

Shattered – knife crime board game and primary school workbook

A scenario-based board game for secondary school children and workbook for primary school children to raise awareness around the consequences of knife crime.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Knife and gun crime Community engagement
Organisation	Derbyshire Constabulary
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Region	East Midlands
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	November 2023
Scale of initiative	Local

Aim

Incidents of knife crime and the fear of knife crime for young people are a continual issue for Derbyshire, as well as nationally.

Derbyshire Police historically used a PowerPoint input in schools to raise awareness of the consequences of knife crime. Feedback from students was negative, highlighting that the content was confusing. The knife crime input for primary schools was removed several years ago after complaints from parents saying their children were upset after the session, so for around 6 years the force had not delivered knife crime prevention education to this age group. However, requests from teachers grew as more and more primary school aged children were becoming involved in knife crime incidents.

Due to this feedback, a new input was created for primary and secondary schools.

The board game (secondary schools)

The idea for a board game was introduced as an interactive input in the classroom where each student was given their own role, so everyone was given the chance to take part and share their thoughts. The game was made with the help and support of young people and teachers/partners and aimed to tackle issues around knife crime, including:

- consequences
- community impact
- victim and offender impact
- the law
- peer pressure
- relationship issues
- joint enterprise

The workbook (primary schools)

The workbook is scenario-based and was created in collaboration with teachers, students and officers. It covers the same aims as the secondary school board game.

Intended outcome

The outcomes for the two products include increased understanding and awareness of the following:

The boardgame:

- the dangers of carrying a knife
- how to anonymously report knife crime
- where to go for support in relation to knife crime
- the What3Words app is and how to use it
- joint enterprise
- sentencing for carrying a knife

The workbook:

- what to do if someone is being bullied at school
- how to report knife crime anonymously
- where to find support about knife crime
- what the What3Words app is and how to use it
- what joint enterprise is
- what the sentence is for carrying a knife

Description

The inputs follow a knife crime story from start to finish, conducted from the perspective of those involved or affected by it. This includes:

- a member of the public
- victim
- friends of the victim
- offender
- friends of the offender
- partner of the offender
- police officer
- paramedic

The boardgame and workbook focus on the consequences of knife crime for all characters involved and those around them. Both the boardgame and the workbook inputs are delivered by safer neighbourhood officers and youth engagement teams. They only require one officer or member of police staff to run the sessions. The inputs are available to all secondary schools across the whole of Derby and Derbyshire. They are best delivered in a classroom setting with up to 36 young people but can also work with higher numbers of students in a larger room, for example an assembly hall.

The boardgame

A video is played where the offender and his friends are at home playing on an Xbox, one individual wants to go out and they all agree to head to the local park. On the way out the main offender asks his friend to carry a knife for him. Once they arrive at the park, there is an argument with another group of young people and the victim is stabbed with the knife.

After the video has finished, the boardgame starts. A die is used during the game, and the first time the die is rolled is to determine the severity of the victim's injury. A cloth board is given to each group, and each student is given a character to play throughout the game.

Students will make decisions for their character; they can discuss with the rest of the group but ultimately it is down to them to decide. These decisions inform the narrative of the game.

There are points where the facilitator needs to ask a question and get an answer from each group, then the group will progress with the next part of the game based on their response. There is a facilitator's guide which talks through each stage of the game step by step – it includes questions the facilitator may want to ask and possible answers/outcomes. It also explains which points on the die determine each possible outcome in the game for example, to see how severe the victim's injury is one to two is minor, three to four is severe and five to six is a catastrophic bleed.

The workbook

To ensure the input covered the issues of knife crime in a relevant way for primary school aged children, focus groups were conducted with teachers, students, and safer neighbourhood teams to establish common themes, issues and worries. From this, the scenario for the session was created which is as follows:

The victim and his friends are being bullied by two pupils at school. The bullying is really affecting the group, but they don't know how to make it stop. When the victim gets home from school, he tells his older brother what's been happening and how upset it is making him and his friends.

The next day during break time, the brother turns up at the school gates and hands the victim a knife and encourages him to use it if the bully comes up to him or his friends again. The brother of the victim notes he needs the knife back at the end of the school day. This is where the workbook element starts.

Throughout the workbook, there are questions asking how the characters might be feeling, whether they are doing the right thing or if what they are doing is in another character's best interest. It explores the consequences for those involved and their wider family/friends/communities. These questions are answered both independently by students and through group discussion.

The workbooks were created and printed in-house and the graphic design files can be shared should another force wish to utilise this resource. To support the implementation of the resource, facilitator guides were created for both inputs.

Evaluation

The boardgame

Initially, the force ran a basic test of the game idea with young people through focus groups in schools, which helped to understand what young people thought of the concept and what might need to change to optimise engagement and learning.

Feedback from the children and young persons in pilot phases was collated and changes were made accordingly, the board had some updates around the layout of the park, and the setting the scene video was changed to ensure the scenario used was more realistic.

Pre- and post-knowledge check surveys were conducted to measure learning from the initiative. The same questions were asked pre the input and then at the end of the input. Results have shown:

- I know the dangers of carrying a knife – positive increase of +1.22 points on the scale

- I think carrying a knife makes you safer – decrease of -1.32 points on the scale (which shows that understand that they carrying a knife doesn't make you safer post-game)
- I know how to anonymously report someone that is carrying a knife – positive increase in knowledge of +1 point on the scale
- I know where to get support in relation to knife crime – positive increase in knowledge of +0.90 points on the scale
- I know how the What3Words app works – positive increase in knowledge of +1.73 points on the scale

The evaluation for the pilot phase of the game took place over a 12 month period with young people from nine schools, these included mainstream schools (different year groups) and pupil referral units. The trial also included targeted education as well as universal education which is where the pre/post survey results have come from.

The force then conducted a second pilot phase where the safer neighbourhood teams and youth engagement teams were asked to carry out the pre/post surveys themselves. The findings were as follows:

- 79% of respondents were in year nine
- higher number of male respondents
- the number of people who said they know how to anonymously report knife crime increased by 44.1% after they played shattered
- 74 more people said they know where to go to for support in relation to knife crime after they played shattered
- those who answered 'yes' for 'I know what the What3Words app is' increased by 27.33% after they played shattered
- the number of people who said they understand what joint enterprise is increased by 65.84% after they played shattered

- the number of people who completely agreed with 'I understand the dangers of carrying a knife', increased by 21.11% after they played shattered
- those who completely agreed with 'I think carrying a knife makes you safer' decreased by 26.09% after they played shattered

These findings link to 322 students in different secondary schools across the county.

The workbook

This input was evaluated in various stages and was done internally. Conducting the focus groups to start off with was very beneficial as the force heard first hand from children and young people what issues concerned them around knife crime and what was happening in their local communities.

Hearing from a mix of partners (local Council, children's safeguarding board, teachers, and officers/staff) provided additional information which helped in creating the scenario for the workbook and ensuring it was appropriate for the age group.

To evaluate the knowledge gained, pre and post surveys were used, this was because it was the easiest way to facilitate feedback in a classroom-based session, we did consider online forms, but this caused various issues in relation to data protection and schools agreed a physical form would be easier to manage.

The results from these forms were very promising, with knowledge increasing in all areas after the input had been delivered. The results are as follows:

Phase one results

- the number of people who said they know how to anonymously report knife crime increased by 33.34% after the input
- 10 more people said they know where to go to for support in relation to knife crime after the input
- those who answered 'yes' for 'I know what the What3Words app is' increased by 48.89% after the input

- the number of people who said they understand what joint enterprise is increased by 42.22% after the input
- 27 more people said they 'know what the sentence is for carrying a knife' after the input

The above results relate to 45 young people from different groups of year six students.

Phase two results

- 100% of people knew 'what to do if someone is being bullied at school' after the input
- only one person did not know 'how to report knife crime anonymously' after the input
- those who answered 'yes' for 'I know where to find support for knife crime' increased by 39.47% after the input
- 23 more people understood what joint enterprise is after the input
- those who answered 'no' for 'I know what the sentence is for carrying a knife' decreased by 47.37% after the input

The above results relate to 38 young people from two different year six classes.

Overall impact

From June 2024 to June 2025:

- 24 boardgame inputs have been delivered with 1,817 secondary school students engaged
- 105 workbook inputs have been delivered with 2,204 primary school students engaged

The boardgame

Qualitative feedback from teachers includes:

"Thank you so much for coming into school last week to speak with our students. I must say that they really benefited from your input, and were talking about your visit to their peers at lunchtime."

"The activity was really engaging for the young people, and it was great to see them offering their views and ideas. Using the characters as a focus for the discussion worked really well and

supported interaction. The information about joint enterprise and peer influence seemed to have a clear impact on them also."

Feedback from students has been mixed, with many students reporting they enjoyed the input however others have also reported feeling less engaged.

After the trial period, the game was rolled out force-wide with each safer neighbour team and youth engagement teams having access to the full kit.

After the input, twelve young people reached out for further information or additional support. Some shared their concerns of issues in their local area, some shared intelligence that assisted safer neighbourhoods' teams, and others shared disclosures of their involvement in county-line related crime. In addition to the twelve that reached out to an officer directly after the session on a one-to-one basis, many other students also had further discussions or highlighted their surprise around how the joint enterprise law works.

Although it is difficult to show the impact of preventative work, it is positive that students felt comfortable to reach out to find out more or seek support following the boardgame.

The workbook

The force provided information on the intranet page to say the raise awareness about the workbook. Facilitator guides and workbooks were distributed to each safer neighbourhood team/youth engagement team and a training session took place.

It is felt that the workbook has set out what it aimed to do by facilitating a way for primary school aged children to discuss knife crime and family pressures in a safe way and without raising their fear of knife crime. This input has been rolled out across the whole force and is a part of the core school programme. The workbook provided a way to keep the whole class on track throughout various discussions, whilst also allowing them a space to ask questions using the characters, thus not having to reveal anything personal about themselves or their own situations. At the end of the session, support services are shared and trusted adults are discussed in the context of any young person feeling like they want to address other concerns, share intel or ask for help.

A teacher's feedback form has now been created in the force to gain the views of teachers present during our inputs, unfortunately this was not in place during the trial phases of these inputs, but teachers were positive throughout via verbal feedback after the session.

Learning

The boardgame

Young people involvement:

- involving young people in the process from the start was important as it gave them an opportunity to help shape the game/resources and branding
- if you have any shy students in your group that don't enjoy speaking it is worth giving them the member of the public/witness or victim card as they have fewer speaking parts than other characters

Wider roll out:

- emails and internal announcements/intranet articles were shared prior to the game launching to ensure everyone (inc. supervisors) were aware of it coming to all sections of the force
- training was delivered to officers and staff, where they played the game to make them feel confident in delivering the game
- the game needs to be delivered by officers/staff that are experienced in working with young people and able to facilitate conversations
- backing of senior managers is key to ensure that teams are encouraged to implement the game and use it in their local area
- use officers that are positive about the game to promote it within force to other officers
- many officers noted they preferred the game to a PowerPoint style input as it allowed for more open discussions, and they could link in local places/issues

Funding:

- no budget in force was provided but the city and county councils agreed to fund Derbyshire Constabulary with £2,000 each
- all design work was done in-house
- boards and character cards were printed externally
- funding also covered purchase of other items for the game (dice, buzzers etc.)
- the game linked to the council's serious violence plan which helped us to secure the funding

The boards and bags:

- initial boards were 1x1 metre so six students could play at a time, and it was easier for visually impaired students to view
- boards were solid and this caused issues for transporting the boards, so these were changed to cloth and were printed externally
- a backpack can be used to transport the game and all resources (for teams which do not have access to a vehicle)

Training:

- in-person training provided to all officers and staff (run through of playing the game)
- a game-play video walkthrough was also created and stored on the intranet
- virtual training can be provided to other forces if they would like to use this product

Pre and post knowledge checks:

- pre/post surveys were used to assess if knowledge had increased after the input
- paper based pre/post surveys was the best method to use in a school setting
- some officers did not complete the pre/post surveys which hindered the data and evaluation process
- having one designated officer from each safer neighbourhood team or youth engagement team worked well for getting returns to the youth engagement officer

Teacher feedback forms:

- use of a teacher feedback form would have been beneficial to gain additional insight for evaluation purposes. There is a Microsoft form version of this implemented now in Derbyshire.

Classroom based sessions:

- game takes between 50 minutes to one hour to play (it can be longer if the school allows)
- full classroom sessions should be used and not assemblies as assemblies don't allow enough time for discussions to take place
- some schools in the area have only agreed to assembly sessions. The force has a Shattered assembly input (PowerPoint), but it is not as impactful due to the lack of discussion amongst students

Student led board game:

- a step-by-step guide was produced so that young people could play the game themselves, however, this did not work as students rushed through the game and did not take part in the discussions, therefore facilitator led sessions are encouraged

The workbook

Focus group with students:

- feedback showed they preferred a workbook style input as they liked being able to write their answers down and reflect on the discussion points
- after trials with the workbook feedback from teachers, staff, students and officers showed the class were more engaged and focused with this method

Pre/post surveys:

- pre/post surveys were used to see if knowledge had increased after the input
- getting officers to complete the forms was challenging, some just didn't bother. Having senior officers on board from the outset is key to ensure that forms are completed and returned to a designated person for analysis
- having a single point of contact (SPOC) on each area who is responsible for the getting the forms completed and returned is beneficial
- paper based pre/post surveys were found to be the most effective method to collect this type of data

The role play:

- the optional role play element has proved popular with students during the input. It helped to keep the students engaged and gave them a feel for being 'interviewed' or acting as a parent or carer
- some officers did not feel comfortable with this, so it would be worth considering some initial training to make them more comfortable and confident with this element