





KNIVES TAKE LIVES

Over the last decade there has been a worrying increase in the volume of knife crime recorded across England and Wales. In the year ending March 2022, there were around 45,000 (selected) offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police Force). This was 9% higher than in 2020/21 and 34% higher than in 2010/11.

In England and Wales for the year ending in March 2022 there were 261 homicides using a sharp instrument which includes knives and broken bottles. Sentencing statistics provided by the Ministry of Justice shows that in the year ending March 2022 there were 19,555 disposals given for possession of a knife or an offensive weapon. 18% of the offenders in these cases were juveniles aged 10-17.

MYTH	OR	FACTS
Carrying a knife provides a person with protection		It has been proven that if you carry a knife, you are more likely to be hurt or threatened by someone else. People are often wounded by their own knife they were carrying, putting them at greater risk.
Most young people carry knives		Actually, 99% of young people DO NOT carry knives. Sometimes it may feel like more people carry knives because of stories they've heard, or what they have seen online, on social media or in the news.
If it is illegal to carry a knife, then other sharp objects can be carried for protection		Any sharp object that is being carried with the intention of using it in a threatening way could be classed as an offensive weapon.
There are safe places on the body to stab someone		Any stab wound could be fatal for a number of reasons. For example, major arteries run across the whole body. If a major artery is severed, that person will bleed very quickly and it could be fatal within 5 minutes.

The below image shows some laws relating to knife crime within the UK. Please note there are some variations in the law between England, Wales, and Scotland.



It is against the law to carry a knife in public place.

Unless the blade is less than 3 inches long and is a manual folding blade. Doing so can carry a prison sentence of up to 4 years even if it is not used in England & Wales, and 5 years in Scotland. It is also against the law to carry a knife on behalf of someone else



A person must be 18 or over to purchase a knife.

This includes cutlery and kitchen knives. In Scotland, people between the ages of 16 and 18 can legally purchase cutlery and kitchen knives.



If the blade is less than 3 inches in length and is a manual folding blade,

A person over the age of 16 can purchase this knife.



It is illegal to bring into the country, sell, possess, hire or give someone a banned knife.

Banned knives include: butterfly knives, disguised knives, flick knives, and zombie knives. A full list of banned knives in the UK can be found on the GOV website.

A full list of banned knives and weapons can be found at - <https://www.gov.uk/buying-carrying-knives>.

Police Powers – Stop & Search

A police officer has powers to stop and search you if they have ‘reasonable grounds’ to suspect you’re carrying:

- illegal drugs
- a weapon
- stolen property
- something which could be used to commit a crime, such as a crowbar

You can only be stopped and searched without reasonable grounds if it has been approved by a senior police officer. This can happen if it is suspected that:

- serious violence could take place
- you’re carrying a weapon or have used one
- you’re in a specific location or area

This power is subject to a lot of debate, but it has been particularly effective in the fight against knife crime. Since 2019, stop and search use has increased by around 85% and has contributed to over 50,000 deadly knives and offensive weapons being taken off our streets.

The Murder of Ben Kinsella – The Impact of Knife Crime

Ben Kinsella was a 16-year-old young boy who grew up in Islington, London. He was tragically stabbed to death on 29th June 2008.

Ben had just finished his GCSEs so on the Saturday night, Ben's friends rang him to invite him to a popular venue close to his home to celebrate completing their exams. Ben was excited to go. Whilst at the venue there was an altercation between an older group of boys which Ben wasn't involved with. Some boys were angry because they felt they had been disrespected by some other boys at the venue. Security staff ejected both groups from the venue. Ben, his friends and all the other people at the venue continued with their evening.

On their way home, Ben and his friends realised they were being followed by three older teenagers. Scared and worried, they decided to run. But the older teenagers chased after them. They were seeking revenge for the altercation in the club that had taken place earlier that evening. Ben and his had nothing to do with it and so, possibly for this reason, Ben stopped running. The older boys caught up with Ben and in an entirely unprovoked attack, they stabbed him several times.

Ben had never met or spoken to the boys who stabbed him. He wasn't involved in youth violence, gangs, or drugs. He had a family who loved and cared for him, and he did well at school. He was a 'normal' teenager.

The three boys who were aged 19 at the time, 3 years older than Ben, were caught by the police and found guilty in court. They were sentenced to a minimum of 19 years in prison in 2009.

A trust has been set up in Ben's memory which provides information, stories and resources relating to knife crime. <https://benkinsella.org.uk/>

"No parent or sibling should ever have to go through or see what we have seen with our son. He died in front of us. We can now only visit Ben at a cemetery, our beautiful son who so loved life".
Debbie Kinsella, Ben's Mum.

What are the signs somebody may be carrying a knife?

Below are some warning signs that might indicate a young person is carrying a knife. These are aimed mainly at parents but can be useful for anyone who comes into contact with young people.

- Have they become withdrawn from the family and/or school?
- Do they stay out unusually late without giving a reason and are vague about their whereabouts?
- Are they secretive about the contents of their bag?
- Are they defensive if you ask what is in their possession or if they are hiding anything?
- Has their attitude changed about carrying knives/weapons? For example, justifying it by saying people carry them for self-defence?
- Have any items gone missing from the kitchen, toolbox, or garage?

Reporting Knife Crime

You can report knife crime or provide information relating to it by calling 101 or if you are in danger and need immediate help always phone the emergency services on 999.

Alternatively, you can report to Crimestoppers. Crimestoppers is an independent charity, where people can give information about crime 100% anonymously over the phone or online. Tell them what you know about knife crime, and they will know what to do with it.

Crimestoppers is available via phone or online 24 hours a day. Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or report online here <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/give-information-anonymously>.

