

Debate Pack

Number CDP 2021/0129

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14 July 2021

Tackling Knife Crime

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Summary

This pack has been prepared ahead of the Westminster Hall debate on tackling knife crime on 20 July 2021 at 2:30pm. The debate will be opened by Sarah Owen MP.

The pack provides information on the Government's approaches to tackling knife crime.

It outlines the main categories of offence relating to knives and offensive weapons in England and Wales: offences relating to possession and offences relating to sale and supply. It also highlights sentencing guidelines for these offences and explains the recently introduced Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) in the Offensive Weapons' Act 2019.

It provides some statistics on knife crime in England and Wales. For full statistics on knife crime, please see Library's [Knife crime statistics](#) Briefing Paper.

It also highlights the current Government strategies for tackling knife crime. This includes the 'public health approach' to serious violence and the recent proposals in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill.

1 Background

1.1 Criminal law and sentencing

There are a range of criminal offences covering the possession, sale and supply of knives and other offensive weapons. Guidance on the relevant legislation and charging practice is set out on the [Crown Prosecution Service \(CPS\) website](#). A more detailed breakdown of the CPS approach to knife crime including the approach to the offences, caselaw, sentencing and practical guidance for prosecutors, is also published on [their website](#).

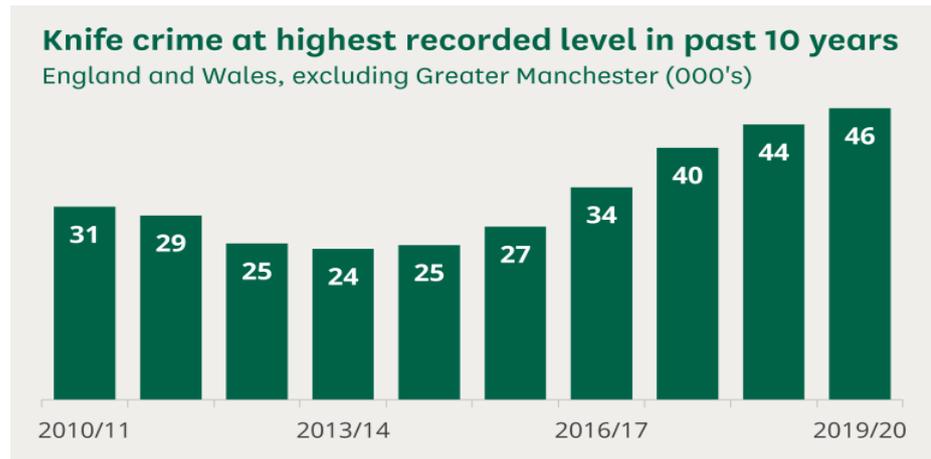
Detailed guidance on sentencing practice – including offences attracting mandatory minimum custodial sentence in respect of offenders aged 16 or over – is available on the [Sentencing Council's website](#).

1.2 Knife Crime in England and Wales

The Library's briefing on [Knife crime statistics](#) includes the most recent available annual statistics on knife crime in England and Wales.

Recorded crime

In the year ending March 2020, there were around 46,000 (selected) offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales. Recent trends in offences have been affected by undercounting in the Greater Manchester Police Force area prior to 2018/19. In addition, due to ongoing problems, data from Greater Manchester Police is not available for the year 2019/20. Excluding figures from Greater Manchester, this is the highest number of offences since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point at which comparable data are available. This increase is directly related with improvements in recording practices.

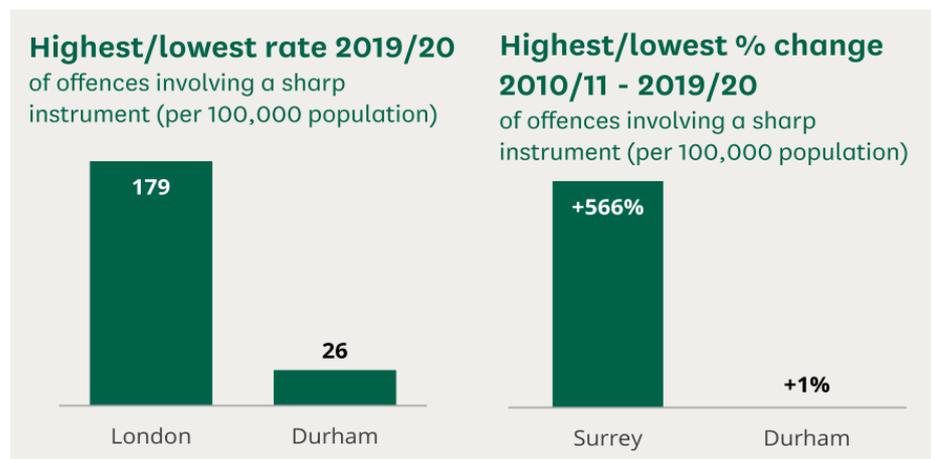


Homicide

In the year ending March 2019 there were 259 homicides (currently recorded) using a sharp instrument, including knives and broken bottles, accounting for 39% of all homicides – a decrease from the 285 recorded in the year ending March 2018.

Knife crime by police force area

London recorded the highest rate of 179 offences involving a knife per 100,000 population in 2019/20, a slight increase on a rate of 169 in 2018/19. Durham had the lowest rate of 26 offences per 100,000 individuals (down from 31 in 2018/19).

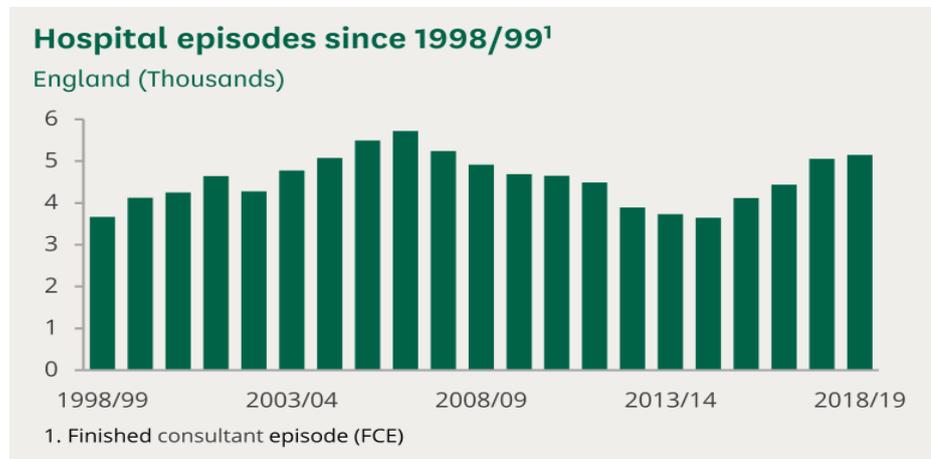


Proven offences and offenders

In the year ending June 2019, there were 22,306 disposals given for possession of a knife or offensive weapon. Juveniles (aged 10-17) were the offenders in 20% of cases.

Hospital admissions

There were 4,757 finished consultant episodes (FCE) recorded in English hospitals in 2019/20 due to assault by a sharp object. This was a decrease of nearly 8% compared to 2018/19 and 31% higher than in 2014/15.



1.3

Strategies for tackling knife crime

Alongside increased law enforcement, the Conservative Governments (from April 2018 onwards) have been increasing funding for projects that aim to divert young people away from crime. Inspiration has been taken from Scotland, which established a [public health approach to violent crime](#) in the mid-2000s. This approach has seen the [Scottish Violence Reduction Unit](#) (VRU) try to tackle the root causes of violence through co-ordinated [multi-agency projects](#). In May 2019, the May Government [set aside £35 million to fund 18 VRUs in English and Welsh police forces](#).

In October 2018 the May Government also announced it was investing £200 million over ten-years to the [Youth Endowment Fund](#). The Fund provides direct funding to individual early-intervention projects across England and Wales and evaluates these projects to inform future policy making.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs)

The most recent development in the governments approach knife crime is the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs). Provided for in [part 2](#) of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019, the Metropolitan Police recently began a [14-month trial](#) of KCPOs. These are civil court orders that can be imposed on people aged 12 and over whom police “have reason to believe are carrying knives or are habitual knife carriers, or those who have been previously convicted of a knife-related offence.”

A court can give a KCPO to any person on conviction for an offence where the prosecution has applied for one and the court agrees that the order is necessary to protect the public or prevent the defendant from committing an offence with a bladed article. Courts can also grant KCPOs without a conviction on a complaint by the police. Recipients will usually be notified by the police that they are applying for a KCPO from the court. However, under section 16 of the 2019 Act, KCPOs can be granted without notice in exceptional or urgent circumstances.

The conditions of KCPOs can include curfews, social media use restrictions, travel restrictions, and explicit bans from carrying a knife. They can also include positive requirements such as attendance on educational courses, sports club referrals, relationship counselling, anger management, mentoring and drug rehabilitation.

The Home Office guidance (page 8) highlights that KCPOs for people under 18 should be subject to more scrutiny than those issued to adults and will be subject to consultation with youth offending teams. Applications for KCPOs for under 18s should be made to the Youth Court. Youth Offending Teams should be involved with KCPOs issued to children. Further guidance on the role of Youth Offending Teams is detailed on page 13 of the [Home Office guidance](#).

A public health approach

Since the [Serious Violence Strategy](#), the Government has slowly adopted the term ‘public health approach’ to describe its violence prevention policy.

A public health approach focuses on the health, safety and wellbeing of entire populations. It is multi-disciplinary and should involve different services working together. According to [Public Health England](#) (page 14), a public health approach looks for short and long-term solutions to health problems using data and evidence. A public health approach to violence recognises violence as a public health problem. Typically, it seeks to identify what is causing individuals to become violent. This information is used to design, implement and evaluate interventions intended to stop violence occurring.

There has been growing cross-party consensus supporting early intervention projects and treating knife crime as a public health problem. In July 2018, the Youth Violence Commission, a cross-party group of MPs, published its [interim report advocating the approach](#). In July 2019, the Home Affairs Select Committee [praised the Government for taking a public health approach](#). [Labour Party spokespeople](#) have said a “genuine public health approach” to violence “does work”. The [Local Government Association](#) says early council work to implement a public health approach to violence has shown “signs of promise.” [College of Policing research](#) has found that “public health approaches” have a “positive impact” on knife crime.

However, there has been some scepticism of how the Government has been implementing this approach. The [Home Affairs Select Committee](#) argued in

July 2019 that the Government needs to give more thought to “what sustained and coherent preventative measures should look like, and how to ensure that public funding is diverted towards the most effective approaches.”

Proposals in the PCSC Bill

Part 2 of [the PCSC Bill](#) makes new proposals for tackling serious violence, including knife crime.

Chapter 1 would introduce a new legal duty requiring local public services to work together in “Serious Violence Partnerships” to tackle serious violence. It would also amend provisions in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* so that existing Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are required to consider “serious violence” when making their strategies to combat local crime and disorder.

The last Conservative Government committed to introducing this legislation in its response to the 2019 consultation [Serious violence: new legal duty to support multi-agency action](#). The current Conservative Government promised to introduce this legislation in the 2019 Queen’s Speech.

Chapter 2 would require police, local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (public health boards in Wales) to conduct Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews when an adult’s death involves the use of an offensive weapon.

Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews would be similar to Domestic Homicide Reviews. DHRs are carried out when an adult dies as a result of domestic violence, abuse or neglect.

The Government has been committed to “take action” to address homicide but has not previously committed to introduce Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews specifically.

A more detailed breakdown of these sections is included in sections 1 to 3 of the Library’s [Briefing Paper on Part 2 of the Bill](#).

2

Parliamentary Material

Ministerial statements

[Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Home Office Measures](#)

9 March 2021 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS834

Member: Priti Patel | **Department:** Home Office

[Offensive Weapons Act 2019 Surrender and Compensation Scheme](#)

10 December 2020 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS636

Member: Kit Malthouse | **Department:** Home Office

[Violence](#)

14 September 2020 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS450

Member: Kit Malthouse | **Department:** Home Office

Debates

[Knife Crime: Summer 2021](#) HC Deb 12 July 2021 cc5-8, Oral question

[Safe Streets for All](#) , HC Deb 17 May 2021 cc451-512

[A Brighter Future for the Next Generation](#), HC Deb 13 May 2021 cc294-378

[Draft Surrender of Offensive Weapons \(Compensation\) Regulations 2020](#), HC Deb 23 September 2020, Delegated Legislation Committee cc1-8

[Knife Crime](#), HL Deb 21 July 2020 cc2056-60, Private Notice Question

[Surrender of Offensive Weapons \(Compensation\) Regulations 2020](#), HL Deb 8 July 2020 cc1182-92

[Knife Crime](#) HC Deb 25 March 2019 cc 1-44WH

Parliamentary questions

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Baker, Mr Steve | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to reduce knife crime among young people through working with schools.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

This Government is committed to reducing serious violence, including knife crime, and prevent the tragedies affecting our communities. We are taking a whole system approach - this involves working with a wide range of partners to combat crime, including schools.

We have invested £105.5m over three years into to establish and develop 18 multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), which bring together key partners across health, education, policing, housing, and others to address the root causes of serious violence in the worst affected areas. These VRUs commission a range of interventions to intervene early and prevent crime, including close working with schools to support vulnerable young people, such as through mentoring programmes, sports-based interventions, and behavioural therapy. With an additional £30 million this year for ‘Grip’ funding, to bolster operational problem-solving police activity work, some forces are also carrying out interventions, engagement and education work in schools alongside the VRUs. We have also invested £200 million in early intervention and understanding what interventions work best to reduce violence, through the 10-Year Youth Endowment Fund (YEF). YEF’s funded projects ensure those most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives; and will provide robust evidence about the effectiveness of different interventions.

The Government also supports Operation Sceptre’s knife crime weeks of action conducted by police forces across England and Wales, which include knife crime awareness session in education establishments. In the last week of action beginning 26 April, police forces conducted 1,481 school engagement events.

In addition, in 2020 the National Police Chiefs’ Council published guidance to schools on ‘When to call the police’ which provides advice regarding incidents on schools and colleges premises if a potential crime has been committed. This covers weapons enabled crime and also how to identify vulnerable children. It should be read alongside DfE’s statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14 July 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 28163

Date tabled: 06 July 2021 | **Date for answer:** 08 July 2021 | **Date answered:** 14 July 2021

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Rosindell, Andrew | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help tackle the increase in knife crime in London since mid-May 2021.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

This government is committed to tackling the scourge of knife crime.

As covid-19 restrictions ease across the country, we are aware that there may be a rise in serious violence. We are closely monitoring the latest data and working with local partners and the police to ensure we are able to respond quickly to any changes in the situation. However, the very latest data from the Metropolitan Police Dashboard shows that the number of knife crime and gun crime incidents in April 2021 remained below the 2-year average.

We are taking a number of steps to tackle knife crime in London, including:

- Investing £21m in the London Violence Reduction Unit, which brings together key partners to tackle the root causes of violence;
- Investing in a targeted law enforcement response, including through £42m for the Met police to operate hotspot policing;
- Investing in early intervention through our £200m 10 year Youth Endowment Fund, which has provided 28 grants to date to the London area.

Alongside this, our Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will place a duty on public sector bodies to take a joined up approach to addressing serious violence as well as introduce Serious Violence Reduction Orders, which give the police the authority to stop and search known weapons carriers. We will also be piloting Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPO) which will help prevent further knife offending and divert those at risk away from being involved in knife crime. The KCPO Pilot will commence in July 2021 across the whole of the Metropolitan Area.

23 June 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 16038

Date tabled: 15 June 2021 | **Date for answer:** 17 June 2021 | **Date answered:** 23 June 2021

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Evans, Dr Luke | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of longer sentences on deterring people from carrying knives without good reason.

Answering member: Chris Philp | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Ministry of Justice

We understand the devastating impact knife crime has on victims and their families and are determined to do all we can to break the deadly cycle of violence that devastates the lives of individuals, families and communities. We are taking significant action to both prevent and respond to crimes involving weapons through the Serious Violence Strategy, the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders, the recruitment of 20,000 new police officers, and increasing stop and search powers.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, currently before Parliament, introduces Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs). These will give the police powers to make it easier to stop and search those already convicted of knife and offensive weapon offences. A person who is subject to an order will know that if they persist in carrying a weapon, there is a greater chance they will be searched, detected and arrested.

In respect of sentencing, deterrence is one of the purposes, but there are other important aims. These include public protection and a strong punitive element, to help make our streets and communities safer and to give victims confidence that justice has been served.

22 June 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 15407

Date tabled: 14 June 2021 | **Date for answer:** 16 June 2021 | **Date answered:** 22 June 2021

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Longhi, Marco | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of school age children linked with knife crime in (a) the UK and (b) Dudley North constituency.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

This Government is determined to turn the tide on knife crime in all areas, wherever it occurs.

Through the Serious Violence Fund (SVF), the Home Office has invested a total of £242 million over three years in the 18 police force areas most affected by serious violence. Over three years £105.5 million of the SVF has been invested in multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in the 18 areas, with

£10,110,000 allocated to the West Midlands PCC to develop the West Midlands VRU. VRUs bring together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the local drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them. The remaining £136.5 million of the SVF has been allocated to the same 18 police forces to fund a surge in police operational activity. West Midlands Police have been allocated £15,541,485.00 of this funding.

In addition to the Serious Violence Fund, we have invested £200 million in early intervention and prevention support initiatives over 10 years to support children and young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence, through the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF). Moreover, this government has awarded an extra £5 million towards the expedited development of a national Centre of Excellence (CofE) to help guide government investment and national policies. In total, 12 grantees in the West Midlands are in receipt of funding from all grant rounds.

Through the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts bill, we have also introduced legislation which will place new duties on a range of specified agencies across different sectors, such as local government, youth offending, and health and probation, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence.

In the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 we have introduced specific measures to address knife crime, including the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders to help the police target those most at risk of being drawn into serious violence, to set them on a more positive path.

21 June 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 15418

Date tabled: 14 June 2021 | **Date for answer:** 16 June 2021 | **Date answered:** 21 June 2021

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Mullan, Dr Kieran | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle knife crime.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

The Government is determined to crack down on the scourge of violence devastating our communities, and tackling violent crime, including knife crime, is a priority.

Violent crime can have devastating and long-lasting impacts on victims, families and communities. This is why the Home Office has invested over £136.5 million over three years (19/20 – 21/22) to support the police to take

targeted action in the 18 areas in England and Wales most affected by serious violence; £105.5m, over three years, in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) to tackle the root causes of violence; £200m over ten years in the Youth Endowment Fund for early intervention and prevention; and this year we announced an additional investment of up to £23 million for new early intervention programmes that will help stop young people from being drawn into violence.

Across England and Wales, we are recruiting 20,000 additional police officers and increasing the amount of funding available to the policing system for 2021/22 by up to £636 million, totalling £15.8 billion. 8,771 additional police officers have been recruited as part of the Police Uplift Programme at 31 March this year, all working to keep our communities safe.

We also continue to strengthen the law on knife crime and serious violence. The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 introduced Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPO). These preventative orders enable the courts to place positive intervention requirements as well as other measures including prohibition to carry a knife on individuals to help the police steer those most at risk away from serious violence and to set them on a more positive path.

In March the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill was introduced. The bill includes a duty on public sector bodies to take a joined-up approach to addressing serious violence; the requirement for local agencies to review the circumstances when an adult homicide takes place involving an offensive weapon; and Serious Violence Reduction Orders, which give the police the power to stop and search known knife and offensive weapons carriers.

10 June 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 7997

Date tabled: 26 May 2021 | **Date for answer:** 07 June 2021 | **Date answered:** 10 June 2021

[Knives: Sales](#)

Asked by: Wilson, Munira | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to require that knives sold in shops are kept locked in secure cabinets.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

During the passage of the Offensive Weapons Bill, we considered whether to make it a criminal offence for businesses to display a bladed product and whether shops should keep knives locked in secure cabinets. We concluded that we could achieve the same aim by working closely with retailers to

ensure that knives cannot be easily stolen in order to circumvent age verification processes.

We continue to work with retailers, local authorities and the police to send a clear message that retailers have a responsibility to sell and display bladed articles in a responsible manner. The Government are encouraging much stronger voluntary action in relation to displays through the set of voluntary commitments with major retailers to prevent the underage sales of knives. These commit retailers to having robust measures in place to ensure age verification and both appropriate display and access to knives in stores. Retailers also act to ensure customers and staff are reminded that knives are age restricted products and that all staff receive regular training. Since March 2016, 19 major retailers have joined the agreement, with some stopping the sale of single knives in their stores altogether.

We are keeping this work under review and we will work with retailers within the framework of the voluntary agreement on sales of knives to include stronger voluntary action on displays once we commence some provisions in the Offensive Weapons Act which were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

26 March 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 173177

Date tabled: 22 March 2021 | **Date for answer:** 24 March 2021 | **Date answered:** 26 March 2021

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Halfon, Robert | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent knife crime.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

This Government is determined to turn the tide on knife crime in all areas, wherever it occurs.

On 4 February 2021, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £636 million compared to 2020/21. Across England and Wales, we are also recruiting 20,000 additional police officers by the end of March 2023.

From 2019 to 2022, this government will have provided over £242 million, through the Serious Violence Fund (SVF), to address the drivers of serious violence at the local level and significantly bolster the police response in 18 Police Force areas most affected by serious violence across England and Wales.

We have also invested £200 million through the 10-Year Youth Endowment Fund to ensure those most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives.

We have also made it easier for the police to use enhanced stop and search powers and we have introduced Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs) in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill which will give the police powers to make it easier to stop and search those already convicted of knife and offensive weapon offences.

Through the PCSC bill, we have also introduced legislation which will place new duties on a range of specified agencies across different sectors, such as local government, youth offending, and health and probation, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence.

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 includes specific measures for knife offences, in particular making it an offence to possess certain offensive weapons in private, and stopping knives being sent to residential addresses after they are bought online, unless the seller has arrangements in place with the delivery company to ensure that the product would not be delivered into the hands of a person under 18. The measures on knives in the Act also include:

- changing the legal definition for threatening with an offensive weapon to make prosecutions more straightforward;
- banning the possession of a knife on a further education premises;
- updating the definition of a flick knife to reflect changing weapon designs;
- introducing Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) to help the police target those most at risk of being drawn into serious violence, to set them on a more positive path.

25 March 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 172977

Date tabled: 22 March 2021 | **Date for answer:** 25 March 2021 | **Date answered:** 25 March 2021

[Educational Institutions: Knives](#)

Asked by: Lockhart, Carla | **Party:** Democratic Unionist Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many knife possession orders have been issued in relation to (a) primary schools, (b) secondary schools and (c) higher educational establishments in the last five years.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

The Department does not hold data on the number of children found in possession of a knife at school. However, the School Snapshot Survey from winter 2019 showed that 29% of schools were actively dealing with knife crime as a safeguarding

issue: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-snapshot-survey-winter-2019>. Secondary schools were 4 times more likely to be actively dealing with knife crime than primary schools.

Schools and colleges have a duty and responsibility to protect pupils and staff. We support them with a range of guidance to help them fulfil their responsibilities, including advice on health and safety and school and college security. The school and college security guidance includes a suite of resources to assist schools and colleges with the development of policies and culture to help address a wide range of security related issues.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is now compulsory, and schools can build on the core content to address local issues such as gang activity and recognising and avoiding exploitative relationships. In serious violence hotspot areas, schools, alternative provision settings and colleges are working with police and health through Violence Reduction Units to run interventions to tackle serious youth violence.

08 March 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 158236

Date tabled: 24 February 2021 | **Date for answer:** 01 March 2021 | **Date answered:** 08 March 2021

[Offensive Weapons](#)

Asked by: Davies, Philip | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to bring into force the offence of threatening with an offensive weapon etc in a private place as provided for by section 52 of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Department:** Home Office

We intend to commence this measure, along with other measures provided for by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 relating to knives and corrosive products and substances, later this year. We paused commencement of the Act temporarily because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but we are working now to bring the Act fully in to force as soon as we can.

01 March 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 154889

Date tabled: 19 February 2021 | **Date for answer:** 23 February 2021 | **Date answered:** 01 March 2021

[Knives: Young People](#)

Asked by: Crosbie, Virginia | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to educate young people on the illegality of carrying knives without reasonable cause.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

It is vitally important that we prevent young people from being drawn into violent crime and carry knives in the first place. Raising awareness of the risks and consequences of carrying a knife is an important part of the Government's approach to knife crime prevention. And there are many sources of funding we have put in place to ensure this education exists for young people:

The Government has invested over £200 million specifically in early intervention and prevention initiatives to support children and young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence. The Youth Endowment Fund and their National Centre of Excellence are sharing knowledge and expertise with those working with vulnerable children and young people at risk of involvement in serious youth violence.

This funding is in addition to the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund which ran from 2018 – 2020 that directly funded awareness raising and education programmes, diversionary activities, tailored interventions, and programmes which aimed to cease offending or reoffending.

Locally we have set up Violence Reduction Units in 18 of the highest violence hotspots whose job it is to bring together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the drivers of serious violence, to help them to implement a long term, multi-agency, preventative approach, to stop violence from happening in the first place. We know that a number of these Units are funding education/awareness programmes.

11 January 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 134279

Date tabled: 06 January 2021 | **Date for answer:** 11 January 2021 | **Date answered:** 11 January 2021

[Knives: Safety](#)

Asked by: Slaughter, Andy | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 10 September 2020 to Question 85969 and 14 October 2020 to Question 100312, if she will take steps with knife (a) manufacturers and (b) retailers to change the design of kitchen knives to replace pointed ends with rounded ends.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Home Office

We know that knives are used for legitimate purposes by the vast majority of people. Bladed articles with pointed ends have legitimate uses and are often needed for a wide range of purposes, including as tools for work for instance in farming or fishing and in private such as in the household for use during cooking. While we are always ready to engage with manufacturers and retailers to help ensure public safety, it is important that the government strikes the right balance between allowing access to knives for legitimate reasons, with the need to protect the public from dangerous weapons. We believe the current legislation strikes the right balance. We will, however, continue to do everything we can to ensure that people do not carry dangerous weapons and commit violent crime in the first place.

This is why we have invested £176.5 million over two years in preventing serious violence in local communities and bolstering police capacity to respond to serious violent crimes when they do occur.

It is also why we have launched a consultation on new powers for the police to target those who have been convicted of knife related offences. We will also be piloting new Knife Crime Prevention Orders, introduced through the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. These new preventative orders will provide an additional tool for police to steer people away from serious violence.

22 October 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 103451

Date tabled: 14 October 2020 | **Date for answer:** 16 October 2020 | **Date answered:** 22 October 2020

Petitions

[Increase sentences relating to knife crime](#)

14 Dec 2020 | e-petitions | 563199

Government response: 29 June 2021

The government's top priority is to keep people safe. We understand the devastating impact knife crime has on victims and their families, and are determined to put a stop to violent offences that involve knives. It is essential that offenders serve sentences that reflect the severity of their crimes – helping to protect the public and giving victims confidence that justice has been served.

Parliament has provided courts with the powers they need to effectively deal with the range of offences and offenders which come before them. Where someone is actually harmed by a knife or offensive weapon, there are a range of offences that the person may be charged with, such as causing grievous bodily harm. These can result in lengthy sentences, including life imprisonment. For offenders aged 18 and over who bring a knife or another

weapon to the scene of a murder with the intention of using it, courts will consider a minimum term spent in custody of at least 25 years.

An individual convicted in the last 3 years of threatening with or possessing a knife or offensive weapon was more likely to receive a custodial sentence, and to receive a longer custodial sentence, than at any point in the last decade.

For being in possession of a knife or offensive weapon, the maximum penalty is 4 years' imprisonment. Over half (57%) of offenders cautioned or convicted of this offence for the first time received a custodial sentence in 2019 in comparison to a third (34%) ten years earlier. In 2015, we introduced minimum custodial sentences for repeat knife possession and offences that involve threatening with a weapon. Adults face a minimum of 6 months' imprisonment whilst young people aged 16 or 17 face a minimum 4-month Detention and Training Order. Since the introduction of the minimum custodial term people caught carrying a knife or offensive weapon for a second time are now more likely than ever before to receive a custodial sentence – in 2019, 86% of offenders received a custodial sentence for repeat possession offences.

When sentencing, the courts consider the full circumstances of the offence and offender and must follow any relevant sentencing guidelines produced by the independent Sentencing Council. The guidelines are clear that for any offence the use of a weapon will be treated as an aggravating factor meriting an increased sentence.

While judicial discretion will be retained, in the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill the government is amending the criteria for passing a sentence below the minimum term to seek to ensure that courts depart from the minimum sentence only in exceptional circumstances.

As an additional tool police will be able to use to help steer young people and adults away from knife crime and serious violence, the government introduced Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) through the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. Breaching an order can result in up to two years in prison. KCPOs will be piloted by the London Metropolitan Police.

In the PCSC Bill currently before Parliament the government has also introduced Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs). These will give the police powers to make it easier to stop and search those already convicted of knife and offensive weapon offences. A person who is subject to an order will know that if they persist in carrying a weapon, there is a greater chance they will be searched, detected and arrested.

Through the Prime Minister's Crime and Justice Task Force, the government has made it clear that the focus on enforcement must be matched with a focus on prevention and early intervention. To help drive the cross government strategic response to serious violence we are taking action across a range of services including children's social care, education, and

investing £200 million in a Youth Endowment Fund, to ensure those most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives. From 2019 to 2022, this government will have provided over £242 million, through the Serious Violence Fund, to address the drivers of serious violence at the local level and significantly bolster the police response in 18 police force areas most affected by serious violence across England and Wales.

Police funding is increasing and on 4 February 2021, the government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £636 million compared to 2020/21. Across England and Wales, we are also recruiting 20,000 additional police officers by the end of March 2023 – the biggest recruitment drive in decades.

Ministry of Justice

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Press releases

Home Office

[Ban on knives, firearms and offensive weapons comes into force](#)

14 July 2021

Home Office

[Knife Crime Prevention Orders begin in London](#)

7 July 2021

Home Office

[Serious Violence Reduction Orders to be piloted in 4 police forces](#)

16 March 2021

Home Office

[New surrender scheme starts to keep dangerous weapons off the streets](#)

10 December 2020

Home Office

[Government closes antique firearms loopholes to protect public](#)

9 November 2020

Home Office

[New stop and search powers for convicted knife criminals](#)

14 September 2020

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Further information

Home Office, [Government response to the consultation on guidance to support the application of Knife Crime Prevention Orders](#), 5 July 2021

Home Office, [Knife Crime Prevention Orders: Guidance – issued under section 30 of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019](#), 5 July 2021

Home Office, [The Government Response to the 2019 Youth Select Committee Report](#), 17 June 2021

Home Office, [Consultation on Serious Violence Reduction Orders Summary of Consultation Responses and Conclusion](#), 9 March 2021

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Crown Prosecution Service, [Offensive Weapons, Knives, Bladed and Pointed Articles](#), Updated 17 November 2020 (cps.gov.uk accessed 14.07.2021)

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Crown Prosecution Service, [Offensive Weapons, Knife Crime Practical Guidance](#), 10 September 2020 (cps.gov.uk accessed 14.07.2021)

Local Government Association, [Taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime: Case studies](#), July 2020

Keir Irwin-Rogers, Abhinay Muthoo and Luke Billingham, [Youth Violence Commission Final Report](#), Youth Violence Commission, July 2020

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[Youth Endowment Fund website](#)

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