



**25<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

## **Safeguarding Children and Young People in Southwark**

Dear Parent and Carers,

We are writing to ask for your support tackling violence in our communities. In the last year there has been a concerning increase in the level of some violent crime in Southwark. This has tragic consequences for individuals and families and it also affects the broader community in Southwark and beyond.

### **The facts**

- In the year to April 2018 there were 850 knife crimes recorded by the Police in Southwark.
- The majority of victims and perpetrators are young males.
- There is a worrying lack of cooperation with the Police from some victims and others in the community.
- We know victims and witnesses independent of age fear revenge attacks.
- Research tells us that those carrying weapons are more likely to become victims of violence.
- We know that not all violent crime is related to gang activity.
- We hear from young people that some feel the need to carry a weapon for one or a number of reasons including protection, because of others carrying weapons, peer pressure or to feel they have power, respect or control.
- Carrying a knife in public without good reason is a crime unless it's a knife with a folding blade 3 inches long or less.

### **What we can do together to tackle this**

- Partner agencies through Southwark Safeguarding Boards are working together to support children and young people, and some details are available at the end of this letter.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to learn about the potential risks affecting children and young people from carrying knives and involvement in crime and how they can support them. See <http://noknivesbetterlives.com/parents>

- Knife carriers and known offenders are targeted by the Police.
- Police patrols, “weapon sweeps” and “stop and search” tactics are carried out based on intelligence and information from the community.
- You can speak to your Police Safer Schools Officer or Safer Neighbourhood Team. If it’s an emergency call 999.
- If you feel unable to speak to the Police you can pass information on **100% anonymously** via CrimeStoppers online or by phone on 0800 555 111.

To find out more about activities and services available for young people in the borough visit <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/activity4youths> . Also you can follow Southwark Young Advisors Twitter @SouthwarkYAs where local activities and opportunities are publicised.

If you need help or support in relation to concerns about your child or a young person you can call Family Lives (formerly Parentline) on 0808 800 2222 and make your child aware of support at Childline on 0800 1111.

Together we can make a difference and as we re-commit to doing all that we can to prevent and to tackle violence in our community, we call on you to join us in directly addressing these issues. We all want a community where our young people can flourish and achieve their very best potential. In order to achieve that we need to come together and to work together, in the best interests of our young people.

Regards,



DCS Simon Messinger  
Southwark & Lambeth Police Borough Commander



David Quirke-Thornton  
Strategic Director for Children and Adults, Southwark Council, (Interim Chair, Southwark Safeguarding Children’s Board)