



Welcome to another bimonthly edition of Open Minds. My name is Steve Barnes, I would like to introduce myself as the Designated Safeguarding Lead here at F-TEC, my role is to take responsibility for all safeguarding and child protection, providing advice and support for all staff and apprentices.

Safeguarding Matters: Knife Crime

Knife crime refers to a broad collection of behaviours that mean different things to different people.

For some, knife crime is exclusively a 'youth crime' issue, despite the fact that many older people use, and are injured with, knives. For others, knife crime is taken to mean 'serious violence', even though most knife carrying does not result in violence. For many, knife crime denotes a series of crimes that typically take place in public between strangers, despite a great deal of knife-enabled violence occurring indoors and between acquaintances.

In light of these differences, it is important to make clear what we mean by the term 'knife crime', and to clarify what we do and do not cover in this guide.

Knife crime relates to crimes involving knives or other bladed or pointed articles. This definition reflects how the relevant laws in England and Wales are worded. (The carrying and use of a bladed weapon is prohibited in a variety of contexts and there are specific knives that are prescribed for ownership, sale and/or carrying in public. In addition, the use of a weapon in a violent incident may be an aggravating factor in sentencing. The Crown Prosecution Service has a detailed description of legislation relating to knife crime: [Offensive weapons, knife crime practical guidance](#))

Hence, knife crime incorporates crimes involving articles other than knives. The definition of bladed or pointed articles includes, for example, razors, swords, axes, bayonets, forks, needles, arrows, and broken glass bottles. Some bladed or pointed articles will be in their original manufactured form, while others may be modified (for example, a screwdriver with a sharpened tip) or improvised (such as a piece of wood with a nail driven through it).

Knife crime, as defined here, broadly relates to two kinds of behaviour. The first relates to people owning or possessing knives when doing so is illegal. This may be because their ownership is specifically banned, such as certain (de facto or 'made') offensive weapons, or because they are illegal in certain contexts, mainly being possessed in public without good reason. These are so-called State or Regina crimes and do not involve a victim. The second behaviour relates to the use of a knife in the commission of another offence, so-called 'knife-involved offences'. Typically, this relates to violence or threats against the person, theft, burglary, or criminal damage.

The Scope of This Guide

The possession and use of knives to threaten or harm someone covers a wide range of offences, from robbery to serious sexual offences and murder. Producing a guide that covers the huge range



of contexts within which knives are used illegally would be unwieldy. We do not attempt that here. Nor do we focus on offences that involve the illegal sale or importation of knives.

Instead, this guide describes a process through which the broad category of knife crime can be broken down into smaller categories of specific knife-involved offences and demonstrates how doing so can support efforts to develop appropriate, tailored, and effective responses to local knife crime problems.

Ref: Segment taken from College of Policing.

Mental Health Links...

Mental Health Foundation
[Support and Information](#)

Mind
[Get HELP now](#)

Mental Health UK
[Information and Support](#)

Rethink Mental Illness
[Advice and Information](#)

Online Safety...

The number of issues that could be regarded as harmful online is considerable, but they can be categorised into four areas of risk:

1. Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, e.g., pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, and extremism (even pre-school children may come across such content – especially on devices with voice-activated search enabled).
2. Being subjected to harmful online contact with other users, e.g., peer pressure, adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
3. Personal online conduct that increases the likelihood of/causes harm, e.g., making, sending and receiving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images, online bullying, allowing apps/websites to access location, younger children sending (including inappropriate/indecent) images/information to a device's contact list (e.g., their parent's);



4. Commerce-based risks (both as victims and perpetrators), e.g., online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

Online abuse is any abuse that is facilitated by using internet connected technology. Online abuse may take place through social media, messaging apps, emails, online gaming, live-streaming sites or other channels of digital communication. Children who are abused offline may be re-victimised online if their abuse is live-streamed or recorded and uploaded online.

Ref: Segment taken from Safeguarding Network.

Ben: Support for Life...

Ben Helpline

If you need someone to speak to, call our free and confidential helpline on 08081 311 333, Monday - Friday from 8am-8pm. You can also chat with our trained advisors online or request a call back at a time that suits you.

Our friendly advisors can offer support and guidance while ensuring they find out all the information needed to get you the right support.

Ben also operates an out-of-hours text support service, to access this service all you need to do is text BEN to 85258. It's free, confidential, and anonymous - find out more here.

If you need any help or advice from F-TEC, please contact –

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By Steve Barnes Nov 2023