



Nottinghamshire Youth Commission:

Knife Crime Roadshow Report

July 2019

**LEADERS
UNLOCKED**

YC:UK
YOUTH COMMISSION



Introduction



The Nottinghamshire Youth Commission was established in 2015 with funding from the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Paddy Tipping.

The Youth Commission is a peer-led project made up of **30 active members from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences**. The Commission enables young people living in Nottinghamshire aged 14-25 to have a voice on issues around policing and crime. The project supports and informs the PCC to make changes for young people living in Nottinghamshire.

Over the past four years, the Youth Commission has tackled a number of priorities that young people feel are issues in Nottinghamshire, including: Relationships with the Police; Hate Crime; Sexual Offences; and Stop and Search. The Youth Commission has also developed a legacy film and workshop on Stop and Search, *Know Your Rights*.

Following from a successful roadshow in 2017/2018 with *Know Your Rights*, the Youth Commission decided to develop a new roadshow around a prevalent issue facing young people today, which is knife crime.

Using a similar approach to that of *Know Your Rights*, we identified the following aims for the knife crime roadshow:

- **Increase awareness** of knife crime and the consequences, both through the film and guest speakers
- Make young people **aware of the laws around knife crime**
- Hear from young people with **lived experience of knife crime and** find out **what changes they would like to see being implemented**

Why the Knife Crime film and roadshow was developed

Since 2015, knife crime has been on the increase. More people used knives for assaults and robberies in 2018, when compared to previous years, and one in four victims were aged 18 to 24 years old.

Based on this evidence, the Youth Commission identified:

- Young people are becoming increasingly vulnerable to carrying knives and becoming victims of knife crime
- Not enough is known about the law and what the consequences are for breaking the law
- Using feedback from our *Know Your Rights* film, we know that young people respond well to films and take in more information. A film can also be distributed across social media platforms to spread the word further

The process of creating the Knife Crime Roadshow



Recruitment:

During the period of September and October 2018, the Youth Commission recruited a further 15 new members to join the existing cohort, which increased the total number of active members to 30.

First design day:

In October we conducted the first design and planning meeting for the film. During the meeting we discussed three main areas:

- **Storylines**
- **Key Messages**
- **Locations in Nottingham for filming**

Working with Nottinghamshire Police:

To make sure we had accurate messages, we enlisted the help from then Supt Simon Firth, former head of Knife Crime operations for Nottinghamshire Police. In a meeting with the Youth Commission and Supt Firth, we gathered information, and established some areas for our work to focus on, including:

- **What are the places where young people felt safe, and where they don't?**
- **Where do young people think high levels of violent crime occur?**
- **How do young people consume media and how do they receive information?**

Second design day:

Using the ideas generated from the first design day in October, we set about creating an accompanying workshop. Having the knowledge and experience of how young people actively engage during sessions, we knew having a quiz would increase their levels of engagement. The second activity we incorporated was a group activity of local mapping on areas that young people perceive as dangerous areas and those they perceive to be safer areas.

Development of postcard:

To capture voices within our workshops, we developed a new postcard. This was designed to evaluate the workshop and film in terms of how much knowledge and awareness participants have gained. We also developed two questions as a basis for our key solutions and recommendations, which were:

- **What can young people do to help reduce Knife Crime?**
- **What support from other agencies do young people need to help reduce knife crime?**

Feedback from young people with lived experience:

Throughout the process of creating a knife crime roadshow, the members highlighted the importance of involving young people with lived experience of knife crime in all aspects of the roadshow. For this reason, we enlisted the help of young people from R.E.A.L Education (an alternative education provider) where we shared our proposed storyline to the group and asked for feedback. The young people told us:

- **Have more emphasis on the law, as they felt that not a lot is known about the law**
- **Make it interactive**
- **Have people in the film who have been affected by knife crime**

Using this feedback, we narrowed down our storyline to make it less complicated and decided to make it into two parts – one part being specifically about the law and the second part hearing young people's personal stories.

Filming:

After the New Year, we started filming. We decided early on to carry out the filming in Nottingham City Centre, to ensure the film had a Nottingham identity. During the filming, we received help from two young people who agreed to share their own experiences of knife crime in the film from two different perspectives.

Start of the roadshow:

In March, we launched the roadshow and started to deliver the workshop and film to schools, colleges, alternative education providers, youth clubs and cadets. During the roadshow events, 'Jay', a mentor with lived experience of knife crime, joined the Youth Commission members. Jay spoke about his own experience of knife crime and helped to generate discussions with participants.

Online survey:

As well as the workshops, we developed an online survey to further develop some of our emerging findings with a larger population of young people. The results of this survey can be found in the appendix.

Who we reached



Throughout our engagement with young people, we reached **1,600 young people** through workshops and surveys **across 32 events**. We aimed to reach out to as many young people from Nottinghamshire as possible, including those from harder to reach groups and areas.

We delivered workshops and surveys to the following organisations:

- Arnold Hill Academy
- Base 51
- Beeston Cadets
- Broxtowe Youth Homelessness
- Dukeries Academy
- Foxwood Academy
- George Spencer Academy
- Groundwork Nottingham
- Holgate Academy
- Kirkby College
- Nacro
- North Notts cadets
- Nottingham College
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- R.E.A.L Education
- Sherwood Cadets
- Vision West Notts

Root causes for carrying a knife



During the roadshow, we asked young people, including those with direct experience of Knife Crime, why they believe young people carry knives. Through the responses, we identified four main reasons:

- **Protection**
- **Fear**
- **Gangs**
- **Peer Pressure**

Protection

We found protection to be the most common reason for why people carry knives. Many young people feel that carrying a knife will keep them safer. Young people perceive that a knife would deescalate a conflict situation and make someone run away.

"I carried a knife, as I don't feel safe"

We also heard from young people who believed a knife would protect them in other ways. One young person said:

"I carried a knife because I wanted to go back to prison so I was protected"

This quote highlights that not all young people carry knives with the intention to harm someone.

Fear

Fear links in with the findings we collected on protection. For many young people, fear is the driving force behind their belief that carrying a knife will protect them. A young person stated:

"It's a vicious cycle"

"I was stabbed and then started to carry a knife to protect myself"

This shows that young people are seeking the support from a knife to help them with their fear, which ultimately means they become more at risk of being stabbed.

Gangs and Peer Pressure

When we spoke to young people, especially those who have carried, they told us that many people carry a knife because of someone else. This can be either for reputation, or for a loved one.

One young woman said that she was exploited by someone else to carry a knife for them:

"I was groomed"

A lot of young people are unaware that older gang members groom vulnerable young people to carry knives for them, with gangs showing little or no respect for their safety.

Some young people told us that carrying a knife brings 'street cred' and increased status. Others said it's because young people want to fit in with the people around them.

"People carry knives for street cred"

"Young people feel they need to be a part of something to fit in"

Perceptions of local areas



Common perceptions of unsafe areas

In the workshops, we asked young people to map out their common perceptions of areas where they felt unsafe in Nottinghamshire. Using the maps, we extracted six areas that were mentioned throughout the roadshow:

- **Arnold**
- **City Centre**
- **Clifton**
- **Meadows**
- **St Anns**
- **Stapleford**

One surprising aspect of this is that they are buildings and not areas. This indicates that young people feel safer in buildings surrounded by friends or family.

What we noticed, especially with St Anns, was that young people identified this area straight away without hesitation. When we asked young people why St Ann's came to mind a lot, they didn't know of any recent knife crime incidents taking place in that areas compared to other areas. This suggests that due to St Ann's reputation and high media coverage this may have influenced perceptions.

Common perceptions of safe areas

Like the common perceptions of unsafe areas, we were also interested to find out when and where young people actually felt safe. Again we identified six places and times including:

- **Home**
- **Friends' houses**
- **Youth centres**
- **With friends**
- **During the day**
- **College**

One surprising aspect of this is that they are buildings and not areas. This indicates that young people feel safer in buildings surrounded by friends or family.

Key Solutions



At the end of the roadshow, the Youth Commission members had the opportunity to analyse the data from the postcards and surveys. Using this information, the Youth Commission identified seven key solutions:

- **More awareness of the consequences of Knife Crime**
- **Increase support and places for young to go**
- **Increase signposting of support already out there**
- **More activities for young people to take part in**
- **Anonymous reporting**
- **More safe spaces**
- **Harsher restrictions on accessing knives**

More awareness of the consequences of knife crime

It became apparent that most of the young people we spoke to were unaware of how serious the consequences of knife crime are, especially the consequences of just carrying a knife.

We heard from young people with direct experience who said:

"We don't know anything about knife crime"

"More awareness"

More support and places for young people to go

We heard from young people that there's not a lot for them to do after they finish school or college. Having a safe space to go like youth centres encourages young people to not go on the streets and can support them:

"Without my social worker I would be involved in that stuff"

"More support and awareness need to be put out and more youth groups as people want to feel accepted, it then keeps them out of trouble"

Increase signposting of support already out there

When we asked young people on what support is out there, the majority of responses mentioned Childline and Crimestoppers. This may be because both services are well advertised. Despite this, young people didn't know of any other services, including local ones.

"More advertisement for talks and advice lines (call lines)"

"More advertisement of helplines and webpages, use empty billboards and public transport shelters"

More activities for young people to take part in

Similar to increasing safe spaces to go, young people feel that there should be more activities for them to take part in. They also feel that these activities should not just be sports related.

"Activities after 3pm to keep people off the streets"

"More fun activities"

Reporting anonymously

One of the biggest barriers for young people reporting knife crime to the police is the fear of being identified if they report it. Young people are concerned that they may get into trouble for knowing about it. Young people need to know more about anonymous reporting options and who to report it to.

"A place where they can anonymously report it"

Have safe spaces to go to

Young people have stated that there are not many places they can go to and feel completely safe. They would like to see more spaces they can go to, including more youth clubs.

"More youth groups in communities"

"Making more places for young people to get off the streets and feel safe"

"Make places for people to go where it's safe and don't have to carry a knife to be safe"

Harsher restrictions on accessing knives

Young people are aware of how easily accessible knives are. They want to see harsher restrictions on accessing knives, with the main focus on online platforms and shops. One young person suggested having tracking on knives, so you know where they go to once they are purchased.

"Restrict access when buying knives off the Internet"

"Ban knives and make sure you have ID and protest"

The impact of the roadshow on participants



Out of the postcards we received, **89% of young people rated the workshop 5 or above for increasing their understanding of the law on knife crime.**

We also asked young people, **how has listening to young people with lived experience impacted your views around carrying a knife?**

Young people said they found having people with direct experience has made them think about the consequences of knife crime from a victim's point of view.

"It has made me understand the negative impact of knife crime"

"It's made me care more about people who are in danger"

We also heard that some young people have now changed their views on knife crime:

"My view on knife crimes and carrying a knife has change as I learned that even though you were involved in a crime but didn't do the stabbing you can still go to prison"

"It has impacted because it shows how many people actually die due to knife crimes"

These findings show just how much of an impact having people with lived experience join the roadshow has made. We received an overwhelming response on how engaging young people and staff found 'Jay' and his personal story.

George Spencer Academy said:

"The majority of students came away saying how enjoyable your session was, the discussions that were shared, the advice and examples given by you guys have really stuck in some student's heads leaving them asking me when you guys are coming back in! One student commented "That session was so real, I do about English and Maths all the time but stuff like this is what's happening out there in the country." (unnamed year 9 student)

Staff were very impressed with your delivery as well, mainly speaking about the relevance of the topic you discussed and how you opened up the floor to the students putting the onus on them to talk. Staff were also very pleased that some of their quieter students even voiced their opinions on the day, which is so positive for them to see from a teaching perspective as they got to see students come out of their shell more.

On the whole it was a great 2 days delivered from you guys and I can't thank you enough for coming in again"

Recommendations



Using the key findings from the workshops and surveys, the Youth Commission developed the following recommendations for change. These recommendations are for Local Authorities, The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police, as well as the Youth Commission itself.

Recommendations for Local Authorities

1. **Increase the number of activities for young people** to attend, not just sport related, and improve advertising of where activities take place
2. More places for young people to **access support and increase the number of support / volunteer workers**
3. **Improve signposting** of how young people can access support services in Nottinghamshire
4. **Work in partnership with community and organisations** to increase awareness of places where young people can access support

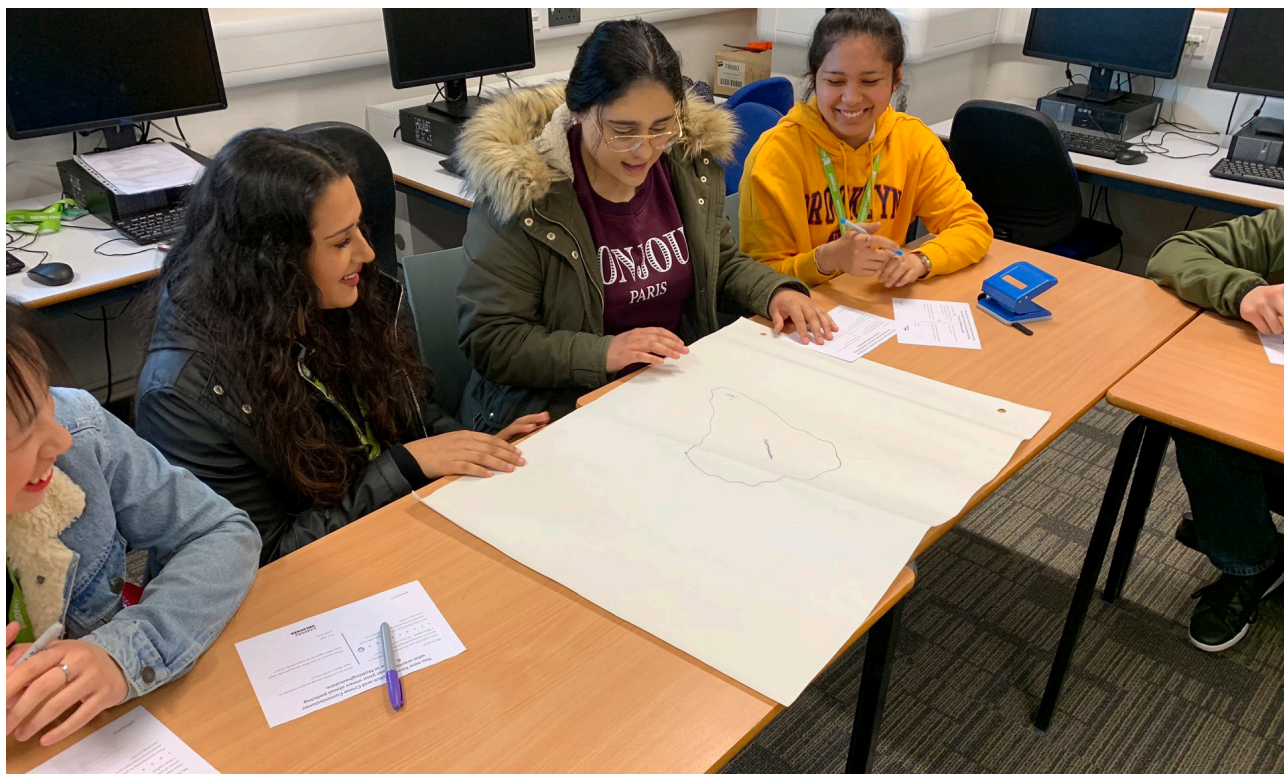
Recommendations for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Nottinghamshire Police

1. **Increase Police presence within the community** and within education settings. Talking to young people about the consequences and dangers of knife crime
2. Young people would like to see more **knife amnesties**, and more messages from the Police on amnesty weekends emphasising that people handing in knives will not be arrested
3. Knife amnesty bins, not just in **police stations**, as this can be a **barrier for people to hand in knives**. Instead, place knife bins in local community areas with a Police officer or PCSO present

Recommendations for the Youth Commission

1. **Continue to** develop the Knife Crime Roadshow work and **raise awareness of the law and consequences of carrying knife**
2. Provide opportunities for **organisations to build on the work started by the Youth Commission, and assist organisations to develop peer-led work packs**
3. Involve young people in the development of social media content **and campaigns to raise awareness of knife crime and support services**
4. Continue to include **people with lived experience as part of the knife crime roadshow** to maximise our impact and have an authentic voice

Conclusion



We are grateful to the members of the Nottinghamshire Youth Commission and the local organisations who have made this roadshow such a success.

The insights and recommendations contained in this report represent a significant contribution to the work of Nottinghamshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

On 25th June, the Nottinghamshire Youth Commission held their 3rd Annual conference, where delegates and stakeholders came together to hear the Commission's key findings and recommendations for change.

Delegates were involved in roundtable discussions and had the opportunity to discuss the future of the Youth Commission. Some of their ideas included:

- Have more meetings
- To go on more panels
- Advertise the work the Youth Commission do, including booklets
- Work more closely with services, especially in the city
- Work with families and older generations

We received a lot of positive feedback from delegates during the conference. Some of their quotes include:

"Excellent engagement and discussions"

"Excellent research, peer information and solution approach"

"Nice to hear the voice of the younger generations"

"Good to hear young people tackling a really difficult issue"

Moving forward, the Nottinghamshire Youth Commission will further develop the work of the Knife Crime roadshow taking forward the recommendations.

We will continue to work with Nottinghamshire Police and continue to reach out to more young people on policing and crime issues affecting them.

Testimonials

Leah Sareen, Chair of the Youth Crime prevention Advisory Group

"As Chair of the Youth Crime Prevention Advisory Group for Nottinghamshire County Council, I have been lucky enough to work alongside the Youth Commission over the last few years. Their professionalism, expertise and real-life experience has been inspiring. The Youth Commissioners have been a catalyst for system change in relation to the experience of young people both as victims of Crime and as young people on the receiving end of the criminal justice system."

The Youth Commissioners also supported having more police officers in schools and have gone on to deliver training to support these officers. More recently the Youth Commission have been able to address Knife Crime and importantly ensure the views of young people with real life experiences are included in the work to prevent such crime happening in the first place"

Karen Dalby, SEIO Coordinator for Nottinghamshire Police

"Nottinghamshire Police Schools and Early Intervention Officers (SEIOs) have been working together with the youth commission this past year. Following the successful pilot in 2017 /18 the SEIO project was rolled out across Nottinghamshire, requiring the recruitment of 11 Police Officers into the role of SEIO. The Youth Commission were a key part of the recruitment process and gave a young person's view and voice during the application and interview process. Two members of the YC were part of the interview panel."

The Youth Commission have been an important element in supporting the SEIO team with educational packages that are delivered into schools and colleges. They reviewed each of the presentations, identifying correct and current terminology used in the young person's world today and highlighting key issues for young people today. They also introduced some ideas for making the presentations more interactive and younger person friendly to promote engagement."

I look forward to continuing to work with the Youth Commission in the future."

Joshua Reders, Notts YC member

"I joined the Nottinghamshire youth commission about 2 years ago when I heard about it from a teacher at school. The first day I joined I was too scared to even ask a question but 2 years later I can talk to a large group of people without a problem. My confidence has grown so much and it's thanks to the amazing people at the commission being so kind and helpful to me"

Sorreyll Kendall, Notts YC member

"Going through the Youth Commission has been an honour, meeting new people and making friends and finding out things about crime you didn't know and travelling to see how young people feel about these crimes, the best opportunity I've had. I highly recommend people to join and help the police and find information from youth voices that could and can be crucial to them"

Appendix

Knife Crime Survey findings

During our roadshow, we engaged with young people through different means including a survey developed using the initial findings from the roadshow, we based the survey off 5 questions.

Do you think knife crime is an increasing issue in Nottinghamshire?

79% of young people said yes that knife crime is an increasing issue

What do you think would be the best way to help reduce Knife Crime?

25% of young people said they would like to see activities being increased

25% said they would like to have credible speakers go into schools and colleges to raise awareness of knife crime

4% would like to have sign posting for different support agencies

25% have more youth clubs/ organisations for young people to access outside education

18% said other suggestions including more police patrols, promoting activities already out there and tagging on knives

What would you like to see the police do more in a bid to reduce Knife Crime?

29% said they would like to see stop and search increased

28% would like more police patrols

19% want the police to go into communities to raise awareness of knife crime

16% want the police to go into schools to raise awareness

5% said other ideas including, Decrease stop and search and increase the knowledge of what knives can do

What do you think young people could do to help reduce knife crime?

We heard a lot of different responses including:

Young people **learning more about the consequences**

Persuade friends not to carry knives

People that have experiences of knife crime to talk to young people

Young people to stand up and be heard rather than turning the other way and allowing it to be the norm.

Coming together to raise awareness

Mentors in youth clubs and social media groups

What support do you think young people need from other agencies to help reduce knife crime?

Some responses included:

Talking to people in person who has been through knife crime

Have the police come into schools to **warn students of the consequences and increase help**

Services for mental health, family support, social services all need better funding and **understanding of cultural issues young people face**

Funding for positive activities and mentoring