

HILLINGDON'S KNIFE CRIME REDUCTION PLAN

Relevant Board Member(s)	Councillor Phillip Corthorne
Organisation	London Borough of Hillingdon
Report author	Dan Kennedy, Jacqui Robertson, Bill Hickson, Community Safety Team
Papers with report	Appendix 1 - Knife Crime & Serious Violence Table of Actions 2019 - 2020.

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	A local response to knife crime, to inform the Board of the multi agency actions being taken in Hillingdon to reduce knife crime as detailed in the Knife Crime and Serious Violence Plan 2019-20.
Contribution to plans and strategies	Hillingdon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021
Financial Cost	There is no direct cost arising from the recommendation set out in this report.
Ward(s) affected	All

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Health and Wellbeing Board acknowledges and endorses the multi agency work being taken in relation to knife crime.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

Since 2008, knife crime has been defined as any offence that satisfies both of the following criteria:

- Is classified as an offence of homicide, attempted murder, assault with intent to cause harm, assault with injury, threats to kill, sexual offences (including rape) and robbery; and
- Where a knife or sharp instrument has been used to injure, used as a threat, or the victim was convinced a knife was present during the offence.

Knife possession offences have been defined as:

- Having an article with blade or point in a public place (including school);
- Threatening with a blade or sharply pointed article in a public place (including school);
- Possession of offensive weapon;

- Using someone to look after an offensive weapon; and
- Threatening with an offensive weapon.

Across London, overall, during the periods July 2017-July 2019, knife crime levels have decreased, there is supportive data to demonstrate that:

- in the 12 months overall in London during the period July 2017-July 2019, crime has decreased by 0.94%.
- in the London Borough of Hillingdon, crime has increased by 3.78% over the same period.
- in comparison, when looking at the other two boroughs that make up our West Area Basic Command Unit (Ealing and Hounslow), there have been increases in knife crime of 5.71% and 3.21% respectively.

Over the last decade, there have been peaks, troughs and a spike again in knife crime across London Boroughs. It is clear that knife crime has a detrimental effect to the health and wellbeing of all, causing fear, anxiety and trauma to both victims, their families and the wider community as a whole due to the direct effects caused by persons that carry and use knives.

Through the London Knife Crime Strategy, that is the Greater London Authorities comprehensive plan of partnership action to tackle the immediate threat to safety posed by knife crime in London, there are six action strands included, those being:

- Targeting lawbreakers
- Offering ways out of crime
- Keeping deadly weapons off our streets
- Protecting and educating young people
- Standing with communities, neighbourhoods and families against knife crime
- Supporting victims of knife crime

These action strands are mirrored in Hillingdon's Community Safety Partnership Knife Crime and Serious Violence Plan 2019/20, detailed below.

The West Area Police are reporting that a reduction in robberies and domestic abuse will have a significant impact on decreasing the number of knife crime offences. In addition, as gang or group offending contain a higher proportion of young victims and serious injuries suffered, it can be referred to as a high harm aspect of knife crime, even though it may not be considered high in volume.

Police initiatives such as "Operation Honey Badger" are currently in place to tackle knife and violent crime. "Operation Honey Badger" is an ongoing commitment which includes monthly days of action including executing search warrants, increasing the use of intelligence led stop and search, identifying outstanding suspects, delivering crime prevention awareness, test purchase operations and conducting weapon sweeps. In addition "Knife Arches" have been used at mainline and underground stations, shopping centres and schools across the Borough.

The Police response to robbery is currently in the form of "Operation Catalyst", this operation is a multi-stranded approach to tackle robberies (both knife and non-knife related) through both enforcement and prevention.

Key findings of a recent Knife Crime Analysis undertaken by the Police shows that in Hillingdon, there were slightly more robberies (50%, 142) than violence (49%, 137).

- The data shows that over one third (34%, 46) of reports for violence, were in relation to domestic abuse.
- Gang or group offending accounted for 12% of violent incidents and 11% of robberies.
- 22% of injuries suffered by victims of gang or group offending were serious.
- Money and phones were the most common property type stolen during robberies.

The Knife Crime & Serious Violence Strategic Group which includes officers from the Council and Police, this Group reports to the Director Housing, Environment, Education Performance and Health and Wellbeing. The Group meets on a monthly basis to monitor the progress of actions listed in the Community Safety Partnership Knife Crime and Serious Violence Plan 2019/20. Actions are grouped under the following themes:

- Governance.
- Targeting Lawbreakers (Enforcement and criminal justice response to knife crime).
- Keeping Deadly Weapons Off Our Streets (Addressing the accessibility and availability of knives).
- Protecting And Educating Young People (Recognising the importance of prevention and working alongside schools).
- Standing With Communities, Neighbourhoods and Families Against Knife Crime.
- Supporting Victims Of Knife Crime (Ensuring that improving support to victims is at the heart of a holistic response).
- Offering Ways Out Of Crime (Recognising that young people should be offered interventions which help them move away from criminality).

There are a total of 42 actions within the plan that are currently all on track to be completed by March 2020. These actions are detailed in appendix 1 of this report.

The Hillingdon Community Safety team are instigating a number of additional actions that are connected Knife Crime & Serious Violence. Officers have commenced a wide ranging "mapping project" looking at the use and supply of controlled drugs and psychoactive substances. This work will involve gathering information from various internal teams and external agencies so that we can fully understand the size of the problem, for example the types of controlled drugs and psychoactive substances being used/supplied in the Borough; the locations in the Borough where controlled drugs and psychoactive substances are being used/supplied; known user/supplier profiles, links to other crimes including Knife Crime and Serious Violence. The outcomes will provide evidence to target interventions in areas and with groups having the highest needs.

Community Engagement events are being held to raise public confidence in the Police. These events are being run monthly with ward Safer Neighbourhood Teams taking a lead role, events include weapons sweeps in close proximity of a school, educational or other facility known to be frequented by young people.

The Hillingdon Community Safety team has facilitated a programme of partnership work with the Police to address incidents of serious anti-social behaviour in the Joel Street area of Northwood Hills that involve groups of young person's causing alarm and distress to local residents and traders. This work has culminated with officers working with the management of a local fast food outlet that has been identified as the central gathering point for the young person's, gathering intelligence, engagement with the young person's and the Police undertaking direct enforcement for drug, weapons and other such offences.

Financial Implications

There are no direct finance implications related to this report, ongoing programmes currently exist within the service and appropriate budgets are available.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

Reassurance that relevant agencies are working together taking a multi strand approach to tackle Knife Crime and resulting consequences.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

No consultation is required at this stage due to this report being information concerning local response to Knife Crime.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Hillingdon Council Corporate Finance comments

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and confirm that there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation.

Hillingdon Council Legal comments

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.