Subject: You can help the police to reduce knife crime – with just a conversation

Hello Neighbours

I’m sure you’ve all seen the news lately about the surge in violent crime across England and Wales. Knife crime is up by more than 22 per cent year-on-year and last year there were 39,598 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument - the highest number for seven years. In London, in the first 100 days of 2018, 52 people were murdered.

You may feel that this type of crime doesn’t really impact you or your neighbourhood, but actually, everybody has a role to play in tackling serious violence. It’s not confined to inner-city estates – stabbings are happening all over the country, often driven by the growing phenomenon of ‘county lines’, where criminal gangs set up drug-dealing operations in places outside their usual operating area. Children and young people are being recruited as drug runners and getting drawn into the gang lifestyle, putting themselves at great risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violent crime.

Experts that work in the field all agree that the best way to prevent young people from carrying a knife is to talk to them about the risks and let them know about positive alternative activities in their local area. Young people believe lots of myths about carrying knives – and if you know a young person, you can help to bust those myths, and warn them about the dangers to themselves and others.

You may be a parent, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or a family friend, it doesn’t matter - if you know a teenager, you can play an important role in tackling this terrible crime and preventing it from taking hold in your community. It all starts with a conversation.

Neighbourhood Watch has created an excellent online information pack to help you have the conversation with young people about serious violence. You can find this pack here: https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes-archive/serious-violence/ and if you go to the Toolkit section here https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes-archive/toolkit-3/ you can find lots more resources to help you spread the knowledge within your community.

Do take a look through the online pack and come back to me if you have any questions.

Thank you,