



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt. Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Monday 18th July 2011

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to raise the issue of knife crime that is of great concern to ourselves and our constituents, and which we know you share. You will recall visiting Enfield several years ago to launch the Mayor of London's knife strategy in the wake of six knife fatalities in 12 months. Unfortunately our borough continues to be affected by knife crime. As recently as a week ago there was a distressing incident in Enfield North where two rival gangs publicly fought with machetes, knives and guns. The members of these gangs were youths, and a sixteen year old was stabbed in the hand. Also in the borough of Enfield in April a 15 year old called Negus McClean was stabbed and killed while trying to prevent a gang stealing his brother's phone. A number of sixteen and seventeen year olds have been arrested following this incident. These incidents confirm the Borough Commander's estimation that over 40% of all knife offence prosecutions involve young people under the age of 18.

We have the support of one of Enfield's local newspapers, the Enfield Independent, and community groups who are currently promoting a campaign entitled 'don't carry, don't kill', supporting the call for mandatory sentences to apply to under eighteen year olds.

The relationship between knife crime and youth offending is particularly significant given the provisions in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill 2010-11. You will recall responding to PMQs about the prevalence of knife crime in London on 6th July and seeking to provide assurance from the provisions for mandatory sentences for an offence of making threats with a knife. Whilst we welcome the new offence, it is important to recognise that the scope of the offence is limited to adults. It would therefore not apply to the U18 youths in our borough who are sadly causing carnage on our streets with little deterrence from sentencing. We are writing to you to request urgent consideration of an amendment to the new offence so that it will apply to U18s who are increasingly responsible for the prevalence of knife crime.



The sentencing problem which has been identified to us by Youth Court Magistrates is that the current limitations of statute and guidelines mean that an U18 youth convicted of possessing a knife, even using it to threaten, is unlikely to receive a sentence of imprisonment. Your response at PMQs and the intention behind the new offence is to send a clear unambiguous message that anyone (over or under 18) possessing a knife and using threats will go to prison. We wish to give full effect to this policy and hope that you will agree to urge the Justice Secretary to amend the legislation before Parliament.

We appreciate that tackling knife crime involves more than getting sentencing right and is also about prevention. We are working hard to support early intervention projects in Enfield and welcome the Government policies in this regard.

We would welcome a meeting with you to discuss our concerns about the prevalence of knife crime.

Yours sincerely,

Nick de Bois MP
Enfield North

David Burrowes MP
Enfield Southgate