

Written evidence submitted by Newcastle Youth Council and Youth Parliament (BYC003)

1. Generally we feel that knife crime is more of an issue for young people in southern parts of the country, especially in inner cities. Young people are scared but that is often because of media and not based on reality.

General

2. We are only aware of the law where if you are caught carrying a knife you get 5 years in prison. This seems like a really long time for a young person. Stop and search can be a bias process.

3. We don't believe that treating knife crime as a public health issue is effective as knife crime doesn't fit in with this category.

4. We don't believe that this is as much of an issue in the North as it is in the South but that generally knife crime across the country is putting additional pressure on to all the services mentioned.

5. Judicial sentence isn't effective if people still reoffend even if they know what the penalty is. Younger people could mix with the wrong people in an institute and get involved with other crimes or criminal activity.

Young People

6. All of the mentioned factors would make young people more vulnerable. Young people who carry knives are motivated by:

- Fear, caused by media (perception not reality)
- Impress people
- Peer pressure
- Music can have a small influence but only if other factors also influencing

7. To reduce fear as a motivator, young people need to know what the reality is and hear from people who have been directly affected by knife crime (perpetrators and victims)

8. There is a correlation between exclusions and knife crime. If you aren't doing well at school you might feel less isolated being part of a gang. You might not have the support network that young people can access through schools. If young people aren't engaging in education they may get bored and be more likely to become involved in gangs.

Prevention

9. Education and talking to people is best prevention but if people are going to do it, they may not be put off very easily.

10. We are not sure of any support or local initiatives; however we feel that young people who aren't in education or accessing another service will be overlooked.

Intervention

11. Outside of Youth offending Team unsure what else is available. With regards to schools, the support and information they provide is very varied. Some schools have had police visit to discuss knife crime but it was all about scaring young people and giving lots of statistics.

12. Positive role models are a deterrent. We don't believe that stop and search powers are effective and they can be biased.

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