IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN

LOCAL CAMPAIGNERS' TOOLKIT

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FOR ANYONE WANTING TO TAKE ACTION TO TACKLE YOUTH KNIFE CRIME IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

“

FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE DIED DUE TO THIS ISSUE. I DECIDED I JUST HAD TO DO SOMETHING...

...I WANT TO INSPIRE OTHERS. I’M NOT SPECIAL. EVERYONE CAN USE WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.

ALEXANDER ROSE, YOUTH CAMPAIGNER

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
WELCOME		01
KNIFE CRIME: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT		01
1	CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW	02
1.1	CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND	04
1.2	CAMPAIGN STRATEGY	05
1.3	GET INVOLVED	06
1.4	KEY MESSAGES	07
1.5	ACTION AND INSPIRATION	08
2	KNIFE CRIME FACTS, FIGURES AND ESSENTIAL INFORMATION	09
2.1	WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?	10
2.2	WHO CARRIES KNIVES?	10
2.3	WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY KNIVES?	11
2.4	WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN GANGS?	12

WELCOME TO THE IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN LOCAL CAMPAIGNERS' TOOLKIT.

THIS TOOLKIT IS A RESOURCE FOR LOCAL ANTI-KNIFE CRIME CAMPAIGNERS. IT IS INTENDED FOR ANYONE WANTING TO TAKE ACTION TO TACKLE YOUTH KNIFE CRIME IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

You could be a youth leader, a teacher, a parent or carer. You could be a sports coach or council worker. Whatever your profession or position within the community, as a local campaigner you have a crucial role to play in helping to persuade young people not to carry a knife. Your ability to reach key groups of people and bring about change on the ground will be essential in helping to create a united stand against knife crime.

KNIFE CRIME: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Knife crime does affect young people disproportionately. Since the start of 2008, over 50 young people are reported to have been killed in Britain, many of them lost to knives or sharp instruments.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of young people are carrying knives and getting involved in knife, gun and gang crime. Most young 'carriers' are motivated by fear, but in 'tooling up' they increase the likelihood of becoming victims of knife crime themselves.

But knife crime does not only affect the victim or offender. Tragically it can affect individuals, families and communities anywhere and at anytime. The most important thing is to prevent more injuries and deaths occurring by encouraging young people not to carry knives.

1 IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Intended to inform and inspire local action, this toolkit provides ideas, advice, support and best-practice on how to engage young people and tackle youth knife crime in your area. Designed to act primarily as a communications resource, this toolkit covers general information about the IDHTH campaign, including its background, context, structure and objectives.

At the back of this toolkit there are ideas for action and 'how-to' information on a range of topics, including events, partnerships, reaching young people, and media relations.

Through your work, we want to encourage young people throughout England and Wales to 'say no to knives', and to empower and enable local communities to stand united against knife crime. You have a key part to play in achieving these goals. This toolkit will show you how.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN (IDHTH) IS A NATIONAL HOME OFFICE LED CAMPAIGN WHICH AIMS TO SUPPORT AND DELIVER ANTI-KNIFE CRIME INITIATIVES THROUGHOUT ENGLAND AND WALES.

Launched in May 2008, conceived by the Home Office and developed by and for young people, the campaign's main objective is to reduce the possession and use of knives among young people by facilitating peer-to-peer messaging. We want young people to understand the consequences of knife crime – for themselves, their families and their communities. We want them to say 'no to knives' and have a positive influence on each other.

By providing tools, materials and support to young people, parents and carers, professionals and local campaigners, our aim is to empower people to work effectively at community level to significantly reduce knife crime We want young people to 'own' the campaign, showing them that the solutions are in their hands to create a culture of intolerance towards knives.

Our approach is to unite local and national action, and to use local efforts to amplify the national campaign voice. We want campaigners to use their local knowledge of people and places to bring about change on the ground; to help deliver national messages with maximum impact; and to help build momentum and support to stand united against youth knife crime.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

At a national level, It Doesn't Have to Happen (IDHTH) is being delivered through a range of advertising (TV, viral and radio ads), media, messages and materials. Targeting 10-16 year olds, these include:

- **Online**
  The hub of the campaign sits on the social networking site Bebo (www.itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk). The IDHTH page facilitates powerful peer-to-peer messaging and dialogue. It also contains audio, visual, broadcast and text-based information for people who want to take positive action against knives. Since its launch, the Bebo page has been visited by tens of thousands of young people.

- **Radio**
  Radio adverts, featuring personal testimonies such as a mother who lost her son, and a young person who was stabbed, have been used to direct young people to the Bebo page. By the end of 2008, 2.8 million had heard the radio ads.

- **Viral**
  Viral alerts have been distributed through mobile phones and websites, and have been seen by nearly 10 million young people so far.

- **Partnerships**
  The IDHTH campaign has a range of partners such as the Football Foundation and Kiss Radio Station.

- **Billboards**
  An IDHTH poster campaign has been launched in key urban residential areas in England and Wales, for a five month period. Each phase of the poster campaign has incorporated creative ideas from young people themselves, and has featured images of young people who have uploaded anti-knife photo pledges on the campaign Bebo page. These posters have been designed to motivate positive action amongst young people against knife crime.

TALK ABOUT KNIVES

Talk About Knives is part of the IDHTH campaign, targeting mothers who have a strong influence over their sons. Talk about Knives encourages positive dialogue with young people to help keep them safe and encourage them to stay away from knife crime.

With support from campaign web pages on DirectGov (campaigns.direct.gov.uk/talkaboutknives), Talk About Knives provides guidance on how to broach the subject of knife crime, and how to spot signs that a child might be carrying, or thinking about carrying a knife. It also offers ideas and advice for mothers who want to work with other parents and carers to take a local stand against youth knife crime.

To order a Talk About Knives leaflet, please call 0845 600 4171 and quote "TAK".

1.1 CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

TACKLING VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN 2008

In recent years, the government has introduced a range of initiatives aimed at tackling knife crime and its underlying causes. The It Doesn't Have to Happen (IDHTH)campaign brings together key components of these government measures. Specifically, IDHTH is a commitment by central government, outlined in the Tackling Violence Action Plan, to challenge the fear, glamour and peer-pressure that motivates young people to carry knives.

KEY MEASURES WITHIN THE PLAN INCLUDE:

- **Tackling Gangs Action Programme**

  The Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP) was a six-month initiative, announced in September 2007, to target and reduce youth violence – particularly gang-related firearm offences. Funding of £1.5 million was allocated to support this work in four cities in England and Wales. The work was conceived against a backdrop of a number of high-profile fatal incidents involving young people and gangs, and the programme is part of on-going work to tackle this serious problem.
  For more information, go to www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet011.htm.

- **Tackling Knives Action Programme**

  The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) was launched in June 2008 and involves five government departments. It is intended to deliver intensive activity in ten police force areas in England and Wales to reduce the number of teenagers killed or wounded by knives. Through this Action Programme, the government also wants to increase public confidence in the levels of street safety.
  For more information, go to www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tackling_knives.htm

- **Tackling Violence Action Plan**

  In 2008, the government published the Tackling Violence Action Plan (called Saving Lives, Reducing Harm, Protecting the Public). The Plan sets out a new approach to knife crime intended to send a clear message to everyone, but young people in particular, that it is unacceptable to carry a knife, and that those found carrying a knife will be punished.
  For more information, go to www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/violent-crime-action-plan-08/violent-crime-action-plan-180208?view=Binary

- **Youth Crime Action Plan**

  In July 2008, the government published a Youth Crime Action Plan designed to approach key issues from a number of different perspectives. It makes clear that the government will not tolerate the behaviour of a small minority which causes misery and suffering to others, especially their victims who, more often than not, are other young people.
  For more information, go to www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan

- **Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006**

  The Violence Crime Reduction Act 2006 gives police and local communities the power to tackle low-level aggression and intimidation through measures designed to reduce alcohol-related offences and anti-social behaviour. The Act also sets out a range of actions to tackle more serious violence caused by guns and knives.
  For more information, go to www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/violent-crime-action-plan-08/

1.2 CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

MAKING IT HAPPEN

TO HELP US ACHIEVE OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, WE'VE DEVISED A STRATEGY THAT FOLLOWS TWO VERY SPECIFIC APPROACHES TO CAMPAIGNING. THEY ARE:

LOCAL AND NATIONAL

It Doesn't Have to Happen (IDHTH) has been designed to be both a national and local campaign. The idea is to support and brand local campaigns and to build recognition nationally. In this way, we aim to unite local and national action, and to use local efforts to amplify the national campaign and its messages.

Indeed, local campaign work is fundamental to the success of IDHTH. Local activities enable campaigners to target specific areas and groups of young people most at risk, and to communicate alternatives to, and routes out of, gang culture and knife crime. In return, the national campaign is there to support locally run initiatives, providing practical advice and guidance to local anti-knife crime campaigns.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Campaigns such as IDHTH are referred to as 'behaviour change campaigns'.

Behaviour change campaigns aim to reach deep into daily life for specific groups of people, and motivate them to change habitual behaviour. In the context of IDHTH, the habitual behaviour we want to change is the carrying of knives.

To succeed, a behaviour change campaign needs to demonstrate tangible, self-interested benefits to the audience in a way that resonates with them.

Putting the audience first

Behaviour change campaigns reverse the thinking behind many communications campaigns. Instead of starting from the objectives and mindset of the organisation delivering the communication, it starts from a deep analysis of the aspirations, mindset and behaviour of its audiences. From this, it identifies who needs to be influenced, what action they need to take, why and how they will be motivated, and how opportunities for action can be delivered in credible, convenient, engaging ways.

Local activities enable campaigners to target specific areas and groups of young people most at risk, and to communicate alternatives to, and routes out of, gang culture and knife crime.

1.3 GET INVOLVED

Local knowledge brings about change in communities and helps to deliver national messages with maximum impact. And as a local campaigner, you know your area. You're also likely to know the local target audience and where to find them. You are therefore best placed to deliver the campaign messages. For example, you can:

- Time and target campaign messages to coincide with appropriate local events, such as local festivals, school activities/ workshops, club nights
- Guide young people to local support services and diversionary programmes
- Forge strong support links and local partnerships – for instance with local youth clubs, schools, football clubs, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions

In this way, you can make a real difference in facilitating lasting behaviour change and helping to tackle knife crime.

HOW LOCAL EFFORTS TIE INTO AND SUPPORT THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

It's crucial that you find out all there is to know about the national campaign before you get started. This will prevent you from needlessly reinventing messages or duplicating resources and materials. Essentially, however, you can deliver the national campaign messages through local channels, tailoring them as you see fit and adding your local insight and expertise to get the best results. Your ability to communicate face-to-face with the target audience, and to devise positive, diversionary interventions at grassroots level, will complement, and be of enormous value to, the national campaign.

It's also important to remember that you are working with the national campaign. We're all in this together, working for the same outcomes. Use the stakeholder website www.itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk/ stakeholders to share best practice and ideas for action. You can also call on the national campaign administration for support, guidance and advice at any time, by emailing info@itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk

Use of national resources

In your local efforts, you are encouraged to use the national campaign identity and resources to deliver messages locally. Operating under a national brand umbrella, you can use the national campaign to gain maximum visibility.

1.4 KEY MESSAGES

THE IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN CAMPAIGN (IDHTH) MESSAGES FOR THE YOUTH TARGET AUDIENCE ARE:

1. **If you carry a knife you're more likely to get stabbed yourself.**
2. **IDHTH has been created by young people for young people.**
3. **Get involved in IDHTH and take a stand against knife crime.**
4. **Tell your friends about www.itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk – the more people you tell, the stronger we become.**
5. **Say "no" to knives.**
6. **Even if a knife wound isn't fatal, it can still cause serious injury.**
7. **The effects of knife crime are devastating – for young people, their families, friends and community.**
8. **Most young people don't carry knives.**
9. **Most people who carry a knife don't think they'll use it.**
10. **It is illegal to carry a knife – the maximum penalty is four years in prison and a £5,000 fine.**

HOW BEST TO PLAN MESSAGE DELIVERY

Campaign messages are most effective when they have some resonance with a local or national event. For example, message delivery could be planned to coincide with:

- **Start of the new school year**
  Focusing on new beginnings and future prospects, you could deliver messages about how knives can cut short young lives and ruin dreams and ambitions.

- **Christmas**
  The increase in seasonal alcohol consumption could provide a platform from which to deliver messages about avoiding trouble on the streets and steering clear of confrontation.

Refer to the "in the news: using the media" guidance sheet which accompanies this toolkit to help focus your thoughts about local campaign message delivery.

1.5 ACTION AND INSPIRATION

CAMPAIGN CASE STUDIES:

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE GREAT WORK ALREADY GOING ON AT A LOCAL LEVEL TO TACKLE KNIFE CRIME AND YOUTH VIOLENCE

Alexander Rose: Solve This Ongoing Problem (STOP)

After one of his friends was killed, Alexander Rose from London decided that he had to do something and take a stand against knife crime.

Using fashion as a 'hook', Alexander goes into schools and youth clubs to talk to young people about gang culture and youth violence. He uses his experience of graphic design and 'positive fashion' to combat negative gangster images, raising awareness about the dangers of knives and encouraging young people to stop carrying weapons.

"Friends and family members have died due to this issue. I decided I just had to do something. I turned to what I knew at the time, which was graphic design, and came up with a t-shirt design and a campaign called Solve This Ongoing Problem (STOP).

I want to inspire others. I'm not special. Everyone can use what they have to do something. I'm telling you: positivity pays off. Talent + Belief = Success."

For more information go to www.bebo.com/STOP_ campaign

Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership in partnership with Bedfordshire Police: No More Knives

No More Knives is a short documentary film exploring the extended consequences of knife crime. Approaching the subject in a frank and realistic way the film addresses the impact of knife crime on victims, offenders, families and communities. It also features the professionals working on the frontline.

The film aims to stimulate thought, and generate open and honest dialogue, to empower young people to resist peer pressure, see the bigger picture and ultimately not carry a knife.

The No More Knives website, www.nomoreknives.com, has been designed to compliment the DVD and to increase accessibility.

A No More Knives resources box is also available for use in classrooms. This resource helps to bring the documentary to life via drama activities and group discussions.

For more information go to www.nomoreknives.com

Spelthorne and Woking Council: Knives Wreck Lives

Spelthorne and Woking Council have launched an anti-knife crime initiative called Knives Wreck Lives (KWL). Following collaboration between Spelthorne and Woking Youth Councils, the campaign idea was created by young people who were inspired to take a stand against knife crime.

Targeting young people aged 10-19, KWL aims to unite young people against knife crime and counter the negative media portrayals of young people's attitudes and behaviour. The project is intended to show that many young people are concerned about knife-related violence, and gives them an opportunity to voice this concern.

To ensure the KWL messages reach their intended audience, the Borough Youth Officer and local Police Youth Intervention Team have been delivering secondary school assemblies on the dangers of knife crime. Young people have been encouraged to show their support for the campaign by wearing lime-green wristbands, speaking out against knife crime, and signing a pledge to keep away from knives. To date, some 20,000 pledges have been signed and returned. The campaign has also received some high profile celebrity support.

For more information go to www.swyc.co.uk

2 KNIFE CRIME FACTS, FIGURES AND ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Before you engage young people in your area, it is important that you understand the key legal issues relating to knives. By arming yourself with information, you will be in a much stronger position to talk to young people about the risks and consequences of carrying knives and other weapons.

HERE WE PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE LAW RELATING TO KNIVES:

POSSESSION

- It is illegal to carry an article with a blade or sharp point in a public place without good reason.
- It is not illegal to be in possession of a folding pocket knife/pen-knife with a blade of three inches or less.
- However, possession of any article, including a pocket-knife/pen-knife, becomes an offence if it is used for causing or threatening violence.

SALE

- It is illegal to sell any kind of knife (including a cutlery or kitchen knife) to anyone under the age of 18 – with the exception of folding pocket knives with blades of three inches or less.
- It is illegal to market any knife as suitable for combat, or in ways that are likely to encourage violent behaviour involving the use of a knife as a weapon.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Carrying a knife could mean being arrested, going to court, receiving a criminal record or even going to prison.

- The maximum penalty for an adult carrying a knife in a public place is four years in prison and a £5,000 fine.
- With an end to knife cautions for over-16s, anyone aged 16 and over can now expect to be prosecuted on their first offence. For under-16s, this applies to the second offence.
- Anyone caught using a knife could receive a custodial sentence, and anyone caught carrying a knife is also increasingly likely to receive a custodial sentence.

Young people need to know that if they are caught carrying a knife they will be punished. With the maximum sentence for knife possession raised and the prosecution age lowered, punishment is more likely to be severe and will be more widely applicable.

They also need to be aware that having a criminal record could affect the rest of their life – it could prevent them from getting a job, going to university/college or even traveling abroad to certain countries.

For more information on knives and the law, go to www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/CrimePrevention/DG_078569.

2.1
WHO ARE WE
TRYING TO REACH?

The target audience for the It Doesn't Have to Happen (IDHTH) campaign is 10-16 year olds, especially those who live in urban areas and are from the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. It seems knives are becoming normalised among this age group, and levels of knife ownership and carriage are growing.

2.2
WHO CARRIES
KNIVES?

Research among the campaign target audience has identified several core types of 'carrier'. These have been defined according to knife carrying tendencies and motivations.

Research has shown that it is particularly useful to target those groups who fear knives and violence, and those who are moving on. Those who fear knives and violence offer the greatest opportunity for intervention before they carry knives, whilst those who are moving on understand the pressures faced by young people around knife crime, and potentially provide credibility and a strong voice against knife crime to vulnerable young people who might consider carrying a knife.

1. **Proactive, hardened knife carriers (status-motivated)**
   High likelihood of carrying a knife, high level of violent threat towards others, crime-experienced

2. **Self-protective knife carriers (protection motivated)**
   High likelihood of carrying a knife, lower level of violent threat, crime-experienced

3. **Those who follow the crowd (belonging-motivated)**
   Less high level of violent threat, less high likelihood of carrying a knife, lower 'serious crime' experiences

4. **Those who carry guns (power-motivated)**
   High level of violent threat, lower likelihood of carrying a knife (because moving towards guns)

5. **Those who use violence rather than knives (control-motivated)**
   Low level of very violent threat, low likelihood of carrying a knife, high likelihood of engagement in day-to-day violence

6. **Those who are moving on (progression motivated)**
   Lower level of violent threat, may have carried a knife in the past, but currently sporadic likelihood of carrying a knife

7. **Those who fear knives and violence (safety-motivated)**
   Lower level of violent threat towards others, sporadic likelihood of carrying a knife

8. **Those who observe but don't get involved (safety-motivated)**
   Very low/no level of violent threat towards others, very low/no likelihood of carrying a knife, high level of concern over the knife culture they see around them

2.3 WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY KNIVES?

1.FEAR

We know that most young knife carriers are motivated by fear. This fear is born out of a fragile sense of security, and centres on the threat (imagined or real) of being attacked by others. Knife carrying is therefore primarily driven by a perceived and accepted 'need' for self-defense and protection.

2.ACTIVE INTENT

In some cases, there is a purely functional and aggressive rationale for carrying a knife – for instance, to use when mugging people, or to inflict injury on others. Research carried out in 2003 revealed that one in five 16 year-old boys admitted to having attacked someone and intended to hurt them seriously with a knife in the previous 12 months (Youth Justice Board/MORI 2003).

3.STATUS AND GLAMOUR

Knives are also representative of social currency, emblematic of misplaced glamour and celebrity, as well as of strength. Knives are often seen to enhance a carrier's street credibility and reputation, and 63% of young people surveyed believe image is directly linked to gun and knife crime (Action for Children/NCH 2008).

4.PEER PRESSURE

Peer-pressure is also a motivational force behind knife possession. Young people within the orbit of older, 'harder' youth are likely to be both influenced and pressured into carrying knives. In this context, a knife may be perceived as a must-have accessory, as well as a necessary 'tool' for self preservation.

5.BARRIERS TO TACKLING KNIFE CRIME

Knife crime and youth crime generally are also attributable to certain social and familial 'risk factors'. These include:

- Lack of prospects and purpose; no positive future orientation, leading to couldn't-care-less attitude
- Low educational attainment, lack of positive diversionary activity and distraction
- The use of drugs by young people fuelling social-exclusion and 'risky' social behaviour
- The use of drugs by parents, often paving the way to criminal activity among young people
- Cycles of exclusion forcing young people away from positive adult influence
- Family breakdown, leading to a care vacuum and lack of family support
- Poor emotional bonds and lack of positive and engaged role-models

Where positive family bonds and influences don't exist, young people can find it hard to conceive of an alternative world of hope and opportunity – a world other than the one that they inhabit. These young people need most help in understanding the consequences of their actions, and in finding positive alternatives to crime and violence.

2.4 WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN GANGS?

The main reasons for young people joining gangs are:

- **To be recognised**
- **To defend their territory**
- **For protection**
- **To gain friends**
- **For respect**
- **To be accepted**
- **For a sense of belonging**
- **For excitement**
- **For a sense of power**
- **For money from crime**

More information on gangs and gang culture is available in the Home Office leaflet Gangs: you and your child; Advice to parents on gangs; Helping your child make the right choice. This leaflet can be ordered by calling 0845 600 4172, quoting "GANGS", or by visiting: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/WorriedAbout/DG_171

END NOTE:

When it comes to the implementation of your local campaign, please be sure to refer to the ideas for action and 'how-to' information at the back of this toolkit. These resources cover a range of key topics, including events, partnerships, reaching young people, and media relations.

If you want to find out more about It Doesn't Have to Happen, or if you have any queries about any of the information in this toolkit, or about running your own local activities, please contact info@itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk.
You can also access campaign information, materials and messages on www.itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk/stakeholders.

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www.itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk/stakeholders

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