



# Knife Crime

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## How stop and search helps reduce crime and improves public safety

In 2014, the Home Office and College of Policing launched the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme (BUSSS). BUSSS was designed to deliver greater scrutiny and transparency, increase community involvement in the use of these powers and provide a greater focus on using intelligence to drive activity. It was intended that this would increase the police's legitimacy amongst the communities who were particularly likely to be stopped and searched, and deliver better outcomes that were linked to the reason for these searches. Nottinghamshire Police is both actively working to meet the requirements of the BUSSS and to keep Nottinghamshire safe.

The number of stop and searches undertaken in the force area have reduced in recent years, which is in line with the national picture, however this decrease corresponds with an increase in the positive outcome rate, suggesting that these powers are being used in a more targeted and effective way.

Violent knife crime is increasing nationally, an increase that is also reflected in Nottinghamshire. There has, consequently, been an increased focus on using stop and search powers to help deter, disrupt and detect criminal activity by taking weapons off the street and thereby reduce violent crime. This focus has been provided, in part, by the Knife Crime Team; the team has delivered notable results. In August 2017, the arrest or positive outcome rate from the searches conducted was 58% or nearly six out of every 10 searches led to some form of policing outcome. The use of intelligence supports the proactive nature of the teams' efforts and offers the ability to identify prolific and habitual knife carriers.

Nottinghamshire Police established the Knife Crime Team in January 2016. Since its inception, the team has seized over 100 weapons. The first knife to be seized was a small kitchen knife, the 25<sup>th</sup> a sword, 29<sup>th</sup> a TASER and 54<sup>th</sup> a firearm. These weapons have been recovered through intelligence led stop and searches. This is not as a result of the indiscriminate use of these powers but from using information given by the public to target those who are believed to be carrying knives and other weapons.

While there are community concerns regarding the use of stop and search, Nottinghamshire Police believes that, providing the powers are used lawfully and proportionally while treating those being searched with dignity and respect, the powers can remove knives from those who seek to harm others while engaging in a positive and meaningful way with the communities we work alongside.

The Knife Crime Team has made a significant investment in ensuring their stop and search powers are properly used, having had team briefings from the force stop and search lead and by getting regular feedback on the quality of the grounds being recorded following their searches from the various force-level audits.

The team is proactive in looking to have a positive effect during their searches, even if no items are found or if only a stop and account takes place. Every opportunity is taken to explain the

reasons for stopping individuals and the work that the team is doing. These interactions also provide an opening to discuss why people choose to carry weapons and to challenge these views.

The Knife Crime Team has forged strong links with the local neighbourhood policing teams to ensure feedback on their activity can be provided during community meetings and detailed explanations given around the grounds and the powers used. Doing this empowers the community to challenge police activity where this is seen to be necessary.

An example of this is when a group of young men were being searched in Radford during which a family member of one came to the scene unhappy with the officers. The opportunity was taken to speak with her, explain the reasons for the searches and what the impact of the team working in the area meant. The safety of her family member was explained by telling her that by correctly using the stop and account/search powers the number of knives and weapons being carried will reduce and therefore the risk of harm to her family member will also. She left thanking the officers and actually praising the work they are doing.