



Knife crime campaign award application

30 word summary – Sussex Police produced a multi-agency campaign aimed to reduce and prevent knife-related violence in Sussex by educating young people on the legal and personal consequences of knife carrying.

Brief, objectives and budget

The brief – To influence behavioural change and raise awareness of the legal implications of carrying a knife in Sussex.

Our objectives were to:

- Target 11-18 year olds in Sussex with factual information about knife related offences and the consequences.
- Provide advice on what members of the public should do if they find a weapon, know of the whereabouts of one, or know of someone who is carrying one.
- Equip officers and staff with the tools they need to effectively communicate with the public about knife crime.
- Signpost further support services and information for target audiences.
- Reduce the fear of knife crime in Sussex.
- Work with partners to coordinate messaging to achieve best outcomes.

Budget

Out of home media - £8145
Design agency – £9,920
Knife crime card game - £4111.19

The idea, research and planning

In line with national trends, Sussex had seen an increase in the number of people carrying and using knives in the county.

Opinion research showed that:

- Fear of crime is a driver to young people feeling they need to carry a knife for protection
- Knife crime affects boys more directly with 1 in 20 reporting being a victim of knife crime compared with 1 in 100 girls
- Overall fear was reported highest between the ages of 15-18

- There is a strong link between pressure to carry a knife and socio-economic deprivation
- Those closer to knife crime are more likely to be driven by a need for esteem and respect - carrying a knife is seen as a way to achieve status and safety
- Anonymous reporting channels are not deemed confidential enough when knife carrying is known only to a small number of people
- Messengers need to be relatable to maintain the attention of the target audience with no reference to Sussex Police used when targeting young people

Our insight gave us a deeper dive into the minds of our target audience and how best to engage with them.

Strategy, creativity and innovation

Our approach was clear:

- Police weren't the best carriers of knife crime messaging to young people
- To use trusted messenger to deliver messages
- Use no police branding.

We gave the creative agency (Crush Creative) a precise brief. Following our unbranded approach, this provided us an opportunity to do things differently. The concept was character-led illustrations to ensure diversity, using strangeness of imagery which becomes easily shareable. The result - drawing in the viewer to deliver a direct message.

We were able to reality test our visuals, concepts and approach with young people via yourpolice.uk instagram account.

Delivery/implementation of tactics

- Powerful campaign assets to drive messages to young people.
- Working with partners who were ambassadors for the campaign, sharing our messages on their social media channels to an established younger following.
- Out of home media advertising in hot spot areas which had higher density of knife offences.
- A police engagement van, using positive images of staff and officers to reassure and engage with young people, and the wider the public. We showed innovation by using video on the side of the van to project outside to ensure accessibility.
- We worked with people affected by knife crime to create, *Lives not Knives*, a short film showing the personal, legal and physical impact carrying a knife can have.
- Media package ahead of the campaign.
- Reassurance messaging to parents and carers.
- Knife crime postcards for young people and parents providing information and signposting to support.

- The creation of a card game 'A game of knife or life' – an educational resource for 11-16 year olds for use in educational establishments to open up the conversation on the consequences of carrying a knife.

Note: In addition, funding outside of the campaign, allowed for 297 additional policing hours focused on anti-knife crime operations in hot spot locations.

Measurement, evaluation and impact

- 297 hours of Home Office surge funding operations resulted in 43 arrests, 64 deployments, 696 weapons seized and 245 intelligence logs.
- A decrease of 11.0% in the number of people using knives across the county from 1233 offences in 2019 to 1097 offences in 2020
- A decrease of 23.6% in the number of people carrying knives or sharp weapons across the county from 1104 offences in 2019 compared to 844 in 2020
- A decrease in knife offences in September – December 2020 from 2019, with only 307 offences down from 472. Engagement with 14,475 young people aged 11-18 at schools, and 588 young people under age 25 were engaged with at roadshows across Sussex.
- Fearless unique page visits for Q3 in 2020 went up by 30%, and reports went up by 25% compared to the previous quarter.
- Crimestoppers saw an increase of 50% for reports on possession of knives in October 2020 compared to October 2019.
- Crimestoppers also saw an increase of 108% to the Crimestoppers website from Sussex in Q3 of 2020 in comparison to 2019.

Media

- Interview with CI Paul Phelps on BBC Radio Sussex (Average weekly listeners 223,000 [source: media.info])
- BBC South East Today broadcast a piece featuring the campaign images during their breakfast show.
- Online coverage of the launch in The Argus, Brighton and Hove Independent, Bexhill in Focus and Hastings in Focus [Estimated coverage views 12,500 and social shares 29].
- Link to press release on Sussex Police Twitter (242,954 estimated reach and 20 shares), Facebook (28,981 estimated reach and 59 social shares).
- <https://www.sussex.police.uk/news/sussex/news/force-news/campaign-to-stop-young-people-carrying-knives-launches-in-sussex2/> (440 page views, dwell time 4 mins 7 seconds)

Social media

20 social media posts, resulting in:

- 1294 link clicks
- A reach of 1,956,608
- 546 shares and retweets
- 1349 likes
- 197 comments.

The out of home media resulted in 946,840 impacts (views) across two weeks.

We launched this campaign during the pandemic as knife crime was still a risk. With emergency services already stretched during this period, this campaign working in tandem with operational activity was extremely important. If the campaign was able to help influence someone's decision to not carry a knife, in turn reducing violent offences – the campaign achieved its objectives.