

Knife Crime

The phrase 'knife crime' was adopted by the media and is now popularly used to refer primarily to stabbings but also to the illegal carrying of knives by young people in a public place or on school premises. (Parliament, 2008). Knife related violence has become an issue for the majority of major cities within the UK. Since New Years day 2018, there have been 60 fatal stabbings in London alone (REF). This alarming spike has been called an 'epidemic' By MET Commissioner Cressida Dick. Questions have been raised as to how police can stop knife crime and if it is their responsibility to do so. This poster also considers the reasoning behind knife crime and the related research that has taken place.

Research

In 1994, Bayley explored the pluralisation and realism of policing. The concept of policing being a 'bandaid for cancer' (Bayley, 1994). This suggests that the policing capability of the system and its officers was unsuitable for society. In 2008, triggers were identified from murders in the capital. Ranging from gang related violence, fighting to domestic incidents (Squires et al, 2008). The triggers are socio-economic and can be seen as environmental factors that effect an individual and/or a community. In addition, the research undertaken by Flanagan (2008) the partnership approach to policing should also include local agencies.

Police and Community: Neighbourhood and Police Liaison

The need to map the changing trajectories (McLaughin and Muncie, 2002) of societies is required for the relations between communities, societies and policing to improve and strengthen. Since 2008, the wider collaborations and partnerships within communities has been more extensive in response to the categorical failings with the Pilkington case. However, with the increase in cuts to public sectors as a method of austerity, the desire for formal partnerships to be used within societies was hampered by austerity. The focus of budgets and austerity has cost the police service the respect and trust of numerous communities especially vulnerable, isolated, minority and ethnic groups. Moreover, an increase in dialogue and mutual effort to collaborate is needed within societies and police forces to improve relations. Also creating a culture of respect and professionalism needs to be developed. The majority of police forces now use the PRIDE initiative which is a sign of the changing ethos. However, many conflicts still arise from the lack of communication and cohesion of police liaison officers within communities. Schemes such as neighbourhood policing, PCSOs and residents associations can work in partnership with the police. However, these schemes cost money and if lessons are to be learnt from previous police issues the government must support communities, the police and schemes. Ring fencing certain funding opportunities can bolster the communication required to improve trust and respect between the police and communities.

Armed Policing: taking a gun to a knife fight?

Arming the police is a point of contention throughout policing. The use of Tasers has become standard within policing and the use of force/restraint is met with considerable review and evaluation upon its use. Police use of armed force is usually met with public outcry as it can appear that the police become the judge, jury and executioner within a split second. However the changing use of crime and violence should be cause for a re-evaluation of the stress and demand on police. The use of the National Decision Model (NDM) trains the officer to evaluate their actions. However, in a fast-moving incident, it is recognised that it may not always be possible to segregate thinking or response according to each phase of the model. In these cases, the main priority of officer is to keep in mind the overarching mission to act with integrity to protect and serve the public (College of Policing, 2014).

Conclusion

Having a fresh approach to knife crime is required as the issue itself can be seen as epidemic across the country. However the reactionary response to knife crime (i.e. catching the perpetrators) cannot be seen as the only response that can be achieved. Increasing communication and community liaison will strengthen and reinforce similar values and awareness of issues. The increased reflection and consideration of reasons, pathways and actions that can lead to involvement in knife crime should be deliberated and then actions should take place to prevent such actions. Partnerships with youth groups, schools, faith groups and other organisations could be the untapped resource to bridge the gaps between communities and policing. The future of policing depends on the systematic ability to update procedures and policies that govern society. The difficult questions about community policing, arming police and evolving the processes within the police are needed to develop strategies and longevity within society. Knife crime has become a political, policing and media hot potato that the majority of society is conscious off and something to has to be attempted to achieve the goal of making our communities safer. The question is what 'something' can achieve such as task.

Tackling knife crime in urban communities

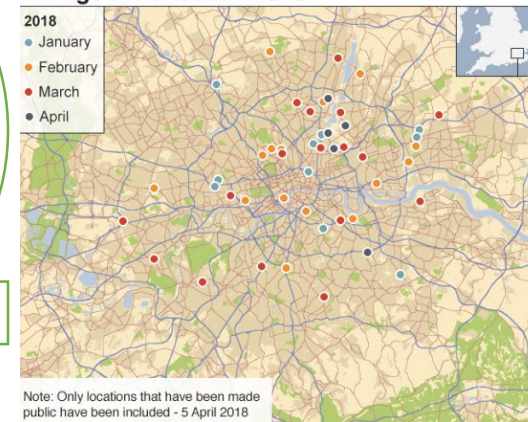
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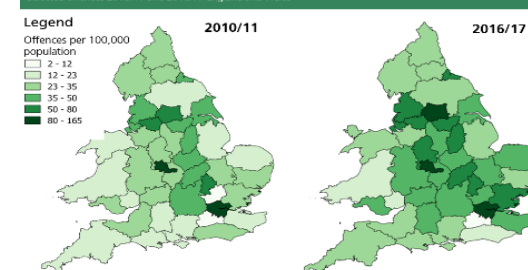
'It's a public health issue.
It's an epidemic'
-MET Police Commissioner Cressida Dick



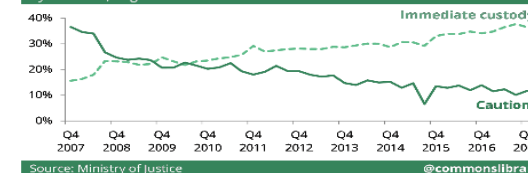
Killings in London in 2018



KNIFE AND SHARP INSTRUMENT OFFENCES RECORDED BY THE POLICE



SHARE OF PROVEN OFFENCES OF POSSESSION OF A KNIFE



HIGHEST RECORDED KNIFE CRIME LEVEL IN A 7-YEAR PERIOD

