# Nearly half of knife stop and searches in Norwich target teenagers despite low arrest rates



A recent Freedom of Information request has unveiled troubling details about knife-related stop and searches in Norwich, pointing to an alarming involvement of young people in such incidents. Between May 2024 and April 2025, police carried out 127 stop and searches for offensive weapons, and nearly half—45 percent—targeted teenagers aged 10 to 19. Specifically, 14 stops involved children aged 10 to 14, while 43 involved older teens between 15 and 19 years. Despite these figures, only 23 percent resulted in arrests, with the majority of searches leading to no further action. The concentration of these stops was heavily skewed towards males, and Norwich East was identified as the hotspot for these police activities.

The persistence of knife crime deeply resonates for families affected by this violence. Margaret Oakes, whose 18-year-old son Raymond James Quigley was fatally stabbed in broad daylight in Ipswich in January 2023, has become a vocal advocate for stronger measures. She has launched the Raymond James Quigley Legacy to install emergency bleeding control kits across Norfolk and to raise awareness about the dangers of knife crime. Mrs Oakes calls for decisive action, including tougher laws and longer sentences for knife offences, and stresses the importance of early education in schools to prevent youth involvement in knife crime. "There are so many deaths and families' lives are ruined when losing a loved one—it causes so much pain and trauma," she said.

The ongoing concern about knife crime has prompted law enforcement and local authorities to take multi-faceted approaches. In May 2024, Norfolk Constabulary ran Operation Sceptre, a week-long campaign targeting knife crime. The initiative saw 13 arrests and the seizure of 21 knives, alongside 73 weapon sweeps. Police officers also collaborated with schools, colleges, and retailers to curb knife sales and educate the community about the risks of carrying weapons. Moreover, high-visibility patrols and targeted enforcement continue as part of new crackdowns on youth violence in Norwich, responding to a rise in daytime incidents involving teenagers carrying knives.

Despite these efforts, the statistical landscape of knife crime has been complex. While more recent figures show a measured decrease—knife crime fell by 11.6 percent in the year ending September 2024 and by 6.6 percent in the year ending December 2024—the broader context reveals ongoing challenges. Norfolk has seen an 8.4 percent increase in knife crime between March 2023 and March 2024, outpacing the national rise across England and Wales. The use of certain weapons, such as zombie knives, has drawn particular attention, with a third of offences involving these weapons committed by under-18s. The police commissioner for Norfolk has expressed concern not only about the number of young people subjected to stop and searches but also about the high percentage of such stops that do not lead to further legal action. This underlines the challenge of applying stop and search powers thoughtfully and effectively, ensuring they serve their purpose without alienating communities.

Beyond knife crime, Norwich and Norfolk face a range of other rising offences, including sexual offences, burglaries, and weapons possession, presenting a broader challenge for law enforcement. Although overall crime in Norfolk has shown some decline in recent years, the persistence of knife-related incidents, especially among youths, remains stark. The trial of a 17-year-old accused of attempted murder from a knife attack earlier this year, alongside other violent episodes involving teenagers, underscore the pressing need for concerted preventive and judicial responses.

As commissioners, police, families, and communities grapple with these issues, there is a shared call for holistic strategies—balancing enforcement with education, community support, and legislative action. The hope is that continued vigilance, coupled with targeted interventions and awareness campaigns, might begin to turn the tide against the knife epidemic impacting Norwich and the wider Norfolk area.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25219875.nearly-half-knife-stop-searches-teenagers/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://concreteuea.co.uk/2024/10/15/one-in-ten-knife-crime-offenses-in-norfolk-committed-by-under-18s/), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czx4y2pgzg8o)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25219875.nearly-half-knife-stop-searches-teenagers/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/may/sceptre-13-arrested-in-operation-to-tackle-knife-crime/), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czx4y2pgzg8o)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2025/january/chief-constable-welcomes-latest-crime-statistics/), [[5]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2025/april/crime-falls-in-norfolk-in-latest-figures/), [[4]](https://concreteuea.co.uk/2024/10/15/one-in-ten-knife-crime-offenses-in-norfolk-committed-by-under-18s/), [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25219875.nearly-half-knife-stop-searches-teenagers/?ref=rss), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czx4y2pgzg8o)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2025/january/chief-constable-welcomes-latest-crime-statistics/), [[5]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2025/april/crime-falls-in-norfolk-in-latest-figures/), [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25219875.nearly-half-knife-stop-searches-teenagers/?ref=rss)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25219875.nearly-half-knife-stop-searches-teenagers/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/may/sceptre-13-arrested-in-operation-to-tackle-knife-crime/> - In May 2024, Norfolk Constabulary conducted a week-long operation named Sceptre, focusing on reducing knife crime. The initiative led to 13 arrests, the seizure of 21 knives, and 73 weapon sweeps. Officers also engaged in community education, visiting 16 local retailers to ensure responsible knife sales and collaborating with schools and colleges to raise awareness about the risks associated with carrying knives. The operation aimed to address the rising concerns over knife-related incidents in the region.
3. <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2025/january/chief-constable-welcomes-latest-crime-statistics/> - In January 2025, Norfolk Constabulary reported a 5.4% decrease in overall crime, with 59,236 crimes recorded in the year ending September 2024. Notably, knife crime decreased by 11.6%. However, there were increases in sexual offences, burglaries, robbery, and weapons possession offences. Chief Constable Paul Sanford highlighted the commitment to protecting communities and addressing criminal behaviour, acknowledging the challenges posed by rising burglary and shoplifting rates.
4. <https://concreteuea.co.uk/2024/10/15/one-in-ten-knife-crime-offenses-in-norfolk-committed-by-under-18s/> - Between March 2023 and March 2024, knife crime in Norfolk rose by 8.4%, surpassing the 4% increase observed in England and Wales. Data from Norfolk Constabulary revealed that out of 18 offences involving zombie knives between January and September 2024, a third were committed by individuals under 18. The article also highlighted the impact of legal loopholes and the experiences of local residents affected by knife crime, emphasising the need for preventive measures and community engagement.
5. <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2025/april/crime-falls-in-norfolk-in-latest-figures/> - In April 2025, Norfolk Constabulary announced a 2.9% reduction in overall crime, with 59,456 crimes recorded in the year ending December 2024. Knife crime decreased by 6.6%. However, there were increases in drug offences, possession of weapons, robbery, sexual offences, and burglary. Chief Constable Paul Sanford acknowledged the positive trend but emphasised the need to address rising crime types, ensuring continued efforts to keep communities safe.
6. <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/april/crime-statistics---year-ending-december-2023/> - In April 2024, Norfolk Constabulary reported a 10.2% decrease in overall crime, with 61,141 crimes recorded in the year ending December 2023. Knife crime increased by 17.3%. The report highlighted reductions in stalking, harassment, public order offences, and drug offences. However, there were increases in possession of weapons offences and shoplifting. The Chief Constable emphasised the commitment to reducing crime and protecting communities.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czx4y2pgzg8o> - In April 2025, police in Norwich launched a crackdown on youth violence following a series of daytime incidents involving young people carrying knives. The operation included high-visibility patrols, targeted enforcement, and collaboration with councils and support groups to prevent teenagers from becoming involved in knife crime. Two teenagers were arrested after being found with knives in Chapelfield Gardens, a central park in Norwich. Acting Chief Superintendent Wes Hornigold expressed concern over the escalation of anti-social behaviour and violence among youths.