

Statement from Lucy Bradley – Bath Student Parliament

Dear Councillors,

As a member of the Bath Student Parliament, a pupil-led organisation set on voicing the political opinions of students in the local area, I would like to talk you through our knife crime proposal. This proposal contains several suggestions of ways we believe will begin to tackle this urgent issue. It is something we all feel very strongly about, particularly with the recent rise in knife related violence.

Our first suggestion is to increase the outreach of police expertise into schools through assemblies and integrating their resources into the PSHE curriculum. We believe that improving the knowledge that young people have around why there is an increase in knife crime and related violence will help them feel less vulnerable and aim to diminish anxiety surrounding the issue.

Furthermore, we believe it would be beneficial for the police to communicate with the teacher leadership teams in school and provide them with appropriate resources to make them feel confident in ensuring they are doing the most that they can to keep the young people they teach safe both within and outside of school.

Our next proposal links to the idea of the police providing resources for schools to use. We propose a BANES school-wide implementation of mandatory education modules about knife crime. These lessons could include teaching de-escalation techniques to students in addition to other parts such as the wider impact of knife crime on the community and the legal implications of carrying a knife. We believe this education is fundamental for increasing the understanding of young people to ensure they feel confident and safe.

A further suggestion is introducing an increased protective presence in the city centre, particularly later at night. We would like there to be a specific team that can act immediately and decisively to assist young people if they are feeling vulnerable or at risk. Within this team would be a medical capacity that is centrally located at all times so that it can assist potential victims of any kind of violence, before an ambulance has time to arrive. In addition to this we would like to see bleed kits available around Bath in a similar manner to those currently found in Bristol, so those already at the scene have the ability to administer lifesaving treatment.

Our final suggestion stems from the idea that we should be taking an active role in ensuring our personal safety. For this reason, we believe it is important for students to have the opportunity to access to self-defence classes. At one local school, some pupils have paid for these classes and are learning crucial skills to protect themselves, but they are extremely expensive. We strongly believe that everyone should have access to such classes therefore funding should come from a central source rather than relying on parental contributions. Our aim for the extra funding would be to provide access to self-defence instructors and validated on-line materials that schools can access.

Within this course, we feel it is also vital to include fundamental first aid techniques, pertinent to knife crime injuries as well as other street violence injuries.

The impact of knife crime on our community is far reaching and unless we all work together it will continue to destroy lives. We appreciate the time you will take to consider our proposal and we look forward to working with you to implement these measures and bring about safer streets in Bath.