Core</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify reasons why it is important to listen to other people. • Identify some actions/ behaviours that show we are being polite and courteous to other people. • Demonstrate ways of playing and working cooperatively. • Explain what we mean by ‘being fair’ to one another.
<p>Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify times when we have listened to others and worked collaboratively. • Demonstrate ways of sharing opinions, thoughts and ideas on things that matter to us. • Identify reasons why it may be upsetting for others if we don’t wait for our turn
<p>Enrichment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe some ways of playing and working with others so that everyone feels happy and is able to do their best. • Describe how to recognise if someone else has missed their ‘turn’; explain how this might make them feel; demonstrate how to resolve this.
<p>Enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why listening and respecting others’ points of view helps us to get on with others.

SA5 – Getting on with Others

Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe ways in which friends, classmates, family members may disagree and ‘fall out’. • Demonstrate some ways of ‘making up’ after a falling out
Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why it is important to listen to others’ point of view; demonstrate active listening; demonstrate simple ways of resolving disagreements. • Describe what it means to ‘fall out’ with friends or family
Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what we can say, do or whom we can tell if we are worried or unhappy in a friendship or relationship.

SSS2 – Keeping Safe

Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how we know when we might need to ask for help.
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and describe feelings associated with not feeling safe (e.g. worried, scared, frightened) and identify trusted adults who can help us if we feel this way. • Demonstrate ways of making it clear to others when we need help.
Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify when someone might need first aid because they are hurt/ injured.
Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe some simple strategies for keeping physically safe in situations when we might feel afraid. • Recognise when a situation is an emergency and explain or demonstrate how to get help, including how to call 999.

MF2 – Managing Strong Feeling

<p>Encountering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to stimuli about some of the different ways we can communicate our feelings and needs to others.
<p>Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify some different ways of communicating feelings and needs to others.
<p>Core</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate vocabulary/ communication skills to express a range of different feelings. • Recognise ways we can help ourselves to feel better if we are feeling sad or upset.
<p>Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and demonstrate simple strategies that can help us manage not so good (uncomfortable) feelings and the people who can help us. • Demonstrate simple strategies to help us manage very strong feelings, including in response to change and loss
<p>Enrichment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give simple reasons why it is important that others know how we are feeling. • Describe some simple ways we can help others to feel better if they are feeling sad or upset.
<p>Enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that when we get upset, angry or frustrated our actions can affect others as well as ourselves. • Describe or demonstrate how to respond appropriately to others' feelings.

DfE Statutory Guidance:

By the end of Primary pupils will know:

FR4.	That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.
FR5.	How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed
BS6.	How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
M2.	That there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations
FA1.	How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary.
FA2.	Concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries



PSHE Association:

Key Stage Three

H7.	The characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing these
H30.	How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including online
H33.	How to get help in an emergency and perform basic first aid, including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of defibrillators
R16.	To further develop the skills of active listening, clear communication, negotiation and compromise
R19.	To develop conflict management skills and strategies to reconcile after disagreements
R42.	To recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online
R43.	The role peers can play in supporting one another to resist pressure and influence, challenge harmful social norms and access appropriate support
R44.	That the need for peer approval can generate feelings of pressure and lead to increased risk-taking; strategies to manage this
R45.	About the factors that contribute to young people joining gangs; the social, legal and physical consequences of gang behaviours
R46.	Strategies to manage pressure to join a gang, exit strategies and how to access appropriate support
R47.	Motivations, misconceptions and consequences of carrying weapons and strategies for managing pressure to carry a weapon

H2.	How self-confidence, self esteem and mental health are affected positively and negatively by internal and external influences and ways of managing this
H7.	A broad range of strategies – cognitive and practical – for promoting their own emotional wellbeing, for avoiding negative thinking and for ways of managing mental health concerns
H23.	Strategies for identifying risky and emergency situations, including online; ways to manage these and get appropriate help, including where there may be legal consequences (e.g. drugs and alcohol, violent crime and gangs)
H24.	To increase confidence in performing emergency first aid and life-saving skills, including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of defibrillators
R35.	To evaluate ways in which their behaviours may influence their peers, positively and negatively, including online, and in situations involving weapons or gangs
R37.	To recognise situations where they are being adversely influenced, or are at risk, due to being part of a particular group or gang; strategies to access appropriate help
R38.	Factors which contribute to young people becoming involved in serious organised crime, including cybercrime

H4.	To recognise signs of change in mental health and wellbeing and demonstrate a range of strategies for building and maintaining positive mental health, including managing stress and anxiety
H14.	To assess and manage risk and personal safety in a wide range of contexts, including online; about support in place to safeguard them in these contexts and how to access it
H17..	To perform first aid and evaluate when to summon emergency services, irrespective of any potential legal implications, for example, when the situation involves alcohol, drugs, gangs or violent crime
R23.	Strategies to recognise, de-escalate and exit aggressive social situations
R24.	To evaluate the dangers and consequences of being involved in gangs, serious organised crime or carrying a weapon

SA4 – Managing Pressure

<p>Core</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what is meant by teasing, hurtful and bullying behaviour. • Explain how we do not need to put up with someone being unkind, hurtful, abusive to, or bullying, us. • Recognise what is meant by peer pressure and peer influence.
<p>Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify some of the ways in which pressure might be put on us by other people, including online. • Describe ways we might challenge peer pressure. • Identify different types of bullying (including online) and what the impact of bullying might be. • Identify strategies to help us if we are being bullied, including online. • Describe how to recognise the difference between friendship groups and gangs; describe some of the risks of becoming part of a gang.
<p>Enrichment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe strategies that can be used if someone is using pressure to persuade us to do something, including online. • Recognise the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and hurtful behaviour. • Identify trusted adults/ services that can help us if we or someone we know has been the target of unkind, hurtful, abusive or bullying behaviour, including online
<p>Enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain ways of safely responding if we experience or witness unacceptable behaviours. • Identify reasons why we might put ourselves under pressure, and how others may apply pressure or encourage us to join a group or a gang; exit strategies and how to access appropriate support. • Describe the risks and law relating to carrying a weapon

SSS5 – Emergency Situations

<p>Enrichment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how to call 999 in the case of an emergency • Demonstrate some simple first aid procedures (e.g. putting someone in the recovery position; when not to move someone; responding to nosebleeds or cuts).
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MF1 – Strong Feelings

Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a range of feelings, where we might feel them in our body, and how they might make us behave.
Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe strong emotions (e.g. anger, fear, frustration, excitement, anxiety, jealousy).
Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how when we feel strong emotions we might feel like doing something we wouldn't usually do; how this could affect ourselves or other people. Describe how to manage strong emotions by using simple strategies to help ourselves and others.
Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain or demonstrate things we can do to help and support others when they are experiencing strong emotions. Recognise signs that we or someone we know might need help to cope with strong emotions and whom to speak to. Identify reliable and trustworthy sources of support for a range of relevant issues, including online (e.g. Childline, Thinkuknow.co.uk).

CG2 – Friendships

Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate ways to manage friendship disagreements restoratively.
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By the end of Secondary pupils will know:

RR1.	The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
FA1.	Basic treatment for common injuries.
FA2,	Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
FA3.	The purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.

NYA Youth Work Curriculum:

HW2.	Helping young people make informed choices about how they live, approach risk and take responsibility for their own behaviour in relation to their lifestyle
HW5.	Providing appropriate, accurate information and guidance
HR1.	Offering relationship support and guidance to young people, including sex and relationship education, in settings and in a way chosen by young people



Useful Resources

Please check all resources are suitable for your settings and children before use

Knife Crime:

Books:

12-17 years - [The Knife that Killed Me](#)

12-17 years - [The Deepest Cut](#)

14+ years - [Hello Mum](#)

Videos:

Ben Kinsella Trust - [Various](#)

Depzman - [Life Cut Short](#)

[Ditch the Blade](#) - poem written by PCSO's at Staffordshire Police

[Harvey's Rap](#) - rap written and performed by local young person from Staffordshire

Lesson Plans:

9-16 years - [Ben Kinsella Trust](#) - Resources explore the real, lived experience of people affected by knife crime and youth violence.

11-19 [British Red Cross](#) - Discuss how to defuse tension and avoid conflict, and the first aid for someone with a heavy bleed.

16-18 years - [Lancaster Violence Reduction Network](#) - Film resource that follows Harry, a student who makes a choice to carry a knife from his family home.

Please visit our [Resource Library](#) knife crime for the latest versions and resources ([Registration required](#))

DEVELOPING SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE



KNIFE CRIME

with thanks to Staffordshire Police and Violence Reduction Alliance for their input on the local picture

Why?

Both national and local research continues to determine the root causes of why young people carry knives to inform the work needed to address the issue and reduce the risks. The list below gives some common factors known to influence young people to carry knives, please note, this list is not exhaustive:

1 County Lines



2 Gang Affiliation

Protection/Status

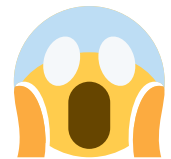


3 Media Attention/Glamorisation



4 Fear of Crime

Being attacked/Self-protection



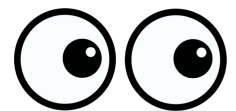
5 Victim of Bullying

Self-protection



6 Peer Pressure

Perception that most young people carry knives



The common factor is the 'vicious cycle' young people can find themselves in, for example – in a gang/drug network it is an expectation to be armed: 'fear or be feared' 'live or die' – regarding fear of crime and thinking 'I need to defend myself' highlights the absence of thinking or disregard that they are committing a crime to prevent a crime which is not a defence in law – also risking the knife they carry being used on them in a confrontation or causing injury to themselves.

Evidence shows that those who carry knives for their own protection are more likely to become a victim as a result and the knife can be turned on them.

Locally

In June 2023, Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) were commissioned by the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance to carry out a youth engagement piece of work.

This research aimed to inform professionals on the issues and concerns young people have around violence within their community and online.

Over 1,500 young people participated via the online survey with ages ranging from 11-25 years.

Young people cited:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying),
- Individual abuse,
- Neglect and trauma (including mental health issues),
- Substance use,
- Peer pressure/negative friendships

as the main causes of serious violence across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

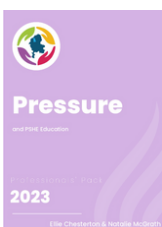
In response to this, the PSHE Education Service added a number of ... & PSHE packs to support professionals in education to increase their knowledge and confidence in this topics that are linked to knife crime.



Bullying & PSHE



Friendships & PSHE



Pressure & PSHE

Spotting the Signs



There are some signs to look out for that a child or young person might be involved in knife crime, however it is important to ***remember that just because a young person is displaying these does not necessarily mean they are involved in knife crime, equally just because a child or young person is not displaying these signs does not mean that they are not involved in knife crime.***

- Becoming withdrawn from family and school
- Change in their behaviour and/or are skipping school
- Losing interest in hobbies and old friends, and now hang about with a new group, staying out late
- They're vague about where they're going to or where they've been
- Becoming secretive and defensive easily, particularly about what is in their bag and might even tell people that they need to carry a knife for protection
- Taking kitchen knives from home, hiding them in their bag or coat

The Law



28

Knife crime is any crime which involves a sharp or bladed instrument that is capable of piercing the skin. This can include anything from a kitchen knife or piece of glass to a scissors or a knitting needle.

Knife crime can range from the threat of violence, where someone is carrying a sharp or bladed weapon, to someone who receives an injury or is murdered as a result of a sharp object or bladed instrument.

Simply carrying a knife – even if it is not used or intended to be used – is considered a crime.

It is an offence to:

- Threaten or cause harm to a person with a bladed weapon
- Some bladed weapons are prohibited from being sold or purchased, including to anyone under the age of 18
- Offences such as robbery or assault can be aggravated if a knife is involved
- Carry a knife in a public place without good reason

Anyone aged 16–17 years old who is convicted of carrying a knife for a second time will automatically receive a detention and training order of a least 4 months.

From September 2024 it became illegal to own zombie-style knives and machetes. These joined dangerous prohibited items already banned, including zombie knives, butterfly knives, Samurai swords and push dangers.

For settings where participants are allowed their mobile phones (FE etc) you could utilise The Ben Kinsella Knife Wise app to include learning about Knife Crime, impact and the law. Learners can download Knife Wise which is an interactive knife crime quiz app for children and young people. Participants will get a score out of 14 on completing the quiz. Why not try the quiz yourself to check your knowledge as well as understand the content.



Joint Enterprise

If someone is fatally stabbed, others can be found guilty of murder, even if they were not the person who physically stabbed someone.

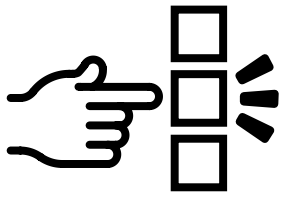
Under the law this is called 'Joint Enterprise'.

This means that other children and young people can be classed as guilty for someone else's death because they were part of the situation that could have encouraged the incident or were part of it without trying to stop it happening.

Examples of how you can be charged for murder under "joint enterprise" are if:

- A child or young person is part of a group and someone in that group kills someone with a knife. This is also the same for any other weapon or physical attack.
- A child or young person is supporting the attacker's actions in some way. This could be verbally by encouraging them or physically if acting in a supportive presence.
- A child or young person knew that the person who made the attack was going to start violence against the victim, and they did nothing to stop it.





The Potential Consequences



Being arrested - police can stop and search someone if they have cause to believe a weapon is being carried

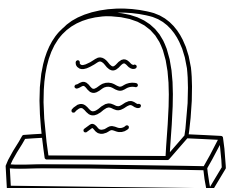
This short [video](#), produced by Nottinghamshire Youth Commission, can be used to explain to young people their rights when they are stopped by the police and our searched.

Prosecution - Regardless of whether the young person says it was for their own protection of a knife or carrying it for someone else



Prison - Sentences of up to 4 years for possession OR if someone is stabbed and dies then a life sentence means 25 years in prison

Criminal Record - This can stop someone getting into college, university, having some jobs and travelling abroad to certain countries

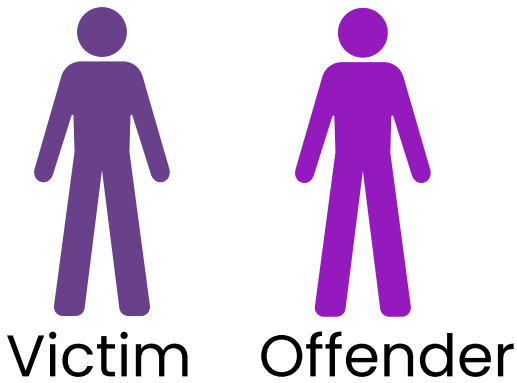


Death - Sometimes those who choose to carry a knife could get seriously injured or even killed

The Potential People affected by Knife Crime

Unfortunately knife crime can have far-reaching and lasting effects on many people.

Below are examples of who is and can be affected by knife crime:



Victim Offender



Families of both Victim and Offender



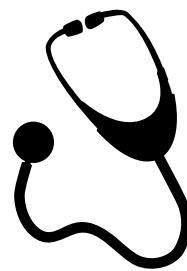
Ambulance Staff



Friends of both Victim and Offender



Undertakers Staff



Hospital Staff



Police Staff



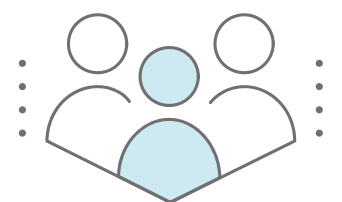
Politicians



Media



School Staff and students



Communities

Knives and Pressure

Some young people carry weapons to feel protected, because of peer pressure or to feel powerful. Our [Knife Crime & PSHE pack](#) has more information to support professionals delivering education sessions on this topic.

A National Lottery Funded [report](#) "Serious Youth Violence" (2019) shows the following risk factors that may indicate people who are more likely to become involved in violence. This shows where some of the pressure may come from for children and young people to carry knives. Professionals are reminded that just because a child or young person has a large number of risk factors this does not mean they definitely will become involved in violence, but can help to identify people who may need support in recognising or creating protective factors.

Risk factors



Pressure

Here are some of the common causes, understanding the factors can help to build resilience towards peer pressure:

Desire for approval and social acceptance

People want to feel accepted and included in their social groups. This often leads to individual conforming to group norms or behaviours patterns.

Fear of rejection

The desire to avoid rejection from a social group is a strong enough incentive for an individual to behave in ways they wouldn't usually choose.

Self-esteem issues

If a person has self-esteem issues then their trust in their own judgement is uncertain, this means people listen to the opinions of others more, despite if they disagree with the opinion shared.

Brain Development

Adolescence is a time when young people begin to seek their identity and independence and an increased importance on social rewards.

Group Dynamics

The characteristics of the group play an important role in the behaviours pressured.

Media Influence

Peer pressure from media influence can reinforce "perceived social norms" and stereotypes about how one should look, act and think.

Tips for Coping with Peer Pressure

With thanks to Rose, 20, Young Minds for sharing these top tips, that we have adapted.



Stay True to your values

When a child or young person is experiencing pressure, they can lose sight of what truly matters to them.

PSHE creates an opportunity for young people to consider their values. Ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for children and young people to explore their own values.



Find your Group

It is natural for people to change and for peer groups to change to. People do not have to be friends forever, especially if they make you feel uncomfortable. There will be people out there who “get you”, even if you haven’t found them yet.

Ensure that the curriculum shows that friendships change over time, and that children and young people have the skills to be able to make new friends.



The “Escape Plan”

It can sometimes help if people have created an escape plan beforehand.

Utilise PSHE sessions to enable children and young people to create their own escape plan scenario that they can utilise in real-life.



Find Positive Coping Mechanisms

Peer pressure can cause feelings of anxiety or nervousness. Writing down worries in a notebook, practising simple relaxation and mindfulness, or speak to a Trusted Adult about their feelings.

PSHE sessions should help children and young people to develop these skills.

Gangs

Gang membership is complex. The term gang takes different meanings in different contexts. The government and nationally recognised definition of a gang is:

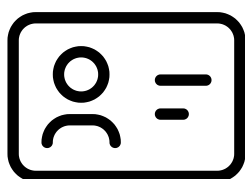
A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

- 1. See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group,*
- 2. Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence,*
- 3. Identify with or lay claim over territory,*
- 4. Have some form of identifying structural feature,*
- 5. Are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.*

To be identified as a 'gang' or 'member of a gang' a person needs to participate in most, if not all, of the above. If a group of young people give themselves a 'gang' name, but do not engage in a range of criminal or violent acts, do not have a leadership/rank structure and are not in conflicts with other groups they are not a 'gang'.



Street based group of young people



They have an identity

Engage in a range of crime or violence



Territorial group



Conflict

A criminal organisation with a rank system and leadership roles.



Types of Gangs

Every gang has a some kind of formal or non informal structure and hierarchy system.

Peer Group:

These can be defined as a relatively small, unorganised, transient congregation of young people who may meet in public spaces. Delinquency and criminal activity is not integral to the identity or practice of all or most peers, and this distinguishes peer groups from gangs.

Urban Street Gang (USG):

These are relatively durable, predominately street-based groups of young people. These groups see themselves (and are recognised by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is intrinsic to their identity. The minimal characteristics of an urban street gang is:

- Has a name.
- Propensity to inflict violence and engage in crimes such as robberies and thefts.
- Violence and delinquency perform a functional role in promoting group identity and solidarity

Urban Street Gangs cause the most chaos and police resource intensive activity.

Urban Street Gangs are territorial in their nature which is the root cause behind most violence for instance responding to invasions by rival gangs

Organised Crime Group (OCG):

Gangs composed of criminal entrepreneurs for whom involvement in a criminal gang is intrinsic to their identity and practice. Often members of these gangs will enlist a member of an affiliated street gang to take on roles which would otherwise put them at a high risk of being arrested for a criminal offence, such as distributing drugs.

The Pyramid of Risk reflects the level of violent crime and risk to the individual should they be involved in one of the groups.



Knives and Gangs

The connection between gangs and knife crime is complex and multifaceted. Here are some key points that highlight the links:

- **Self-Protection and Fear**

Many gang members carry knives for self-protection and out of fear, this is particularly true for individuals who have previously been a victim of crime (Lemos, 2004)

- **Status and Respect**

Carrying knives can be a way for gang members to gain status and respect within their group. It can also be a means of intimidation and asserting dominance (Silverstri, and others, 2009)

- **Criminal Activities**

Knives are often used in various criminal activities associated with gangs, such as drug dealing theft and violent assaults. They serve as tools to facilitate these behaviours.

- **Retaliation and Revenge**

Knives are often carried for retaliation and revenge. Gang members may use them to settle scores or protect themselves from rival gangs.

Get Talking

When a safe learning environment is created, PSHE gives space and opportunity for discussions. Use the discussion questions below to start a dialogue and understand young people's current perceptions and ideas around gangs and knife crime.

- How does the issue of gang and knife crime make you feel?
- What do you understand by the term "gang"? What words do you associate with gangs?
- Do you feel safe in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent? Why? Why not?
- What are some reasons that someone might join a gang/carry a knife?
- What are some ways you can take action to tackle gang/knife crime?

Vulnerabilities

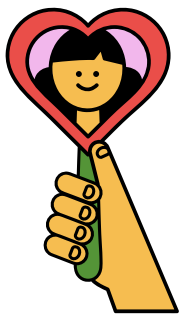
Spotting the signs that a child or young person is being drawn into a gang is a key element of prevention. Certain groups of children and young people are more vulnerable and likely to be drawn into gang membership. Many of the common indicators are also signs of other harmful activity, e.g., criminal exploitation, knife crime. Below are some indicators and signs that a young person is either at risk or already involved in a gang. In isolation they may not raise obvious concerns; however, professionals should use a combination of indicators and signs to ensure they build a full picture of the child or young person's circumstances in order to make a decision about the level of risk.

Using the local Risk Factor Matrix form, professionals can be supported to make that decision.



Home Environment:

- Coming from an unstable family environment, conflict between parents/siblings
- Suffered neglect, maltreatment, physical or sexual abuse
- Absence of parental attachment to the child and a lack of emotional care
- Parents who do not provide a positive role model; unable to communicate effectively with the child or young person; provides poor discipline; does not give guidance or set proper boundaries
- Parents who replace positive discipline with uncaring harsh or violent punishment
- Parents with alcohol, substance or mental health issues
- Witnessing domestic violence or violent conflict
- Parents being separated or having a parent in prison
- Living with a gang member or having family members who are involved in gang activity and criminality
- Exposed to violent media



Personal:

- Suffered traumatic life experience(s)
- Has low academic attainment, significant levels of school absence, excluded from school
- Being a Looked-After Child, or historically involved with Social Services
- History of going missing
- Feeling socially isolated, being bullied or bullying others
- Having learning disabilities or difficulties
- Having mental health issues, depression or behavioural problems
- Being vulnerable to peer pressure or intimidation
- Having poor self-esteem
- Feeling socially isolated
- Struggles to regulate own emotions and behaviours, displays anger and resentment towards society or physical violence and aggression
- Has drug or alcohol issues



Community:

- High levels of gang activity
- Anti-social and criminal behaviour evident
- Drugs are readily available in the area
- High levels of poverty, unemployment, social housing and crime
- Made up of people who have experienced war situations prior to arrival in UK or people more likely to tolerate crime
- Few positive role models
- Lack of diversionary activity e.g., youth services
- Lacks aspirations, little or no job prospects likely to be unemployed
- Schools have known gang recruitment
- No or little access to productive social activities and opportunities
- Disengaged from support services



There are numerous reasons that a child or young person can become involved in a gang. The concepts of risks and resilience can also be considered in terms of push and pull factors.

- Push - Negative things that push someone into something
- Pull - Positive or attractive things that pull someone into something.

We have given some examples below, using the vulnerabilities above can you determine if they would be a push or pull factor?

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Marginalised	Sense of belonging
Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household	Having a purpose
Abuse	Feeling valued
Recent bereavement or loss	Excitement
Homelessness	Sense of Protection
Low self-esteem	Status
Poverty	Money

Emotional Regulation


Emotions are natural reactions triggered by events in our lives. Sometimes, people may not even realise they are feeling them. Emotions are neither good or bad, they are just part of being human.

Teaching children and young people about emotional regulation can support reducing the numbers involved in knife crime.

Children and young people should be able to identify and name their emotions. This helps them become more aware of their emotions and understand that it is normal to experience a range of feelings.

Mindfulness exercises can teach children and young people to focus on the present moment, which helps them manage their emotions better. Simple activities like deep breathing, guided imagery, or mindful colouring can be very effective.

Children and young people learn a lot by observing adults. Professionals, working with children and young people, can model self-regulation by sharing their own feelings and demonstrating how to manage them. As an example, a professional may say:



“I’m feeling frustrated right now, so I’m going to take a few deep breaths to calm down”.

When a child or young person successfully manages their emotions they should be recognised and praised. This reinforces their efforts and encouraged them to continue using their skills.

Conflict Resolution⁴²

Conflict resolution is the process of resolving a disagreement or dispute between two or more parties in a constructive and peaceful manner. It involves understanding the underlying issues, communicating effectively, and finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Key Components of Conflict Resolution

A large, stylized number '1' with a green and yellow border and a white interior.

Understanding the conflict

- Identify the issue - clearly define what the conflict is about
- Understand perspectives - recognise the viewpoints and interests of all parties involved

A large, stylized number '2' with a purple and blue border and a white interior.

Effective Communication

- Active listening - listen to the other party without interrupting, showing empathy and understanding
- Expressing feelings - Use "I" statements to express your own feelings and needs without blaming others

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Problem-Solving

- Brainstorm solutions - Generate multiple possible solutions to the conflict
- Evaluate options - Discuss the pros and cons of each solution and agree on the best course of action

A large, stylized number '4' with a blue and purple border and a white interior.

Negotiate and Compromise

- Find common ground - look for areas of agreement and build on them
- Compromise - be willing to make concessions to reach a mutually acceptable solution

A large, stylized number '5' with a pink and yellow border and a white interior.

Mediation

- Third-party assistance - sometimes a neutral third party (mediator) can help facilitate the resolution process
- Guidance and support - the mediator helps guide the discussion and ensures that all parties are heard



Stay calm: Keep emotions in check and approach the situation calmly



Listen Actively: Show that you are listening by nodding, maintaining eye contact, and summarising what the other person is saying



Communicate Clearly: Use clear and respectful language to express your thoughts and feelings



Seek Solutions: Focus on finding solutions rather than assigning the blame



Make a Plan: Decide what each person will do to solve the problem. Make a plan and stick to it.

Example for use with Children:

Imagine you and your friend both want to play the same game. Instead of arguing, you can:



Stay calm: Take a deep breath



Talk and Listen:

"I feel upset because I really want to play this game"



Find the Problem:

Understand that both of you want to play and feel its unfair



Think of Solutions:

Maybe you can take turns or play together



Choose the Best Solution:

Agree to take turns, with each person playing for 10 minutes



Make a Plan:

Set a timer and stick to the plan

Calling 999

999 or 112 (this is the pan-Europe equivalent to 999) are the free telephone numbers for the national emergency response service.

It is important that children and young people are taught to make sure they are not in any danger themselves before calling the emergency services.

It is important that children and young people recognise that even if someone is unwell or injured, *their own safety must come first.*

When to call 999 for an Ambulance

999 should be called if any of the following apply to the casualty:

- Unconscious or unresponsive - does not respond even when someone shouts and shakes them by the shoulders
- Not breathing, or not breathing normally
- Choking - cannot breathe
- Seriously injured or unwell

It is essential that the call is made straight away, there is no need to call someone else to check first. It is right to call 999 even if they are unsure. The call operator will be able to help them.



Time is very important.



They should stay with the person whilst they make the call if they can

1

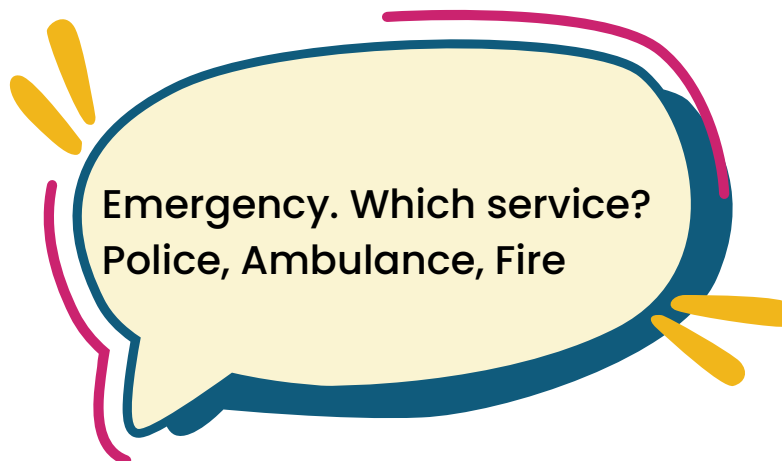
Dial 999 on a landline or mobile phone.
There are options for people who are deaf (see our [Dealing with Emergencies & PSHE pack](#) for more information)

2

Put the phone on speakerphone, if possible.
This means that if the operator asks the caller to do anything else their hands are free.

3

The operator will ask:



4

Ask for an ambulance.

5

The operator will ask questions to find out what is wrong with the unwell person, for example if the person is breathing, this helps to assess the level of emergency.

Legal Implications of Calling for Help

Sometimes people may hesitate getting help when there are legal implications, for example:

- If someone has been stabbed, or involved in other types of violent crime
- If the situation involves drugs or alcohol
- If the situation involves gangs

In any emergency, the priority should always be to get help as quickly as possible. Delaying a call to emergency services can result in more severe consequences, both medically and legally.

While not enshrined in UK law, the concept of medical amnesty is gaining attention. This policy would protect individual from prosecution for drug or alcohol-related offences when they seek medical help for themselves or others.

The emergency services prioritise medical assistance over legal action. In many cases, the police may not be involved unless there is a significant threat or a crime has been committed.

Young people should be aware that there are ways to report incidents anonymously, e.g. Crimestoppers or Fearless, which can help reduce the fear of retaliation or legal consequences – although if something needs immediate attention people should call 999.

CONTROL THE BLEED KITS

Control the Bleed Kits can be found at various locations across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. This kit contains instructions and specialist equipment to help stem blood loss before ambulance crew arrive and usually includes:



Nitrile Gloves - worn for personal protection and to prevent cross contamination



Medical Shears - to cut through clothing and allow easier access to the wound area



Gauze - to pack the wound and stop the bleeding source



Chest Seal - applied to a chest cavity wound to prevent lung collapse



Trauma Dressing - Maintains pressure over the wound to stop bleeding and infection



Tourniquet - applied to limb above heavy bleed wound to stop blood flow and loss

Control the Bleed Kits can be used in many situations including:

- Road Traffic Collisions
- Knife or Gun attacks
- Crush incident
- Terrorist attack

This [video](#) shows people how to use The Daniel Baird Foundation Public Access Bleed Control Kit.

This is the kit that is typically supplied around Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

Many Control the Bleed kits are located with Defibrillators, when calling 999 the operator will advise where the nearest kit can be located.

If it is in a locked cabinet the operator will give the code to enable the cabinet to be unlocked.

Young people should be advise about these new resources, the terminology the operator may use e.g. terminology and be comfortable with them so if required in an emergency they are able to recall the information and potentially save a life.





When teaching PSHE education lessons, it is important to prioritise the appropriate use of language, which will improve communication but can also challenge assumptions. Particularly in the case of knife crime, students may use slang terms which either promote misconceptions and stereotypes, or may serve to mask attitudes from adults.

Below are some slang terms which it may be useful for you to be familiar with, in order to listen out for and challenge in lessons. However, please be aware that the terms young people use are constantly evolving and may be specific to different locations, so it may be necessary to research slang terms young people may use in your setting.





Crew

Mandem

Squad

Gang

Posse

Hood

Blud/
Blood

Rude
Boy

Roadman

**Gang
Member**

Squaddie

5-0

Jakes

Feds,

Police

Pigs

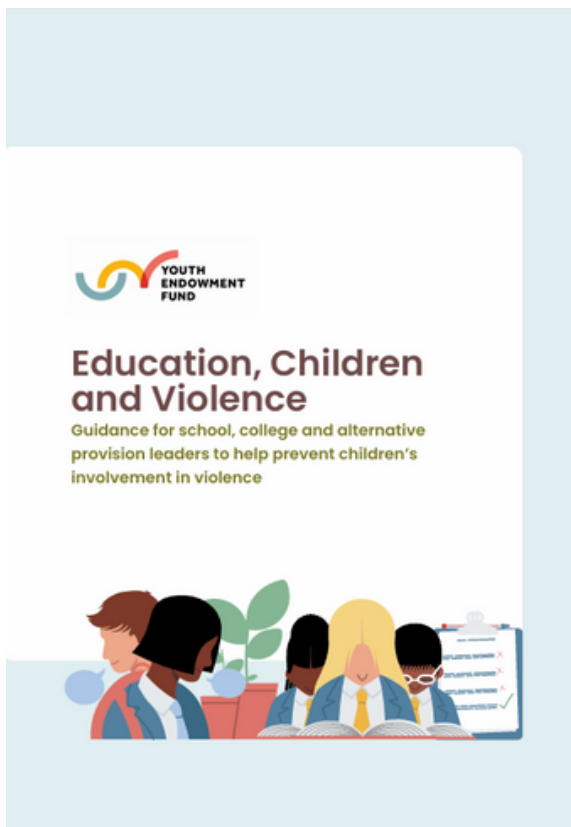
Po-po

Add any words here that young people in your setting teach you or your hear relating to knife crime:

REDUCING YOUTH VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The Youth Endowment Fund, a charity similar to the Education Endowment Foundation set up to test approaches to tackle youth violence has published guidance for schools, colleges and alternative providers. The report highlights the following recommendations on how to reduce children and young people's involvement in violence.

The report highlights that schools and colleges are safe spaces for the vast majority, but are also places where violence can intrude.



The guidance recognises the value and importance of PSHE as dedicated time, across all key stages that can be explicitly used to teach the five social and emotional skills.

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationships skills
- Responsible decision-making

Education, Children and Violence Guidance

Summary of Recommendations

1

Keep children in education

Why? Being in education can protect children from violence.

Recommended actions

- Deliver evidence-informed attendance-improvement strategies (such as meetings with parents/carers and breakfast clubs).
- Implement whole-school and targeted behaviour support to reduce the need for exclusion.
- Provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children.



2

Provide children with trusted adults

Why? Meaningful relationships with trusted adults can protect children from violence.

Recommended actions

- Provide one-to-one mentoring by trained adults to support vulnerable children.
- Engage vulnerable children in sports with coaches who can support them.



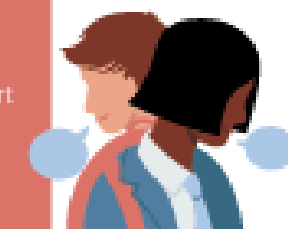
3

Develop children's social and emotional skills

Why? Effective social and emotional skills can protect children from violence.

Recommended actions

- Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies.
- Provide relationship violence reduction sessions to secondary-age children.
- Implement an anti-bullying strategy.
- Support access to therapy for those children who require additional support.



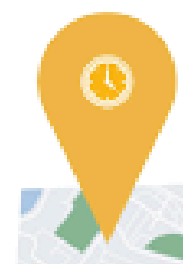
4

Target efforts at the places and times where violence occurs

Why? Violence happens more often in certain places and at certain times.

Recommended actions

- Survey children and talk to staff to determine where to focus your efforts.
- Meet with partners to understand the local context and coordinate your safeguarding response.



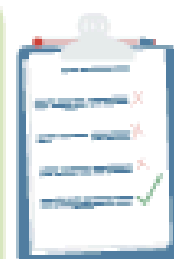
5

Cautiously consider unproven strategies and avoid harmful approaches

Why? Resources are best spent on evidence-based strategies.

Recommended actions

- Cautiously consider unproven strategies (such as knife education programmes, trauma-informed practice training, and police in corridors and classrooms).
- Avoid approaches that have been proven to cause harm (such as prison awareness programmes).

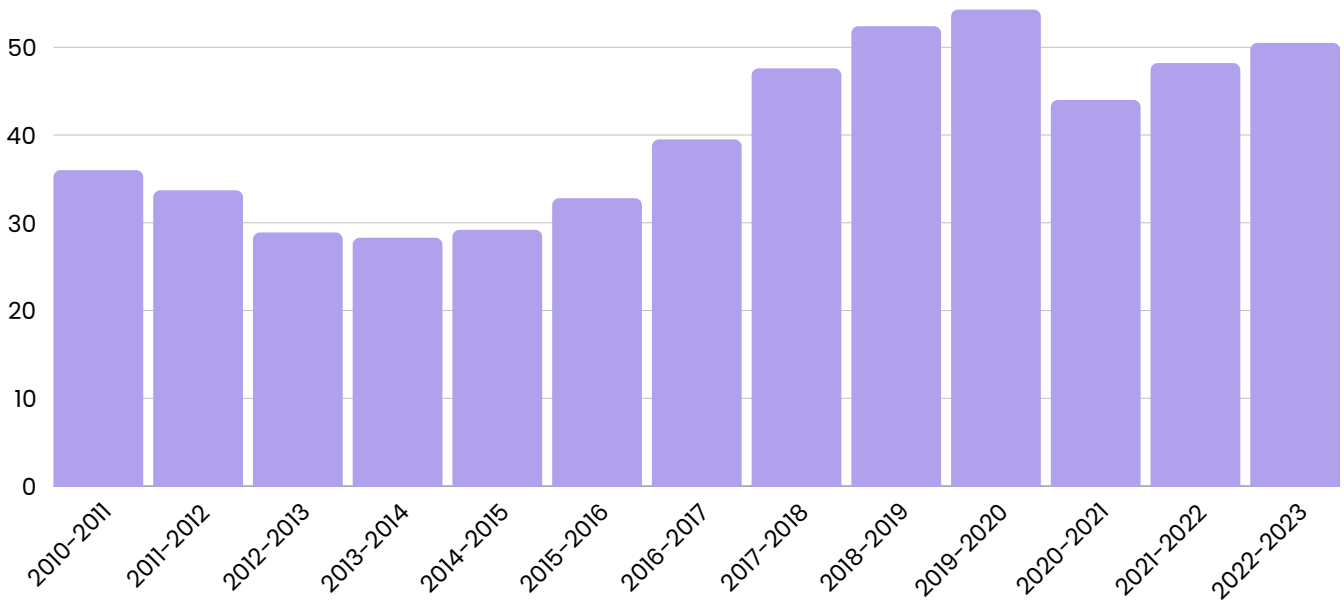


Many school, college and AP leaders are already implementing several of these recommendations. We encourage leaders to continue to focus on these priorities and hone their implementation in line with this guidance.

NATIONAL STATISTICS

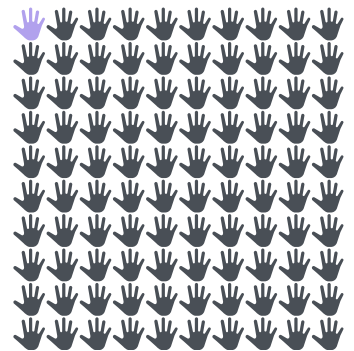
The ONS publishes data on police recorded crime involving a knife or sharp instrument for a selection of serious violent offences.

Knife and Sharp Instrument Offences recorded by the Police for selected offences (excluding Greater Manchester and from year ending March 2020 excluding Devon and Cornwall (000's)



Around 1 in 3 of knife related injuries are caused by the victims own knife

99% of young people do not carry a knife



In total there were 50,510 police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (up to March 2024)

3,441 knife crime offences by 10-17 years were recorded in England and Wales in the year to March 2023

Consistent with 3,448 offences in the previous year



18% of knife crime is committed by 10-17 years

THE LOCAL PICTURE

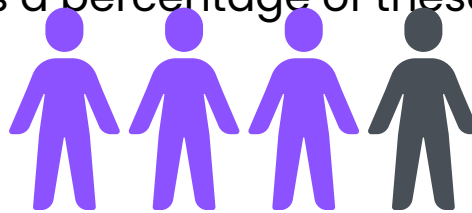
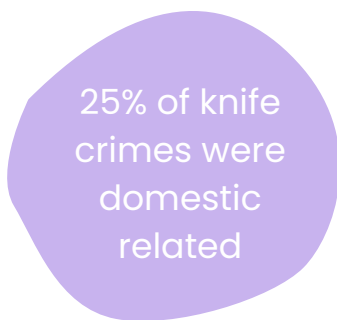
2023

With thanks to the Violence Reduction Alliance Analyst Team for supplying the local data.

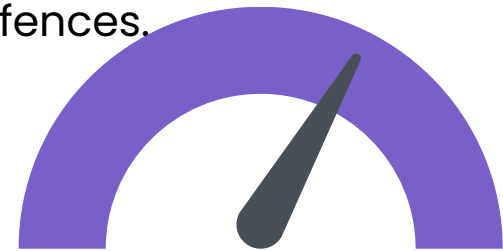
Serious Violence Offences accounted for 2.3% of all actual offences in Staffordshire (7,186 offences).

Knife crime is classed as a Serious Violence Offence and accounts for 0.9% of the total number of offences and 39% of the total Serious Violence Offences committed (this is 39% of 2.3% of crimes).

The following data is a percentage of these offences.



75% of Knife Crime Suspects are male



75% of Knife Crime Victims are male

Reported Crime Over Time



Age of Victims and Suspects of Knife Crime

18-29 years old are the highest age range for victims of knife crime, followed by 30-39 years and then under 18s.

130-39 years old are the highest age range for victims of knife crime, followed by 18-29 years.

guidance:

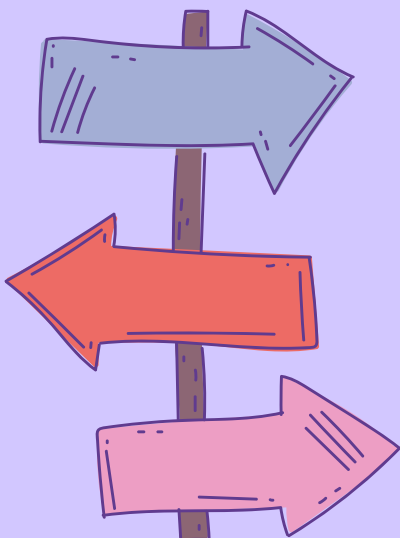
Possession of a weapon, particularly a knife on school or college premises is often an indicator of vulnerabilities for the young person concerned and therefore a multi-agency approach is important, instigated by a police referral. The school or college should not be expected to manage the situation in isolation. School staff do have the power to search for weapons, using force as is reasonable in the circumstances (Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006).

It is important that staff do not put themselves at risk.

The presumption would be to contact the police unless in exceptional circumstances where there is a reasonable explanation or set of circumstance where it is obvious that a weapon or prohibited article has been brought into school or college as a genuine mistake.

Therefore, as the police will be involved in most situations where a weapon is involved, the full circumstances relating to the incident will be investigated.

Staffordshire Police have created this simple guide:



guidance:

1.Recover the item if safe to do so, if anyone's safety is immediately compromised, please call 999, for non-emergency situations contact 101 or report via the [digital format](#) on Staffordshire Police Website.

2.In line with [NPCC guidance](#) (Child Centred Policing), unlike other matters that can be dealt with within the school, all students found in possession of a bladed weapon should be reported to the Police with the primary aims around safeguarding/ education and prevention. The police can help to ensure appropriate referrals are made to partner agencies to reduce safeguarding concerns.

3.Where there is intelligence regarding a bladed weapon, a Child Exploitation (CE) [Intelligence form](#) to be submitted to Staffordshire Police Knowledge Hub. The intelligence will be analysed and allocated to the relevant department to action/safeguard the individuals concerned and where possible prevent crime. In addition, this should not stop local police links having the information shared when on duty.

4.Consider contacting the local Youth Offending Service (YOS) if there is unconfirmed information that children are potentially carrying a knife within the organisation. YOS could offer a prevention/education package to address behaviours. Contacts details for YOS are available in the useful contacts on page 24 in this document. They will send the relevant referral form. **Please note family consent is required.**

5.Consider reporting safeguarding concerns to the relevant Children's Social Care. Contact details are available within the Useful Contacts section of this document.

6.Completion of the [Risk Factor Matrix \(RFM\)](#) should be considered if there are any concerns that the child or young person is at risk of exploitation.



Weapons – see flowchart

An offensive weapon is any article which is made, intended or adapted to cause injury. Offensive weapon can be broken down into two categories:

- Those that are made as an offensive weapon (e.g. knuckleduster, dagger, gun) or adapted (e.g. broken bottle) for use for causing injury to the person; and
- Weapons not made or adapted as an offensive weapon (e.g. kitchen knife, spanner, hammer) but intended by the person having in possession of it to cause injury to another

Possession of a weapon, particularly a knife on school or college premises is often an indicator of vulnerabilities for the young person concerned and therefore a multi-agency approach is important, instigated by a police referral. The school or college should not be expected to manage the situation in isolation.

School staff do have the power to search for weapons, using force as is reasonable in the circumstances. It is important that staff do not put themselves at risk.

Offences

Section 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 creates the offence of possessing an article with a blade or sharp point or an offensive weapon on school premises.

Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 prohibits the possession in any public place of an offensive weapon without lawful authority or excuse.

Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 prohibits having with you, in a public place any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed, (including a folding pocket knife if the cutting edge of its blade exceeds 7.62cm/3 inches)

139A(1) Any person who has an article to which section 139 of this Act applies with him on school premises shall be guilty of an offence.

139A(2) Any person who has an offensive weapon within the meaning of section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 with him on school premises shall be guilty of an offence.

Defences

139A(3) It shall be a defence for a person charged with an offence under subsection (1) or (2) above to prove that he had good reason or lawful authority for having the article or weapon with him on the premises in question.

139A(4) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (3) above, it shall be a defence for a person charged with an offence under subsection (1) or (2) above to prove that he had the article or weapon in question with him:-
 (a) For use at work, (b) for educational purposes, (c) for religious reasons, or (d) as part of any national costume.

BB guns (plastic pellet guns)

The possession of these types of guns under legislation is not an offence as they are deemed to be toys. However, if from a school or college's perspective they breach school rules, they could be seized and retained under the Education Act.

If an item is found which is suspected to be a gun, and it cannot be ascertained whether it is a genuine firearm or a BB gun, it should always be treated as a firearm and the police called to make that decision.

Possession of these items becomes an offence when a person is misled into believing they are genuine firearms in order to provoke fear; the BB gun may then be classed as an imitation firearm. Circumstances giving rise to this belief may include use:

- In connection with a robbery
- To threaten someone
- As a weapon to assault someone, e.g. pellet injures

Contacting the police

The presumption would be to contact the police unless in exceptional circumstances where there is a reasonable explanation or set of circumstance where it is obvious that a weapon or prohibited article has been brought into school or college as a genuine mistake.

The weapon should be seized and stored securely by the school.

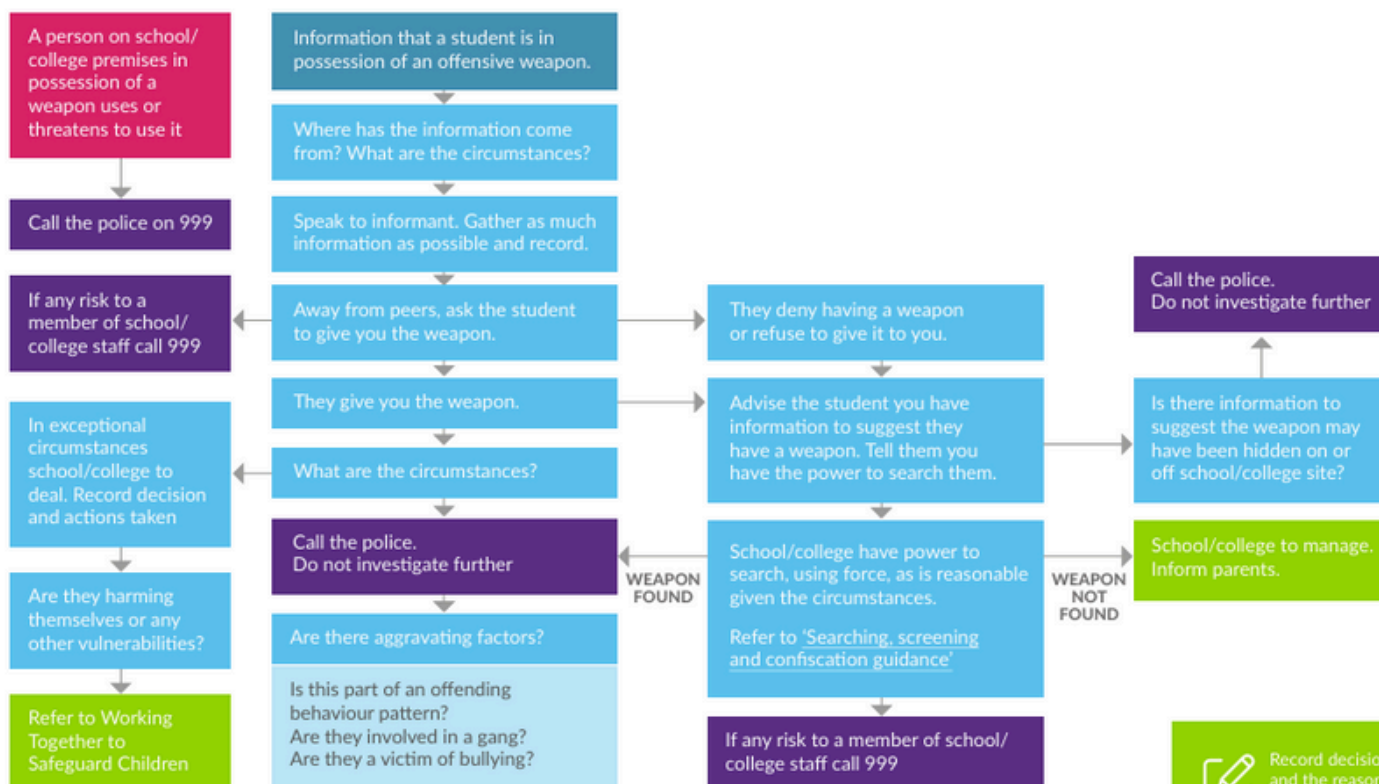
- Head teachers and staff authorised by them have the power to search students for offensive weapons, with their consent. They also have statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have an offensive weapon. Further information can be found [here](#)

Aggravating factors

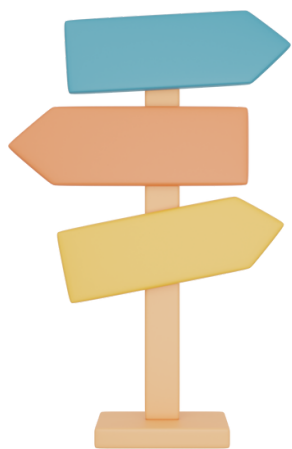
Therefore as the police will be involved in most situations where a weapon is involved, the full circumstances relating to the incident will be investigated.

WEAPONS

Definition: An offensive weapon is any article which is made, intended or adapted to cause injury. It is an offence to possess an offensive weapon or bladed or sharply pointed article on primary school or secondary school premises.



Signposting Information:



It is important to signpost children and young people to relevant local and national organisations who can provide further advice and support, alongside professionals within the organisation.

999 or 112 –Emergency Only

Staffordshire Police

How can I contact the police?
There are a number of ways you can contact us depending on your needs and the urgency of your situation.

- 999 only in an emergency**
When someone is in immediate danger or when a crime is in progress.
- 101 To report non-emergency incidents**
- Go online www.staffordshire.police.uk**
On our website you can find the answers to many of the questions people ask when calling the police, plus helpful information and advice.
- Report crime and incidents online**
If you need to report a crime or tell us something that isn't urgent using the 'Report' section on our website. Reports are dealt with by our contact teams by the same way whether you report it online or call 101.
- Digital Services**
To report non-emergency incidents or general enquiries you can send us a private message on Facebook ([facebook.com/staffordshirepolice](https://www.facebook.com/staffordshirepolice)) and Twitter (@staffpolice).
- Live Chat**
A live chat function is also available on our website www.staffordshire.police.uk. The service offers a quick, easy and direct way of reporting problems that aren't urgent.
- Visit in person**
You can visit one of our 3 police desks at Cannock, Longton or Burton to:
• Report a crime • Receive local advice and information • Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Support from other public services
If you are experiencing Noise Nuisance please be aware that your local council have the powers to deal with this.
If you are experiencing Physical or Mental Health issues, please contact your GP or other NHS services.

Fearless.org – A national website, run by Crimestoppers, that enables young people to pass on information about crime 100% anonymously

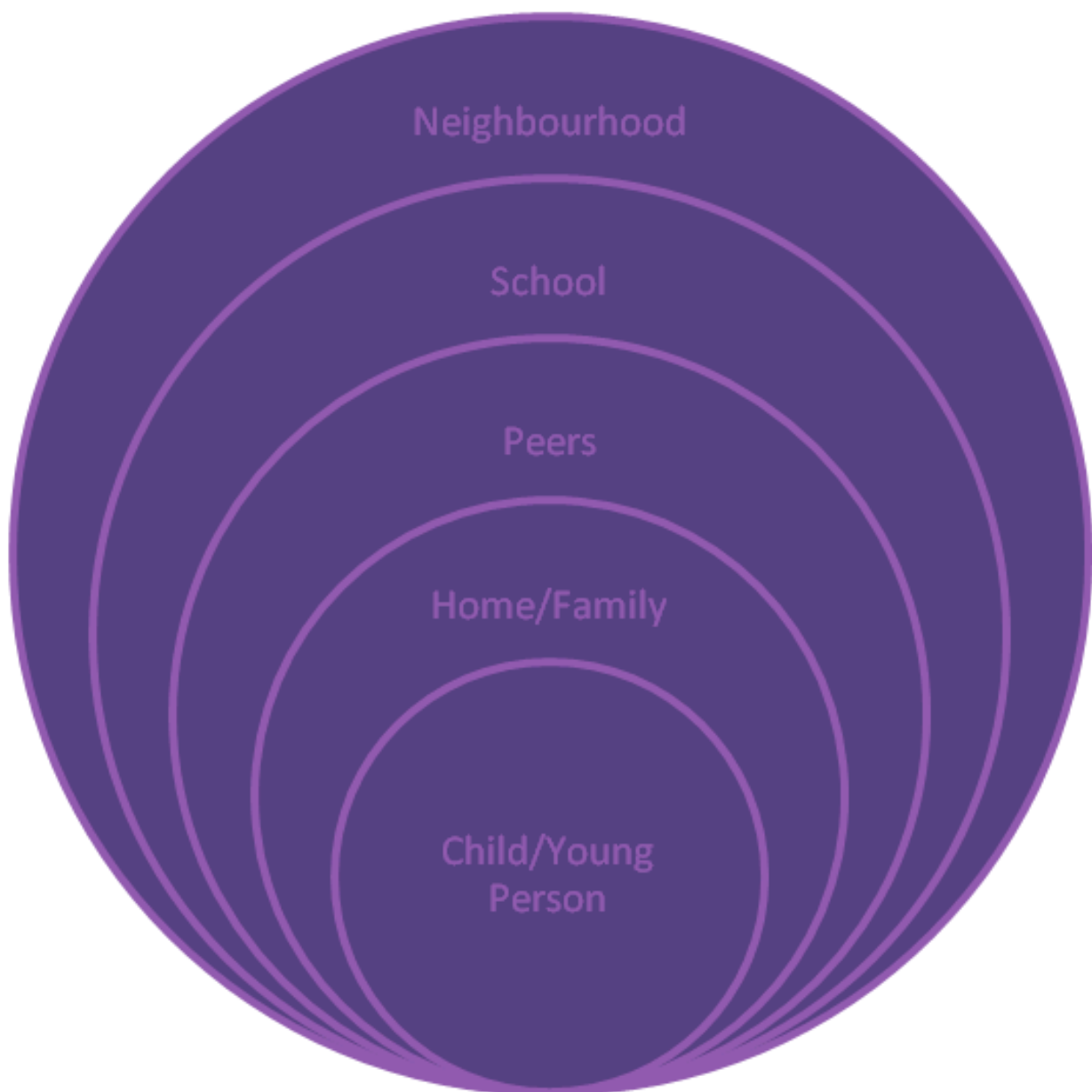
Crimestoppers – 0800 555 111 or crimestoppers-uk.org – a charity that gives people the power to speak up and stop crime 100% anonymously.

Catch22 – Local commissioned service that supports children and young people who are at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation

Contextual Safeguarding:

Contextual safeguarding recognises the impact of the public/social context on young people's lives, and consequently their safety. Contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people. Using Contextual safeguarding can enable professionals to build a holistic picture of the child or young person's individual factors and also identify where and by whom interventions can occur

More information on contextual safeguarding can be found [here](#)



It is important to remember that knife crime does not exist in a vacuum and children who are victims or perpetrators may also be experiencing multiple vulnerabilities.

Useful Contacts:



If you would like more information or support about Knife Crime please contact:

Staffordshire Youth Offending Team (North)-
01782 297 615

Staffordshire Youth Offending Team (South)-
01543 510 103

Stoke Youth Offending Team -
01782 235 858

If a referral to Children's Social Care is required please contact:

Staffordshire:

Staffordshire Children's Advice Service - 0300 111 8007
Monday - Thursday 8.30am -5pm and Friday 8.30-4.30pm
Out of Hours - 0345 604 2886 / 07815 492613

Stoke:

CHAD - 01782 235 100

Monday - Thursday 8.30am -5pm and Friday 8.30-4.30pm
Out of Hours - 01782 234 234

Catch22 - catch22cce@catch-22.org.uk (only where there are also concerns about CCE, please refer to [Child Exploitation and PSHE pack](#) for more details)

Further Reading:

[Fearless.org](https://www.fearless.org/)

[Ditch the Blade](https://www.ditchtheblade.org/)

[Ben Kinsella Trust](https://www.benkinsella.com/)

[Promising approaches to knife crime: an exploratory study](#)

[Fighting Knife Crime](#)

[Education, Children and Violence](#)

[OFSTED - Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime](#)

[WHO - European Report on Preventing Violence and Knife Crime amongst young people](#)

[Home Office - Preventing youth violence and gang involvement practical advice for schools and colleges](#)

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Changes	Made by
October 2022	Pack first published	Ellie Chesterton Natalie McGrath
October 2024	<p>The pack was updated to include SEND learning outcomes and reflect changes in knife laws regarding machetes and zombie-style knives.</p> <p>Added information around emotional regulation, conflict resolution, gangs, how to call 999 and control the bleed kits.</p> <p>Added clearer signposting information</p> <p>Added reference to “When to Call the Police guidance” and YEF Reducing Youth Violence advice</p> <p>Satistics updated</p>	Ellie Chesterton Natalie McGrath



PSHE
Education
STOKE-ON-TRENT
STAFFORDSHIRE

SASCAL
STRONGER TOGETHER

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SCVYS
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