



Police Headquarters
Ladgate Lane
Middlesbrough
TS8 9EH

Chair: Cllr Dave McLuckie Tel: 01642 301467
Chief Executive: Mr J McCarthy BA(Hons), IPFA Tel: 01642 301623
Chief Constable: Mr S Price QPM BSc(Hons) MSt(Cantab) Fax: 01642 301495
Tel: 01642 301215

TITLE: REDCAR AND CLEVELAND YOUTH VOICE EVENT 2008 – WEAPONS CONSULTATION RESULTS

AUTHOR: SARAH WILSON, CONSULTATION & PERFORMANCE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On Saturday 27th September 2008 Cleveland Police Authority took part in the Redcar and Cleveland Youth Voice event which was held at Eston City Learning Centre.
- 1.2 The event was aimed at 13 to 19 year olds from hard to reach groups and deprived areas, and included young people from BME groups and special needs groups.
- 1.3 Cleveland Police Authority ran a consultation session using the interactive IML equipment to ask a series of questions covering weapons and knife crime. To my knowledge this is the first time that CPA have consulted on this issue.
- 1.4 The IML proved a very effective tool for these questions as it is anonymous and allowed the young people to be honest regarding issues which I would not have expected them to be honest about if asked directly. The following report outlines the results of the consultation session.

2 RESULTS

Demographics

- 2.1 49 young people took part in the consultation session. Of these, 44% were from East Cleveland, 45% from Redcar central and 11% from the Eston, Grangetown and South Bank area. 64% were female. Participants were predominantly from the 13 to 15 age range, apart from the special needs group who were mostly aged 17 and over.

Experience of weapons and knife crime

- 2.2 25% of those questioned had carried or considered carrying a weapon. This rose to 33% for the young people from West Redcar.
- 2.3 Overall 74% stated that they knew someone who had carried a weapon. Again this figure was higher for the West Redcar group, at 93%.
- 2.4 Interestingly, although a high percentage of participants stated that they knew someone who had carried a weapon, only 12% agreed with people carrying weapons, and this figure fell to 7% for the West Redcar group, although they were the most likely to be aware of weapon carrying.
- 2.5 Overall, 63% of participants knew someone who had been injured or attacked with a weapon. This figure rose to a worrying 87% for the West Redcar group. The special needs group were the least likely to know someone who had been a victim of weapon crime, at 27%.
- 2.6 The young people were asked whether they knew anyone who had ever taken a weapon into school, college or a youth club. Reassuringly 42% of the votes registered stated that they didn't know anyone who had taken a weapon into any of these places. However, many of the young people were aware of weapons being taken into these environments. Of the votes registered, 31% stated school, 16% youth club and 11% college. The West Redcar group were considerably more likely to know someone who had taken a weapon into school (43%), and the special needs group were very unlikely to know anyone who had taken a weapon into any of these places.
- 2.7 When asked who they would report an incident involving a weapon to, the most popular choice was police, with 31% of the votes registered, followed by parent (26%). Reassuringly only 7% of the votes registered stated that they wouldn't report the incident to anyone. The special needs group were the most likely to report an incident to the police and the West Redcar group were more likely to tell a parent than the police.
- 2.8 When asked who they would report an incident involving a weapon to, if someone they knew was involved, slightly more of the votes registered stated that they wouldn't report it (15%). However, respondents were still fairly likely to report it to the police or a parent (25% each).

Knowledge and Perceptions

- 2.9 Roughly two thirds (64%) of the young people were aware that knives could only legally be sold to over 18 year olds.
- 2.10 Participants were asked why they thought people carried weapons, with options of personal safety, peer pressure and to look good or hard. Up to three options could be chosen.

- 2.11 There was a pretty even spread between the three choices, with personal safety and to look good or hard being the most frequent choices. However, for the West Redcar group personal safety was more of a factor.
- 2.12 When asked what weapons they believed were mostly carried, the top two choices were stanley knife/blade (41%) and kitchen knife (33%). Reasons given for these choices were that these weapons were the easiest to obtain, and also quite small so easy to conceal. Regarding kitchen knives, it was also felt that it would be easier to justify a reason for carrying a kitchen knife if apprehended.
- 2.13 69% of the young people overall thought that the laws on violent crime should be made stricter. Interestingly, this figure rose to 80% with the West Redcar group, who were the most likely to have had some contact with weapons and knife crime.
- 2.14 When asked which age group they believed committed the most violent crime the most popular choice was 15 to 19 year olds (69%), which is broadly speaking correct, with most perpetrators being in their late teens or early twenties.
- 2.15 Males were considered far more likely to commit violent crime than females (51% versus 16%), which again is correct.
- 2.16 The final question asked the young people to select which of the following statements best described Redcar and Cleveland in relation to violent crime:
- It is a safe place to live
 - It is an unsafe place to live
 - It is somewhere between safe and unsafe
 - It is becoming a safer place to live
 - It is becoming a less safe place to live
- 2.17 41% of the young people thought that Redcar and Cleveland was somewhere between safe and unsafe, but 38% felt that it is becoming a less safe place to live, and 9% that it is unsafe. 10% felt that it is safe and 2% that it is getting safer.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 It would appear from the results of this consultation that weapon and knife crime within the young population of Redcar and Cleveland is more widespread than reported crime figures would suggest.
- 3.2 A quarter of those questioned stated that they had carried or considered carrying a weapon, and nearly three quarters (74%) knew someone who had carried a weapon.

- 3.3 63% of those questioned knew someone who had been injured or attacked with a weapon, and weapons being brought into school was not considered uncommon.
- 3.4 The group from West Redcar were the most likely to have had contact with weapons and knife crime.
- 3.5 Reassuringly, most of the young people disagreed with carrying weapons (88%), and most would report an incident to the police or a parent, even if someone they knew was involved.
- 3.6 Over two thirds (69%) felt that the laws on violent crime should be made stricter.
- 3.7 These results are particularly worrying given that the views expressed were based on personal experience rather than on perception which could be influenced by the recent high profile media coverage of violent crime.