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Nottingham City Knives and Weapons Guidance for Schools and Education Providers



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This document has been reviewed and updated in September 2023 v3. A review of this document will be completed annually and action captured as part of the Nottinghamshire Police Knife Crime Delivery Plan.

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Introduction

This guidance has been created in partnership with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), Nottinghamshire Police, Education – Access to Learning, Youth Justice Service and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.

The guidance has been written to support educational professionals to make robust, safe, and proportionate decisions when responding to concerns about offensive weapons on the setting’s site. This guidance supports multi-agency partnership working to ensure that children are protected from additional risk and exploitation, not just in the short term but also in the long term.

This guidance should also be read in conjunction with that relating to the [Serious Violence Duty](#) and the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire’s Violence Reduction Partnership’s Response Strategy [Serious Violence Response Strategy 2022-25](#) (nottsvrp.co.uk).

The Ofsted publication [‘Safeguarding Children and Young People in Education from Knife Crime – Lessons from London 2019’](#) highlights five main objectives to address the issue:

- Improving partnership working and strategic planning.
- Sharing and promoting good practice in relation to exclusions, managed moves and negotiated transfers
- Coordinating early help and prevention.
- Improving information-sharing.
- Implementing safeguarding via Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)/Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and other areas the curriculum, to ensure children are supported to achieve.



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Legal Definitions

Knife possession

There are numerous offences and legislation relating to the possession of weapons and knives. These include:

Prevention of Crime Act 1953 (“the 1953 legislation”)

- Having an offensive weapon in a public place – section 1
- Threatening with an offensive weapon in public – section 1A

Criminal Justice Act 1988 (“the 1988 legislation”)

- Having a bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place – section 139
- Having a bladed or sharply pointed article on school or further education premises – section 139A
- Threatening with a bladed article in a public place or on school or further education premises – section 139AA
- Manufacture, sale or hire, or offer for sale or hire, expose or have in their possession for the purpose of sale or hire, or lending or giving an offensive weapon to any other person – section 141

S. 139 Criminal Justice Act 1988

Prohibits having with you in a public place any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed, (included a folding pocketknife if the cutting edge of its blade exceeds 7.62cm/ 3inches)

S. 139A Criminal Justice Act 1988

Creates offence of possessing an article with a blade or sharp point or an offensive weapon on school premises.

S.1 Prevention of Crime Act 1953

Prohibits the possession in any public place of an offensive weapon without lawful authority or excuse.

BB Guns

Possession of these types of guns under legislation is not an offence as they are deemed to be toys. However, if from a school or college's perspective they break school rules, they could be seized and retained in line with Department of Education [guidance](#).

If an item is found which is suspected to be a gun, and it cannot be ascertained whether it is a genuine firearm or not, it should be treated as a firearm and the police should be called immediately (via 999 or 101) to ensure that all parties are safe. It is good practice to report any possession of a BB Gun to the police, as it could be deemed to be an indicator of Child Criminal Exploitation or Serious Youth Violence.

If a child is in possession of an item that is suspected to be a gun call 999.



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Safeguarding and Prevention

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Some areas of vulnerability that a child may experience are highlighted below, but should not be seen as a comprehensive list. It is important to note that most children with vulnerabilities do not commit offences.

However, the challenges that children with vulnerabilities experience can sometimes contribute to behaviours which may lead them to unwittingly commit offences. All school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol use, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- are using drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child
- is a child in care
- has experienced recent trauma i.e. bereavement

Education settings will already be taking action to prevent incidents of offensive weapons being brought into school if they are adhering to statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) through clear policies, practices and wider culture of vigilance.

The following points are considerations which could support minimising the risk of incidents by taking a Contextual Safeguarding approach (Adapted from Beyond Referrals; Firmin, Lloyd & Walker 2018).

Context

1. School professionals should maintain up to date safeguarding training for all cohorts of staff and have an understanding of current and emerging issues (locally and nationally) which may be affecting students. The school should work with community groups, parents, and students to understand the impact of any change to relevant local issues.
2. The school should identify and use pathways to engage within local contexts (engagement with the local Police, SEIO's, youth services and community groups). This could identify positive and protective activities in your communities for children to engage with.
3. The school environment is to be reviewed regularly in terms of health, safety and safeguarding. When an incident of harm occurs on the school site, necessary steps need to be taken to prevent future incidents. This could include a large fight or an intruder on site which results in a lock down.
4. There are key areas of Nottingham City that could be deemed to be a safeguarding concern and a risk to children. Should your school have concerns about an area of the local neighbourhood, or key hot spots, consider contacting The Neighbourhood Policing Team, contact details can be found on <https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/>



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Culture

1. Ensure all safeguarding training is maintained about child-on-child abuse, serious youth crime, criminal and sexual child exploitation, and drug awareness. Training can be sourced through; [Safeguarding Training - Nottingham City Council](#)
2. Ensure safeguarding in the curriculum is robust and mapped out through quality Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)/Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).
3. The school ethos must promote positive behaviour relating to children keeping themselves safe and respecting each other and adults. The staff and students should recognise this and participate in the development, shaping and reviewing of the culture.
4. Ensure that students know who they can talk to and how they can raise concerns. Schools can access, deliver and promote the work of [Fearless.org](#) (the dedicated youth service of Crimestoppers) a service that allows you to report information about crime anonymously. This could be done via safeguarding notice boards, assemblies, or virtual student spaces.
5. Student wellbeing is resourced, and various sources of support are available for those in need. Consideration could be benchmarked against the Nottingham City Emotional Health and Resilience Charter [Emotional Health and Wellbeing \(nottinghamcity.gov.uk\)](#). Such support may involve liaison with multi-agency partners and other external organisations.
6. The school should strive to understand the lived experiences of students and the influence of communities in which they live.

Policies

1. Ensure that the Behaviour Policy is aligned with the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy with consideration of a trauma informed approach, which considers Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
2. Consider your duties under the [Public sector equality duty](#) and [Serious Violence Duty](#)
3. Ensure the Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies are consistent with legislation, statutory guidance, and local arrangements. For instance, Under section 89 of the School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012, the head teacher/principal must publicise the school behaviour policy, in writing, to staff, parents and pupils at least once a year. Best practice would be that this is developed with students, staff, parents, and governing body. This should be accessible to all your school community, there should be opportunities to read and understand the Behaviour Policy.
4. Consider reviewing the Behaviour Policy alongside the Health & Safety Policy and processes to ensure a contextual safeguarding approach in relation to the school environment. For example, taking action to improve safety in areas of the school that students have identified as spaces where they feel unsafe. See the Department of Education's guidance on [School and college security](#). Consider completing the [Self-assessment emergency incident planning checklist](#).



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Practice

1. There should be regular auditing of the use of systems for recording information about pupils including safeguarding systems. Ensuring that vulnerable children are identified through cross referencing of behaviour, attendance, and attainment records and that where necessary differentiation takes place, in particular for your Special Education Needs and Disability SEND students and take action where practice breaches of the Public Sector Equality Duty occurs (negative discrimination against those with protected characteristics).
2. Ensure that you assess vulnerable students' cases at least on a termly basis, or as required. Action plans should be generated and reviewed on a regular basis. Case management can include peer groups as well as individual students.
3. Schools are encouraged to identify and analyse data trends to enable preventative action and interventions to take place. This could include reviewing incidents of peer-on-peer conflict, such as bullying, online disputes or fights.

Responding

Responding to incidents and intelligence

Response to an incident of possession or use of a knife/weapon in school/education provision occurs in many different contexts. This can range from a teacher confiscating a knife found in a child's bag, to encountering a student threatening another student or member of staff and may involve a weapon already available on education premises. It could be an unintentional case of a child dropping a butter knife into their bag by accident, or a child intentionally bringing a knife to school under the misconstrued guise of self-protection or to attack someone.

Schools are advised to report all known knife/weapons crime/possession cases, and where there is intelligence to suggest a child may be carrying a knife/weapon, whether in school or the community, this information should be passed on to the Police as below:

Emergency

In cases where there is an immediate risk that the knife/weapon may be used, and the school/education provider is not confident of managing the incident safely, then the police should be **contacted immediately on 999**. This can include a situation where the student has fled the school/site or where the student has been contained but is still presenting a risk of harm to themselves, staff, or other students.

Non-emergency and intelligence

For example, a student reports that they have been in possession of a knife which has been handed over, and at that time the student is not assessed as posing any immediate or ongoing risk to themselves or others.

Another example may be that a student reports that they have been in possession of a knife outside of school, or have been put under pressure by another student to bring a weapon into school. Community intelligence such as this, whilst not posing any immediate or ongoing risk to children themselves or others, should be reported to the Police via 101.



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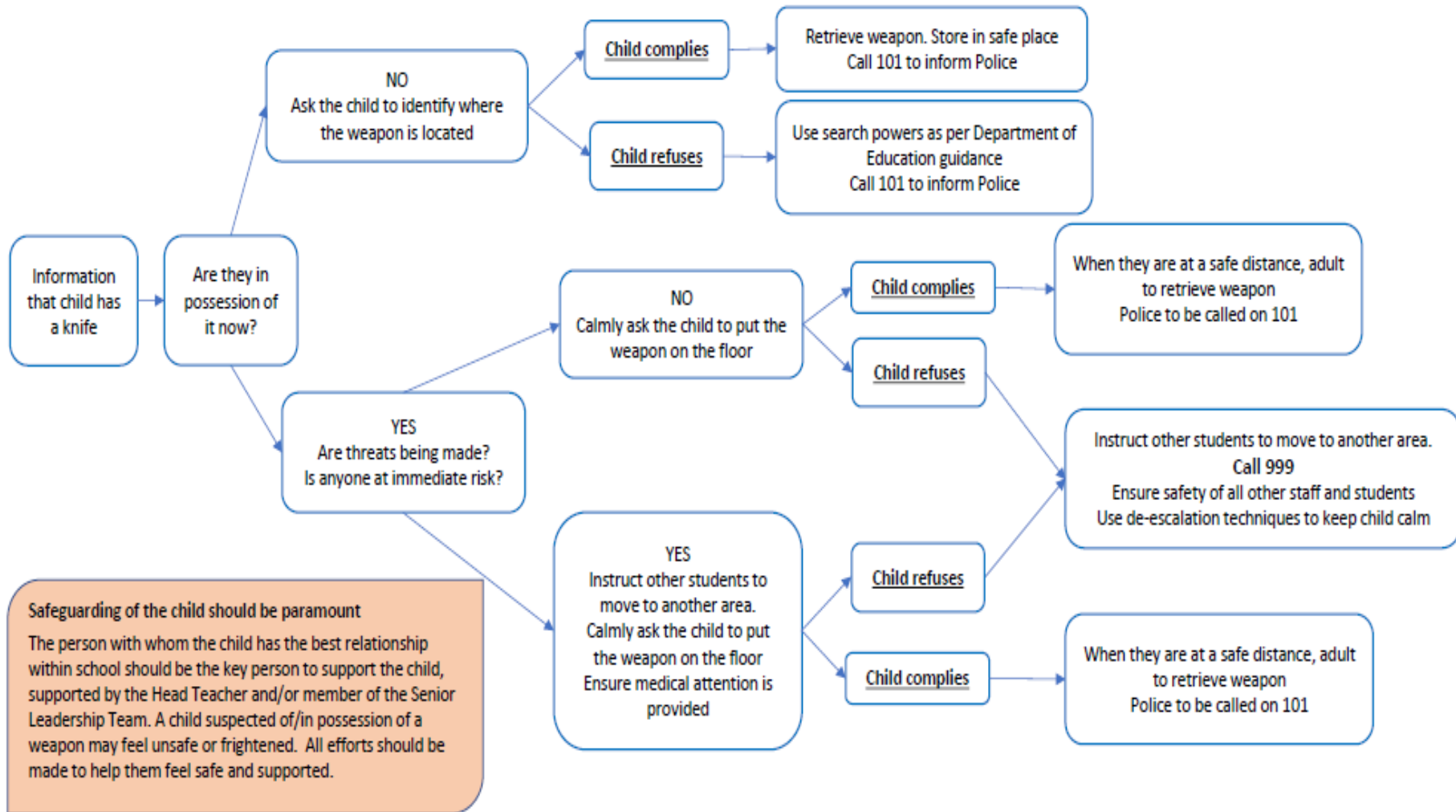
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Due to the serious nature of weapons possession and potential consequences, contact should be prompt in order that future potential risk is managed, and behaviour confronted. **Call 101 to report to Police Control room.**

When reporting incidents of weapons possession to 101, schools should always request and record the incident log reference number. This will facilitate further contact in relation to the incident.





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When completing a search, please be mindful of the Department of Education guidance [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/searching-screening-and-confiscation-at-school) explaining the powers schools have to screen and search pupils, and to confiscate items they find.

Under the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Code, searches are defined as follows:

- a) Jacket outer coat and gloves (JOG) – a search involving no removal of clothing other than an outer coat, jacket or gloves. ([PACE Code A, paragraph 3.5](#))
- b) More thorough search (MTS) – a search involving the removal of more than JOG but not revealing intimate parts of the body. ([PACE Code A, paragraph 3.6](#))
- c) Search exposing intimate parts of the body (EIP) – a search involving the removal of more than JOG that exposes intimate parts of the body. ([PACE Code A, paragraph 3.7](#))

If conducting a search, please ensure the following:

- That there are two members of staff in the room.
- That the search is conducted discreetly.
- That you explain the purpose of the search to the student.
- Record the name of the person requesting the search and the reasons for the search.
- Record the time, date and location, and nature of the search (as defined above) and any items found. Please then ensure that this is recorded on your safeguarding system, even if you do not find anything during the search.
- Inform parents/carers that a search has taken place and clearly explain the reasons for it.

If, following a search no items are found, you still have reasonable suspicion, please consider why, and record the reasons.

If a child refuses to be searched, but you have reasonable grounds to suspect they are in possession of a weapon, or a weapon may have been hidden off site or in the educational setting call 101.

If a weapon has been used or there is a threat of use, the Police should be called immediately on 999.



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Police Response to Knife and Weapon Incidents

Where Police are informed of a pupil in possession of a knife or weapon then the expectation is that the police response to a knife or bladed article incident will be robust and result in a swift and clear outcome for the child.

NB: If you would like any further information on how the Police can support within your setting please find contact details of the Neighbourhood Policing Team at [Home | Nottinghamshire Police](#).

Practice and Resources

Following any incident and initial notification to the police, schools/education providers should take action to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded, and potential risks are sufficiently managed. The priority for schools is to safeguard the child(ren) within their setting.

Routes for additional support and guidance:

- Convene a meeting with parents, key person, and Head Teacher to discuss the incident, explore any risks/support needs and agree future actions. The child should be included in discussions and development of any support plans and future actions.
- Where additional support is required, and safeguarding concerns identified including those relating to child exploitation, consider a MASH referral.
- Speak to the Schools and Early Intervention Officer (SEIO) to explore if they can offer any support/guidance or are aware of any other information/intelligence which needs to be taken into consideration. SEIOs@notts.police.uk.
- Where there are ongoing concerns regarding the child being at risk of repeating such behaviour consider making a referral to the Youth Justice Service for preventative intervention.
- Consider if a referral to VictimCARE is required to support the victim and witnesses of the those impacted upon by the incident. VictimCARE contact details are: admin.notts@catch22.cjism.net.
- Where there are ongoing concerns for a child's emotional health and well-being consider referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Psychology Service, Behaviour and Emotional Health Team (BEH), Mental Health Support Team (MHST).

Support for Schools/Education providers to deliver Knife and Weapon Crime Education and Interventions

Prevention is always preferable to dealing with an incident, and the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Violence Reduction Partnership's (VRP) Response Strategy focuses on prevention and early intervention. Educating children about the consequences of carrying or using a knife or weapon, as well addressing the reasons why they carry knives and weapons is paramount. Schools and Education providers are reminded to consider issues such as being Trauma Aware and Informed, Contextual Safeguarding, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and County Lines among other issues. The following diagram identifies approaches taken for universal, targeted, and statutory interventions.

UNIVERSAL / WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

All children in school / education provision.

TARGETED

Children identified as being at risk of committing offences, e.g. due to Police intelligence, sibling or peer associations with children who have offended.

STATUTORY


Children charged with an offence or receive a conditional caution or subject to OOC Panel Decision.

- A whole school approach is recommended utilising the curriculum to address this. This could take the form of classroom activities, assemblies, Mandatory PHSE/RSHE lessons or themed days.
- Visiting the Ben Kinsella Choices and Consequences exhibition at the National Justice Museum. Staff briefings and training are available.

Bespoke and specialist preventative intervention could take the form of

- Smaller group sessions by Schools Early Intervention Officers or Neighbourhood Officer.
- Referral to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) for prevention and diversionary intervention on a 1:1 or group basis.

Police and YJS involvement for children subject to Out of Court Disposals or Court Orders.

Tier	Organisation	Details	Contact
Universal	Nottinghamshire Police	<p>Early Police Alert to Schools (EPAS)</p> <p>A Police Officer within the Schools and Early Intervention Officer (SEIO) team is responsible for completing the EPAS and sending it to the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the school.</p> <p>The EPAS is a notification sent to a student's school if they have been involved in a weapons offence, whether as a suspect, witness or victim. This is so that the school are aware that the student may be in need of support. The form provides the school details of the officer involved in the case and the relevant SEIO in case they require further information.</p>	 Knife Crime Leaflet 2023.pdf
Universal	Schools and Education providers	<p>Knife Crime – Universal Education Resource</p> <p>Resources created for use and delivery by schools in classroom, small group or assembly settings. Schools are encouraged to use this within their curriculum planning and mapping around this topic which could also sit within wider PHSE/RSHE curriculum themes, for example keeping safe, physical health and mental wellbeing and respectful relationships and will be delivered internally by their own staff.</p>	Knife Crime – Universal Education Resource
Universal	National Justice Museum	<p>Choices and consequences</p> <p>Visiting the Ben Kinsella Choices and Consequences exhibition at the National Justice Museum.</p> <p>Staff briefing sessions</p> <p>School staff being trained to facilitate visits to the Choices and Consequences exhibition.</p>	Call 0115 952 0555 or email: info@nationaljusticemuseum.org.uk



Universal	Ben Kinsella Trust	Resources for parents Resources for parents to help them talk to their child about the risks of carrying knives.	https://benkinsella.org.uk/resources/
Universal	Offensive Weapon Act	The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	
Universal	Crimestoppers	What is Fearless? Crimestoppers (crimestoppers-uk.org)	
Targeted	Nottinghamshire Police	Joint Police/school delivery Assembly/small group/assembly discussion: Neighbourhood Police Officers could be invited to contribute to lesson delivery alongside school staff using the Knife Crime Universal Education Resource or the Ben Kinsella Trust Resources for teachers and practitioners.	Neighbourhood Police Officers Police SEIOs
Targeted	Nottingham Children's Services	Safeguarding Referral to Nottingham City Children's Services MASH where concerns arise in relation to safeguarding including those relating to child exploitation.	City Multi Agency Safeguarding (Children) Hub (City MASH) - Nottingham City Council



Targeted	Nottingham City Youth Justice Service: Prevention and Early Intervention	Targeted Groups in Schools Early intervention Targeted Youth Support (TYS) team will deliver bespoke planned Group sessions with small groups of individuals within school that have been identified as being of concern and in need of additional support in relation to weapons, serious youth violence and gangs.	
Targeted	Ben Kinsella Trust / National Justice Museum	Additional resources for teachers and practitioners Lesson and session plans for teachers working with children to empower schools to educate children away from knife crime and help them to make better choices.	https://benkinsella.org.uk/resources/
Targeted	Nottingham City Youth Justice Service: Prevention and Early Intervention	Individual 1:1 work Early intervention Targeted Youth Support (TYS) team will deliver bespoke planned interventions with children identified as at risk of becoming involved in weapons, exploitation and/or violent offending.	
Targeted	Violence Reduction Partnership: Sports. Mentoring and Diversion	Community and Voluntary sector offer The Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) is a partnership that brings together specialists from Local Government, Health Education, Policing and Criminal Justice to work with communities and the third sector to reduce serious violence and tackle its underlying causes. The VRP works in partnership with voluntary and community sectors partners to ensure provision is delivered to a high quality and that children are properly safeguarded, and their additional needs are met.	Home Violence Reduction Unit (nottsvrp.co.uk)



Targeted	Behaviour & Emotional Health Team	<p>Behaviour and Emotional Health</p> <p>The BEH Team supports children and their families where there are concerns/behaviours indicative of a neurodevelopmental condition such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or post diagnostic support.</p>	<p>Self-referral via Ask Lion - Nottingham City Directory</p>
Targeted	Mental Health Support Team	<p>Mental Health Support Team</p> <p>MHST offer 1:1 and small group work with children experiencing mental health difficulties. They have a range of practitioners including education mental health practitioners and children’s wellbeing practitioners who are all based in Nottingham City schools. MHST also works alongside school to develop whole school approaches to mental health, we offer a range of services as part of this offer, including themed workshops.</p>	<p>Mental Health Support Teams Ask Lion - Nottingham City Directory</p>
Statutory	Nottingham City Youth Justice Service	<p>Youth Justice Service</p> <p>The YJS gets involved if a child is referred to the Out of Court Disposal panel, or convicted of a crime and given a sentence at Court. There is a tiered offer for all children referred to YJS for either Out of Court or Community disposals, including both education and direct offence-related intervention:</p> <p>Tier 1 (Low) - Mark’s Story – ‘No Knives, Better Lives’ film <i>One Knife, many victims</i>. The learning objectives of the session are informed by the 4 Rs – Reassurance, Risks and consequences, Resilience and Responsibility.</p> <p>Tier 2 (Medium) – Sharp Solutions – a ‘No Knives Better Lives’ resource. A programme aimed at reducing the concerns and risks associated with violent behaviours. The programme delivers ‘hard-hitting’ educational intervention to</p>	<p>Call 0115 9159400</p> <p>Email: YJS@Nottinghamcity.gov.uk</p>



ensure children are fully informed and aware of the devastating risks and consequences of risky behaviours, to develop the capacity to make reasoned decisions and positive life choices. Developing the child's confidence and sense of self-worth are themes throughout the duration of the programme.

Tier 3 (High) - Weapons Intervention Toolkit –An intensive educational intervention that focuses on Barnett and Howard 2017 review of work addressing offending. The programme breaks down the adolescent brain using 'the chimp paradox' and the influence this has on our ability to make appropriate decisions, problem solving, motivation, trauma related behaviours, role models, protective factors, des-escalation, group conflict, peer influences and joint enterprise.