

REPORT TO: STANDING CRIME SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE: 01/10/2015

REPORT TITLE: An overview of Enfield Safer Schools Team and issues of knife related crime around Schools.

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PURPOSE OF REPORT: The purpose of this report is to highlight the work of the Safer Schools Team, including the work and education carried out to deter carrying of weapons by young people. The issue of carrying weapons has become both a local and a National concern. There has also been a recent change in legislation which is important to mention.

SUMMARY: The content of this report is an overview of the working practises and innovative interventions carried out by Enfield Safer Schools Team.

1. BACKGROUND

Enfield Safer Schools Team has been in operation for over 10 years and consists of 14 Officers. I have overall responsibility for 22 secondary schools, 62 primary schools and 2 'pupil referral units'.

The focus of a Safer Schools Officer is secondary schools. However they also cover around half of the primary schools on the Borough, focusing on years 5 and 6. Some officers have one dedicated secondary school and others have two. This depends on factors including location, crime statistics etc.

One Officer is dedicated solely to primary schools, having responsibility for 12 schools and the remaining Safer Schools Officers have 2 or 3 primary schools each. These tend to be the 'feeder' schools for the secondary school to which the Officer is attached.

The role of a Safer Schools Officer is complex and varied. Primarily, they are there for the safety and well being of young people, and enforcement is a last resort. They are active in implementing educational programmes designed to deter young people from offending or from becoming victims. They also conduct high visibility patrols in and around the schools, aimed at enhancing the safety of pupils.

2. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

A Safer Schools Officers works independently within a school and can be faced with highly complex issues. They need to be confident, calm, robust on some occasions, and able to communicate at all levels.

The areas we have focused on over the last 12 months have been; youth violence, robbery, internet safety (including mobile phones), and the carrying of weapons.

Some of the projects and interventions delivered include the following:

Officers conduct regular 'weapons sweeps' around schools to detect and deter the hiding of weapons. We also conduct knife arches in schools, although this has met with opposition from some Head Teachers.

I recently delivered a project called 'Operation Crest' in 5 secondary schools, which was targeted at youth violence, knife crime and gang awareness. The speakers included Police, a London Paramedic, an ex offender, and a bereaved mother. The project was demanding from a staffing perspective, but was very well received, and the aim is now to deliver this to the remaining schools on the Borough.

Safer Schools Officers carry out crime prevention work within their schools, including work around mobile phones. The encouragement is to register all phones on 'immobilise.com', note the IMEI number for their phone and activate tracking devices such as 'find my iphone' The aim is to make the phones less attractive to potential thieves and assist with an 'evidential chain' if a crime is committed.

Historically, we noticed a rise in robberies as pupils made their way home, typically 3pm to 5pm. Therefore we increased our patrols around schools at these times. The patrols, coupled with education around prevention have helped to reduce the number of reported robberies on school children dramatically. I am mindful that not all robberies may be reported, due various reasons, and so when Operation Crest was delivered there was a strong push to encourage the reporting of all robberies.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

My recommendation is to note the contents of this report.

4. NEXT STEPS

I am happy to answer any questions the panel may have.