

News story: Home Secretary announces further action to target youth violence

Chairing the latest Serious Violence Taskforce, Sajid Javid set out details of a new youth advocates programme that will see respected members of communities, such as sport coaches and youth workers, receive specialist training in order to have safe conversations with young people and provide them positive alternatives to carrying a knife.

He also announced the next stage of the #knifefree advertising campaign which features real life stories of youth who have turned away from a life of crime thanks to a mentor in their community.

Home Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

Intervening early in the lives of vulnerable youngsters is key in combating the rise of serious violence.

It's therefore vital that we communicate with them directly through the people in their communities who they respect and listen to.

That's why the grassroots advocates programme and our #knifefree campaign are integral to the work we are doing to stop this bloodshed.

The new youth advocates programme is running in London and Manchester and provides local role models expert training on skills such as safeguarding, diffusing conflict and substance misuse, this will help them spot warning signs and give guidance on how to cope in challenging situations.

The youth advocates in London, who work in key community focal points such as boxing clubs, youth centres and schools, have already started to receive specific training. The programme in Manchester will start in the next few weeks.

To support the advocates conversations with young people, new #knifefree adverts will run in key London and Manchester areas. These will tell the real stories of young people portrayed by actors of why and how they stopped carrying knives – inspiring others to live knife free.

Members of the taskforce were also shown a preview of the new #knifefree video. They were also updated on a new collaboration with youth channel SBTV which saw four YouTube videos go live on Sunday. The videos were filmed across the UK and show music artists speaking to young people from their area about why and how they are both knife free.

These use popular music artists, such as Bugzy Malone, who has almost 1 million Instagram followers, to amplify the #knifefree campaign and directly reach young people and inspire them to live knife free.

The #knifefree media campaign – which aims to educate 10-21 year olds on the dangers of carrying knives – is one of the 61 commitments in the Serious Violence Strategy which stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes of violent crime and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence.

The strategy sets out the importance of a multi-agency approach to tackling serious violence which involves a range of partners and agencies. Building on this, on 2 October the Home Secretary announced further measures including a new £200 million youth endowment fund, an independent review of drug misuse and a consultation on a new legal duty to underpin a multi-agency preventative or 'public health' approach to tackling serious violence.