



## Speaking out on gun, knife and gang crime

### Who's going to be at the meeting on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June?

The British Youth Council along with the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) and YMCA England coordinate and administer the all-party parliamentary group (or APPG) on Youth Affairs.

Along with the APPGs on Foyers, and Child & Youth Crime, the APPG on Youth Affairs are holding the meeting on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June on gun, knife and gang crime.

The APPG on Youth Affairs is a group made up from MPs and Lords from across all the different political parties. It aims to discuss and raise the profile of issues that affect and concern young people.

Everyone at the meeting today will be interested in the issue of gun, knife and gang crime. They will also be really interested in hearing what you have to say so feel really free to have your say!

A mix of MPs, people from youth sector organisations and young people! Vernon Coaker, Minister of Crime Reduction is due to attend as Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary, was unable to make it in the end.



**Vernon Coaker, Minister for Crime Reduction**

### What's been going on with gun, knife and gang crime by young people recently?

- There has been a lot of media coverage on gun, knife and gang crime this year. This year alone 15 teenagers have been killed in London – 11 of them stabbed to death. Last year, 26 teenagers were killed - nine in shootings.
- While the number of overall offences by young people has remained broadly stable since 2002, out of about 300,000 offences committed by young people, 56,200 were violent attacks on other young people – up from 40,000 four years ago.
- 69 teenagers are victims of knife crime every week in London and nearly half of all murders are carried out with a knife (Metropolitan Police - [www.itsnotagame.org/](http://www.itsnotagame.org/)).
- The Met police have estimated that more than 170 gangs were operating in London, and this month admitted that attempts to crack down on knife crime had not solved the problem.

### What have politicians and other decision-makers been doing about gun, knife and gang crime by young people?

#### The Home Office has budgeted £5m to tackle violent crime

On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May Home Secretary Jacqui Smith announced a further £5m to tackle violent crime in 10 known 'hotspots' across the country.

The funding will go towards greater use of stop and search by the police and support for community projects which show young people the risks and consequences of carrying a knife.



## More stop and search in London

On Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, welcomed the Metropolitan Police's plans for officers to use more stop and search powers to prevent knife crime – Operation Blunt 2.

This action came soon after a perceived rise in knife crime in London and a day after the death of Steven Bigby, 22, who died from being stabbed in Oxford Street on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May.

On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair, said parents had a duty to ask their children if they carry knives.

Scotland Yard revealed on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May that this stop-and-search operation in London, just two weeks after its launch, had led to more than 200 arrests, with 130 weapons seized.



## Government advertising campaign

A £3m advertising campaign, devised by 18 teenagers, to warn young people of the physical and emotional consequences of knife crime was launched on Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup> by the Home Office.

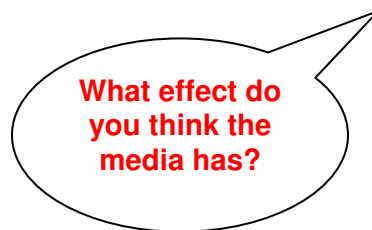
The campaign, which will run over the next three years, will feature national radio, website and mobile phone adverts as well as print and "viral ads" to be distributed via social networking sites such as Bebo and mobile phones. Radio commercials feature teenagers talking about the emotional impact of a knife attack on their boyfriends and girlfriends while promotional postcards feature a thumbless hand, with the message: "If you carry a knife you're more likely to get stabbed yourself."

## Why does BYC want to hear young peoples' (and your!) opinion on gun, knife and gang crime?

As an organisation run for young people by young people, BYC believes all young people should have the opportunity to have their say and be heard on issues that they care about. With funding from the *Speaking Out* Small Grants Programme, BYC had the opportunity to run an online survey in order to gain a snapshot of what young people thought about gun, knife and gang crime.

Why did we do this? It was because BYC thinks it's important that young people are able to become part of the solution, not just seen as the problem.

BYC was particularly interested to ask young people what effect they think media coverage of gun, knife and gang crime by young people has. Whether media coverage of gun, knife or gang crime helps decision-makers to take action or raise awareness amongst young people, or if it provokes an unfair portrayal of young people or the amount of this type of crime committed by young people.



This is because in previous research BYC found that young people feel negatively stereotyped by the media and in society. In a survey of over 700 young people for the Respect? campaign run by BYC and the online charity YouthNet, more than 4 in 5 young people feel they are always or often represented by the media as a group to be feared. 97% of young people feel they are always or sometimes presented in this way.

For more information on BYC's work and campaigns check out [www.byc.org.uk](http://www.byc.org.uk) or contact Helen Deakin, BYC's Policy and Press Officer via [helen.deakin@byc.org.uk](mailto:helen.deakin@byc.org.uk) or 020 7022 1974.

