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# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE KNIVES & WEAPONS GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS

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**(Reviewed and updated September 2021)**

## **Introduction**

Violent crime using weapons and possessions of a knife/bladed article is increasing nationally, and Nottinghamshire is not immune to this trend. Unfortunately, many of the reported knife crime offences in Nottinghamshire have involved children and young people.

Nottinghamshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, working with partner agencies, has published the [Nottinghamshire Knife Crime Strategy](#) to tackle this issue. An important element of this relates to educating children and young people on the dangers and consequences of carrying a knife or bladed article, and schools in Nottinghamshire are in a prime position to be part of this. The strategy and 'best practice' add strength to the notion of working in partnership to support this. Schools can also use their curriculum resources around PSHE and RSHE/RHE to further support education on violent offences. School's Early Intervention Police Officers (SEIO's) can support with this education in secondary schools, and local PCSO's can assist in Primary schools.

Whilst Schools generally remain safe places and only a small minority of pupils carry knives or other weapons in school, the potential - consequences are serious. Schools have a responsibility to keep all students and staff safe, including the child who may be in possession of a knife, as research indicates that often they can also become a victim.

This guidance produced in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottinghamshire Police aims to provide clarity to aid schools, and other education providers, to make the best decisions possible, balancing safety and risk against a need for a proportionate response, where children or young people come to school with a knife, bladed article or weapon. This document is to be used in conjunction with existing guidance e.g. *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and local policy documents, and should complement your existing approach to safeguarding including acting as a guide, should you choose to have a school weapons/knives policy.

## **Legislation and Procedures**

An offensive weapon is defined as any article made or adapted for causing injury or intended by the person having it with them for such use. As a school this would include items such as knives, including pocket-knives, sling shots, bb guns, imitation firearm, and any other bladed instrument. It should be recognised that when children bring an offensive weapon onto a school site this can often be in response to a situation where they feel unsafe, and your resulting response needs to promote a feeling of safety for the child. It is strongly recommended that a [Contextual Safeguarding](#) approach and accompanying resources should be used in understanding the drivers/motivations for the child in question including any elements of child exploitation (including CCE and CSE), when this does arise in schools in the first instance.

Nottinghamshire's Chief Constable has issued guidance to the Police force on how to deal with individuals who commit knife crime. Whilst Officers will still retain some discretion, the focus of the guidance is to ensure a consistent and robust approach to knife crime and in particular possession offences, sending a clear message to those who carry knives that this is unacceptable.

The guidance is clear that for 16 and 17-year olds caught in possession of a knife or weapon, they will be charged to Court, unless there are exceptional circumstances. For those aged 10 (criminal age of responsibility) to 15 years old, the likely outcome of a first knife/weapon possession will be a Youth Conditional Caution, in which the child will be required to work with the Youth Justice Service (YJS). However, partners are keen that children are dealt with at the lowest level so, where there are exceptional circumstances, following a fuller assessment, they could receive a lesser outcome (Community Resolution/Youth Caution) but still receive support and intervention according to their individual need. In more serious circumstances, a charge to Court is also an option which may have to be considered. To enable swift action to be taken, children in possession may be arrested and taken to the Police station.

Safeguarding issues for children are still paramount, and contextual safeguarding issues will be considered, with a safeguarding referral being made to the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) for knife enabled offences.

## **Responding to incidents and intelligence**

Response to an incident of possession or use of a knife/weapon in school/education provision occurs in many different contexts. This can range from a teacher confiscating a knife found in a child's bag, to encountering a student threatening another student or member of staff and may involve a weapon already available on education premises. It could be an unintentional case of a child dropping a butter knife into their bag by accident, or a child intentionally bringing a knife to school under the misconstrued guise of self-protection or to attack someone.

Schools are advised to report all known knife/weapons crime/possession cases, and where there is intelligence to suggest a child may be carrying a knife/weapon, whether in school or the community, this information should be passed on to the Police as below:

### **Emergency**

In cases where there is an immediate risk that the knife/weapon may be used, and the school/education provider is not confident of managing the incident safely, then the police should be contacted immediately on 999. This can include a situation where the student has fled the school/site or where the student has been contained but is still presenting a risk of harm to themselves, staff, or other students.

## **Non-emergency and intelligence**

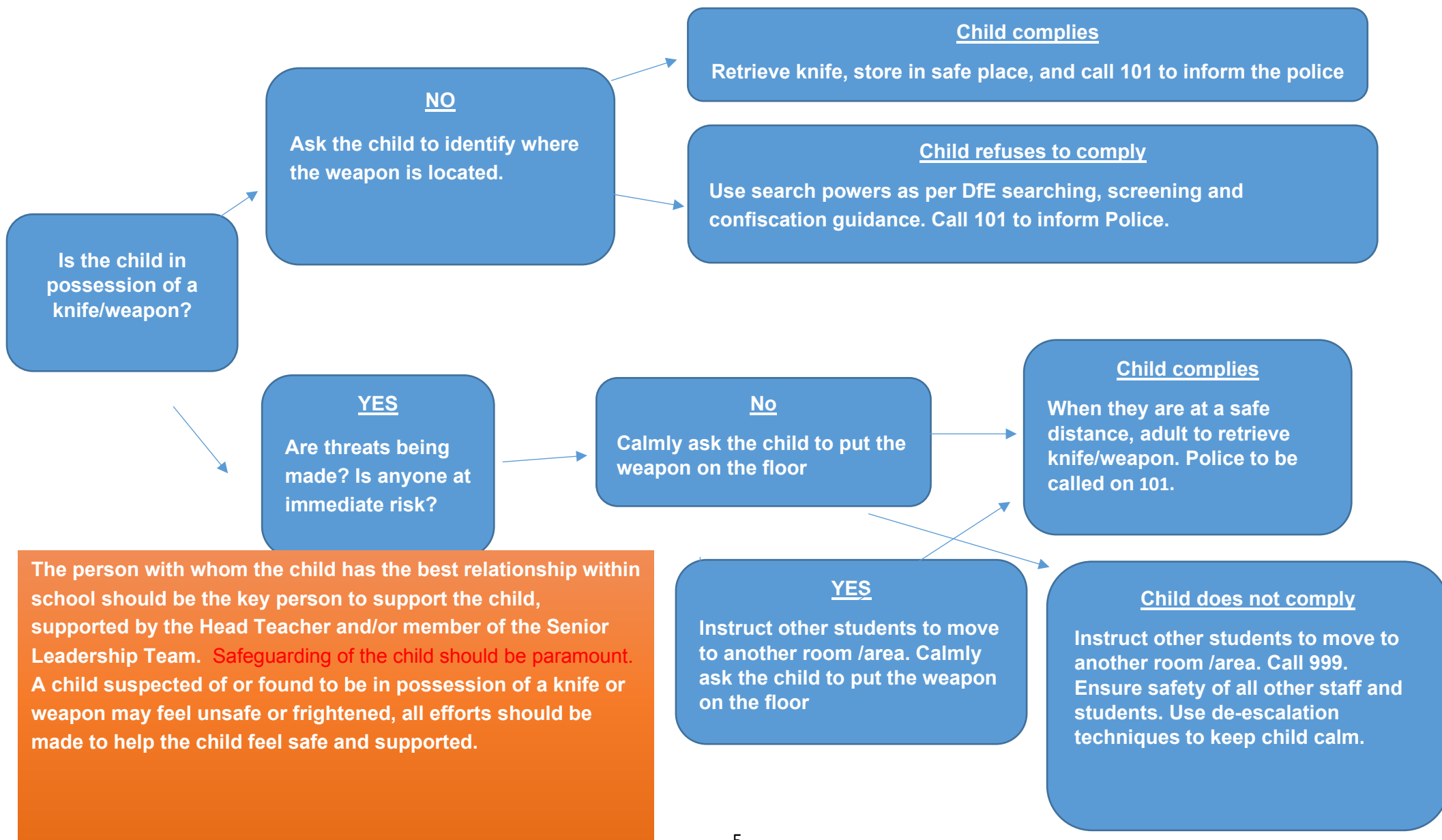
For example, a student has been searched and found to be in possession of a knife which has been handed over, and at that time the student is not assessed as posing any immediate or ongoing risk to themselves or others.

Due to the serious nature of weapons possession and potential consequences, contact should be prompt in order that future potential risk is managed, and behaviour confronted.

Call 101 to report to Police Control room.

When reporting incidents of weapons possession to 101, schools should always request and record the incident log reference number. This will facilitate further contact in relation to the incident.

## Response to reports of a knife/weapon in school:



The person with whom the child has the best relationship within school should be the key person to support the child, supported by the Head Teacher and/or member of the Senior Leadership Team. **Safeguarding of the child should be paramount.** A child suspected of or found to be in possession of a knife or weapon may feel unsafe or frightened, all efforts should be made to help the child feel safe and supported.

- Following any incident and initial notification to the police, schools/education providers should take action to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded and potential risks are sufficiently managed . Potential action may be; The priority for schools is to safeguard the child(ren) within their setting. Additional support and guidance can be sought from the Education Access & Partnership Services Team.
- Convene a meeting with parents, key person, and Head Teacher to discuss the incident, explore any risks/support needs and agree future actions. The child should be included in discussions and development of any support plans and future actions.
- Where additional support is required consider an Early Help referral or a referral to the MASH depending on the level of urgency. (Refer to the Pathway to Provision Vol.9)
- Speak to the SEIO to explore if they can offer any support/guidance or are aware of any other information/intelligence which needs to be taken into consideration.
- Where there are ongoing concerns regarding a child being at risk of repeating such behaviour consider making a referral to the Youth Justice Service for preventative intervention.
- Consider if a referral to Victim Care is required to provide support for perpetrator, victims or wider groups in school who may have witnessed the incident; [admin.nottsvictimcare@catch22.cjsm.net](mailto:admin.nottsvictimcare@catch22.cjsm.net)
- Where there are ongoing concerns for a young persons' emotional health and well-being consider referrals to CAMHS

### **Support for Schools/Education providers to deliver Knife and Weapon Crime Education and Interventions**

Prevention is always preferable to dealing with an incident, and the Nottinghamshire Knife Crime Strategy focuses on prevention and early intervention. Educating children and young people about the consequences of carrying or using a knife or weapon, as well addressing the reasons why they carry knives and weapons is paramount. Schools and Education Providers are reminded to consider issues such as being Trauma Aware and Informed, Contextual Safeguarding, CCE, CSE, and County Lines among other issues. The diagram on the next page identifies approaches taken for universal, targeted and statutory education and interventions.

## **UNIVERSAL /WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH**

All children and young people in school/education provision

This could take the form of assemblies, RSHE/PSHE lessons<sup>^^</sup>, themed days etc. facilitated by Teachers, SEIO's, TETC Team, and Youth workers. Staff briefings and staff training is also available. A whole school approach is recommended and utilising your curriculum to address this should be considered as well.

## **TARGETED**

young people identified as being at risk of committing offences e.g. police intelligence, siblings of young people who have offended, associating with yp who have offended.

Targeted preventative intervention could take the form of smaller group sessions by Schools Early Intervention Officers, referral to YJS for diversionary intervention 'My Futures'<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, Youth Service or other providers <sup>\*\*</sup>

## **STATUTORY**

young people who have been charged with an offence

Police and involvement from YJS (Out of Court Disposal or Statutory Court Order).

<sup>^^</sup> A list of resources available for schools to use can be found in appendix A

<sup>\*\*</sup> A list of organisations who can offer interventions on knife crime is available in appendix B

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> The YJS My Future Youth Support Programme form is in Appendix C

## REAL LIFE STORIES

Resource	Recommended use	Details	Where you can access the resource	Author organisation
Video Character(s): victims and their parents and EastEnders characters (not related, two different stories)	Real life story interwoven with fictional scene to be used in both an assembly and classroom setting. Suitable for all ages	Developed by EastEnders this video including interviews with real family members of knife crime victims. Features real-life testimonies about the effects of knife crime.	Available as streaming on this site: <a href="https://youtu.be/OfYZhWAwGgc">https://youtu.be/OfYZhWAwGgc</a>	BBC EastEnders
Video: vox pops Character(s): three young people both victims and perpetrators	Real life story to be used in both an assembly or classroom setting suitable for all ages	Drop the Weapons is a vox pop including contributions from the perpetrators and victims of knife crime. The site also includes links to anti-knife crime television adverts and 'choose a different ending' YouTube videos.	Available as streaming on this site: <a href="http://www.droptheweapons.org/droptheknife.html">www.droptheweapons.org/droptheknife.html</a>	Metropolitan Police Service Drop the Weapons
Video: documentary, case studies and posters Character(s): policeman, young people, doctor	Real life stories to be used in both an assembly or classroom setting  Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds  (warning, graphic images)	No More Knives is a short documentary that goes beyond the headlines to see first-hand the impact knife crime has on its victims, their families, the offender and their families, and on the professionals on the front line on the war against knives.	Available as streaming on this site: <a href="https://www.merseyside.police.uk/police-forces/merseyside-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/2018/no-more-knives/">https://www.merseyside.police.uk/police-forces/merseyside-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/2018/no-more-knives/</a>	Merseyside Police  No More Knives Ca

Resource	Recommended use	Details	Where you can access the resource	Author organisation
<p>Video</p> <p>Character(s): Mother of a victim who died as a result of knife crime in Nottinghamshire.</p>	<p>Real life story to be used in a classroom setting</p> <p>Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds</p> <p>(warning, deeply moving and emotive)</p>	<p>Case studies of real-life experiences of knife crime. Jane Taylor from Clifton talks about losing her son Luke in 2011 to knife crime.</p>	<p>Available as streaming on this site: <a href="https://youtu.be/GicU2ALMZe8">https://youtu.be/GicU2ALMZe8</a></p>	<p>Nottinghamshire Police</p> <p>Lives Not Knives Campaign</p>
<p>Video</p> <p>Character(s): young people planning and effecting knife crime</p>	<p>To be used in both an assembly and classroom setting dealing with Peer Pressure and Joint Enterprise.</p> <p>Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds.</p>	<p>Developed by Nottingham Youth Offending Service. Intended for peer-to-peer education to teach young people about the dangers of peer pressure.</p>	<p>Available as streaming on this site: <a href="https://youtu.be/RVGx4qsVx6c">https://youtu.be/RVGx4qsVx6c</a></p>	<p>Nottingham Youth Offending Service</p>
<p>Video</p> <p>Knife Angel by Alfie Bradley-</p> <p>One Show</p>	<p>To be used in both an assembly and classroom setting dealing with violence and knives.</p>	<p>Created with over 100,000 knives 'Knife Angel' sculpture made of confiscated weapons, The Knife Angel is a national monument against violence and aggression and aims to show the impact knife crime has on people's lives.</p>	<p>Available as streaming on this site: <a href="https://youtu.be/XjGYEjuFMR8">https://youtu.be/XjGYEjuFMR8</a></p>	<p>BBC One Show</p>

## LESSON PLANS

Resource	Recommended use	Details	Where you can access the resource	Author organisation
Home Office Guidance	KS3 and 4	Free Lesson Plans and teacher guidance	<a href="https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/home-office-knifefree-lesson-plans-ks34">https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/home-office-knifefree-lesson-plans-ks34</a>	PSHE Association
Video Amani – Short Film	<p>Short film to be used in both an assembly, or classroom setting.</p> <p>Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds</p> <p>(warning, graphic images)</p>	<p>Based on a true story from Amani Simpson, 'AMANI' is a short from Joivan Wade. The film depicts the inner reflections of a young man battling with his faith after being stabbed seven times. The vision is that this will be much more than a film, but rather a movement to strengthen the discussion and debate towards the end of the knife crime epidemic plaguing the lives of our young people and adults across the country</p>	<p>Video available via this site:</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/Jm6PwChWiJ8">https://youtu.be/Jm6PwChWiJ8</a></p>	MYM: Million Youth Media

**LESSON PLANS**

Resource	Recommended use	Details	Where you can access the resource	Author organisation
Posters and lesson plans	Resources can be used in a classroom setting  Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds.	The materials demonstrate the consequences of carrying a knife in a way that makes an impact on teenagers. These resources can be used in the classroom to tackle issues such as knife carrying and violence and enable young people to make safe choices.	Posters and lesson plans available to order for free on this site: <a href="https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/weapons">https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/weapons</a>  Fearless provides access to non-judgmental information and advice about crime and criminality.  What makes this site different is it also provide children and young people with a safe place to give information to about crime - 100% anonymously.	Fearless.org
Lesson Plans	Classroom setting suitable for teaching staff delivering to Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. More resources for parents and young people available on their website.	The Ben Kinsella Trust have produced free lesson plans designed alongside the PSHE Association. The Children’s Society	Available to order or download via this site:  <a href="http://www.benkinsella.org.uk">http://www.benkinsella.org.uk</a>  <a href="https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/preventing-child-sexual-exploitation#contacts">https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/preventing-child-sexual-exploitation#contacts</a>	Ben Kinsella Trust

Resources and information	Guidance, information posters and videos			The Children's Society
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**GAMES**

Resource	Recommended use	Details	Where you can access the resource	Author organisation
Interactive	Can be used in a classroom setting  Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds.	Designed and researched by the sentencing council and the CPS, this interactive website allows young people understand the workings of the crown court and sentencing guidelines for a raft of offences	Available as streaming on this site: <a href="https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/about-sentencing/you-be-the-judge/">https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/about-sentencing/you-be-the-judge/</a>  <a href="http://ybtj.justice.gov.uk/">http://ybtj.justice.gov.uk/</a>	Sentencing Council

**Fearless Website <https://www.fearless.org/en> which is aimed at children and young people.**

## Appendix B – Some Support Agencies

Support			
Organisation	Contact	Details	Where you can access the resource
<b>TETC Team, Meadow House, Littleworth, NG18 2TB</b>	Kirstin Lamb (CSE Co-Ordinator) <a href="mailto:Kirstin.lamb@nottscc.gov.uk">Kirstin.lamb@nottscc.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0115 804 2896 Mob: 07585990702 Tackling Emerging Threats to Children	Early intervention including advice, support and guidance to schools, training, quality assurance.	<a href="http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal">Available upon request and on Notts Schools Portal - http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal</a>
<b>Schools Early Intervention Officers</b>	<b>Nottinghamshire Police</b> <a href="mailto:seios@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk">seios@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk</a>	Assembly / Lesson delivery (generic violence & specific knife crime). Problem Solving in school (tackling immediate or emerging themes 1-2-1's with vulnerable young people.	See contact
<b>Life-skills Education</b>	Angie Sheard Learning and Development Manager Life-skills Education Charity (Registered Charity Number 1772680) NBV Enterprise Centre 6 David Lane	Pilot project to current DARE customers, one session on knife crime added to programme	

	<p>Nottingham  NG6 0JU  <a href="mailto:angie@lifeskills-education.co.uk">angie@lifeskills-education.co.uk</a></p>		
<b>Lotus Development</b>	<p>Rachel Pink  <a href="https://www.lotusdevelopment.co.uk/">https://www.lotusdevelopment.co.uk/</a>  hello@lotusdevelopment.co.uk</p>	Life coaching sessions, resilience and decision making	See contact
<b>Pythian Club</b>	<p>Ben Rosser  NBV Enterprise Centre, 6  David Ln, Nottingham NG6  0JU  07718649771</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boxing, football, and music programmes which are delivered within schools, communities, and sports settings</li> <li>• Knife awareness drama performance called Double Edge. The performance focuses on creating awareness, education, and early intervention/prevention when it comes to knife crime awareness</li> <li>• Referral based early/targeted intervention projects/workshops – Including gang and knife crime, county lines/drugs, alcohol and ASB</li> <li>• Senior coaches actively promote positive lifestyle choices and decision making. Mentoring of young people towards resilience and constructive pathways towards learning and employment</li> </ul>	<p>See Contact  <a href="https://www.thepythianclub.co.uk/home">https://www.thepythianclub.co.uk/home</a></p>

## Referral Criteria & Referral Form:

- **My Future: Youth Intervention Programme**
- **My Future: Mentoring and Support**

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) work with young people on a voluntary basis, offering preventative interventions to address individual needs, with the aim of preventing them from entering the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The service can also provide support to young people in a mentoring capacity; encouraging positive lifestyle choices, by challenging and changing attitudes and values that contribute to serious youth violence.

The service offers support and intervention to children and young people that is tailored to their individual needs. Intervention could be on a one to one or group work basis, delivered by YJ workers or specialist workers based within the Youth Service. The referrer should consider what services are already being provided to address the areas of concern and what additional support is required.

Referrals will be considered for young people aged 10 – 17 (up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday). Referrals are welcomed from across all partner agencies and should be made at the earliest opportunity. It needs to be clear that a discussion has been had with the young person and parent / carer (where appropriate) to advise them that a referral will be made, and that engagement is voluntary.

The referrer should consider the young person's behaviour in the context of their *individual circumstances and needs*.

Referral indicators:

- The young person is engaging in, or at risk of engaging in, anti-social behaviour or behaviour which could lead to Police involvement.
- There are concerns relating to the young person being involved in, or at risk of being involved in, acts of aggression/violent behaviour and/or using knives/weapons.
- There are concerns' regarding their use of social media which places either themselves or others at a risk of harm.
- There are concerns regarding the young person's thinking and behaviour which harmfully impact on their relationships (e.g. discriminatory attitudes and beliefs).
- Concerns are being raised in relation to the young person's risk of being or becoming involved in Serious Youth Violence (SYV) or / and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- There exists other concerning or worrying behaviour, which unaddressed, may lead to criminalisation.

If there are concerns that are not referenced above, please contact the Early Help Unit 0115 8041248 for advice and guidance. If a young person is in immediate danger or at risk of harm a safeguarding referral should be made to MASH 0300 500 80 90 email: [mash.safeguarding@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:mash.safeguarding@nottsc.gov.uk) (or contact the Emergency Duty Team if out of hours on 0300 456 4546).

If you are unsure as to whether a referral is appropriate, please call the YJS Duty Officer 0115 8042888 (Mon – Thurs 8:30am – 5:00pm, Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm).

## Referral Details

Name of Young Person:

Date of Birth:

Age:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Parent/ Carer name(s):

Address and contact telephone number(s):

Name and contact details of referrer (including organisation):

Has the young person and parent / carer been advised that a referral is being made for intervention and support?

Yes / No

What are the views of the young person and family regarding this referral?

Reason for referral (present situation and concerns):

Has the young person been discussed at the Serious Youth Violence Child Criminal Exploitation Panel? Yes / No

Are any of the following risk factors applicable for this young person?

- |                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knife Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Youth Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CCE/CSE   | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Misuse       |   |

Please specify how you want the young person to benefit from this referral and the desired outcome:  
(Are there any resources (e.g. family, friends, community) or services already being provided to address the concern?)

Date of Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

## Contact Details and Referral Submission

Referrals should be sent password protected – please do not include personal details in the email subject line.

[NottsYJS@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:NottsYJS@nottsc.gov.uk)

Once a referral has been received, you will be updated regarding the referral decision within five working days.

Should you need to discuss a referral please phone YJS Duty Officer 0115 8042888 (Mon – Thurs 8:30am – 5:00pm, Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm).

### For Office Use Only: Information Relevant to Allocation of Referral

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