

Knife Crime Survey – January 2024 Review

06/07/2023-01/01/2024

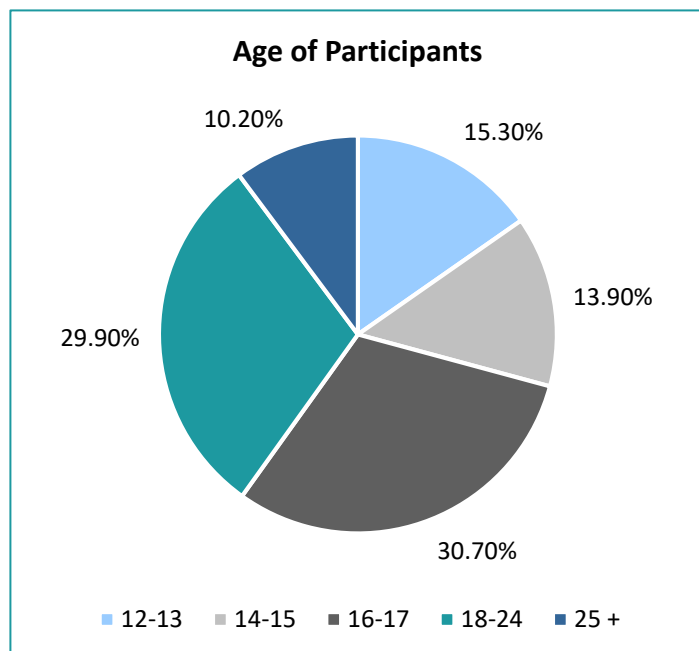
Total number of responses: **317**

Total number of complete responses: **143**

Completion rate: **45.1%**

The aim of the knife crime survey is to gather the views and opinions of young people living in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight on knife crime and violent offences in their area. It was developed by the OPCC; the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS) Violence Reduction Unit (VRU); and a student on the OPCC Masters Research Placement. The survey was originally launched on 06/07/2023 and the following will analyse results until 31/10/2023. It has been distributed via sixth form colleges in the HIPS area, the Youth Commission and Youth IAG, OPCC staff, VRP engagement events, Southampton probation team and the Saints Foundation.

There was a total of 317 responses, of which 143 individuals completed the survey, a completion rate of 46.1%. The most common age band continues to be 16-17 (31%, 42). This is followed by the 18-24 age band (30%, 41) and 12-13 (15%, 21). We also collected 14 responses from individuals aged over 25, and 19 (14%) from young people aged 14-15. It is important to note, however, that the age question was answered by 137 participants, meaning it only captured the age of 43% of those who took part in the survey. Although these is a small increase in the number



of 14-15 year olds who responded (4) this age range continues to be the least engaged with the survey and this will continue to be addressed at future events where the survey is promoted.

Similar to the age demographic question, 135 participants provided their gender. Among these individuals, 45% described themselves as male, 49% as female, while 3% said they prefer not to say. There was also 2 individuals who described themselves as transgender, and a further 2 who described themselves as non-binary. Moreover, the current results show 83% of participants described their ethnicity as White British (114), 4% stated they were White and Asian and 3% said they would prefer not to say.

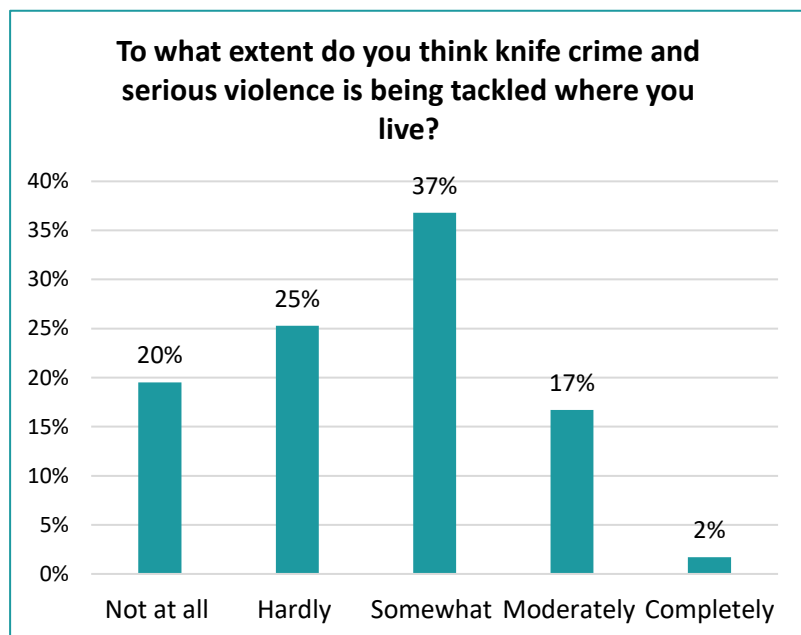
The district breakdown continues to be disproportionately spread across the area, although it is weighted differently to the last review. Basingstoke and Portsmouth each recorded 22% of participants answering that they live in that area. Moreover, there is still eight districts with five responses or fewer, indicating that the majority of response come from six districts and more than 50% of responses came from Portsmouth, Havant and Basingstoke only. It is also true, however, that only 135 respondents provided the district they live in, so it is unclear whether, in practice, responses are more spread out across the whole HIPS area.

Understanding where the young people who respond to the survey is particularly important as feelings around knife crime and serious violence likely vary depending on where in the HIPS area a young person lives. Being able to pinpoint and break down the responses based on the home district of young people is therefore essential in understanding local sentiments and allows more bespoke local responses to specific issues.

Knife Crime

The impact of VRP interventions and strategy cannot be effective without ongoing analysis and understanding of young people’s perceptions of knife crime and violence in their local area. Of the 174 young people who answered, 16% (28) considered knife crime to be a serious or very serious issue where they live. The majority of respondents considered knife crime to be somewhat an issue (36%, 62) or moderately serious (26%, 46), while the remaining 22% (38) considered knife crime not to be an issue in their local area. Significantly, the breakdown in responses has remained consistent when compared to the results at the end of the previous quarter.

Following this, the survey asked for young people’s opinions on the extent to which knife crime is being tackled in their area. Only 2% (3) of responses said knife crime was being completely tackled, compared to 20% (34) of individuals who do not consider knife crime to be being tackled at all. The majority of responses fell in the central categories, with 37% (64) of respondents answering that knife crime is being somewhat tackled, and the remaining individuals responding that knife crime is



being hardly tackled (25%, 44) or moderately tackled (17%, 29). Compared to last quarter, there was an increase in the percentage of individuals who answered that they do not think knife crime is being tackled at all, increasing from 18% of the total to 20% this quarter.

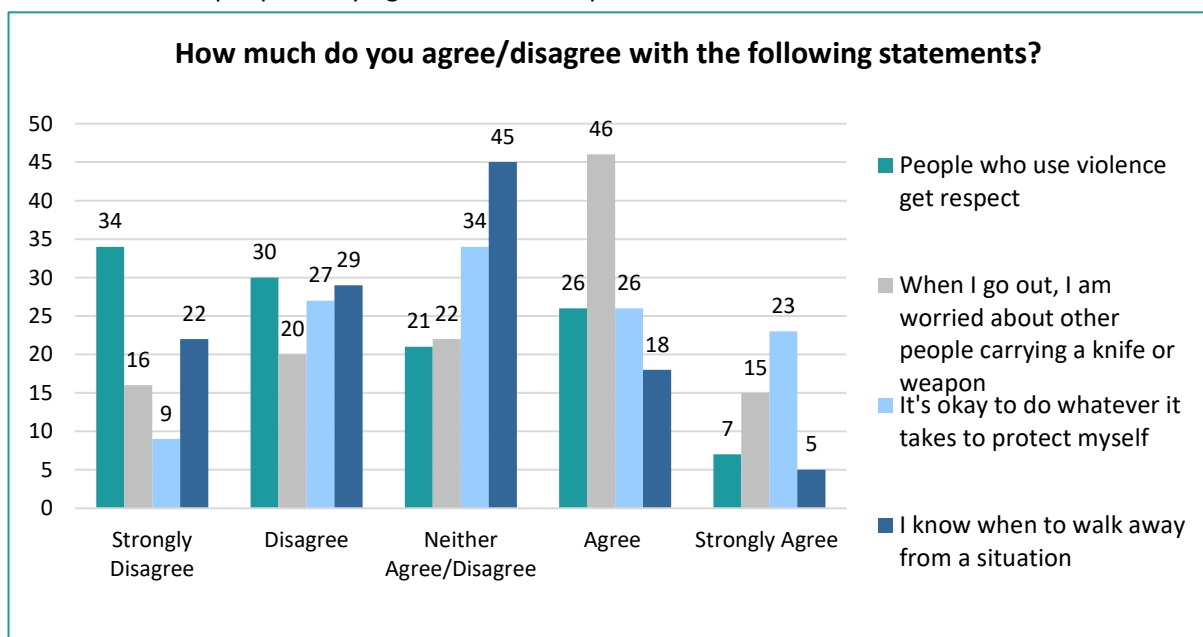
A significant factor in understanding feelings of safety is knowing who young people consider to be responsible for tackling violence and knife related crime. Among those who responded, 92% (158) considered it to be the responsibility of the Police, followed by 40% (69) of respondents who stated

that Fire and Rescue have some responsibility for reducing serious violence and knife crime. Moreover, 30% (50) of respondents said that teachers and the wider Education authorities play a significant role in reducing and preventing serious violence and knife crime. Among individuals who provided a further written answer, the most common themes were government (both local and national), the media and local communities. As was the case in the last quarter, there was a general consensus that no single group or authority are solely responsible for reducing serious violence and knife crime without some kind of wider partnership response.

Victimisation

Understanding how young people view those who carry knives in their local area is essential to building strategies to prevent this. To gauge this, individuals were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements. Of the 118 responses, 28% (33) either agreed or strongly agreed that people who use violence get respect. However, the majority of respondents (54%, 64), answered that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, thus indicating that the majority of young people who have responded to the survey do not believe those who use violence get respect.

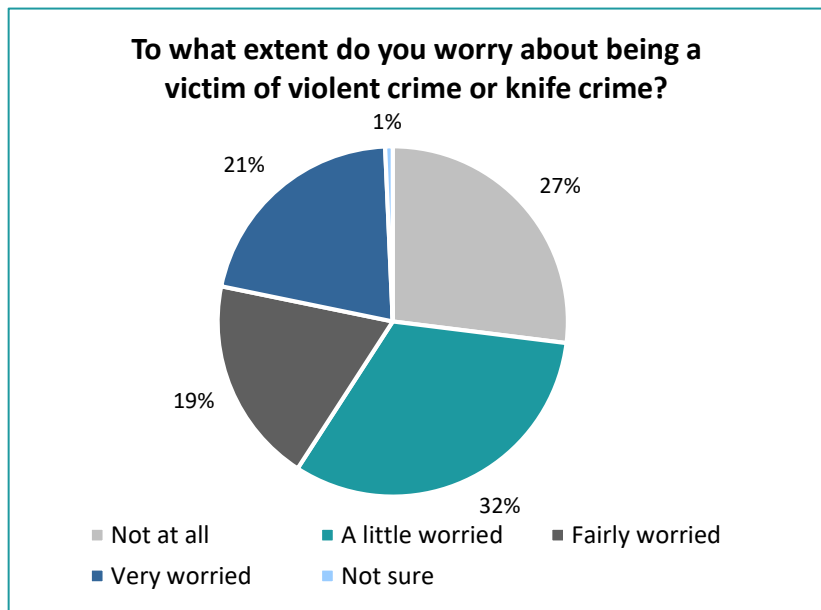
They were also asked if they agree with the statement: ‘when I go out, I am worried about other people carrying a knife or weapon’. To this, 39% (46) said they agree and they do worry, while a further 13% (15) said they strongly agree with the statement. This indicates then, that even though the majority of young people in this group do not think people who use violence are respected, many are still concerned about individuals carrying knives or weapons. Linked to this, the same group were asked whether they agree that ‘it’s okay to do whatever it takes to protect themselves’. In response, the largest group (34, 29%) answered that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This level of ambiguity in the responses indicates that young people are unclear on whether this statement is true or not, or how they would react in such a situation. Of those who answered more decisively, 41% (49) said they either agree or strongly agree with the statement. Such a high number of young people answering that they do think it’s ‘okay to do whatever it takes to protect myself’ is perhaps unsurprising given the high number of respondents who are also concerned about people carrying knives and weapons in their local area.



Finally, young people were asked whether they ‘know when to walk away from a situation’. Unlike the previous scenarios, the largest group of respondents in this case were those who answered that they either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement (43%, 51). This suggests a large group of the respondents do not believe they know when to walk away from a situation. By contrast, only 19% (23) said they agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Young people were also asked who they would trust to tell if they knew someone was carrying a knife or weapon and they could not stop them from doing so. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most common response given by 60% (89) of participants was a parent or a family member. However, the second most common response was police officer/authorities (56%, 83) followed by a friend (37%, 55). This finding indicates that young people who responded to this survey feel more comfortable talking about someone carrying a knife to the police than they do to a friend or peers. While this is a positive finding and suggests that more than half of young people feel comfortable reporting such an issue to the police, it is interesting that fewer young people would trust a friend or peer with this information. Finally, 32% (48) of respondents said they would trust a teacher with this issue.

Young people were asked the extent to which they worry about being a victim of violent crime or knife crime. A total of 152 individuals answered this question and the largest group (32%, 49) said they are ‘a little worried’ about being a victim. This was followed by 27% (41) responding that they are not worried at all. This is a direct contrast to the earlier question where the young people were asked if they are worried about people carrying knives and weapons when they are out. This indicates, therefore, that even though young people report that they are worried about people carrying knives and weapons, they are not necessarily worried about becoming a victim of violent crime.



The final question young people were asked is what, if anything, stopped them from reporting any violent or knife related offence they had witnessed or been involved in. The most common response given to this question was that they don’t trust the police (27%, 27), followed by a belief that they shouldn’t get involved (25%, 25). Again, the responses to this question somewhat contradict the previous questions particularly that which outlines how 56% of respondents would feel comfortable talking to the police if they knew someone was carrying a knife. This, therefore, demonstrates that there is a wide range of competing feelings towards the police among young people. It is clear that many trust the police and would report incidents of serious violence and knife crime, while others cite not trusting the police as the primary reason they did not or would not report such an incident.

Finally, 17.6% (18) said they were afraid of what would happen to them and that this is the primary reason they did not report the incident of serious violence or knife crime. This was followed by 14% (14) who said they didn't know who to talk to about the incident, indicating there is a significant gap in necessary engagement with some young people.

Key Findings

- 37% of respondents answered that they thought knife crime and serious violence was being somewhat tackled, whereas 25% answered that they thought it was being hardly tackled.
- 92% of respondents consider it to be the responsibility of the Police to tackle knife crime and serious violence, although 40% of respondents also said it was the responsibility of Fire and Rescue.
- 39% of respondents answered that they agree with the statement saying they are worried about other people carrying a knife or weapon.
- 41% of respondents answered that they either agree or strongly agree that it is okay to do whatever it takes to protect themselves, which is unsurprising given the high number of respondents who reported they are concerned about others carrying knives and weapons.
- More young people answered that they would report someone carrying a knife to the police (56%) than to a friend (37%) or teacher (32%). This is interesting as the most common answer given for why respondents did not report a violent or knife related incident was because they do not trust the police (27%). This demonstrates that there is a wide range of competing feelings towards the police among young people. It is clear some feel they can trust the police and would report incidents accordingly, while others cite not trusting the police as the primary reason why they would not report an incident.