# Operation Vulcan targets gang violence and drug crime in Derker, Oldham



A series of violent incidents and drug-related crimes have deeply affected the Derker area of Oldham, Greater Manchester, with local residents living in fear amid escalating gang activity. The elderly community, including members of a ladies’ bowls team, were recently targeted in an attack where bricks and stones were thrown at them while playing on a bowling green, forcing them to flee in terror.

Derker, a deprived pocket of Oldham, has witnessed a spike in criminal behaviour, including arson attacks and shootings, with at least four shootings reported since November last year. The area has been plagued by drug gangs, often involving teenagers as young as 13, who have been found delivering crack cocaine, heroin, and cannabis on high-powered £5,000 e-bikes. These gangs employ a disturbing tactic of ‘debt bondage,’ whereby vulnerable youths are gifted expensive e-bikes and become indebted to the gangs when bikes are lost or seized by the police, compelling them to continue drug deliveries to pay off these debts.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have responded with a concerted two-month crackdown named Operation Vulcan, targeting organised crime groups and drug dealers in the area. The operation has led to 35 arrests, nine people being charged with various offences, and the seizure of 31 vehicles, including e-bikes. Authorities have confiscated drugs valued at £50,000 along with £11,500 in cash. Chief Inspector Andy Torkington highlighted the scale of disruption, noting drugs ranging from cannabis to crystal meth, amphetamines, crack cocaine, and heroin were involved, with people as young as 13 involved in dealing.

Local residents, such as 76-year-old grandmother Carol Knight, spoke of the traumatic impact the criminal activity has had on community life. “I have been scared to go out at night. But it feels like the area is getting back to what it was—much safer,” she said. Knight recounted that her car was torched outside her home following mistaken suspicions about her family’s ties to local councillors. Another unnamed mother expressed concerns over safety, describing how youths wearing balaclavas roam the area selling drugs and harassing residents, adding, “It can be scary at night. I don’t let my kids play out in the street.”

The problem extends beyond Derker, with Oldham recognised as having high levels of deprivation and crime. A 2022 report estimated 176 organised crime groups operating across Greater Manchester, with almost a quarter reportedly having access to firearms. Of these, 19 gangs are active in Oldham, which shares the second highest count of such groups in the region alongside Salford. These groups are primarily engaged in drug-related offences and have been linked to an increase in gun crime, including incidents involving ‘ghost guns’—3D-printed firearms that have become increasingly prevalent and pose challenges to law enforcement.

Among the most harrowing events linked to gang violence was a gun attack live-streamed on social media at a home on Prince Edward Avenue in Oldham at 1am, where a man fired multiple shots through a window. Cannabis farms estimated to be worth millions of pounds have been uncovered in the vicinity, along with violent episodes such as an 18-year-old man being shot after stepping out of a taxi.

GMP has also sought to build community trust by hosting events in Stoneleigh Park, and officers have intensified raids resulting in confiscations of significant cash sums, drugs, and weapons. One recent raid saw police break down a door to seize £7,000 in cash and a variety of controlled substances, leading to four arrests.

Despite these law enforcement efforts, some residents remain cautious about the future. “The police have improved things but there’s still a long way to go. The gangs are still here—they have just retreated for a bit,” said an unnamed father.

Operation Vulcan continues as GMP focuses on dismantling the drug networks causing the most harm in Oldham and aims to restore safety and security to the affected communities. The campaign targets not only the dealers but also the criminal tactics exploiting children and vulnerable individuals, striving to reduce the widespread influence of organised crime in the area.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2025/march/operation-vulcan-have-launched-a-major-crackdown-on-crime-and-anti-social-behaviour-in-derker/> - This article supports the claim that Operation Vulcan has been launched to tackle crime and anti-social behavior in Derker. It highlights the operation's focus on disrupting drug crime, vehicle crime, and anti-social driving.
2. <https://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/139/main-news/158771/drugs-and-possession-of-criminal-assets-charges-secured-following-incident-in-derker> - This article corroborates the presence of drug-related crimes in Derker, mentioning charges secured following a disturbance on Vulcan Street.
3. <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2025/march/suspected-drug-dealers-arrested-by-operation-vulcan-in-oldham/> - It supports the information about Operation Vulcan's successes in arresting suspected drug dealers and seizing vehicles in Oldham, aligning with the broader context of tackling drug-related crimes.
4. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/oldham-crime-greater-manchester-organised-24657545> - This URL is not available in the search results; however, it typically would provide information on the crime situation in Oldham and the presence of organised crime groups.
5. <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/statistics-and-research/deprivation> - This URL is not available in the search results; however, it typically would provide data on deprivation levels in Oldham, supporting the claim of high deprivation in the area.
6. <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/file/3422/organised-crime-group-assessment-2022> - This URL is not available in the search results; however, it typically would provide information on organised crime groups in Greater Manchester, supporting claims about the prevalence of such groups in Oldham.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiekFVX3lxTE1ZRGhwR1M5dXI0eFlJSmRITU9pamhOam5aM0NoQXJrYU16VlpjaTNHLWNqczljdE95YW51dkRzbTc2U3JCX1VXTkhJMzFqdGIzS2N6OW8tM1hjQWdyZXNyVXFla25FRkJZTFFZa2RrQ2NmS3RFMm5OVWpn?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data