Subject: You can help the police to reduce knife crime – with just a conversation

Hello Neighbours

After a period of relative quiet due to the pandemic lockdowns, it appears that violent crime is on the increase again. In London alone, there were almost 234,000 offences of violence against the person in 2021, compared with just over 220,000 in 2020.

You may feel that this type of crime doesn’t really impact you or your neighbourhood, but actually, everybody has a role to play in tackling serious violence. It’s not confined to inner-city estates – stabbings are happening all over the country, often driven by the growing phenomenon of ‘county lines’, where criminal gangs set up drug-dealing operations in places outside their usual operating area. Children and young people are being recruited as drug runners and getting drawn into the gang lifestyle, putting themselves at great risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violent crime.

Experts that work in the field all agree that the best way to prevent young people from carrying a knife is to talk to them about the risks and let them know about positive alternative activities in their local area. Young people believe lots of myths about carrying knives – and if you know a young person, you can help to bust those myths, and warn them about the dangers to themselves and others.

You may be a parent, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or a family friend, it doesn’t matter - if you know a teenager, you can play an important role in tackling this terrible crime and preventing it from taking hold in your community. It all starts with a conversation.

Neighbourhood Watch has created an excellent online information pack to help you have the conversation with young people about serious violence. You can find this pack here: https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes-archive/serious-violence/ and if you go to the Toolkit section here https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes-archive/toolkit-3/ you can find lots more resources to help you spread the knowledge within your community.

Do take a look through the online pack and come back to me if you have any questions.

Thank you,