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Knife crime declines by 32 per cent following summer clamp down on violence

Knife crime reduced in London by 32 per cent compared to pre-pandemic levels as officers across the Met executed a summer campaign of violence suppression activity.

Officers continued their unwavering commitment to tackle violence while lockdown restrictions lifted, the school year ended and the summer months began. Several coordinated operations took place displaying a strong, visible policing presence with the support of local communities.

The Met-wide activity also led to reductions across many violent crime types during August (compared to the same period in 2019), including:

- Total knife crime reduced by 32 per cent
- Robbery reduced by 37 per cent
- Gun crime reduced by 38 per cent
- Lethal barreled discharges reduced by 47 per cent
- Knife injury victims under 25 reduced by 35 per cent
- Violence with injury reduced by 8 per cent

Over the summer period (12 July to 6 September 2021), the collective efforts resulted in:

- 427 knives recovered
- 226 offensive weapons seized
- 61 firearms recovered
- 1,875 weapons sweeps carried out
- 1,793 drug seizures
- 277 warrants conducted
- 4,978 arrests.

Officers patrolled open spaces and violence hotspots including parks, transport hubs and areas of high footfall during operation Summer Nights. Our surge activity also saw officers from different commands team up to combine their specialist skills to deter crime and apprehend violent offenders.

Targeting criminals using transport routes in and out of London, the Met worked with neighbouring forces and arrested more than 40 people and seized 10 weapons during Op Pandilla in August. Using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology, the officers intercepted offenders bringing weapons and drugs onto the capital's streets.

At the start of the summer period there was an upsurge in activity to tackle firearms offences. During that week there were 45 arrests, eight firearms recovered, 55 rounds of ammunition found and multiple kilos of class A and B drugs discovered. The link between violence and drugs is inextricable and between April and June, 732kg of drugs was seized, plus 929 cannabis plants and 442 doses of various drugs also removed from London's streets.

In an effort to prevent violence and build on relationships with communities and young Londoners, the Met hosted various summer camps during the school holiday. One in Lambeth was attended by 150 local children aged nine to 16. The camp was staffed by officers and volunteers, plus a visit from Commissioner Cressida Dick, who provided fun and engaging sessions with life skills lessons.

The safety of women and girls remains a key priority. Officers worked with partners to relaunch the Ask for Angela campaign which aims to ensure anyone who feels unsafe during a night out can access assistance. So far, in excess of 600 frontline staff from more than 400 London venues have been trained to provide support. Additionally, we created the 'Walk and Talk' initiative providing the opportunity for women and girls to express their safety concerns while being out and about with 25 female police officers.

Commander Alex Murray, lead for violence in London, said: "The reductions are compared to crime levels before the pandemic, showing real progress has been made over this time. These are tremendous efforts by officers who are dedicated to creating safer communities. Londoners can be reassured this work will continue.

"The work we are all doing plus the legacy effects of Covid-19 are also likely contributors to the declines.

"Policing alone is not enough and given the complex nature of violence, the responsibility falls across society. The reductions are also thanks to partners, volunteers and community workers who all work to make London safer. The results are encouraging and we will continue to work together to tackle violence.

"To everyone who has made a call to police or Crimestoppers with information on violent crime, you too have made a difference in your community.

"Although these reductions are positive, we cannot and will not be complacent in the fight to tackle violence in all its forms.

"We encourage the public to call the independent charity Crimestoppers, 100 per cent anonymously, with any information they may have about violence or knife crime in their area. Any information, no matter how small, could save a

life.”