# Natashia Lee highlights urgent need for knife arches and mental health support in schools amid rising youth violence



"I live in constant fear of a bad feeling; it's a psychological scar that won't ever be healed," Natashia Lee reflects, recounting the harrowing moment she was stabbed seven times during a brutal school attack by her childhood bullies. Now, almost twenty years later, the trauma still resonates deeply, amplified by a rising tide of knife crime incidents that threaten the safety of students across the UK.

On 10 November 2005, a young Natashia approached her school day at Collingwood College in Surrey with an unsettling sense of dread. This anxiety proved warranted when, shortly after leaving the dinner queue, she faced a horrific assault from three classmates, injured by a pair of scissors. In the aftermath, one of her assailants received a sentence exceeding three years, while the others faced community orders. Despite her physical wounds eventually healing, the emotional aftermath led to severe PTSD, a profound loss of trust in humanity, and lasting anxiety about school safety.

Recent events have only heightened her concerns. The tragic case of 15-year-old Harvey Willgoose, who lost his life to a knife attack at All Saints Catholic High School in Sheffield, echoes Natashia’s traumatic experience. This incident exemplifies a broader disturbing trend, as statistics reveal that in 2023-24, a staggering 83% of homicide victims aged between 13 and 19 were killed with a sharp instrument, sparking urgent calls for intervention against rising youth violence.

Natashia's fears were further compounded by a violent rampage involving a 14-year-old girl in Ammanford, who injured two teachers and a fellow pupil with a knife taken from her father's multi-tool. Such incidents speak to a growing crisis in schools, where safety measures lag woefully behind the urgent need for protective strategies. Natashia advocates for the introduction of knife arches, walk-through detectors designed to prevent weapons from entering school grounds; however, financial constraints mean many state schools are unable to afford this vital security measure, with each arch costing upwards of £7,500.

The UK education system faces critical challenges not only in terms of physical safety but also in nurturing mental wellbeing among students. As Natashia rightly points out, the rapid turnover of teachers in schools means that personal relationships, which are vital for student support, are significantly weakened. Without established rapport, students often feel isolated and unsure of where to seek help during challenging times. The need for more school counsellors and a robust mental health framework in educational settings has never been more pressing.

Natashia’s own journey has taken her from her traumatic experience in Surrey to various roles in education and charity work, including time spent in Thailand and Kenya. Now, she has established ESG Pro, a consultancy that aims to improve educational conditions by reinvesting 20% of client fees into initiatives that enhance school safety. Her flagship project, the School Impact Project, seeks to provide critical funding for safety improvements in schools facing dire budget constraints.

“My biggest concern is that when it happened to me, the only social media we had was MSN and MySpace. Society has now evolved, and we’re looking at a generation that lacks empathy and compassion as they see the world through the lens of social media,” she asserts, highlighting the need for a conversation about proactive behaviours and values among today's youth.

In partnership with the Ben Kinsella Trust, Natashia is determined to effect change. The partnership has already secured funding to support 19 schools, underpinning her belief that if she can contribute towards making just one school safer, her efforts will be meaningful. As she eloquently states, "I’m not healed; I will never be healed because I am partly stuck as a 14-year-old girl."

Amidst the harrowing statistics, the need for a national response to what many are calling a public health crisis has become increasingly clear. The former children’s commissioner for England has voiced that knife crime in schools is a problem requiring immediate attention. With nearly 20,000 offences recorded involving knives or offensive weapons in England and Wales, many are questioning what preventative measures can be effectively implemented to safeguard the next generation.

Natashia Lee's story serves as a crucial reminder of the urgent need for action to protect students from the growing threat of knife crime, while also advocating for the mental well-being of young people. Her resilience in sharing her experience aims not only to raise awareness but also to inspire a collective effort towards creating a safer, more compassionate school environment for future generations.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.
2. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3.
3. Paragraphs 4, 5.
4. Paragraphs 5, 8.
5. Paragraphs 6, 9.
6. Paragraphs 4, 5, 6.
7. Paragraphs 4, 6.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/uk-schools-knife-crime-natashia-lee-b2748101.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/uk-schools-knife-crime-natashia-lee-b2748101.html> - This article recounts the experience of Natashia Lee, who was stabbed seven times at Collingwood College in Surrey in 2005 by her childhood bullies. The piece highlights the lasting psychological trauma she endured and her concerns over the rise in school stabbings, referencing recent incidents such as the manslaughter of Harvey Willgoose in Sheffield and a knife attack in Ammanford. Lee emphasizes the need for improved mental health support and preventive measures within the education system to protect students from such violence.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdxnpg90we2o> - The BBC News article discusses the alarming statistics on teenage homicides in England and Wales, revealing that 83% of homicide victims aged 13 to 19 were killed with a sharp instrument in 2023-24. It also highlights the case of 15-year-old Harvey Willgoose, who was fatally stabbed at his school in Sheffield. The piece underscores the urgent need for effective interventions to address knife crime among young people.
4. <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2024/january-2024/knife-crime-offences-schools-recorded-january2018-september2023/> - This report from the Metropolitan Police provides data on knife crime offences recorded in schools from January 2018 to September 2023. It includes annual totals for the number of offences, offering insights into trends and patterns of knife-related incidents within educational institutions over the specified period.
5. <https://www.cambs.police.uk/foi-ai/cambridgeshire-police/foi/2025/april/knife-crime-in-schools-2020-2024/> - Cambridgeshire Constabulary's report details school-based knife-related crimes from 2020 to 2024. It presents data on various offence types, knife usage, and demographics of victims and suspects, highlighting the prevalence and nature of knife crime within schools in the Cambridgeshire area over the five-year period.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/nov/20/knife-blighting-the-lives-of-too-many-children-in-england-warn-inspectors> - The Guardian article reports on a joint inspection by Ofsted and other agencies, revealing that knife crime is significantly affecting children in England. Inspectors found that carrying knives has become normalized for some children, with a failure to identify serious youth violence as a safeguarding risk leaving many in danger.
7. <https://knifecrimematters.org/rising-tide-of-knife-crime-in-the-uk/> - This article discusses the escalating issue of knife crime in the UK, noting over 280 fatal stabbings recorded in England and Wales in 2023. It also outlines government initiatives aimed at reducing knife crime, particularly among young people, such as Serious Violence Reduction Orders and tougher sentencing for repeat offenders.