

<u>Title:</u>	Principles for working with children where a knife/weapon is indicated
<u>Description:</u>	<p>Nottinghamshire YJS are committed to taking a 'child first' approach to its work with children. It is important that the service and its partners prioritise the best interests of children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society.</p> <p>The following principles are to be used for reference when working with children who have been involved in an incident which features a knife or bladed article and/or weapon.</p>
<u>Owner:</u>	YJS Service Manager
<u>Version information:</u>	26 th May 2022, due for review 25 th May 2024.

1. Introduction

This document should be used as a reference when working with children in the following circumstances.

- A child has committed a weapon enabled violent offence e.g., knifepoint robbery, stabbing.
- A child has been convicted of an offence which has involved a knife/bladed article, or threat of a knife.
- A child has been found in possession of a knife/bladed article.
- A child has threatened to use a knife/bladed article, albeit a knife has not been seen by the victim or witness.
- A child has been convicted of an offence in possession of other weapons (e.g., a knuckle duster).
- There is intelligence to suggest that a child is carrying/using knives/bladed articles or other weapons.
- There are concerns over the child's wider behaviour such as gang involvement, group offences (such as robberies, not necessarily involving a knife/weapon) getting involved in serious violence.
- A child is the victim of a knife crime and there are concerns as to their own safety, well-being and vulnerability.

The above list is not exhaustive and case managers should also be alert to other behaviours/incidents which may require further enquiry.

2. Planning

All children who are in contact with the YJS should have an up-to-date assessment completed by either the YJS, Childrens Social Care (CSC) or the Family Service (FS). An assessment is a dynamic process, which analyses and responds to the changing level of need and/or risk faced by the child which should also be true of any plan for intervention.

At a minimum, the YJS should have completed a plan for intervention considering the child's individual, risk, need and responsivity. Plans should be co-produced with the child and, where possible, include input from their parent and carer. It is important that plans are constructive and promote a child's strengths.

Given that intervention plans should be as a result of a meaningful collaboration between the child and the case manager, and should be easily understood by the child, it may not be obvious how an agreed action links with a child's offending behaviour, risk or safety and well-being or what outcome is being worked towards. This is where clear and sufficient recording can assist in providing an insight into what the intended outcome of the action/intervention is and how the child has been involved in creating their plan. Case managers should consider this when recording sessions where intervention planning has taken place.

Example of a case record evidencing how a child's views have been included in planning and how the case manager believes the plan is going to support them:-

Dan said that he wants to try something new so we have agreed that he will attend the Mill on a weekly basis. It is apparent that Dan spends most of his time with Pete who he committed this offence with. He tells me that he doesn't have any other friends as he doesn't know what to say to people. It is hoped that Dan attending the Mill will help him learn new skills and develop his confidence by talking to people he doesn't know as part of the team building tasks. This will hopefully help him in developing his communication skills and widening his circle of friends and distance himself from Pete who I think is a negative influence. Dan tells me that he has never done climbing before and is looking forward to doing this, Dans mum said she will make sure he is ready for the taxi to pick him up and hopes he will continue attending this every week. Attending the Mill will also get Dan engaged in something constructive outside of the home and away from negative peers which may help reduce the chances of him getting into trouble.

3. Needs led Intervention

Nottinghamshire YJS aims to support children not to become involved in knife and weapons related offences. Where a child has committed an offence which features a knife/bladed article/weapon the service seeks to prevent re offending and reduce the likelihood of them using a knife, bladed article/weapon in future.

Case managers should seek to get a good understanding of the child, their personal circumstances and the factors linked to the behaviour of concern, taking a collaborative approach to identify these. Case managers should remember that 'One

size does not fit all' and intervention and support should be specifically tailored to the individual needs of the child.

When planning what type of support and intervention is appropriate, case managers should consider where they need to focus e.g., developing knowledge, developing skills, raising awareness, increasing resilience, building human capital (educational qualifications, employment, self-efficacy) or social capital (strengthening parent/carer relationships, forming pro social relationships) etc.

The following areas should also be considered.

- Identity: we need to understand the importance of their identity and if this is significant in their behaviour. How do they see themselves and their place in the world? Is there an element of their identity which is conducive to using/carrying knives/weapons; or not? Is there anything which may have recently disrupted their identity to allow the behaviour?
- Attitudes to knife carrying; exploring their attitudes to carrying knives/weapons and the 'rules' the child may apply to their lives, including fear of crime, gangs/peer groups. The nature of the incident may give some indication if this is an area of concern.
- Social: what impact do those around the child (family, peers etc) have on them? What are the 'push' 'pull' factors in their life which may be influencing their decisions?
- Social implications: do they understand the impact on family and community from knife/weapon offences; including victims and potential perpetrators. Is this something which they would benefit from having intervention?
- The law: education regarding the law and ensuring a correct understanding of the law in relation to knife/weapons may assist some children in becoming more aware and prevent them from committing a relevant offence. Educating children on the legal implications of carrying a knife/weapon and the potential consequences for themselves is seen as preventative. One child (F aged 12) told us: "*Educating children on the consequences of knife crime and the impact on their future could make them less likely to do it.*"
- Health: highlighting the dangers of carrying a knife/weapon for others, and themselves and the medical implications of using a weapon may be appropriate for some children. This could include First Aid intervention.
- Managing conflict: helping children understand their own experiences, and, where appropriate, developing skills for managing conflict may reduce the likelihood of them resorting to violence.
- Problem solving this could be made-up of risk-taking scenarios and talking about ways people can resolve them; what could they do differently. Focussing on real life, local problems and thinking about ways children can make a difference. This could include, exploring with them how they can change their behaviour, what options they believe are, and are not, available to them and how different choices can influence outcomes.
- Safety Planning: children experience risks to their safety outside of the home; often in ways that adults may not; this can impact on the choices they make

about how to keep themselves safe. Talking openly and raising awareness of exploitation can help children identify potential risks and be more aware. Creating a safety plan can be a helpful way to work with them to think about their safety, identify places of safety or concern, and make a note of what actions they can take should they be in a situation where they feel unsafe.

- Peer educators: including the experiences and learning from children who have been involved in knife/weapon crime/been a victim of CCE can be a powerful way to engage with children (e.g., No Knives, Better Lives NKBL). Studies have shown that peer education can be successful in ways that formal education (i.e., school) cannot, especially if working with at risk or vulnerable groups.
- Victim interaction: using testimonies from victims of knife/weapon crimes can be a powerful way to reinforce, and bring to life, the potential consequences for children who offend.

Case managers should adopt a layered approach to engaging and working with children and dependent upon their individual needs, regardless of their Order or type of programme. Tailored preventative intervention should also be offered to those perceived as being vulnerable to becoming involved in offending and referred for My Futures Youth Support Programme.

Layer	Features	Possible Areas for Intervention
1	Not committed an offence, evidence of anti-social behaviour, has threatened to use a knife/bladed article but no evidence of a weapon. Offence of possession of a knife but no intent to use to harm others/to commit an offence. Assessed as low RoSH.	Education around the law and the impact of offending upon themselves, advice, and guidance...
2	Intelligence to suggest that a young person is carrying/using knives/bladed articles or other weapons Offences of Possession / Carrying Knives/other weapon, assessed as medium risk of harm. Identifiable protective factors.	Problem Solving, Health, Social Implications, Safety Planning, Education around the law...
3	Repeated possession offences, concerns over	First Aid intervention, Managing Conflict, Safety Planning, Identity, Problem Solving...

	the young person's wider behaviour such as group offences (such as robberies, getting involved in serious violence), involved in offences where weapons have been used/threatened to be used, has been a victim of knife crime. Limited protective factors.	
4	Has been convicted of an offence which has involved a knife/bladed article, or threat of a knife. Has committed a weapon enabled violent offence. There is a pattern of offences involving weapons/knives, threats to harm etc. Is the victim of a knife crime and there are concerns as to their own safety, well-being and vulnerability? Concerns over the young person's wider behaviour such as gang involvement, group offences (such as robberies, not necessarily involving a knife/weapon) getting involved in serious violence.	Mentoring, one to one, Conflict, Safety Planning, Identity, Problem Solving, Victim interaction, First Aid, Peer Educators...

It is important that, even within the different layers case managers tailor the intervention according to the risk, need and responsivity of the individual. They should consider.

- how long the YJS are going to be working with that child.
- previous intervention and their understanding/recollection of this.
- involvement with other services and intervention being provided.
- the seriousness of the incident and the context in which the offence/behaviour occurred.
- the learning needs of the child (this could include SLCNs, educational need, learning style etc.).

4. Resources

Nottinghamshire YJS use a variety of resources to deliver intervention to children on a one to one or group work basis. Resources that case managers within Nottinghamshire YJS have found useful can be found in the following folder [YJ Resource Space - Knife Crime - Resources \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Specific Programmes of Intervention used:

Title	Relevant Information
Behind the Blade	Members of the interventions team have been trained to deliver behind the blade and dependant on the needs of the child will use elements of this resource.
Brave Space	Online tool kit which is free to access.
No Knives Better lives	An online resource which can be accessed by case managers to assist them in delivering intervention on a one to one or group work basis.

5. Partnership Working

Case managers will have considered the circumstances surrounding the offence/behaviour; assessing levels of risk, and safety and well-being; including circumstances, likelihood and imminence. Case managers should consider if there are any steps that need be taken in partnership with other agencies to reduce the likelihood of future offending or reduce any identified risks to the child or others. Consideration should also be given to how acute risk factors can be monitored to identify any increase in risk or concerning behaviour.

Areas to Consider

Risk Management	
Police Knife Team	<p>(May 2022) Inspector James Oliver leads to County Knife Crime Team. Inspector Oliver Vale leads the city team (for those in the South boroughs).</p> <p>The main areas targeted for The County Knife Crime team to be involved in is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Understand who are those open to YJS and are carrying / dealing etc so the team can actively search, locate and enforce that criminality.-Understand who may be on the knife crime cohorts BUT may be working well with YJ, so the team can understand that and not target. <p>The team can also support by providing some early, proactive enforcement activity.</p>
Completion of Serious Youth	YJS work closely with CSC to promote good outcomes for CYP open to both services. Referral to the YJS may be

<p>Violence & child Criminal Exploitation (CCEP) assessments and multi-agency meeting (MAM) attendance</p>	<p>submitted at an earlier stage (PPN screening, strategy discussions) with subsequent joint working allowing for a more cohesive / synchronised approach to assessment, planning and delivery. CCEP assessments should be jointly completed for CYP open to both services. CSC MAMs (Multi Agency Meeting) (CiN reviews, CIC placement planning meetings; CPCs, etc) and YJS case management meetings (CMMs) should be sufficiently co-ordinated and joined up to enable clarity around agency roles while avoiding duplication. Assessments rated as 'High' lead to CYP being discussed at the monthly 'Child Criminal Exploitation Panel' chaired by the Early Help and Youth Justice Group Manager.</p>
<p>Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs)</p>	<p>Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) were introduced through the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. The aim is to divert people who may be carrying knives, or who are at notable risk of being drawn into serious violence, away from being involved in knife crime. The civil orders can be imposed by courts on any young person aged 12 or over who police believe is regularly carrying a knife, or upon conviction of a knife-related offence to prevent reoffending.</p> <p>The orders are intended to be preventative rather than punitive, to help young people change their behaviour and avoid being drawn into knife crime.</p> <p>If this is something which the case managers believes is necessary, this should be raised for discussion at Case Management Meetings or discussed with the YJ Police.</p>
<p>Restrictive Conditions</p>	<p>When imposing conditions on an order or licence case managers should consider if there are any conditions which need to be proposed which are necessary to assist in managing the identified risks to the young person or others.</p> <p>This could include Exclusion Zones, Curfew, non-association, Activity Requirement etc.</p>
<p>Integrated Offender Management</p>	<p>Integrated Offender Management (IOM) brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. IOM can be used by the YJS to gain support from the police in working with the most complex and risky young people; including those who use weapons. If a young person is accepted on an IOM scheme this can include daily intelligence checks, enhanced police supervision and access to additional support (e.g., ETE). Suitability for IOM should be discussed at a CMMs or with the YJ Police.</p>

	For more information please YJ Resource Space - IOM - All Documents (sharepoint.com)
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Early Intervention, Prevention and Diversion	
Schools Early Intervention Officers	<p>Schools Early Intervention Officers (SEIOs) deliver intervention in schools, primarily in a group setting; however, they can work with children on a one-to-one basis.</p> <p>When a child becomes known to the YJS (e.g., PPN/referred for My Future/Court Order) the SEIO (Schools Education and Intervention Officer) for the child's school can be contacted in the information gathering stage to share information and establish if they have delivered any intervention to the child.</p> <p>A list of SEIOs and their linked schools can be found here Schools Early Interventions Officers list 2022.docx</p>
Area to Consider	If a school is having a disproportionate number of children being referred for knife/weapon offences liaison should take place with the relevant SEIO to establish if there needs to be some targeted intervention. The TECT could also be included in these discussions.
Schools	<p>The YJS work with the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team (TECT) and the police to give teaching staff further knowledge of the law and knife crime and a clear outline of procedures for reporting incidents to the police (e.g., when to call 999) and what support is available to help them if a child is known to be carrying a knife.</p> <p>Knife and Weapon Guidance for Schools and Education Providers September 2021 v.1 - FINAL.pdf</p>
Area to consider	Case managers should consider if there is any support that needs to be put in place at school to keep the child safe at school; or to support those children, where there are concerns regarding their behaviour, to prevent them from being excluded.
Neighbourhood Safety Meetings/Anti-Social Behaviour Meetings/Vulnerable Peoples Panels	These meetings are multi-agency (Police, Council, Police, Probation, YJS Health etc) in nature and are held in each of the localities. They focus on locally identified issues and specific individuals to co-ordinate and review a multi-agency response.

Youth Service Intervention Team	The YS (Youth Service) Interventions Team deliver small group work intervention to children involved in anti-social/offending behaviour within the community. This team work closely with the neighbourhood safety teams and can be accessed through the Youth Support Group as an exit strategy for children and young people involved with the YJS where additional/longer term support is required.
Area to Consider	If an area is having a disproportionate number of children being referred to the service, this could be referred for discussion at the YSG to discuss issues/concerns and establish if there needs to be a targeted piece of intervention delivered in a specific area.
Mentoring (YS/YJS)	<p>One to one mentoring is available for children involved in serious youth violence/weapon related offending.</p> <p>Referrals will be considered as part of the YSG (Youth Support Group).</p>
Youth Support Group	<p>The YSG meeting is multi-disciplinary group aimed at ensuring that young people who are at risk of knife crime, child criminal exploitation (CCE) and serious youth violence (SYV) are directed to the appropriate youth support provision. The aim being to ensure that young people are provided with the right support and interventions. This can be on an individual basis but more commonly small groups. These Tailored interventions including diversionary activities typically last for several weeks with the aim of linking to universal services.</p> <p>The YSG will also consider children appropriate to step up to Youth Justice Service for targeted support or step down to the Youth Service and universal provision for longer youth work support.</p> <p>For further information see: Youth Support Group Terms of Reference</p>
YJS Public Protection Notice (PPN) screening:	<p>The YJS screen PPNs (Public Protection Notices) that have been submitted by the police, for children that have been involved in a knife/weapon incident, a serious violent incident or where Child Criminal Exploitation is suspected. This aims to ensure that children and young people at risk of 'emerging threats' will be appropriately identified, supported, and protected at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>For further information see: PPN Guidance to be linked here</p>
Knife Crime Decision Record (KCDR)	While most children arrested for weapon/ knife offences will be expected to receive a Youth Conditional Caution (YCC) given the serious risks in knife possession, there will be some circumstances where a fuller assessment is required

	<p>to understand and establish what the most suitable and effective disposal is to address underlying needs and prevent re-offending. When a child is arrested for a knife crime offence in Nottinghamshire there is an expectation that they contact the YJS / out of hours duty worker and a Knife Crime Decision Record (KCDR). This will assist them in gathering relevant information and reach a decision as to whether a Youth Conditional Caution is appropriate or if there are exceptional circumstances (this could be presenting complexity/or vulnerability) meaning that a YCC is not just or appropriate and a fuller assessment is required.</p> <p>For further information see: Knife Crime Decision Record Flowchart, Nottinghamshire's Knife Crime Strategy 2018 (pcc.police.uk)</p>
<p>YJS attendance at s.47 strategy meetings:</p>	<p>The process has been formalised with Children's social Care (CSC) and safeguarding colleagues to ensure YJS are invited to appropriate s.47 strategy meetings to enable children's needs and a potential My Future referral to be considered. This applies to the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any incident occurring involving a child or young person (CYP) open or recently open to YJS. • incidents occurring involving CYP and suspected Child Criminal exploitation (CCE). • incidents occurring involving children linked to ASB (antisocial behaviour) or criminal peers / associates. • incidents occurring relating to knife or weapon possession / offences. • children being involved in any serious violence incident. <p>For further information see: YJS involvement in child protection enquiries</p>
<p>Divert Plus</p>	<p>A new approach to the earlier diversion of children and young people from the justice system. Contributors include Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Youth Justice Services, Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire NHS Liaison and Diversion and Community and Voluntary Sector partners. Working from both Nottingham and Mansfield Custody Suites, Divert Plus workers will be working with children arrested for violence and a range of other offences. Key elements of the provision are engagement and support for in custody at the point of the 'teachable' / 'reachable' moment; mentoring for up to one year; and speech and language support.</p>

Partners who may be able to provide wider can support			
This list of partners will be updated and kept up to date.			
Ben Kinsella Trust	Impact of youth violence, lived experiences from a victim perspective; consequences of serious youth violence.	Primary & Secondary Age	info@benkinsella.org.uk 07712 306103 www.benkinsella.org.uk
St Giles Trust	Impact of violence and those with lived experiences of involvement in gangs.	Secondary Age	info@stgilestrust.org.uk 020 7708 8000 www.stgilestrust.org.uk
Street Doctors	First Aid skills Information on medical consequences of violence	Peer education programme. 11-25 years	07763 457712 nfo@streetdoctors.org www.streetdoctors.org
Red thread A youth work charity aiming to support and enable young people to lead healthy, safe and happy lives.	To empower young people to thrive as they navigate the challenging transition to adulthood by integrating trauma, informed youth work into the health sector. A&E Work Youth Violence Intervention Programme runs in hospital emergency departments in partnership with the major trauma network. There, our innovative service aims to reduce serious youth violence.	13–19-year-olds	0203 744 6888 www.redthread.org.uk info@redthread.org.uk Redthread 158 Buckingham Palace Rd Belgravia London SW1W 9TR

6. Recording

6.1 Assessments and Events

All case managers are required to keep up to date records of their work. Anyone taking over a case should find enough information for them to feel informed about what has already happened without having to 'start again', repeating the same work with children which could be frustrating. Good record keeping can help stop this from happening; good record keeping can also help in supervision to aid case discussions and check on case progress and the quality of practice. Good record keeping can also assist case managers to reflect on their own practice and plan for future work.

Please see [Data Access and Recording Policy October 2021](#) for more information and guidance.

6.2 Characteristics

Case managers should use the relevant characteristic within CAPITA to assist with identification and risk management. If one of the below characteristics is being used information contained within a child's assessment should correspond with the 'Notes' entered against a characteristic.

It is important that, all characteristics are considered at the start and end of every order/programme and at each assessment/intervention plan review to ensure that what has been recorded remains true.

Short Description	Long Description	Front Screen	Why we Record	When to review	Notes
Has committed an offence involving a Knife/Bladed Article	The young person has Committed an Offence Involving a knife/Bladed Article	Not on the front screen	Track knife offending. Track re offending amongst young people who have committed a knife offence and identify gaps in resources	This characteristic will remain active on the record but fuller assessment of any ongoing risks to be addressed within the assessment	The young person has committed an offence which has involved a knife/bladed article. Notes on CAPITA when entering the characteristic should detail the type of offence, offence date, outcome/conviction, including date given. If there is an ongoing risk of this type of offending, characteristic (likely to use/carry a weapon) should also be indicated.
Likely to use/carry a weapon	The child is likely to Carry/use Knife or Weapons / Intelligence received	Not on the front screen	Health and Safety, Risk and SaW management	When the risk has been identified; at the start and end of programme/order, every review of Asset + or assessment; this should detail if this is still the case and clearly indicate circumstances, likelihood and imminence within risk assessment	This would indicate a conviction/verified intelligence being received from a reliable source that the young person has/is likely to use/carry weapons/knives. The young person may not have received a related conviction, and this may be intelligence received as part of Early Intervention/ Preventative identification. This is assessed as a continuing concern and identified within the assessment or Asset +

					<p>explanations and conclusions as being a potential risk factor in their offending behaviour. Notes should detail the type of weapons the young person is likely to use/carry. This needs to be actively reviewed and if not considered to be an ongoing risk the characteristic should be ended.</p>
<p>Young person is known to be a victim</p>	<p>The Young Person is known to have been a victim</p>	<p>Not on front screen</p>	<p>SaW, ACE alert, monitoring</p>	<p>This characteristic will remain active on the record but fuller assessment of any ongoing Safety and Wellbeing concerns to be addressed within the assessment</p>	<p>The young person has been identified as having been a victim. The notes should provide the nature of the offence which has led to the cyp being identified as a victim e.g., Assault/robbery/dv etc and where possible dates. This may include a victim of abuse which may have led to CP/CIN concerns.</p>