

Serious Violence Reduction Orders to be piloted in 4 police forces

New court orders to boost efforts to crack down on knife crime will be piloted in 4 police forces, Home Secretary Priti Patel has announced.

The 4 forces – Thames Valley, West Midlands, Merseyside and Sussex – will trial the introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs), which give the police new stop and search powers to target convicted knife and offensive weapons offenders.

The orders are designed to ensure convicted offenders are steered away from crime and, if they persist in carrying a knife or an offensive weapon, that they are more likely to be caught and put in prison.

They will also help protect vulnerable offenders from being drawn into further exploitation by criminal gangs, by acting as a deterrent to any further weapons carrying.

Targeted use of stop and search, as part of a wider approach to intervene and support offenders, will help to safeguard those communities most at risk.

The pilot will test how well the orders deter violent offenders from carrying weapons, before a decision is made on national roll out.

Policing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

We are absolutely committed to cutting crime, getting knives off our streets and putting violent criminals behind bars.

The public want criminals who continue to carry knives and other deadly weapons, even after they have been caught before, to be stopped in their tracks.

These orders give police the power to do just that and protect communities from harm.

Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Jo Shiner said:

We are committed to keeping our communities safe, and Serious Violence Reduction Orders will build on the extensive work we already do in Sussex to tackle knife crime and serious violence. Knives and other offensive weapons have no place on our streets.

We welcome this pilot and the additional powers it will give our officers in helping identify and deal with those who persist in carrying dangerous weapons.

Deputy Chief Constable Jason Hogg of Thames Valley Police, said:

Tackling serious violence and particularly knife crime is a priority for the force. We welcome the opportunity to trial these new powers as they are developed and to contribute to national methods of policing and criminal justice outcomes.

The new powers will enable more robust interventions with what remains a relatively small number of offenders, creating a focused deterrent to prevent reoffending and will help us support those most vulnerable. Through this, we will keep the pressure on those who are involved in the most serious violent crime and ultimately keep our communities safe, right across the Thames Valley.

Our involvement in this pilot contributes to our range of activity already underway, both through our local policing operations and that of the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, all focused on tackling serious violence and its root-causes.

Assistant Chief Constable Jon Roy of Merseyside Police, said:

Merseyside Police are pleased to be selected as one of the four police forces piloting the Serious Violence Reduction Orders programme.

We are dedicated to tackling serious violence in all of its forms, as well as bringing offenders to justice and protecting all those living, working and visiting Merseyside. We're also committed to offering alternatives to prosecution and working closely with offenders and their families to address their needs and helping them break the cycle of reoffending.

It is welcoming to see that these orders will enhance our powers to target known and prolific knife crime offenders and those insistent on carrying dangerous weapons as well as reducing serious violence and ultimately saving lives.

Chief Constable Sir David Thompson of West Midlands Police, said:

We welcome this Home Office pilot on Serious Violence Reduction Orders as part of a wider public health approach for reducing violence in the West Midlands.

The orders will enable us to target those already convicted of certain knife offences, giving us the automatic right to search those who pose the greatest risk. It is crucial that these orders are policed fairly and effectively and that scrutiny is in place to ensure that happens. We also recognise search should be only one

tool in changing the behaviour of those subject to the orders.

Our work as part of the Violence Reduction Unit will also continue, alongside partner agencies, to reduce violence by preventing problems at the earliest possible stage through a wide range of activities.

The introduction of SVROs follows a public consultation, which was [published](#) on 9 March.

Courts will be able to make an SVRO when someone is convicted of an offence involving a knife or offensive weapon. Police officers will have the power to stop and search a person subject to an order to look for knives or offensive weapons. They will apply to those aged 18 and over.

The government is clear that stop and search is a vital tool for tackling violence and saving lives. Last year, it helped remove 11,000 dangerous weapons from our streets and with every weapon seized, a potential life is saved.

SVROs are part of a major criminal justice bill which the government introduced to Parliament last week.

The [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill](#) seeks to equip the police with the powers and tools they need to protect themselves and the public, while overhauling sentencing laws to keep serious sexual and violent offenders behind bars for longer and placing greater emphasis on rehabilitation to better help offenders to turn their lives around.