



Home Office

ACPO / Home Office

Knife Crime Best Practice Guidelines

June 2007



Foreword

Knife-enabled crime continues to cause serious harm to victims and creates fear in our communities. The consequences for all those involved or touched by this type of crime are enormous. These guidelines seek to build on the work already done and reinforce the importance of partnership working in the prevention of crime. At the core of the approaches recommended is the need for our work to be intelligence-driven.

This joint guidance has been produced to enable forces to access the best practice available and help formulate strategies to reduce knife-enabled crime, thus making neighbourhoods and communities safer.

This national knife crime good practice guide has been developed out of lessons learned from the national knife amnesty and the experience of many practitioners. Thank you to all who have contributed to this piece of work.

We are pleased to recommend this guidance to all forces.

Vernon Coaker
Parliamentary Under
Secretary of State,
Home Office

DAC Alfred Hitchcock
ACPO Knife Crime

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SECTION 1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



Recent months have seen a considerable number of high profile murders involving young people. In many of these cases, the murder weapon was a knife. This guide is therefore a timely contribution to the violent crime agenda and the need to divert young people away from harm.

Perhaps surprisingly, the available data indicates that the proportion of violent offences involving the use of a knife has remained relatively stable in recent years. This fact is contrary to public perception that knife crime is rising. There may also be an element of under-reporting. The public need to be reassured that police services in the UK and the Home Office are working together with other appropriate agencies to make communities feel and be safer.

An area of particular concern is the use of knives within the context of domestic violence. Focusing on this issue is an essential part of violence reduction and demonstrates that knife-enabled crime (KEC) is not committed solely by young people. Whilst many of our approaches deal with preventable youth crime, there are considerable opportunities across the whole

spectrum of violence.

This guide builds on what is already known and suggests various tactics and initiatives to reduce KEC as well as providing an agreed way forward to build that more complete picture to better inform future action and strategy.

Data Collection – National Recording Standards

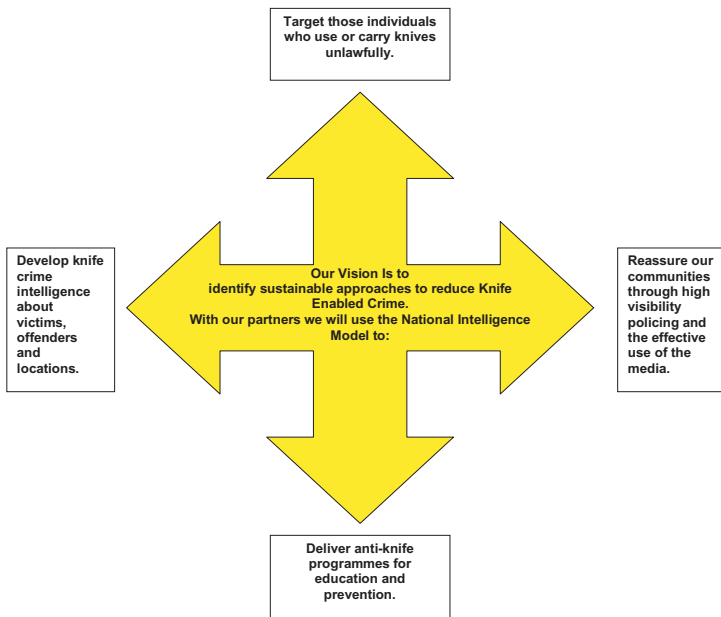
Until April 2007, knife-enabled crime was not separately identified in the Annual Data Requirement, as these offences fell within other offence categories, other than for homicides committed using a sharp instrument. From that date, however, forces are identifying knife crimes which result in GBH, in the categories of attempted murder, wounding with intent to do GBH, wounding or inflicting GBH, robbery of a business property and robbery of personal property.

ACPO continue to discuss with the Home Office the possibility to extend this data collection to cover all offences.

This is an evolving document, a first endeavour to bring together tactics and good practice in this field, and will be built on with continued contributions from police, government and community members.



Knife Enabled Crime Suggested Model



Overview of Strands

The National Knife Crime Best Practice Guidance identifies four main strands. These strands have been developed in accordance with the policing principles of intelligence, prevention, enforcement and reassurance. The strands are not mutually exclusive and there are clear links between them.

The guide recognises that KEC may be different in each policing area. Consequently the National Knife Crime Guidance is not intended to be prescriptive but should be used as a guide for developing bespoke strategies that best address the issue in individual forces and command units. Understanding local context and acknowledging regional variations are fundamental to effective delivery.

The strands are outlined below in more detail.

Develop knife crime intelligence about victims, offenders and locations

- In order to effectively impact on KEC police activity should be intelligence led. Good intelligence informs prevention and enforcement.
- In the case of Domestic Violence a great deal of intelligence often exists before a serious attack takes place.



Early identification of these warning signals provides opportunities for positive interventions and diversion opportunities. Forces should have clear information sharing protocols with key agencies such as schools, hospitals and social care services.

- Forces should, where appropriate, use the NIM to develop problem profiles around knife related issues and KEC should feature in force control strategies. For example, a clear analysis should be made of the ‘night time economy’ so that licensing legislation can be effectively applied to alcohol related KEC.
- The use of informants, Crimestoppers, open source intelligence, and specific tasking of dedicated source units are all well established means of intelligence gathering.

- Interviewing protocols for prisoners for violent or aggressive crime should include considerations for gathering Knife related intelligence.
- Information gathering protocols should be established between Police, Hospitals, Social Services, Probation, Schools (Particularly Safer Schools Partnerships), and YOTS etc. These relationships are critical to establishing the true nature and scope of the local and National picture.



Deliver anti-knife programmes for education and prevention

Education

- To ensure young people have correct information on KEC and to challenge “the knife carrying culture”. Forces should consider using targeted education programmes. Delivery of these programmes should be informed by the problem profile to identify ‘at risk’ groups and work in combination with effective media campaigns.
- Technology should be used as both a vehicle to provide and receive information. Forces need to identify new and innovative ways to utilise emerging trends and technologies i.e. games, mobile phones, ipods, the WWW, music, downloads, film, radio, TV etc.

- Many charities and community organisations exist are working to provide education and diversion from knife crime. Forces need to be clear on what is being provided locally and work together with these charities to enable a joined up and coherent approach.
- Forces need to work with the local and National DfES to ensure young people are presented a co-ordinated and consistent message about KEC and its consequences.

Prevention

- Location ‘hot spotting’ and ‘offender profiling’ are effective ways of targeting resources. Having a firm grip on local Priority and Prolific Offenders (PPO)– and the nature of their offending should enable early opportunities for positive intervention and diversion.

- Forces should consider KEC as a part of their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The creation of ‘safe places’ and ‘safe routes home (Schools)’ should be central to the thinking when working with CDRP’s.
- Ensuring responsible retailing or conducting test purchase operations should be a feature of local BCU operations.

Forces should utilise a communication strategy that includes the use of ‘Champions’ in the fight against Knife Crime.

The role of the family and good parenting cannot be understated in the drive for prevention. Forces and strategic partners should look towards early engagement and support for vulnerable families and individuals. Information sharing between police ‘protective services’ and other agencies

is crucial to success.

Faith based and local support networks provide a rich vein of skilled people willing and able to help. Forces should identify local faith leaders willing to assist and encourage their support and involvement in diversionary and preventative activity.

Previous victims and their families can often provide a potent and compelling anti knife crime message – delivered through personal testimony about their experience.

Moreover, often those effected by this type of crime are very keen to help with preventative activity, and Forces should not overlook this potential for support. Due sensitivity and consideration must always be applied.

Target those individuals who use or carry knives unlawfully

- To reinforce the message that the community will not accept KEC forces should consider the benefits of intelligence profiling of individual offenders.
- Prolific offenders can be prioritised and targeted through local coordination and tasking procedures.
- With reference to the local KEC problem profile Local Criminal Justice Boards should, where appropriate, be encouraged to adopt a premium service for KEC offenders through a positive prosecutions policy and by fast tracking accused through the criminal justice system.
- One of the key features of a KEC strategy should be to prevent offenders

travelling with knives. Partnership working between BTP, local bus companies and local forces provides a potent force to stop those who carry knives using the transport network.



Reassure our communities through high visibility policing and the effective use of the media

- As with so many crime types, the fear that KEC creates, appears to exceed the probability of becoming a victim of knife crime. Forces may wish to reassure communities by using various media resources to communicate the facts around knife crime.
- Good use should be made of some form of local independent advice. An Independent Advisory Group can act as both a critical friend and a direct link to community perceptions. Clear terms of reference are essential.
- High visibility policing does provide reassurance, particularly when used in

combination with clear messages about how the force is effectively tackling KEC, and helps address many of our communities' concerns.

National Co-ordination

ACPO will ensure appropriate liaison, linkage and read-across into the strategies dealing with communities, violence, and dangerous people. ACPO and the Home Office jointly own this guidance with a shared commitment to deliver success. For example, it is important not to run amnesties at the same time as proactive operations.

Powers of Search

Forces need to be confident that officers are fully conversant with the full range of powers available to them with regard to searching and enforcement.

Development of Tactics / Best Practice

To identify and promulgate best practice, ACPO will establish a system for sharing forces' experiences in dealing with KEC. A Network of regional representatives will be established through the Superintendents' Association to draw together best practice.

Tactical Guide

Section 2 of this paper looks at the various strands in greater depth.



SECTION 2

BEST PRACTICE/TACTICAL GUIDE

INTELLIGENCE

Aim: To obtain intelligence to inform a picture of local knife crime problems, utilising police and partners' data

	APPROACH	REASON	METHOD/RESEARCH
1	Produce a force wide problem profile using the National Intelligence Model (NIM) system	To identify the key issues locally including locations, ages of victims/offenders and temporal features.	An essential tool in any future policing operations Will assist in identifying educational opportunities

2	Tasking of dedicated source units	To increase the intelligence flow in relation to individuals that carry knives	Will assist to identify potential local targets and assist in the compilation of an accurate problem profile
3	Accurate recording of knife related incidents	To have systems in place to identify which crimes involve the use of knives	It is important to ensure the correct ‘flagging’ of knife related crime. Any discrepancy affects the accuracy of any problem profile, and resultant tactics’.
4	Ensure partner agencies record knife related incidents	Any intelligence gained can be fed back into the local police intelligence units.	Initiatives such as working in partnership with the Health Authority to supply de-personalised data to police regarding causalities treated for knife related injuries in A&E departments. To encourage schools to report any knife related incidents To encourage licensed premises to report knife related incidents that might not otherwise be reported, such as door supervisors seizing weapons.

5	Encourage victims to overcome barriers such as language, immigration status or personal involvement in crime to report knife related incidents.	To maximise additional intelligence	Explore methods that ensure such groups engage with police. For example the use of text messaging to report information to Crimestoppers.
6	Closer liaison with Hi- Tech crime units	To seek intelligence of both on-line retailers and purchasers of knives.	Although there is legislation relating to the sale of knives by retailers to people less than 16 years of age there is very little policing of on-line retailers.
7	Use of Crime stoppers and informant hot lines	To encourage the reporting of people who routinely carry knives	All avenues should be considered in gaining information that assists in building up an intelligence picture. More information on Crime stoppers can be found at their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org

8	Local intelligence units to identify crime drivers	To clearly establish the relationship between knife crime and other criminality such as drugs & alcohol dependency.	Using local intelligence databases and sources to create a dynamic problem profile.
9	Supporting Victims	Supporting victims to encourage reporting of offences and to create a wider understanding of the local KEC profile.	Support for victims of knife crime; For example - witness protection to encourage reporting of crimes.

PREVENTION

Aim: To assist police and partner agencies when planning to reduce the incidents of knife enabled crime

	APPROACH	REASON	INFORMATION																				
1	Education	Have a focused education programme to tackle future offending.	<p>There are a number of educational resources available most of which have a cost attached to them. Some examples are given below (not exhaustive):</p> <table> <thead> <tr> <th>Resource</th> <th>Contact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fix Up Look Sharp</td> <td>Sandy Pepper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tooled Up For School</td> <td>Tooled Up For School</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Miss Dorothy</td> <td>www.missdorothy.com</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Games over for Knives</td> <td>www.gameover4knives.com</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Its Not a Game</td> <td>Its Not A Game</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knife City</td> <td>Knife City</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calling the shots</td> <td>Calling the shots</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Be Safe</td> <td>Be Safe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project: Consider</td> <td>www.ukyp.org.uk/ulyptv/</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Resource	Contact	Fix Up Look Sharp	Sandy Pepper	Tooled Up For School	Tooled Up For School	Miss Dorothy	www.missdorothy.com	Games over for Knives	www.gameover4knives.com	Its Not a Game	Its Not A Game	Knife City	Knife City	Calling the shots	Calling the shots	Be Safe	Be Safe	Project: Consider	www.ukyp.org.uk/ulyptv/
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2	Knife Amnesty	To reduce the number of knives that are in circulation and raise awareness of knife related issues.	For further details on how to conduct a knife amnesty contact DCI Gary Baldock at: Gary.Baldock@met.police.uk
3	To work in partnership with retailers	To reduce the opportunities for young people of purchasing weapons	<p>Encourage retailers to be aware of the law on the sale of knives. This will enable them to self-police sales of knives to young people under 16 years (under 18 as from October 2007).</p> <p>Encourage stores not to sell certain types of weapons. (Devon and Cornwall Police successfully encouraged 38 stores to stop selling Samurai swords. Contact Ch.Insp Brigden)</p>
4	Targeted media Campaign	To reach as many people as possible with the anti knife message	Ensure that any knife operation receives maximum publicity to reinforce the fact that the police will deal robustly with this type of crime and also to reassure the public and reduce the fear of crime

5	High Visibility Policing Activities	To deter offenders from carrying knives	Increase high visibility patrolling of areas identified as hot spots.
6	Crime Stoppers	Ensure that the crime stoppers number and leaflets are available.	To encourage those that may have information on people that carry weapons to report to police. More information can be found at www.crimestoppers-uk.org
7	Use of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships	To maximise the opportunities for partners to impact on knife crime	Knife enabled personal robbery seems to broadly follow the fluctuations in all personal robbery, therefore any opportunities to reduce violent crime generally will have a positive impact on knife enabled crime. For information on options to tackle associated crime there is a useful crime reduction toolkit on www.crimereduction.gov.uk
8	Work in partnership with licensees	To deter patrons from carrying weapons	To encourage licensed premises to utilise their door staff to routinely scan customers for knives as a condition of entry

9	Have a robust Domestic Violence Policy	To prevent minor domestic incidents escalating	Research by Devon & Cornwall Constabulary has established that 17% of their knife crime incidents were domestic related.
10	Section 60 powers	To prevent offences occurring.	Section 60 is preventative legislation that can be used at the discretion of a senior police in appropriate circumstances
11	Community Champions	To facilitate the KEC message to the target group.	Identify community champions to promulgate the anti knife message. The Damilola Taylor Trust used Rio Ferdinand as their community champion. This method generated a great deal of media and target audience participation in the campaign.
12	Conflict resolution	Provide alternative strategies to reduce violence.	Schools are best positioned to identify and plan to meet staff training needs in conflict resolution. Schools also identify ways in which pupils can be taught skills and understanding for conflict resolution. A range of providers offer courses for school staff and pupils to give individuals the skills to avoid violence.

13	Youth Offending Teams (YOTS)	Identify individuals that have a high risk of being involved in KEC.	Develop positive interventions/diversions that reduce the possibility of offending/re-offending.
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ENFORCEMENT

Aim: To give practitioners a toolkit of tactical options to be considered when dealing with a knife enabled crime problem

14	APPROACH	REASON	METHOD/RESEARCH
1	Automatic Number Plate Recognition System	To highlight vehicles that may be carrying weapons, reducing the opportunity to travel with weapons.	This may assist in better targeting when carrying out Stop and Search or other Proactive Operations

2	Targeting individuals	To discourage offenders from carrying knives	Use Tasking processes to proactively target those individuals that intelligence suggests carry weapons through both Stop and Search or Search Warrants
3	Execution of outstanding arrest warrants	To transfer the fear of crime onto those that commit knife related crime	Prioritising warrants for those suspects who have a PNC warning marker for weapons, this enables these individuals to be processed through the criminal justice system faster and reduces the opportunity for repeat offending.
4	Targeting hot spots	<p>Disrupting offenders methods/routines</p> <p>Preventing low level disorder that may escalate into more serious violence</p> <p>High Visibility patrols</p>	<p>Transport networks and hot spot areas can be effectively targeted using the BTP operation Shield. Operation shield uses search arches to detect metallic objects and facilitate grounds to search.</p> <p>This type of operation has also been used at sporting events and shopping malls.</p> <p>Research has shown that high profile proactive operations targeting other types of crime also assist to reduce knife enabled crime</p> <p>Where intelligence dictates consideration of implementing S60 Powers</p>

5	Young people	A high proportion of victims and offenders of knife crime are of school age	In consultation with head teachers hand held metal detectors are used at the entry points to schools to scan pupils as they enter.
5a	Schools	A high proportion of victims and offenders of knife crime are of school age	With reference to the forthcoming DfES guidance on head teachers powers to search pupils. Head teachers to use powers to create a safe learning environment.
5c	Other youth related areas (youth clubs ect0	A high proportion of victims and offenders of knife crime are of school age	Consider using knife arches or metal detector search techniques as a condition of entry.

6	Targeting Public Transport	<p>Reducing the opportunity to travel with weapons and deter would be offenders from travelling.</p> <p>Increase the likelihood of offenders being arrested.</p>	<p>Operation Vine, which was run in Strathclyde, was a multi agency intelligence lead operation targeting buses coming into the city centres. This Operation saw a reduction of as much as 26% in some areas. Details of this Operation can be found on www.actionviolence.com</p> <p>Operation Shield, conducted by British Transport Police, used magnetic arches set up at exit points to assist in identifying potential suspects. During an 8-week period 10,000 people passed through the arches resulting in 107 arrests 48 of which had weapons on them. The majority of those arrested were searched as a result of attempting to avoid passing through the arch.</p>
7	Targeting Licensed Premises	<p>Research has shown that there is an intrinsic link between alcohol related disorder and knife crime</p>	<p>In partnership with licensed premises utilise hand held metal detectors to scan customers entering the premises as a condition of entry.</p>

8	Targeting high street retailers	To enforce the sale of knives legislation	Conducting test purchase operations in partnership with trading standards with a view to prosecuting retailers that fail to adhere to the law.
9	Targeting Internet retailers	To identify the scale of on-line purchasing of knives and other weapons	This is an unknown quantity but companies that are identified selling weapons to young people or selling items that would otherwise be illegal could be forced to cease trading by the trading standards authority.
10	Adopt a Positive Charging policy	To support any proactive policing initiatives	To send a clear message to people who chose to carry knives without a lawful purpose.
11	Fast track knife related crime offences through the criminal justice system	To reduce the opportunity for repeat offending	In partnership with Criminal Justice units, CPS and the Courts ensure that all knife related offences are dealt with expeditiously.
12	Adopting a forensic strategy	To maximise the opportunity for sanction detection's and brought to justice outcomes	Consideration should be given to prioritising knife related forensic submissions. Liaison with the national injuries data base should also be considered to support any investigation

13	Adopt a minimum standard of investigation policy	<p>To improve the quality of investigations</p> <p>Ensure that positive action is taken</p>	<p>Ensure intrusive supervision of knife crime to improve standards of investigation</p> <p>Conduct regular dip sampling of unsolved crime to ensure the quality of investigations are being maintained</p>
14	<p>Forces and partners should make full use of the existing knife related legislation currently available. A summary of the legislation is included below.</p> <p><u>Section 1 prevention of crime act 1953.</u></p> <p>Possession of an offensive weapon in a public place. Arrestable offence S.24 PACE.</p> <p><u>Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959</u> creates an offence of trading in ‘flick or gravity’ knives.</p> <p><u>Section 139 Criminal Justice Act 1988.</u> Possession of a bladed or pointed article in a public place + power to stop and search persons under section 140. Arrestable offence.</p> <p><u>Section 139a Criminal Justice Act 1988</u> extends to ‘school premises’ and to bladed or pointed article or offensive weapon, at any time of the day.. (could extend to school premises when the public have access public car boot sales). Powers to enter and search and an arrestable offence.</p>		

Section 60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994(as amended by Knives act 1997 and Crime and Disorder Act 1998) Allows senior police officers to authorise constables to stop and search persons in a specific area either where a serious public order problem is likely to arise, or for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments, failing to submit to a search is an arrestable offence.

The Knives Act 1997 introduces a range of anti-knife measures including unlawful marketing of combat knives, publishing adverts for combat knives, and creating powers for entry seizure retention and forfeiture.

Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006

- s.28 - Using someone to mind a weapon (implemented 6 April 2007).
- s.42 - Increase of maximum sentences for offences of having knives (implemented 12 February 2007).
- s.43 - Sale of knives and other weapons (implementation October 2007).
- s.45 - Powers of members of staff to search school pupils for weapons (implementation May 2007).
- s.46 - Powers to members of staff to search further education students (May 2007).
- s.47 - Powers of staff to search persons in attendance centres (May 2007).
- s.48 - Amendments to police powers to search schools.

SECTION 3

DIRECTORY OF AGENCIES (not exhaustive)

Agencies and Charities name	Resources	Address	Telephone number
Crimestoppers	24/7 phone line	Apollo House, 66a London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5BE.	0800-555-111
Damilola Taylor Trust	Events for young people	P.O.Box 3478, Wokingham RG40 9AT	
Rising Tide	Getting Young people into the music industry	Ocean Music Venue, 270 Mare Street, Hackney,London E8 1HE	020-8986-3222

Be Safe	Educational packages for young people Nationwide coverage. Also run trainers programme	600 Galleywood Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8BY (personal Safety Ltd)	01245-456-747
UK Youth Parliament	UK Youth Parliament letting young people have their say on matters that concern them in parliament. Consider DVD released October 2006	UK Youth Parliament, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE	020-7843-6038
MPS Site itsnotagame.org	Website	Itsnotagame.org	
Miss Dorothy.com	Schools Packages for under the ages of 16 and also Watch Over Me schools package for 16-18 year olds.	MDC Publishing Ltd, P.O. Box 264, Dartford DA1 9AY	0870-759-3388

Adams Electronics	Hand held and Archway Search arches	Adams electronics international Ltd, Unit 10 Forest Row Business park, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5DW sales@adamselec demon.co.uk	01342-823-856
Scanna	Search Arches	Scanna MSC Ltd, 179 Piccadilly, London W1J 9EN info@scanna-msc.com	020-7355-3555
Enfield YOTS	Blunt Choices DVD	Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield EN1 3XY	020-8379-1000
Calling the Shots	Calling the Shots DVD	Greater London Authority, City Hall, London SE1 2AA	020-7983-4100

MPS Fix Up Look Sharp	Fix Up Look Sharp DVD and lessons booklet	ESB, Lillie Road, Empress approach, London SW6 1TR	
Crimestoppers	Website	Gameover4knives.com	
MPS Knife City	DVD Demo	ESB, Lillie Road, Empress Approach, London SW6 1TR	
Tooled up for school	Educational packages	Incentive plus, Unit 6, Fernfield Farm, Whaddon Road, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes MK17 0PS (This company deal with all West Midlands Educational packages.) www.incentiveplus. co.uk	0121-626-5328

Acknowledgement

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