

## Discussion on youth knife crime in DNC area – July JPC

A constituent got in touch with me last January to ask some questions related to community policing following the knife attack on a woman in the IFSC the previous night. Sadly, the following week a 16-year-old boy, whom he had coached at Bohemians/SKB academy, was fatally stabbed during an incident in East Wall.

In light of these incidents we put forward a number of PQs through Cian O Callaghan's office to try to ascertain what response we could expect from An Garda Síochána & the Minister for Justice' office and also to try get some detail as to the current level of knife related incidents within our local communities.

- 1) Below in an excerpt taken from the DMR North – Coolock area JPC Sub Committee – Garda Report. See data related to Possession of Offensive Weapon figures and the Comments made in relation to same.

### Question to JPC – What is being done to tackle this significant increase?

#### *DMR North - Coolock Area JPC Sub Committee - Garda Report*

Garda Patrol Activity	2019	2020	Change	Detections 2019	Detections 2020	Comments
Possession of Firearm	7	3	-57%	29%	0%	Decrease in figures
Possession of Drugs for Sale or Supply	83	81	-2%	60%	40%	Detection rate is not a true return on as drugs are awaiting analysis/cannot be detected until certified as drugs.
Possession of Drugs for Personal Use	227	251	+10%	89%	64%	Detection rate is not a true return on as drugs are awaiting analysis/cannot be detected until certified as drugs.
Possession of Offensive Weapon	29	36	+24%	72%	61%	Significant increase – knife crime creeping back in among young men
Animal Offences	14	9	-35%	0	0	2019 14 dog offences 2020 1 horse attack, 8 dog offences
Searches under Drugs Act	1483	1294	-12%			Specialised Units policing drug hot spots -
Vehicle Seizures Sec 41	604	494	+28%			Significant decrease in 2020 as a result of less traffic on the roads

2) The following is an excerpt taken from a recent survey carried out by the YPAR (Young people at risk, North Inner city) group. Note: this excerpt is relevant as it relates directly to the concerns of local people with

3) regards knife crime within our local communities.

I think it is pointed when you see the response below from the youths & parents who are living within these communities. These are the fears that they live with daily and I think that these fears need to be addressed.

## 2. Feedback From The Young People Engaged In Youth Services In The NEIC

114 young people and parents took part in focus groups and questionnaires carried out by youth projects in the NEIC. Projects took part in a mix of focus groups and questionnaires. The following highlights the thoughts, feelings and opinions of young people in our projects.

### Young people's responses to the questionnaire.

Question 1. I am in a good mood today.

Question 2. I feel just as happy/content as I was this time last year.

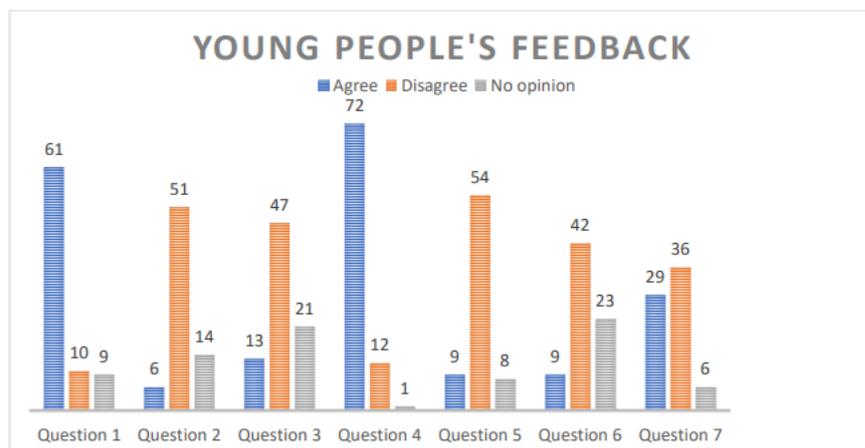
Question 3. Is the NEIC a safe place to live?

Question 4. Is knife crime a big issue in the area?

Question 5. I think the recent violence is only as a result of Covid19 and the restrictions.

Question 6. The Gardaí are doing good work in the area.

Question 7. I enjoy living in the area



4) Below are some excerpts taken from a response we got from the Department of Justice' office in relation Parliamentary Question Number 1436 for answer on 21 April 2021, in which I requested, further to Parliamentary Question No. 741 of 24 February 2021, the number of incidents reported to An Garda Síochána; the number of arrests made in relation to knife crime during the same ten-year period in tabular form.

A search of the PULSE database was conducted on 13th April 2021 to identify any charge or summons created nationwide during the 2010 to 2020 period whereby the associated legislative act was the 'Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990' and the offence wording referred to Section 9(1) or Section 9(4). The total count of unique charges or summonses created each year under each heading is as follows:

\

Offence Wording	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Contrary to section 9(1) & 9(7) of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act, 1990 as amended by section 39 Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009	2155	1972	1638	1659	1509	1578	1420	1505	1726	1846
Contrary to Section 9(4) Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990	277	272	198	221	212	204	187	178	213	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>2432</b>	<b>2244</b>	<b>1836</b>	<b>1880</b>	<b>1721</b>	<b>1782</b>	<b>1607</b>	<b>1683</b>	<b>1939</b>	<b>2121</b>

In the same response the following information was provided:

It should be further noted that the relevant weapons relating to these charges/summons are as defined in the legislation, as such, they will relate to knives and also other articles (such as knuckledusters, guns etc). Please also note that these figures are based on the date the charge/summons was created on PULSE. They will not be directly comparable to the figures from the Courts Service referred to in Parliamentary Question No. 741 of 24 February 2021, as those are based on the date the conviction was recorded. A charge and conviction may happen in the same year or in different years.

It is very concerning that we do not currently record statistics specific to the crime, in this case knife crime.

How can the Gardai, government or stakeholders tackle the issue of knife crime if they do not know for certain how prevalent it is within our society?

One can go online and easily find a report from the House of Commons relating to the knife crime figures in England & Wales (A). The detail within this report is substantial and gives a very clear picture of the prevalence of knife crime within England & Wales.

It is also a frightening report when you drill down into the figures and see the figures involved.

My fear is that this is the trajectory which we are on, however as outlined above it is impossible to tell as we do not have those figures.

### Questions for the JPC meeting:

- Is there a reason why we do not record statistics specific to knife crime?
- If there are no valid reasons, what would it take to start recording same?
- Are there any existing efforts at targeting knife crime? If so, can we get some detail?
- Can the superintendent to give an honest assessment on current Gardai resources?

- Does he think that they have enough resources to tackle the level of crime within our society today? Are there sufficient number of Gardai available to provide regular patrols "walking the beat"?
- Are there statistics in relation to these patrols?

(A) <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04304/>