

LOVING THE FLOW

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THE FLOWHESION FOUNDATION

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YOUNG PEOPLE AT EDEN BOYS VISIT THE KNIFE ANGEL

**KNIFE
CRIME
SPECIAL:**
Exploring knife crime
with students from
Eden Boys School,
Bolton



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**bolton
CVS**



The voice of

GREATER MANCHESTER'S

Cohesion-Conscious Youth



A Message from our *Guest Editor*

I was delighted to visit the Knife Angel from Eden Boys school, Bolton alongside with some of our pupils in November 2023.

The Knife Angel is a touring monument making its journey around the country to towns and cities that have nominated themselves to host it. It was in Bolton until 30th November. The British Ironwork Centre along with artist Alfie Bradley created the 27ft, 3.5-ton sculpture out of 100,000 confiscated knives from 43 Police forces across the UK.

The Knife Angel highlights the negative effects of violent behaviour and the critical need for change in our society. It also acts as a memorial for those whose lives have been lost as a result of these violent actions.

One student reflecting on seeing the sculpture stated, 'The Knife Angel just towers above you. It was shocking to look at first when you see each rusting blade. The messages engraved on its wings were very hard hitting too'.

Another student said 'I felt really sad about the intentions people had when they wanted to use them knives to cause harm to others. But the shape of the Angel made me think about forgiveness and grief of the victims and loved ones.

I thought it was really important to give young people the opportunity to see this moving sculpture first hand. I'm passionate about tackling knife crime and I'm working with our teachers, parents and wider partners in the community to ensure that our students are properly educated about the harms of carrying knives.

I am also pleased that students who attended that visit have worked on articles for this magazine.

Arshad

Arshad Ashraf
Principal / Eden Boys / Bolton

If you 'feel the flow' and want to get involved join the 'Flowhession Family' by emailing us at: admin@flowhessionfoundation.org.uk or connect with us at:



@flowhession

By Muhammed Tauha Siddiqui

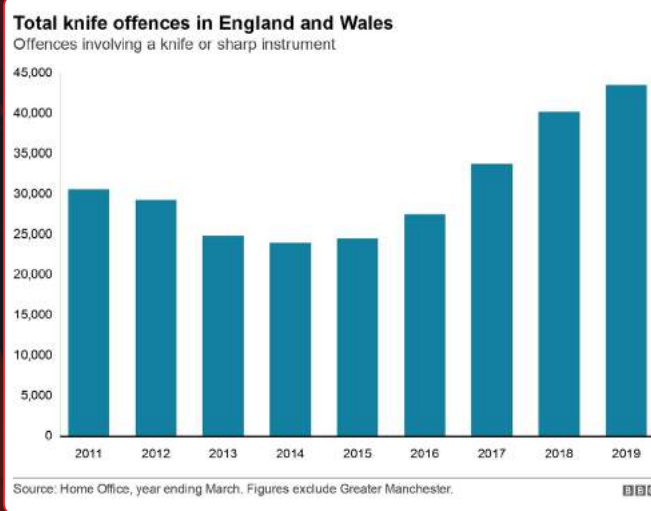
Knife Crime Facts and Stats

There's a clear upward trend in knife crime statistics over the last 10 years, with only a temporary dip likely due to the pandemic. However, the situation is even more worrying when considering a crucial factor: according to government sources, an estimated 38% of knife crimes go unreported. This means the true scale of the problem is likely significantly higher than what we think. There's another cause for concern: a decrease in police stop-and-search procedures. This decline is believed to be a contributing factor to the rise in knife crime. However, just because the police are not acting, that does not mean we should not act. But that begs the question...



What can we do?

Firstly, you should always make the right friends and be part of the right communities. As one aspect that might surprise you is the number of victims who know their attacker. While getting a precise figure is tricky – many victims are understandably hesitant to share details – evidence suggests a sizable portion of these incidents involve pre-existing relationships. Think rival gang members or even former friends experiencing a falling out.



This underscores the importance of building positive social circles and avoiding risky situations. But here is the crucial part: we cannot paint everyone with the same brush. While some victims (and perpetrators) might have connections to gangs or criminal activity, that is not the whole story. Many victims are innocent bystanders – simply caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. They pay the heaviest price for situations they have no control over. Contrary to widespread belief, most people actually solely carry knives for self-defense, which is still illegal. It is important to remember that most stabbings are not premeditated. People do not typically set out to stab someone. However, having a knife readily available during an escalating argument can lead to a violent outcome. The person with the knife might instinctively use it, even though they never intended violence (Not to justify the crime). According to the BCS, many of the “victims” who used a weapon in “self-defense” during an assault reported carrying it for that purpose.

#StopKnifeCrime

www.westyorkshire.police.uk/stopknifecrime

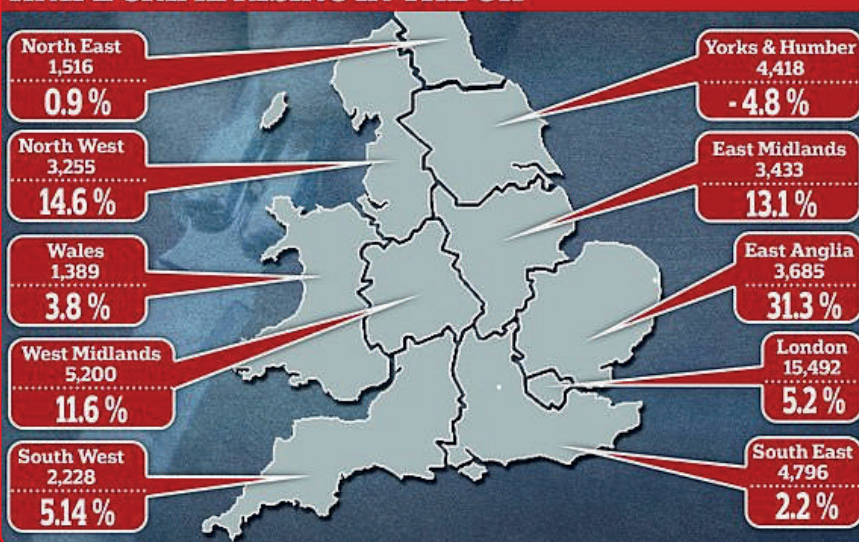
IF YOU CARRY A KNIFE,
YOU HAVE MORE CHANCE OF
GETTING STABBED YOURSELF.

KNIVES TAKE LIVES

If you carry a knife you risk being sent to prison and increase your chance of being seriously injured or killed



KNIFE CRIME RISING IN THE UK



And this is a positive feedback loop as if more people have knives, there will be more violence which will make more people feel unsafe and so more people will now have their own knives; that is why there has been a drastic increase in the number of women who now possess knives. However, it's crucial to avoid this trap. Carrying a knife is illegal, with a maximum sentence of four years in prison. Additionally, if you are in a dangerous situation and have a knife, your attacker could use it against you.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, most stabbings are not planned. People carry knives for protection, but these knives can escalate situations. If they were not carrying a knife in the first place, the situation might not have turned violent. The rising tide of knife crime in the UK is terrifying. It is clear there is no single answer, but it feels like people are reaching for knives for the wrong reasons. They may think it is protection, but the truth is, these weapons are more likely to spark a tough situation than fix it. Most stabbings are not planned, they just erupt in the heat of the moment. That is why we need to focus on prevention, not punishment.

By Fasial Hassan

The Rise of Knife Crime: A Global Epidemic

Knife crime is not confined to a single region—it's a global epidemic. In urban centers like London, youth violence involving knives has become alarmingly prevalent. The statistics are staggering, with a notable surge in incidents involving knives in recent years. The use of knives as weapons in criminal activities has escalated, posing a significant challenge to law enforcement and community safety. In the quiet of a bustling city, beneath the surface of ordinary life, lurks a haunting reality: knife crime. This menacing issue has permeated communities worldwide, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake. From shattered families to wounded spirits, the impact of knife crime resonates deeply, affecting individuals and society at large. In this magazine, we delve into the multifaceted effects of knife crime, shedding light on its far-reaching consequences.

Every **9 days**
a **teenager** in the UK
is **stabbed**

The Human Cost: Shattered Lives and Broken Dreams

Behind every statistic lies a human story. The victims of knife crime experience profound physical and emotional trauma. Families are torn apart by the loss of loved ones, and survivors bear scars—both visible and hidden—that alter the course of their lives forever. To illustrate, consider the story of Sarah, a young

professional whose brother was fatally stabbed in a senseless altercation. "His absence is a constant ache," she confides, underscoring the enduring grief that follows such tragedies.

**CARRYING A KNIFE
EARNS ME RESPECT**
UP TO FOUR YEARS IN PRISON

Communities in Crisis: Fear and Distrust

Knife crime breeds fear and distrust within communities. Once-vibrant neighborhoods become synonymous with danger, eroding the social fabric. Residents feel increasingly vulnerable, altering their daily routines to avoid potential threats. This climate of apprehension stifles community cohesion and undermines collective well-being.

Youth at Risk: Lost Potential and Unfulfilled Futures

Perhaps most troubling is the impact on young people—the future generation. Vulnerable youths, often drawn into knife crime due to peer pressure or lack of opportunities, face a stark reality. Education takes a back seat to survival instincts, and dreams of a better future give way to mere survival. The cycle perpetuates as disenfranchised youth seek validation and protection in the wrong places.



by Jesse Short

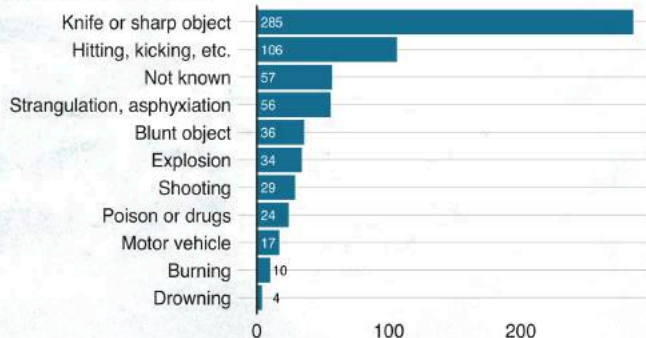
Visiting the Knife Angel in Bolton

In November 2023, the knife angel came to Bolton. This made a huge impact on many people in Bolton due to its presence in the town centre. Many Youth groups, schools, and other local organisations visited the angel in order to understand its message. Eden Boys School visited the structure and had many interesting opinions on the statue and it's meaning. Bolton Council Leader.

Sentencing statistics from the Ministry of Justice shows that in the year ending March 2023, there were just over 19,000 cautions and convictions made for possession of a knife or offensive weapon. Juveniles (aged 10-17) were the offenders in around 18% of cases.

A record number were killed with a knife or sharp object

Number of homicides



Source: Office for National Statistics

BBC

Nick Peel said, "we have incidents here, as does the rest of the country, and this is a very powerful message to send out that knife crime devastates lives." This shows the level of impact the knife angel has on communities'

Overall, the knife angel has made a huge impact in terms of being an inspiration for combatting knife crime, as well as violence in general. One large reason for this is that some knives on the wings of the angel had personalised messages carved into them, which helped people to understand the sculptures message and remember those lost to knife



crime. It also helped many to truly understand the problem of knife crime, as the memorials in the wing helped show how personal this issue is to many people. In conclusion, the Knife Angel is an incredibly powerful statue which has made a huge impact both in Bolton, and throughout England.

I believe knife crime is a huge problem in today's society. Thousands of people have been affected by knife crime and it is sadly affecting more every day. Despite this, I believe that knife crime rates can be brought down, and people should do as much as they can to help combat the issue.



By Muhammed Amaar

KNIVES and the LAW

Which Knives are Illegal to Possess?

As a general rule, it's best not to carry around any type of object that could be perceived as a weapon. However, there are a specific number of knives that are deemed illegal if they're found in your possession.

These include:

- stiletto
- switchblades
- throwing knives
- folding knives with more than one cutting edge
- folding knives with an overall length of more than 28 cm when deployed
- butterfly knives
- gravity knives
- disguised knives
- push daggers



What are the Knife Crime Sentencing Guidelines?

The strict and swift action toward knife crime is seen most within the sentencing guidelines, so much so that if a person is convicted of a second offence of possession of a knife, they will face an immediate prison sentence of between 6 months and 4 years.

The variations in the time frame are often due to the sentencing guidelines focusing on an assessment of culpability and harm, along with any aggravating or mitigating factors.

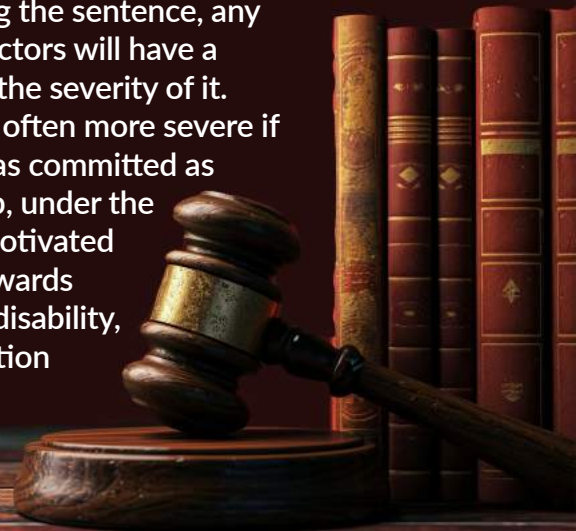
Culpability described how responsible the accused was for the knife crime offence, along with the type of offensive weapon or bladed article they had in their possession.

Harm is used to measure the type and amount of damage that was risked or caused against the victim/s. Harm also looks into where the offence allegedly took place, as if it was in a location where vulnerable people are, it would indicate more harm was caused (such as a school or elderly home.)

When deciding the sentence, any aggravating factors will have a big impact on the severity of it. Sentences are often more severe if the offence was committed as part of a group, under the influence or motivated by hostility towards race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or identity.

What are the sentences for carrying a knife and threatening with a knife in the uk?

Unfortunately, there is no straightforward answer when it comes to sentencing as there is a huge range of factors that need to be considered. Parliament has set the maximum penalty for any offence, whether it involves carrying a knife or threatening with a knife. For the possession of a weapon, the maximum sentence is four years in custody. Threatening another person with a weapon will land the guilty offender in custody for a minimum of six months, or a maximum of four years.





HELP AND SUPPORT:

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE

We don't mean people who are happy all the time – we mean the ones that are a force for good in your life. Your friends should never pressure you into doing something you don't want to do.

PLAN AHEAD

You may be put in a position where someone is trying to force you to carry a knife. Being prepared with a way to say no before you're put on the spot could save you from spiralling into a dangerous situation.

THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU GO

You probably know about the places in town or near your home or school that have a lot of conflict or violence. Stay away from them. If you're not there, you can't get caught up in whatever's happening.

FIND A NEW FOCUS

Whether it's a creative activity like making music, or something physical like boxing or football, finding something you enjoy doing will not only help you avoid dangerous situations, but you'll be able to build new skills, meet different people, and pave the way for your bright future.

SUPPORT LINKS

There are lots of people out there to help and support you. Take a look at the below for more:

- The Ben Kinsella Trust is one of the leading anti-knife crime charities in the UK, helping to create a society where no one suffers the loss of a life to knife crime.
<https://benkinsella.org.uk>
- Childline offers a safe and secure place for you to talk. They can help you with knife-related advice or any other worries you may have. **Childline: 0800 1111**
- The Mix has advice on what to do if you feel you need to carry a knife.
<https://www.themix.org.uk>
- No Knives Better Lives offers practical support and information on the effects of knife crime.
<https://www.noknivesbetterlives.com>

DON'T BE AFRAID TO APPROACH YOUR TEACHER, COUNSELLOR, PASTORAL SUPPORT LEAD OR MENTOR AT SCHOOL.

