

Knife Crime Prevention Orders begin in London

Court orders preventing young people from carrying knives and becoming embroiled in serious violence are now being piloted in London, Home Secretary Priti Patel has announced.

The new Knife Crime Prevention Orders are being trialled by the Metropolitan Police Service for 14 months, before plans to roll them out across forces in England and Wales.

They can be imposed on individuals as young as 12 whom police have reason to believe are carrying knives or are habitual knife carriers, or those who have been previously convicted of a knife-related offence.

Police can apply to the courts for the orders. The conditions attached can include curfews and restrictions on an individual's use of social media, travel outside geographical boundaries, as well as explicitly banning them from carrying a knife.

Courts can also prescribe positive intervention, such as educational courses, sports club referrals, relationship counselling, anger management, mentoring and drug rehabilitation.

The orders aim to stop a small but high-risk cohort of individuals from causing immediate harm to others and support earlier interventions to turn young people away from a life of crime and protect them from potential exploitation from criminal gangs.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

One of the hardest parts of my job as Home Secretary is seeing families ripped apart by the horror of knife crime and I am determined to stop this misery, protect communities and help save lives.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders will crack down on those carrying weapons while at the same time intervening to steer them away from a life of violence.

Police have asked for these orders to help them keep our streets and young people safe, and I will always do everything in my power to ensure they have the tools and powers to cut crime and protect the public.

Commander Ade Adelekan from the Metropolitan Police Service said:

Knife Crime Prevention Orders will allow police more options and will be a valuable tactic in preventing and tackling violence in London.

They will allow intervention at an early stage and divert vulnerable people at risk of becoming serious criminals by supporting them to make better lifestyle changes away from violence. Also, they will enable police to monitor the individual and enforce the law on them if they breach it. Both outcomes helping to keep our communities safe.

Tackling violence remains a priority for the Met to which our officers will continue exploiting all preventative and enforcement tactics and powers.

Pastor Lorraine Jones, founder of Dwaynamics Boxing Gym in Brixton, and mother of knife crime victim Dwayne Simpson, said:

These orders are just what we need and are vitally important for us in the community as we have a number of young people who carry knives for various reasons in fear.

They will give us greater opportunity to work with young people and potentially divert them from prison, as they too are vulnerable at a tender age and at risk of being killed or using that knife to take a life.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders can be in place for a maximum of two years and must be reviewed by the courts after 12 months, with orders issued to under 18s to be reviewed more regularly.

The results of the pilot, which commenced on Monday 5 July, will be reviewed after 14 months before deciding whether to roll the orders out to all other forces in England and Wales.

The orders are designed to complement the range of existing police powers to tackle knife crime, including the existing offence of possessing a bladed article in public without good reason and stop and search.

Breaching the order will be a criminal offence punishable by a maximum prison sentence of two years if convicted.

The government is determined to cut crime and crack down on serious violence. Knife Crime Prevention Orders will complement other measures to protect young people including:

- investing £200m in the Youth Endowment Fund to provide evidence-based solutions to tackling youth violence
- tackling drug crime – since 2019, our County Lines Programme has resulted in the closure of more than 780 lines, over 5,100 arrests and

the safeguarding of more than 1,200 vulnerable people

- introducing a Serious Violence Duty to ensure all parts of the system – including police, youth offending teams, and health services – work together to drive down serious violence

We are also recruiting an extra 20,000 police officers by March 2023. Almost 9,000 of these officers have already been recruited, including an extra 1,369 officers for the Metropolitan Police.