# Teenagers involved in a third of positive knife searches amid rising youth violence in Scotland



Amid rising concerns over youth violence in Scotland, recent data reveals a troubling trend: teenagers now account for nearly a third of positive knife searches across all age groups. This surge in incidents coincides with several high-profile cases involving youths and deadly weapons, culminating in the tragic deaths of two teenagers within the last three months.

This alarming situation has dominated recent political discourse, prompting First Minister John Swinney to affirm the government's commitment to addressing youth disorder. Analysis by crime and justice publication 1919 Magazine highlights specific instances, including a 10-year-old caught with a knife in Edinburgh and multiple twelve-year-olds found carrying blades in various regions such as Ayrshire, Glasgow, and Lanarkshire throughout 2024. Additionally, a concerning number of positive searches involved children aged 13, including girls, underscoring the broad scope of this crisis.

In light of these figures, politicians have called for urgent reforms. Scottish Labour’s justice spokesperson, Pauline McNeill, described the situation as indicative of a youth violence epidemic. She pointed to systemic issues, noting that cuts to youth work services, a decrease in police numbers, and insufficient mental health services have exacerbated the problem. McNeill urged for early intervention schemes to address the root causes of violence, stating, “The only way to tackle this effectively is to have early intervention schemes that get to the root cause, and without this we will fail our communities.”

The Scottish Conservatives, meanwhile, attributed the rise in knife crime to “soft-touch” sentencing policies that reportedly embolden young offenders. Community safety spokesperson Sharon Dowey contended that current sentencing guidelines for under-25s are inadequate, calling for more stringent penalties and enhanced police stop-and-search powers as deterrents. Dowey asserted that the government’s approach to justice reflects a severe negligence in safeguarding communities.

Adding to the gravity of the issue, David Threadgold, chair of the Scottish Police Federation, stressed the need for multifaceted strategies to prevent youth violence. He cautioned against relying solely on police responses, suggesting that community-level initiatives must be developed to cultivate safer environments. As he articulated, "Each of these statistics is a real situation which created significant risk for my colleagues, as well as potentially life-changing consequences for the perpetrator and sadly – as we have seen so tragically across Scotland recently – the victim of knife crime, their families and friends."

First Minister Swinney has publicly acknowledged the devastating impact of youth deaths on families and communities. He outlined a three-pronged approach focused on early intervention, community engagement, and effective punishment for offenders. Meanwhile, a spokesperson from the Scottish Government stated that stop-and-search powers must be employed in a lawful, necessary, and proportionate manner, reflecting ongoing debates about the balance between public safety and civil liberties.

As Scotland grapples with these figures, the implications for public safety and youth welfare remain critical. Recent data suggests a complex landscape of crime, with a slight decrease in overall recorded crimes juxtaposed against an unsettling rise in violent acts involving knives and bladed instruments. Such statistics underline the necessity for holistic, community-driven tactics that can effectively address the underlying challenges of youth violence while ensuring public safety.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25208023.dozens-children-caught-knives-across-scotland/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202500457624/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25208023.dozens-children-caught-knives-across-scotland/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.gov.scot/news/recorded-crime-in-scotland-year-ending-december-2024/), [[5]](https://www.gov.scot/policies/crime-prevention-and-reduction/violence-knife-crime/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25208023.dozens-children-caught-knives-across-scotland/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2023-24/pages/9/), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c80lv23ng43o)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25208023.dozens-children-caught-knives-across-scotland/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.gov.scot/news/recorded-crime-in-scotland-year-ending-december-2024/), [[3]](https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2023-24/pages/9/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25208023.dozens-children-caught-knives-across-scotland/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.gov.scot/policies/crime-prevention-and-reduction/violence-knife-crime/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25208023.dozens-children-caught-knives-across-scotland/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.scot/news/recorded-crime-in-scotland-year-ending-december-2024/> - This official Scottish Government publication provides statistics on recorded crimes in Scotland for the year ending December 2024. It reports a 1% decrease in total crimes compared to the previous year, with non-sexual crimes of violence decreasing by 2%. The report also highlights a 10% increase in crimes against society, driven by a rise in crimes against public justice. The data offers insights into crime trends and informs policy decisions aimed at crime prevention and public safety.
3. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2023-24/pages/9/> - This section of the Scottish Government's Recorded Crime in Scotland 2023-24 report focuses on crimes against society. It notes a 4% increase in such crimes compared to the previous year, accounting for 21% of all recorded crimes. The report details categories within this group, including crimes against public justice, drug possession, and weapons possession. It also discusses historical trends and the impact of procedural changes on crime recording, providing a comprehensive overview of societal crime patterns in Scotland.
4. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202500457624/> - This Freedom of Information (FOI) release from the Scottish Government addresses requests for data on knife crimes in Scotland, including homicides and attempted homicides involving bladed or pointed instruments, broken down by council area for the last three years. The response clarifies that the Scottish Government does not hold detailed data on whether recorded crimes involved knives or other bladed instruments, as the data received from Police Scotland is a simple count of the number and type of crimes and offences recorded.
5. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/crime-prevention-and-reduction/violence-knife-crime/> - This Scottish Government policy page outlines the approach to tackling violence, including knife crime, in Scotland. It emphasises a public health approach to prevention, drawing parallels with disease control strategies. The page highlights initiatives such as the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Medics Against Violence, and the No Knives Better Lives programme, all aimed at reducing violence and promoting safety within communities. It also discusses legislative measures and the importance of early intervention and education in preventing knife crime.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c80lv23ng43o> - This BBC News article reports on the latest homicide statistics in Scotland for the year 2023-24. It notes a 10% increase in homicide victims compared to the previous year, with 57 people killed. Despite the rise, the number of homicides remains the third lowest since records began in 1976. The article provides insights into the demographics of victims and perpetrators, methods of killing, and regional variations, offering a comprehensive overview of homicide trends in Scotland.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knife_legislation> - This Wikipedia article provides an overview of knife legislation in the United Kingdom, with a specific focus on Scotland. It details various laws and regulations governing the possession, sale, and use of knives and bladed instruments, including the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) (Scotland) Order 2005. The article also discusses exceptions and defences related to carrying knives, such as for work purposes or religious reasons, and outlines the penalties for offences.