



WILTSHIRE POLICE **KNIFE CRIME STRATEGY**

2026–2029

An overarching strategic framework for the prevention, reduction and disruption of knife crime and knife-enabled violence across Wiltshire and Swindon.





Knife crime causes profound harm to victims, families and communities, and even where volumes remain comparatively low, the consequences of each incident can be life-changing.

Wiltshire Police is committed to tackling knife crime through a balanced and evidence-led approach that combines prevention, protection, enforcement and partnership delivery. This strategy sets the strategic direction for that work. It is designed to provide clarity of purpose, align activity across the force and with partners, and ensure that our response remains focused on threat, harm, risk and long-term prevention. It reflects our belief that knife crime is not solely a policing issue, but a wider safeguarding and community safety challenge that requires a whole-system response.



Superintendent Mike Vass
Wiltshire Knife Crime Lead

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knife crime in Wiltshire is a serious but preventable form of violence that can have disproportionate and lasting consequences for individuals and communities. While Wiltshire remains comparatively low in volume against many national measures, the harm associated with knife-enabled violence remains significant and concentrated among particular places, cohorts and circumstances.

This strategy sets out Wiltshire Police's overarching response for 2026–2029. It adopts a public health and problem-solving approach, combining prevention, safeguarding, intelligence development, enforcement and community engagement. Its purpose is to reduce knife-enabled violence, protect those at risk, improve confidence and ensure that Wiltshire Police and its partners are organised to respond consistently and effectively. Delivery will be supported by clear governance, shared accountability, evidence-led action and regular performance review.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Wiltshire Police's response to knife crime sits within the wider framework of the Serious Violence Duty, the Police and Crime Plan, and the Wiltshire and Swindon Serious Violence Strategy 2024–2029. These frameworks place clear emphasis on a public health approach, requiring policing, local authorities, health, probation, youth justice, education, fire and rescue, and the voluntary sector to work together to understand violence, identify risk and vulnerability, and deliver coordinated interventions.

In Wiltshire, knife-enabled violence is understood not only as a criminal justice issue, but also as a safeguarding, public protection and community safety priority. Current local analysis continues to indicate comparatively low overall volume against national benchmarks, but concentrated harm across particular cohorts, locations and circumstances, especially where youth violence, exploitation, repeat offending, hotspot demand and group-based behaviour intersect. The local response is therefore grounded in a whole-system model that connects force tasking, Daily Management Meetings, Tactical Gangs governance, Community Safety Partnerships and Serious Violence Duty delivery plans with neighbourhood problem solving and targeted operational activity.



VISION AND STRATEGIC AIM

Vision: Safer communities across Wiltshire and Swindon where fewer people carry knives, fewer lives are harmed by knife-enabled violence, and those at risk are identified early and supported effectively.

Strategic Aim: To reduce knife crime and knife-enabled violence through prevention, intelligence, enforcement, safeguarding and partnership working, whilst improving confidence, resilience and the quality of the collective response.



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Fewer incidents of knife-enabled violence and carrying of knives or sharp instruments.

Reduced harm to victims, families and communities, including reductions in repeat victimisation and serious injury.

Earlier identification of children, young people and adults at risk of carrying knives, exploitation or serious violence.

More effective disruption and prosecution of those who carry, use, supply or enable weapons.

Stronger multi-agency problem solving in hotspot locations and around priority cohorts.

Improved community confidence, communication and visibility of action.

A better organised, evidence-led and sustainable policing and partnership response.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

Public health approach:

tackle root causes as well as symptoms, with a focus on prevention, vulnerability and long-term harm reduction.

Problem solving:

use scanning, analysis, response and assessment to understand local patterns and design the right interventions for the right places and people.

Child-centered and trauma-informed practice:

recognise the overlap between offending, victimisation, exploitation and vulnerability.

Partnership by design:

use statutory and voluntary sector relationships to improve information sharing, safeguarding and intervention.

Targeted enforcement and visible reassurance:

combine robust action against offenders with communication and community engagement.

Continuous evaluation:

review activity regularly and adapt where outcomes, impact or demand indicate change is needed.

Evidence-led delivery:

base activity on intelligence, analysis, local performance data and recognised professional guidance.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Wiltshire Police will prioritise early intervention with children, young people and adults who are at risk of becoming involved in knife crime, whether as victims, offenders or both. This includes strengthening school and education engagement, supporting diversionary and focused deterrence programmes, using community-based interventions, and working with families and professionals to reduce escalation.

Prevention activity will continue to be informed by local profiles, intelligence, safeguarding information and the voice of children and communities, with particular emphasis on those identified through tactical gangs processes, youth risk analysis and local vulnerability pathways. Alongside awareness activity, this priority includes practical prevention measures such as targeted mentoring, schools-based inputs, youth diversion programmes, parent support, test purchasing and retailer engagement, and work to challenge the drivers of knife carrying, exploitation and serious youth violence before harm escalates.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 2: Protection, Safeguarding and Community Safety

Wiltshire Police will strengthen the identification and safeguarding of those at risk from knife-related harm, including victims, repeat victims, exploited children, vulnerable adults and those exposed to violence in homes, peer groups, schools, transport hubs and public spaces.

This will include improved intelligence sharing, contextual safeguarding, victim support pathways, multi-agency strategy meetings and targeted work in locations and networks associated with heightened risk. Protect activity will also include community safety measures such as hotspot problem solving, reassurance activity, support for businesses and public venues, and initiatives that reduce harm in the event of violent incidents, including the Wiltshire Community Bleed Kit Partnership and wider first-response awareness. Delivery will be strengthened through established partnership forums, schools and police panels, safeguarding arrangements and consistent use of referral pathways for those at risk of exploitation or serious violence.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 3: Enforcement, Disruption and Offender Management

Wiltshire Police will use intelligence-led enforcement to identify, target and disrupt offenders, repeat carriers, suppliers and those linked to knife-enabled violence. This includes the use of targeted patrols, stop and search powers where lawful and proportionate, search warrants, hotspot policing, proactive investigations and force tasking processes to align specialist and local resources.

Enforcement will be supported by improved evidential quality and legislative understanding through workforce development, better use of technology such as hotspot mapping and dedicated knife crime performance products, and coordinated action with regional and national partners where supply or distribution routes extend beyond Wiltshire. This priority also includes disruption of illegal supply through retailer engagement, test purchasing, postal and online supply route disruption, and partnership working around transport hubs and other high-risk locations.

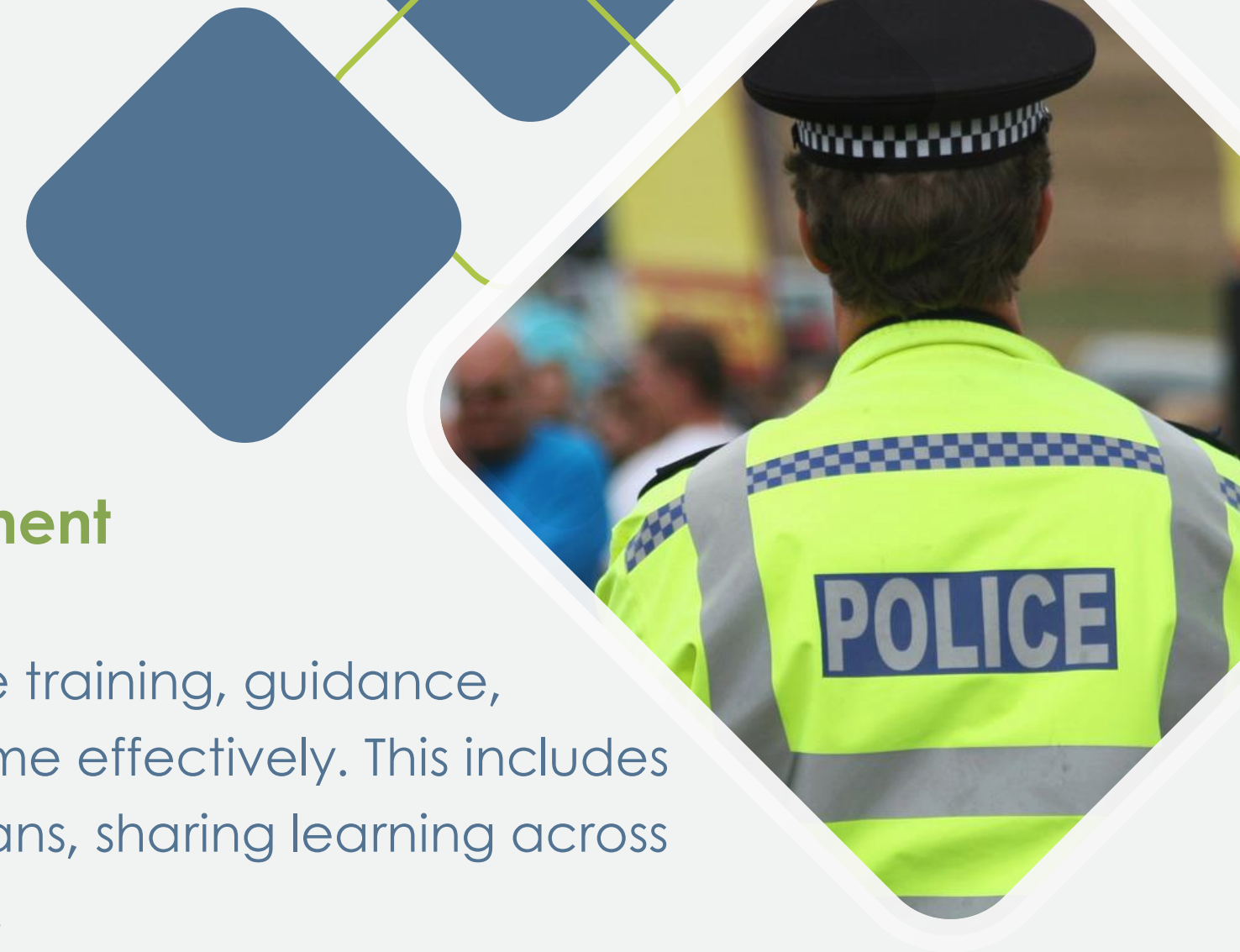


STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 4: Preparedness, Governance and Continuous Improvement

Wiltshire Police will ensure officers, staff and partners are equipped with the training, guidance, data, governance and operational readiness required to address knife crime effectively. This includes improving analytical products, maintaining current profiles and delivery plans, sharing learning across the force and with partners, and embedding regular review of what works.

Preparedness also includes delivery of initiatives such as Project Aluma, workforce training on knife legislation, safeguarding and evidential standards, coordinated communications and community impact planning, and the ability to mobilise appropriate tactics during periods of increased demand or heightened risk. The force will continue to strengthen its readiness through learning from incidents, operations, inspections, partner feedback and performance outcomes, ensuring that governance structures remain current and that tactical activity is properly aligned to strategic intent.



GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic oversight for this strategy will sit with the Wiltshire Police knife crime portfolio lead, supported by force governance structures and Community Safety Partnership arrangements across Wiltshire and Swindon.

Delivery will be informed by the Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment, local problem profiles, Tactical Gangs meetings, violence reduction meetings, Daily Management Meetings and force tasking.

Accountability for individual workstreams should sit with named leads across prevention, neighbourhood policing, investigations, intelligence, safeguarding, communications and partner agencies, with progress reviewed through both force and partnership governance. These arrangements should ensure that strategic direction, tactical delivery and local problem solving remain aligned, and that emerging risks, intelligence gaps, safeguarding concerns and opportunities for intervention are escalated promptly and acted on consistently.



DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Performance against this strategy should be monitored through a combination of outcome, activity and quality measures. These should include reductions in knife-enabled serious violence, offences involving knives or sharp instruments, hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object, repeat victimisation, and non-domestic homicide where relevant. They should also include indicators of safeguarding, intervention, enforcement and confidence, such as referral quality, disruption activity, hotspot problem solving, victim support pathways, programme participation, intelligence development, training delivery, and community feedback.

Performance review should consider both force and partnership data, recognising that knife crime is concentrated and that success is not measured by volume reduction alone but also by the quality of intervention, reduced harm, improved resilience, and the maturity of the collective response. Particular attention should be paid to data quality, consistency of recording, emerging patterns of youth violence and the effectiveness of targeted interventions over time.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This strategy will be implemented through supporting delivery plans, local problem-solving activity, partnership workstreams and force governance processes.

Responsibility for delivery should be assigned to named leads across policing and partner agencies, with progress monitored through existing violence reduction, tasking and performance structures. The strategy should be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains aligned to local need, strategic assessments, emerging threats and legislative or policy changes. Where required, interim amendments should be made to reflect significant changes in demand, risk or organisational learning.



IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR 2026–2027

- Refresh the force knife crime control framework so that governance, ownership, Tactical Gangs arrangements and performance reporting are consistent and current.
- Align local tactical plans, Serious Violence Duty delivery plans and Community Safety Partnership workstreams to this strategy, with clear named leads for each priority area.
- Strengthen intelligence development around priority cohorts, hotspot locations, weapon supply routes, online purchasing and emerging patterns of knife carrying and serious youth violence.
- Embed targeted prevention, safeguarding and diversion pathways for those identified through Tactical Gangs meetings, schools, neighbourhood intelligence, vulnerability processes and Daily Management Meetings.
- Improve workforce capability through Project Aluma and related training on knife legislation, evidential standards, safeguarding, contextual risk and problem solving.
- Coordinate visible operational, communications and partnership activity around hotspot locations, key demand periods, national weeks of action and community reassurance opportunities.
- Support implementation of practical harm-reduction initiatives, including the Wiltshire Community Bleed Kit Partnership, improved victim pathways and stronger evaluation of prevention and enforcement activity.



KNIFE CRIME 4P PLAN – CONSULTATION & STAKEHOLDER SUMMARY (2026–2029)

The 4P Plan and strategy has been co-produced through extensive consultation with statutory partners, operational leads, and regional and national stakeholders, ensuring that Wiltshire's response to knife crime is evidence-led, partnership-driven and aligned to a public health approach. It provides a coherent, whole-system framework that integrates **prevention, enforcement, safeguarding and community engagement to reduce knife-enabled violence, protect those at risk and improve long-term outcomes for communities.**

Local Strategic and Governance Partners

- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
- Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) (Swindon & Wiltshire)
- Violence Reduction Partnership / Violence Reduction Boards

These partnerships provide the legal and governance framework for **joint ownership, accountability and delivery.**

National and Regional Stakeholders

- Home Office
- National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- South West Regional Knife Crime Working Group
- Youth Violence & Gang Culture 4P Plan (regional/national learning)

These stakeholders ensure **alignment with national priorities, legislation and cross-force working.**



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Local Partnership and Service Delivery Stakeholders

- Violence Reduction / Youth Violence Partners
- Health Partners (including SWASFT and NHS England South West)
- Local Authorities, Probation and Fire & Rescue
- Third Sector and Community Organisations

These partners enable **early intervention, safeguarding and community-based solutions to reduce harm and prevent escalation.**

Internal Departmental Stakeholders

- Intelligence (IDU / analysts) – development of problem profiles, threat assessments and intelligence gaps
- Vulnerability and Safeguarding Leads – identification and protection of at-risk individuals
- Victim Services – delivery of support pathways and enhanced victim care
- Business Intelligence – performance, data quality and analytical products
- Corporate Communications / Media Team – public messaging, engagement and prevention campaigns
- Neighbourhood, Response and Specialist Operations teams – operational delivery across the 4Ps





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PLAN ON A PAGE

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VISION

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STRATEGIC AIM

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

01

**Prevention
and Early
Intervention**

02

**Protection,
Safeguarding and
Community Safety**

03

**Enforcement,
Disruption and
Offender Management**

04

**Preparedness,
Governance and
Continuous Improvement**



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Problem solving: use scanning, analysis, response and assessment to understand local patterns and design the right interventions for the right places and people.

Child-first and trauma-informed practice: recognise the overlap between offending, victimisation, exploitation and vulnerability.

Evidence-led delivery: base activity on intelligence, analysis, local performance data and recognised professional guidance.

Partnership by design: use statutory and voluntary sector relationships to improve information sharing, safeguarding and intervention.

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