



[Recovered cash and weapons]

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More than 150 people arrested in County Lines operation

A Met-led operation, alongside four other police forces to bear down on county lines and violent crime, has yielded 154 arrests in London alone.

Proactive units across the Met, plus the Essex, Sussex, Surrey and Thames Valley police forces worked together to stop drug dealers and high harm offenders in their tracks.

Between Tuesday, 23 until the early hours of Saturday, 27 February, officers used ANPR technology along arterial routes such as motorways and A roads

connecting London to regional areas to stop vehicles linked to drugs and county lines. They were also proactively on the look-out for suspicious activity in their efforts to tackle violence, the Met's top priority.

Coordinated by the Violent Crime Task Force, more than 100 officers and staff took part in the efforts spanning five counties, named Operation Pandilla.

The operation resulted in:

- **18** individuals referred to DIVERT, an intervention programme aimed to reduce re-offending;
- **49** knives and weapons removed from London's streets;
- **27** vehicles seized;
- **78** separate incidents resulting in various quantities of drugs being recovered;
- **154** arrests by the Met for offences including possession of an offensive weapon and possession with intent to supply Class A drugs;
- **62** individuals were reported for consideration for a Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for breaching coronavirus regulations.

Some of the results include one man who was stopped carrying 250 wraps of suspected Class A drugs, and another man was found with a large hunting knife in his trousers following a stop and search.

On Thursday, 25 February officers stopped a car on Queens Road, E13 and found the driver in possession of Class B drugs. He was arrested and during a further search, he was found concealing Class A drugs inside his clothing. At his home address, officers found £25,000 in cash, large amounts of cannabis, bricks of Class A drugs and three bladed weapons.

Acting Inspector Pete Luciano, of the Violent Crime Task Force, said: "Drugs and violence devastate lives and destroy communities, therefore operations such as this are imperative in our drive to make communities safer.

"Since the pandemic, offenders have relied on vehicles to enable their criminality compared with other modes of transport, and we have adapted our tactics to respond to this change. We will not stop in our determination to make London safer for everyone. I believe it is the best city in the world.

“Last year in London, there was a 26 per cent reduction in violence, however we are not complacent. The issue of drugs and violence spans wider than the capital and we must continue to work as one, sharing information and intelligence – a method we know is successful.

“The results from this operation show there is an undeniable link between drugs and violent crime. We are absolutely committed to build on work with our partners to remove illegal drugs and weapons, arrest those who cause destruction through their criminality and protect the most vulnerable.”

+ If you have any information about knife crime, please contact police or [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111 – your anonymity is guaranteed. They are a totally independent charity and you remain 100 per cent anonymous, they never ask your name and they cannot trace your call, your IP address or device you use.

No detail you might have is too small - every bit of information helps towards the fight against knife crime in London.

If you are worried about someone you suspect may be carrying a knife or other weapon, advice and support is also available through organisations including [Knife Free](#) and [Fearless](#).