

four years' behind bars– you increase your chances of injury massively. The statistics shows that the knife is far more likely to be turned on you and cause you harm rather than anyone else. Research from the Youth Justice Board shows that 65% of young people who have carried a knife have had it used against themselves and the same survey shows that 29% of students in London schools have admitted to carrying a knife.

So what can we do about it? The authorities have brought in national knife amnesties and increased police presence on the streets, but in the end it's down to us. We're the ones living it; we're the only ones who can stop it. Many of the young people we asked felt that knife amnesties might take knives off the street but doesn't change the situation. They thought that there is a lack of activities for young people: 'everything costs so much money and all they can do is be on the streets'. One suggestion is for ex-cons to run workshops in youth centres to help show young people that it's not worth turning to crime.

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‘It's getting out of control’

Hearing from people who have been in the situation rather than just listening to teachers and politicians who don't have first hand experience would probably be far more effective. Its not, however, it's not all about getting more youth clubs, but 'finding ways to attract these young people to get out of this way of life and do something productive'. One boy thought that 'we need more role models' to aspire to, and people that have dropped out of schools need more positive options.

Obviously we can't change an entire culture overnight, but the biggest step we can take at the moment is to help those young people who persist on carrying knives understand that it doesn't improve how you look, and certainly doesn't make you safer.

If you have any views or suggestions on the matter of youth crime in Kingston and London then go to www.younglivin.org.uk

Written by Natasha Patel and Vicki Exworthy

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