

Committee: Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 18 January 2012

Agenda item: 6

Wards: All

Subject: Discouraging the carrying and use of knives amongst Young People

Lead officer: Keith Shipman

Lead member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Keith Shipman

Recommendations:

- A. That scrutiny note the contents of this report and endorse the proposal for a multi-agency action plan to further strengthen partnership activity to address knife crime which will cut across CYP and Safer Partnership structures.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To outline the current data on knife crime in Merton and to review current action to reduce knife crime.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Knife crime is never far from the news. Sadly in Merton over the last 6 months we have had three high profile stabbing incidents:
- 2.2. There have been three serious incidents involving Merton residents, two on borough and one in central London. These events have involved both adults (18+) and young people.
- 2.3. They pose the question for us: are these sad, high profile incidents one off's or do they show us a deeper trend showing a rise in knife carrying and the use of knives?
- 2.4. **National Research**
- 2.5. Lemos and Crane were funded in 2004 by City Bridge Trust to undertake and publish the seminal Fear and Fashion report on knife crime. This report highlights the reasons why young people and young adults carry knives. The reasons are complex and interdependent, but can be summarised as follows:
- 2.6. Carrying knives provide status and cause fear in others, so are seen by some adults and young people as an effective weapon where they intend to scare, harass or rob. This is particularly true when this criminal activity is undertaken in groups. Peers will support/ pressure each other to be armed/

“tooled up”. Thus carrying weapons can be seen as a fashion for a small group of young people.

- 2.7. Conversely and connectedly, if young people are asked why they carry weapons they will cite fear as the main reason, that they need to protect themselves. This is particularly true if they have been a victim of crime or had a brother or sister who has been a victim.
- 2.8. Young people nationally and in Merton’s young residents survey report fear of crime as their highest concern at 40% which is at similar levels to the rest of London and has been for at least the last two years.
- 2.9. Lemos and Crane also noted that fear and fashion work within specific community issues: living in a culture of fear and violence; reluctance to report crime to the police; not trusting that the police are able to keep young people safe; peer pressure to offending in groups and gangs.
- 2.10. In discussion with local experts we would add financial gain to the above list. Some adults and young people are attracted to a life style of quick money through crime and specifically drug dealing. This “money making” requires threat and status of which weapons are seen as part of that world.
- 2.11. The report also found that knife carrying cut across boys and girls (however higher amongst boys in the same way as youth offending in general is higher amongst boys), and being excluded from school was also associated with a higher likelihood of knife carrying.
- 2.12. **Merton picture with regard to services for children and young people**
- 2.13. Merton Youth Justice Service (YJS) run an anti knife crime programme (KPPP: see re interventions below 2.21). Small numbers of highly targeted young people undertake this programme who are on orders for carrying or using knives and weapons – they complete pre and post questionnaires:
- 2.14. 86% knew someone that had been a victim of knife crime or had been the victim themselves; 57% knew someone who had been a victim of gun crime
- 2.15. 57% stated that they carried a weapon to feel safe; 71% stated they felt the police were unable to protect them from knife crime
- 2.16. Prior to the intervention programme 57% stated they felt better education either in school or for those on the streets would help reduce knife crime and only 14% stated they would report a knife crime to the police. This changes post the programme to 100% now stated they felt better education either in school or for those on the streets would help reduce knife crime 80% now stated they would report a knife crime to the police. The numbers on the schemes are small, but the change is positive.
- 2.17. These findings support the findings in Lemos and Crane that fear and trust in the police are key issues for these young people. This is a very small sample as it is based on those convicted of knife crimes – however it is very positive messages that in the group attitudes do change. Feedback direct from the young people also highlighted that they felt they knew ways to solve issues without knives and would think twice now.
- 2.18. In Merton the number of young people convicted of knife crimes are low, as are the number of knife related incidents. Numbers fell for 2 years, but now

appear to be rising. This is in the context of serious crime falling overall but a slight rise in serious youth crime. Thus crime against young people using knives appears to be rising slightly after a fall last year, back to levels of a year ago. Merton's knife crime is mainly a male crime and is related to robbery of the person. Offenders are likely to live in a few wards of the borough, particularly Cricket Green. Knife related Incidents are more likely to occur in Figges Marsh ward from Mitcham Town centre up to Tooting. Both White and Black young people are convicted of knife crime and both are 44% of the knife offences - however the black population is lower so Black young people are disproportionately represented. (See Appendix 1)

2.19. Knife incidents are more common over 16s and school based incidents are rare and do not appear to be rising based on exclusion data. Schools do use Permanent Exclusions to deal with knife possession incidents. (See appendix 1)

2.20. **What is being done to prevent knife crime**

2.21. Merton's Youth Justice Service can ensure that any order for a young person involved in knife crime includes activity to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending. If young people are found guilty of knife crime incidents, or are linked to knife crime through a prevention service, they can be referred on to the KPPP programme run in conjunction with the youth service. If knife issues are part of their order, then they must attend. KPPP stands for Knife Prevention and Protection Programme. This was a pilot programme originally funded by Youth Justice Board. Merton YJS is now funding this from within council resources; it is no longer mandatory on YOTs, but Merton is still implementing the programme. The programme was originally designed as six sessions long, but was developed for the last programme to eight sessions. Six Core sessions include:

- Attitudes to knife crime and gang culture;
- The Law around weapons – (police come in and answer questions);
- Realities of Prison Life
- The Health Consequences of being attacked or attacking someone with a weapon using Paramedics;
- Victims - often a mother of a victim;
- Conflict Management and Positive Futures – (Role Plays and discussion). The two additional sessions Include: Riots – (difference between most recent riots and Brixton riots, questions around money being so important); Positive Futures – where they can go from here – info about jobs/colleges, create a plan for where they want to be). The YJS has run the programme 5 times since May 2010 and 18 young people completed the programme. They have had good outcomes from groups, including around 85% of those who completed the pre and post evaluation showed improved knowledge of the law around weapons and in the consequences of knife crime with regards to health and victims. (see above 2.13)

2.22. The Police deploy tactics to interrupt and stop the carrying of weapons. The strongest tactics are stop and search and the enhanced powers of a section

60 stop and search area – when they have reason to believe crime may occur. Stop and Search is controversial, as it is an effective deterrent ensuring that young people feel that they may get stopped and arrested if carrying a weapon – however if badly carried out it can alienate young people who feel victimised by frequent stops. This alienation from the police can make them less likely to trust to the police, less likely to report crime and so more likely to carry a weapon as they feel police do not make them feel safe. An independent monitoring group oversee Stop and Search. The membership of this group is currently being refreshed.

- 2.23. Stop and search and the principles behind the conduct of using the power are contained within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, specifically with the Codes of Practice for Code A. Standard Operating Procedures, (SOPs) exist for all aspects of stop and search including a bespoke SOP for the use of screening arches. An overriding SOP entitled 'Principles for Stop and Search' details the conduct expected of an officer when conducting searches. This includes a specific section on children and young persons. Initial training is provided during probationer training for all new recruits. This includes s.61 recommendations. Officers receive written guidance in their 'white notes' and engage in 'role playing' scenarios. Further guidance is provided in officer safety training where tactics and expected standards of professional behaviour are incorporated. This includes constant reminders of the GOWISELY mnemonic that assists officers in ensuring that the correct information is provided before a search is commenced. GOWISELY stands for: G - Grounds for the search; O Object of search - What the officer is searching for; W- Warrant Card if not in uniform; I – Identity - The officers name ...(except in the case of enquiries linked to the investigation of terrorism, or otherwise where the officer reasonably believes that giving his or her name might put him or her in danger, in which case a warrant or other identification number shall be given); S - Station to which attached; E - Entitlement to a copy of the search form (form 5090); L - The legal search power being exercised; Y - 'You' must tell the person stopped that they are being detained for the purpose of a search. There are regular initiatives training is provided for all officers e.g., Streetcraft conferences, talks from Professional Standards and Civil Actions.
- 2.24. Police tactics against knives and weapons has focused recently on knife arch operations at transport hubs. They have also monitored the bus routes on which more crime is committed and prioritised these for Safer Transport Team patrols. Additionally, they are increasingly conducting weapons sweeps in areas of known concern, as they know that offenders are secreting weapons in easily accessible areas rather than carrying them. They have also been running Operation Protect which targets resources into a areas surrounding schools and areas where school children congregate during the period after school closure in the afternoon. It was this operation that saw the CCTV van in Wimbledon Town Centre during the recent stabbing, which provided crucial footage to secure the early identification of the offenders. Tactics are adapted based on crime trends and intelligence locally.
- 2.25. Building trust, which is essential if young people are to feel safe, involves young people meeting Police officers and getting to know them. Merton has

a strong tradition of school based police officers in most of our secondary schools and many Safe Neighbourhood teams have delivered workshops in Youth Centres about crime and safety. This work is essential and needs to reach out to those most likely not to report or trust the police and be an ongoing process involving young people and all parts of the Police.

- 2.26. Additionally the police can deploy search arches – these portable arches have been placed outside schools and colleges and send two messages – that the institution doesn't tolerate knife carrying and that they work with the police to stop it. This may make people feel safer and so less likely to carrying knives defensively.
- 2.27. Schools can run a range of Personal, Social and Health education programmes that may include anti – weapon carrying messages. The content of these programmes is decided on a school by school basis.
- 2.28. The Youth Service and Schools use search wands. These too send the message that weapons are not tolerated and a venue is safe/ or this young person is not carrying a weapon.
- 2.29. One of the effects of the above search methods is that there is some evidence that young people may not carry knives - but rather place them in an area for protection if required. Intelligence based weapons sweeps of areas are carried out by the Police to discover knives in an area. These have been carried out in Merton with some success and show that simply preventing carrying does not prevent knife crime.
- 2.30. The Youth Service runs an education programme in schools and youth settings called STABB (students and teachers against bullets and blades) It was widely delivered in schools when previous gang issues were high and is starting to be delivered again in the SMART centre in the new year. It is a shorter version in one session of the KPPP programme. It has led to knives being handed in. It is a significant time commitment for the staff and schools and therefore it is not a systematic rolling programme.
- 2.31. These programmes have been included in parenting programmes when this is an issue for these parents, however there is not a significant parents anti knife group in Merton unlike in some London Boroughs.
- 2.32. The Youth Service key workers will also counsel young people suspected of Knife carrying to trying and reduce the reason for their fear or challenge their views. These two programmes are based on the key relationships and credibility of the staff with the targeted young people.
- 2.33. Weapons amnesties and knife bins have been used by police – additionally trading standards regularly test purchase for knife sales. However most knives used are kitchen knives or Stanley knives brought from the family home.
- 2.34. Multi agency working is key to identifying the most at risk young people and agreeing what interventions are most likely to be effective. A Monthly multi agency group led by the Police and Youth Inclusion called Offender Management Panel – coordinates interventions, and anti social behaviour tactics, including police deployment to target those most high risk to others.
- 2.35. **What does the research suggest that we should be doing?**

- 2.36. City Bridge Trust followed up the Lemos and Crane report by funding and evaluating some example knife crime reduction projects. The evaluations of the projects were inconclusive, as they didn't target sufficient young people who have used knives. However the projects did conclude that for any project to be successful in reducing knife crime they must be targeted at the correct group and include three key elements: **Good quality staff**: this is essential to establishing rapport with young people and credibility with partners; **Peer influence**: this can help establish credibility in young people; **A 'whole systems' approach**: the range of influences on young people's behaviour, including the family and the peer group.
- 2.37. **Proposed Actions**
- 2.38. It is proposed that a multi agency Knife crime plan is developed involving the police, youth justice, youth service (including the voluntary sector youth services) schools and colleges. This plan would build on the successes of current activity to reduce knife crime, but coordinate it better. The development of a parent led group would be positive in Merton – however this would have to grow and be community led. One area where new work will be proposed is to develop some youth led anti knife campaign targeted at those most likely to carry knives. This action plan will be taken to the Youth Crime prevention group, Secondary Headteachers Behaviour and Attendance panel and be overseen by the Youth Crime Executive Group, which brings together the statutory partners for Youth Justice services.
- 2.39. Base lines for success are problematic. We cannot survey young people to find out the level of knife carrying. We know how many young people are arrested and on orders – we can also measure the level of concern about crime that young people have these two may be crude proxy measures for fear and fashion in relation to knives.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. No plan is produced and current action continues as normal.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Data collected from the Youth Justice Service, Merton Police and Virtual Behaviour Service. Discussions on Gangs and Knives in Merton – youth workers, youth justice, police. The groups listed will be consulted with in production of the plan. Targeted young people will be involved in the production of a campaign to effect change with young people

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The action plan will be completed by end of February and implemented until December 2012 when it will be reviewed.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The action plan may have financial implications and some parts of the plan may only be realisable if additional funding is found through the voluntary and community sector. This will be clear in the plan and will affect timescales.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Carrying knives and using them to threaten or injure is illegal. The intention of this report and the action plan will be to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Many areas of crime and disorder effect the denial of individuals rights for the safety of the group. Equally disproportionality is evident in the number of black young people on orders for knife crime. More of the young people convicted also live in economically poorer parts of Merton. Any actions taken in response must be designed with the intention of redressing this by reducing the carrying of knives by these groups – thus any actions must be targeted to prevent and should not be generic and generalist. Much of knife crime stems from young people’s fear of others – especially when it is related to gangs and cross border issues. These issues have long histories. If practical and safe to do so we will endeavour to work cross border with young people to reduce the arguments and fear, which can lead to violence. Additionally all work to reduce bullying and help give young people the skills to problem solve and get along with each other is helpful.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The aim of the action plan is to reduce crime and disorder as stated above.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. All work with targeted young people involves some risk and staff need to be aware of what risks they are taking. Key to reducing risk is the trust that the young people have with the adults working with.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Youth Justice Statistics
- Crime statistics
- Exclusions statistics

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. *Link to Lemos and Crane report*
<http://www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/fearandfashion/index.php?id=201623>

Appendix 1

Knife crime offenders by ward of address over 3 years

	WEST BARNES	POLLARDS HILL	WIMBLEDON PARK	CRICKET GREEN	GRAVENEY	COLLIERS WOOD	LAVENDER FIELDS	TRINITY	RAVENSBURY	ABBAY	LONGTHORNTON	ST.HELLIER	FIGG'S MARSH	OOB	Total
2008/9	1	3	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
2009/10	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	12
2010/11	0	2	0	6	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	1	1	1	20
2011/12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	Part year
	2.2%	13.3%	4.4%	28.9%	2.2%	2.2%	13.3%	2.2%	11.1%	2.2%	11.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	

Knife crime offenders by age of offender

age	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
2008/9	0	2	0	2	4	3	2
2009/10	2	3	2	2	1	2	0
2010/11	0	1	1	4	7	7	0
2011/12 (part year)		1	2	1		1	
	4.4%	13.3%	6.6%	17.7%	26.7%	26.7%	4.4%

Knife crime offenders by gender

Gender	male	Female
2008/9	13	0
2009/10	12	0
2010/11	19	1

Knife crime offenders by ethnicity

	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	WHITE	OTHER
2008/9	2	4	0	7	0
2009/10	0	5	1	6	0
2010/11	2	11	0	7	0
	4.4%	44.4%	2.2%	44.4%	0

Numbers of those arrested and found guilty of knife related offences are between 12 and 20 under 18s in Merton per year. Thus number has risen over the last two years. This may show an increase in knife crime or a greater success in arrest and convictions. Approximately a third of all young people convicted of knife crime lived in Cricket Green Ward. Pollards Hill, Lavender, Longthornton and Ravensbury wards all have some young people convicted of knife crimes. Conviction for knife crime is more common for 16/17 year olds. (note most 18 year olds will convicted as adults so will not appear in these figures) Convictions are much higher for males than females. Black young people are disproportionately represented in convictions.

School exclusions for Knife related incidents

Knife related incidents in schools are rare. When young people bring knives into school or are seen with them on buses young people these are reported to staff and pupils are excluded / removed from the school site. The following figures show the number of permanent exclusions initiated for Knife related incidents. All are in secondary schools. Some will involve weapons brought to school, however others will be the use of scissors or a craft knife legitimately in school as a threat to others.

2009/10 - 6 incidents: 3 male 3 female year 8 , 9 , 10

2010/11 – 6 incidents: all male year 7 , 9 , 10

Ethnicity

Total of 11 pupils over 2 years:

1 Black African

6 White British

2 Black other

1 White other

2 Asian Other

On small numbers there is no issue of disproportionality in school exclusions related to knife incidents in schools.

Police crime data related to knives

Most Serious Violence (not necessarily with a weapon or involving young people) is falling for the third year. In 2009/10 there were a total of 186 incidents which fell to 130 in 2010/11 and 71 by Nov 11 - thus the rate has fallen from 0.5 incidents per day to 0.29.

Most Serious Violence - Homicide and Child Destruction, Attempted Murder, Wounding or other act endangering life, GBH (Part), Causing Death by Dangerous/Careless/Inconsiderate Driving, Causing Death by Aggravated Vehicle Taking

Most serious youth violence (which is measured by the number of serious includes where young people are victims also fell from 2009 – 11. In 2009/10 there were 146 incidents – this fell to 115 in 2010/11. In 2011/12 however we have seen a rise == whereas the rate per day was 0.32 incidents per day it is now 0.37.

Serious Youth Violence - Any offence of Most Serious Violence, Gun Crime or Knife Crime, where the victim is aged 1-19. This measure counts the number of victims of offences, rather than the number of offences.

Knife crime (adults and young people where a knife is intimidated, not necessarily seen) Again from 2009 – 11 we have seen a fall and are now seeing a rise. In 2009/10 there were 239 incidents which fell slightly to 223. To November 2011 we have 179 which is rise in rate from 2010/11 for 0.61 to 2011/12 to 0.79. Across this year knife incidents were high in April then fell, but have been rising three months to November.

Knife Crime - Any offence of Murder, GBH, ABH, selected other serious violence offences, Rape, Sexual Assault or Robbery where a knife/sharp instrument has been used or intimidated (victim convicted).

Merton police undertook a detailed analysis of knife crime data from 2004 – 09 to give them a significant enough data set to understand. This looked at 119 offences of all ages. Significant findings from this analysis were:

Major class	Offences	%
Robbery	75	63%
Violence Against The Person	43	36%
Sexual Offences	1	1%
Total	119	100%

Minor class	Offences	%
Personal Property	69	58%
Assault With Injury	20	17%
Grievous Bodily Harm	20	17%
Business Property	6	5%
Attempted Murder	3	3%
Rape	1	1%
Total	119	100%

All offences major and minor.

Ward	Offences	%
Figges Marsh	20	17%
Pollards Hill	14	12%
Cricket Green	10	8%
Longthornton	10	8%
Ravensbury	10	8%
Graveney	8	7%
Colliers Wood	6	5%
Lavender Fields	6	5%
Wimbledon Park	6	5%
Abbey	5	4%
Merton Park	5	4%
Hillside	4	3%
St Helier	4	3%
Trinity	4	3%
West Barnes	4	3%
Cannon Hill	2	2%
Dundonald	1	1%
Total	119	100%

Of the 69 minor personal robbery offences involving weapons:

Personal robbery by ward	Offences	%
Figges Marsh	15	22%
Pollards Hill	8	12%
Graveney	6	9%
Longthornton	6	9%
Ravensbury	6	9%
Cricket Green	5	7%
Abbey	4	6%
Merton Park	4	6%
Cannon Hill	2	3%
Colliers Wood	2	3%
Hillside	2	3%
Lavender Fields	2	3%
St Helier	2	3%
Wimbledon Park	2	3%
Dundonald	1	1%
Trinity	1	1%
West Barnes	1	1%
Total	69	100%

Historical Police data shows significant knife crime linked to robbery of the person

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