



DEBATE PACK

Number 2016/045, 18 February 2016

Gangs and Serious Youth Violence

By Benjamin Politowski

Thursday 3 March 2016

Backbench Business, Main Chamber

A debate on a motion relating to gangs and serious youth violence has been scheduled by the Backbench Business Committee following a bid by Chuka Umunna.

Mr Umunna will also be leading a public digital debate on [Twitter](#) on Monday 22 February between 4.30pm – 5.30pm, using the hashtag [#StopYouthViolence](#).

The Government allocates a certain number of days in the chamber for debates selected by the Backbench Business Committee. It is up to the Committee to decide what subjects it will schedule for debate. The Committee meets every week on a Tuesday when Parliament is sitting to hear requests from any backbench Member of Parliament. Mr Umunna's request to the Committee for this debate may be seen on [parliamentlive.tv](#)

The proceedings of the debate in Parliament may be watched on [parliamentlive.tv](#)

The NSPCC have a free 24 hour helpline to provide support and advice for anyone worried about a child or young person who may be at risk from gang-related activity: 0808 800 5000

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. A more detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Gang Crime and Youth Violence

1.1 Government Policy

In 2011, following widespread disorder across cities in England in August, the Coalition Government published a cross-government report on [ending gang and youth violence](#). The report set out plans to:

- Provide support to local areas to address gang violence.
- Prevent young people from becoming involved in gangs.
- Help young people get away from gang culture.

This paper formed the basis of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence (EGYV) programme which began in 2012 in 33 priority areas. There are now 52 EGYV areas.

In February 2015, the Home Affairs Select Committee published its report into gangs and youth crime.¹ The Committee noted that the EGYV programme had cost over £10 million, but the Home Office had failed to effectively evaluate the project. The Committee was also critical at the apparent lack of progress which had been made in identifying those most at risk from gangs and little use of new powers such as gang injunctions in areas most affected by gang violence.

On 13 January 2016, the Home Office published a 'refreshed approach' to the policy relating to gang violence. Entitled [Ending gang violence and exploitation](#), the policy paper sets out six priorities:

- 1 Tackle drug dealing outside of urban areas where vulnerable people are being exploited by gang members to sell drugs.
- 2 Protect places where vulnerable and young people can be targeted by gangs such as residential children's care homes.
- 3 Reduce violence and knife crime.
- 4 Safeguarding vulnerable women and girls involved with gangs.
- 5 Promote Early Intervention to prevent young people becoming involved in gangs.
- 6 Promote alternatives to those at risk of becoming involved in gangs through education, training and employment.

The Minister for Preventing Abuse and Exploitation, Karen Bradley said that the new approach provided, 'more targeted support, which will allow local police and authorities to identify how best to address local challenges and identify the right measures to tackle gang-related violence and exploitation.'²

¹ Home Affairs Select Committee, [Gangs and Youth Crime](#), 24 February 2015, HC199

² GOV.UK News story, [More support for communities to end gang violence](#), 13 January 2016

Injunctions to Prevent Gang Related Violence

Introduced under the [Policing and Crime Act 2009](#), gang injunctions are civil orders which can be applied for by the police and local authorities against somebody involved in gang related violence.

Quickly termed by the media as 'gangbos' due to their similarity to the ASBO, a gang injunction allows the courts in England and Wales to place a range of prohibitions or requirements on individuals who were involved in gang related violence. The stated aim of a gang injunction is to:

...prevent a person from engaging in, encouraging or assisting gang-related violence and may also serve to protect them from gang-related violence. Gang injunctions aim to prevent serious violence from occurring, break down violent gang culture and engage gang members in positive activities to help them leave the gang.³

Further information is available in the [Home Office guidance](#) on gang injunctions.

In January 2014, the Home Office published a review of gang injunctions, reporting that in the 25 Ending Gang and Youth Violence priority areas involved in the review, 'gang injunctions were generally seen as a valuable tool in tackling gang-related violence'.⁴

Data on the number of injunctions which have been issued is not routinely collected, but between January 2011 and January 2014, in the 25 Ending Gang and Youth Violence priority areas to return data (out of 33), 108 gang injunctions had been issued, all against males, with two taken out against under 18s.⁵

³ Home Office Guidance, [Injunctions to prevent gang-related violence](#), 2013

⁴ Home Office, *Review of the operation of injunctions to prevent gang-related violence*, 2014, p5

⁵ [PQ220074](#) [on Gang Injunctions] 13 February 2015

1.2 Measuring Gang Crime

There is no national measure of gang related crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, and any such data which may be recorded by the police is not collated centrally by the Home Office.⁶

Gang crime and serious youth violence is often synonymous with knife crime. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that over the past five years offences in England and Wales involving a knife or sharp instrument (excluding possession) have fallen by 20%.⁷

Offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales, 2010/11 – 2014/15

Offence	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Offences involving knife or sharp instrument (excluding possession)	32,889	31,148	26,552	25,975	26,374
Possession of a knife or offensive weapon	21,262	20,153	20,932	18,282	20,153

Sources: ONS, [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2014/15](#)
MoJ, [Knife Possession Sentencing Quarterly, July to September 2015](#)

Likewise police recorded offences of possession of a knife or offensive weapon, where a caution or sentence was received, have fallen by 5% since 2010/11. However, both possession offences and other offences involving knives have seen an increase in the most recent recording year.

London

According to Metropolitan Police intelligence reports, there are an estimated 225 recognised gangs in London, comprising of around 3,600 gang members. 58 of these gangs are reckoned to be particularly active, being responsible for around two thirds of all gang related offences.⁸

In London, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) along with the Metropolitan Police, collates data on knife crime and gang related violence. Statistics are published on knife crime and knife crime resulting in injury, but also on the Gang Violence Indicator. The Gang Violence Indicator is used as a proxy measurement for gang violence. It records the number of offences where the victim is under the age of 25 and either a firearm has been discharged or a knife has been used to injure, but excludes incidents of domestic violence.

⁶ [PQ215346](#) [on Gangs: Crime] 28 November 2014

⁷ Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are a measure of seven serious offences which can be broken down by whether or not a knife was used. The offences included are: homicide, threats to kill, assault (with injury or intent to cause serious harm), robbery, attempted murder, rape and sexual assault.

⁸ Metropolitan Police, [Trident Gang Crime Command FAQs](#) [accessed 18 February 2016]

Data from MOPAC and the Met shows that since 2010, knife crime in London has fallen by 23%, knife crime with injury by 8%, and gang violence by 21%. However, as the table below shows, all have seen an increase in recent years:

Met Police recorded knife crime by calendar year, 2010 - 2015

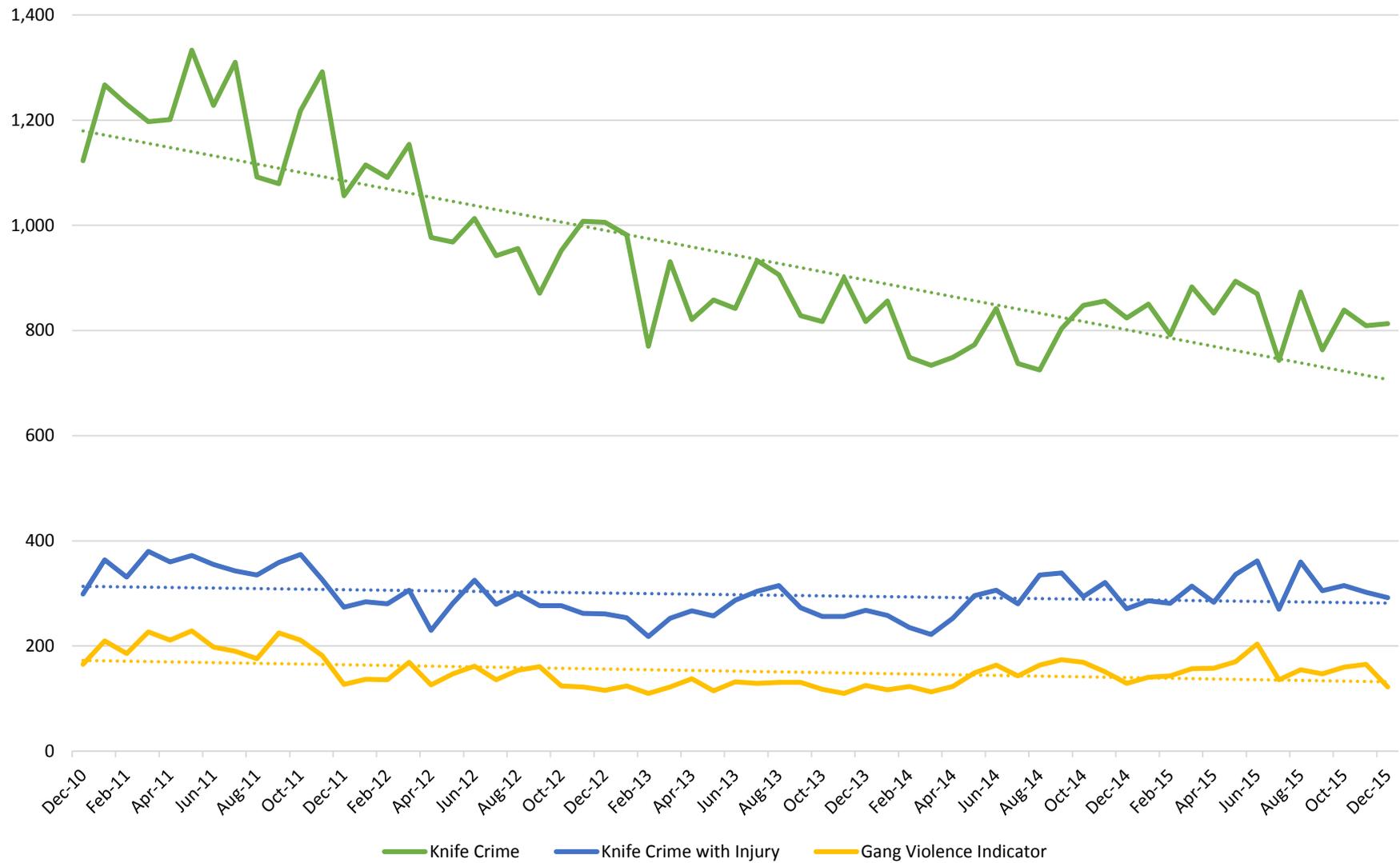
Calendar Year	Knife Crime	Annual % Change	Knife Crime with Injury	Annual % Change	Gang Violence Indicator	Annual % Change
2010	12,986	-	4,015	-	2,340	-
2011	14,503	12%	4,173	4%	2,372	1%
2012	12,053	-17%	3,362	-19%	1,690	-29%
2013	10,405	-14%	3,208	-5%	1,485	-12%
2014	9,497	-9%	3,410	6%	1,719	16%
2015	9,962	5%	3,706	9%	1,858	8%

Source: [Metropolitan Police Recorded Crime to December 2015, London Datastore](#)

Note: Offences classed as knife crime include any offence of: murder, attempted murder, threats to kill, manslaughter, infanticide, wounding or carrying out an act endangering life, wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm without intent, actual bodily harm, sexual assault, rape or robbery, which has been tagged with a code identifying weapon usage as part of the crime report. Possession offences are not included in these statistics.

Monthly data, plotted on the graph overleaf, shows a general downward trend in the amount of police recorded knife crime in London, but slight increases towards the end of 2015. Knife crime with injury and the Gang Violence Indicator shows less of a decrease over the last five years.

Metropolitan Police Recorded Knife Crime, by month, December 2010 - 2015



2. Parliamentary Business

2.1 Parliamentary Questions

Gangs [[HL5254](#)]

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont on 20 January 2016

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps are being taken to curb gang culture across the UK.

Answered by Lord Bates on 27 January 2016

Ending gang violence and exploitation is a priority for the Government and on 13 January 2016 we published a paper setting out our refreshed approach. This has a twin focus concerned with both reducing violence, including knife crime, and protecting vulnerable individuals from exploitation by gangs. The full refreshed approach can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-gang-violence-and-exploitation>

This builds on our work since 2012 when we introduced the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme aimed and targeted at supporting local areas building their resilience and ability to respond to gangs. Since 2012, we have worked with 52 local areas facing problems associated with gangs through supporting peer reviews to identify the main local challenges.

[Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation](#) (PDF Document)

Knives: Crime [[HL2242](#)]

Asked by Lord Patten on 15 September 2015

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the incidence of knife crime amongst young males in London.

Answered by Lord Bates on 5 October 2015

The independent Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that crime has fallen by more than a quarter since June 2010. While better police recording of violent crime appears to have led to a recent statistical rise, knife crime offences remain 18% below the level in the year to June 2010 and figures for London show that knife crime offences are now 24% lower than June 2010. In the year ending March 2015, the Metropolitan police recorded 9,623 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, a 4% decrease compared with the previous year (10,012 in year ending March 2014). Police forces do not break down offence data by age.

We are taking a range of steps to tackle knife crime, including working with police forces and other key partners through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme, including in 25 London boroughs. We have also strengthened the law in this area, and in July 2015, we brought into force the new legislative provision that anyone caught in possession of a knife for a second time will now face a mandatory minimum sentence in prison or youth custody.

Gang Injunctions [[220074](#)]

Asked by Diana Johnson on 7 January 2015

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many gang injunctions have been granted in each of the last three years.

Answered by Lynne Featherstone on 13 January 2015

The Home Office does not collect data on the number of gang injunctions granted. Gang injunctions are used by local areas to prevent gang-related violence and records are held locally.

The "Review of the operation of injunctions to prevent gang-related violence", published in January 2014, included information from 25 of the 33 Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas; showing that between January 2011 and January 2014, 108 gang injunctions had been put in place. Of these, two were taken out against young people under 18s.

This review is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278786/ReviewInjunctionsGangRelatedViolence.pdf

Note - the figures in the review were subsequently updated after an error was found in the data due to the number of gang injunctions reported by one area being revised from 2 to 22.

Gangs: Crime [[215346](#)]

Asked by Chuka Umunna on 19 November 2014

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how her Department defines gang related incidents when recording incidences; how many incidents of gang related crime were recorded by the Metropolitan Police in (a) Greater London and (b) Lambeth in each year from 2005 to 2014.

Answered by Lynne Featherstone on 28 November 2014

The number of offences recorded by the Metropolitan Police involving knives and firearms are shown in Tables A and B respectively. The figures are not available below police force area.

The number of offences involving knives has been collected by the Home Office since 2008/09.

The number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded by the Metropolitan police has fallen by 20% between 2008/09 and the year ending June 2014. The number of offences involving firearms recorded by the Metropolitan police has fallen by 60% between 2005/06 and the year ending June 2014.

The Home Office has not issued any definition of gang-related crime for the purposes of recording such crime by local police forces. The Home Office does not collect data on number of gang related crimes recorded by the police.

[Number of offences involving knives & firearms](#) (Excel Spreadsheet)

2.2 Debates

Adjournment Debate: Gangs and Youth Violence: London

On 29 January 2016, Mr Chuka Umunna led an adjournment debate on gang and youth violence in London. The PUS for Refugees, Richard Harrington, replied on behalf of the Government. The full text of this debate may be read in Hansard at the following reference:

[HC Deb 29 January 2016 cc610-7](#)

Adjournment Debate: Gangs and Youth Violence

On 10 June 2011, Karen Buck led an adjournment debate on gangs and youth violence. The PUS for the Home Department James Brokenshire responded for the Government. The text of the debate may be read in Hansard at:

[HC Deb 10 June 2011 cc467-74](#)

WH Adjournment Debate: Gang Crime (London)

On 6 April 2010, Ms Diane Abbot led a Westminster Hall adjournment debate on gang crime in London. The Minister for Policing, Crime and Counter-Terrorism, David Hanson, responded on behalf of the Government. The full text of the debate is available at:

[HC Deb 6 April 2010 cc227-50WH](#)

2.3 Committee Reports

Home Affairs Select Committee, 24 February 2015, HC199

[Gangs and Youth Crime](#)

3. Press and Media Articles

3.1 Media Articles

The following is a small selection of recent press and media articles which may be relevant to this debate. Please note: the Library is not responsible for the views expressed in, nor the accuracy of, external content.

BBC News, 18 February 2016

[Police forces 'sleepwalking' away from communities](#)

Financial Times, 18 February 2016

[Police fall short in crime prevention, says study](#) [subscription required]

The Scotsman, 17 February 2016

[Street gangs in decline as more youths opt to stay home](#)

BBC News, 16 February 2016

['Gang violence affected my mental health'](#)

Evening Standard, 15 February 2016

[Comment: Gang violence is still a priority for us all](#)

The Guardian, 29 January 2016

[Government to stop funding scheme to tackle gang violence](#)

Evening Standard, 29 January 2016

[Ministers 'risking lives of young Londoners by scrapping anti-gang programme'](#)

3.2 Press Release

Home Office, 13 January 2016

[More support for communities to end gang violence](#)

Minister for Preventing Abuse and Exploitation Karen Bradley announces new policy to tackle gang violence and exploitation.

Communities across England are set to benefit from a new national gangs policy, which will set out six priorities to reduce violence and prevent the exploitation of vulnerable people by gangs, the Minister for Preventing Abuse and Exploitation Karen Bradley announced today (Wednesday 13 January).

Nine new areas will also receive targeted support through the Home Office and experts to better understand the nature of gang-related violence and exploitation, identify opportunities for collaborative working and share effective ways of tackling local challenges.

Support

The nine new areas to receive support from experts are:

- 7 Basildon
- 8 Grimsby
- 9 Harrow
- 10 Hastings/Eastbourne
- 11 High Wycombe
- 12 Medway
- 13 Sefton, Merseyside
- 14 Southampton
- 15 Swindon

The new policy, Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation, sets out priorities for Government to deal with reducing violence including knife crime, tackling the abuse of vulnerable people in the drug trade through county lines, creating opportunities to divert youngsters away from gangs, protecting vulnerable locations, safeguarding girls and women associated with gangs, and early intervention with at risk youngsters.

Minister for Preventing Abuse and Exploitation Karen Bradley said:

Gang and youth violence has a devastating impact on young people, their families and local communities.

That's why today we are providing more targeted support, which will allow local police and authorities to identify how best to address local challenges and identify the right measures to tackle gang-related violence and exploitation.

Our new policy; Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation, sets out the Government's six key priorities to deal with what drives violence and abuse by gangs and shows the Government's continued determination to tackle this problem. We want to work in towns across England to make this a success.

Experience

The ongoing Home Office Ending Gangs and Youth Violence programme has already helped 43 areas with tailored support and advice from a network of over 100 specialists with frontline experience dealing with gang and youth related violence.

The new policy presents a refreshed approach to ending gang violence and exploitation and has been published following challenges identified by frontline workers and organisations, including the police and National Crime Agency.

4. Further Information

4.1 House of Commons Library Briefings

Commons Library Briefing, [Knives and Offensive Weapons](#), SN00330

Commons Library Briefing, [Gangs: a select bibliography](#), SN05264

Commons Library Briefing, [Constituency Casework: Anti-Social Behaviour](#), CBP7270

Commons Library Briefing, [Anti-social behaviour – new provisions](#), SN06950

4.2 Government Documents

Home Office Policy Paper, [Ending gang violence and exploitation](#), 2016

Home Office Policy Paper, [2010 to 2015 government policy: knife, gun and gang crime](#), 2015

Home Office Policy Paper, [Ending gang and youth violence: community engagement](#), 2014

Home Office Policy Paper, [Review of the operation of injunctions to prevent gang-related violence](#), 2014

Home Office Guidance, [Injunctions to prevent gang-related violence](#), 2013

Home Office Guidance, [Injunctions to prevent gang-related violence: statutory guidance](#), 2011

Home Office Policy Paper, [Ending gang and youth violence: cross-government report](#), 2011

4.3 Other

NSPCC, [Gangs and Young People](#)

Early Intervention Foundation, [Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence](#)

Public Health England, [Mental Health: needs of gang-affiliated young people](#), 2015

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