

GANGS

#ExploitationWeek

There are different types of gangs & the word can mean different things to different people

Not all gangs are dangerous or linked to crime & it's not illegal to be a member of one



Maybe you hang around with a small **GROUP OF MATES** in your local area & describe yourself as being in a gang as you all enjoy doing the same things - but don't cause any trouble

You might be a part of a **STREET GANG** where crime, anti-social behaviour or violence is part of your groups identity - which can get you into trouble with the police. People may know you are in the gang & the sorts of things you get up to



Finding yourself in an **ORGANISED CRIMINAL GANG** can be frightening & dangerous. For the people who run these gangs crime is their 'job' - they have little thought for the young people they exploit to make money through things like drug dealing, prostitution or violence

GANGS & EXPLOITATION #ExploitationWeek

People join gangs for a variety of reasons - it could be for status, to feel a sense of belonging, to make money, to earn respect, protection from other gangs - or because you've been forced to

The word 'gang' takes on a new meaning when you or your mates become involved in criminal activity

If you get caught committing an offence you could end up with a longer sentence just for being part of a gang

Many street gangs are involved with the supply & dealing of drugs to make money & are commonly associated with other crimes such as theft, violence, rape or even murder

Dealing in drugs - like running a business - has many different roles & levels of people controlling the entire operation

If you are being exploited by a gang you will be at the bottom - you can be easily replaced or got rid of if you don't do what you are told

It can be very difficult to leave a gang once you have become involved



GIRLS & GANGS

#ExploitationWeek



Although criminal street gangs are mostly male there are some girl only street gangs operating in the UK too

Girls linked to gangs are often used by multiple gang members to establish status, seek revenge & even used to lure rival gang members in 'honey traps' & can become victims of sexual exploitation & domestic abuse

Some criminal gangs use sex crimes as part of their 'initiation' ceremonies. There has been a significant increase in cases of gang rape in the UK over the past 5 years

Gang rape or 'gang banging' is when a group of people rape one person. The victim of the rape is often younger than the group and is often drugged. This type of rape is sometimes linked to gang initiation ceremonies where potential gang members have to rape someone to be allowed into the gang



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WEAPONS

#ExploitationWeek



Having access to weapons provides a gang with status – as other rival gangs will be fearful

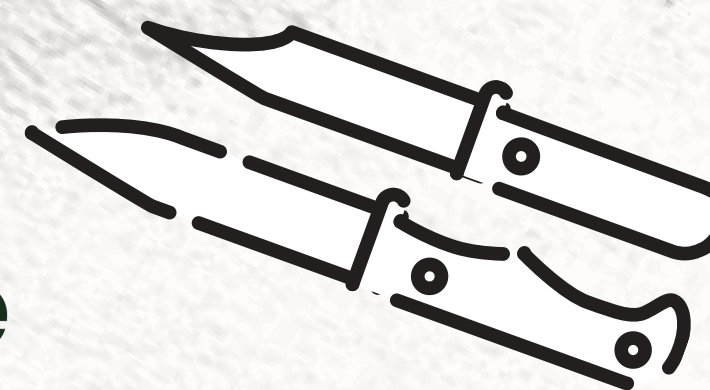
Many gangs pose with photos of guns & knives on social media - to 'show off' how easily they can access weapons

It's against the law to carry knives, guns or things like acid – even if you're carrying it for your own protection

If you're found with a weapon you'll be arrested & could be prosecuted. Using a weapon whilst committing a crime is considered more serious & you are likely to receive a longer sentence

If you're stopped by the police & have a tool on you like a screwdriver/crowbar you could be accused of **GOING EQUIPPED. Depending on the circumstances & any previous criminal history you could receive a community order or a maximum of three years in prison**

The safest thing to do if you feel threatened is to contact the police rather than carry a weapon for self-defence



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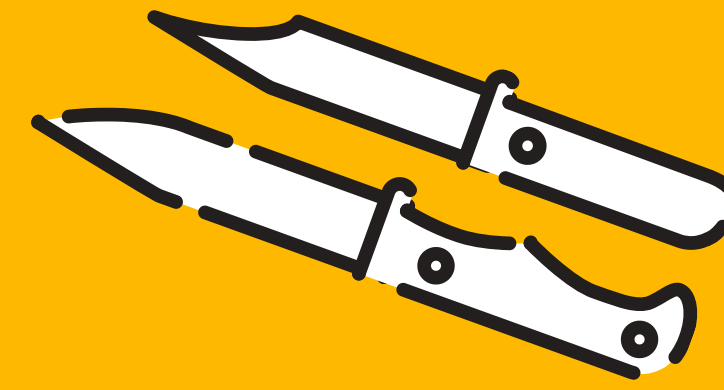


KNIFE CRIME

#ExploitationWeek

Knife crime involves the use of a sharpened weapon or blade

It's illegal for anyone under 18 to buy or be sold a knife



If you're 16+ & in possession of a knife you could get up to 4 years in prison even if you don't use it

You're much more likely to become a victim of knife crime if you carry one

You might hear stabbing being called cheffed, shanked or knifed

FIREARMS

Guns can be used to scare, injure or kill people & in crimes like robberies, taking people hostage & murders

If you're caught hiding/holding a gun for someone else the MINIMUM sentence is 3 years for 16-17 year olds - the maximum sentence is ten years



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JOINT ENTERPRISE

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Generally in law you can only be held liable for your own actions - but under joint enterprise you could be found guilty due to another person's crime

This law is used in gang related offences meaning you could be convicted of things like murder because you were there - or if it isn't clear who actually killed the victim



DRUG POSSESSION & SUPPLY

You can be arrested for being in possession or supplying drugs

	Possession	Possession with intent to supply
Class A	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Class B	Up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Class C	Up to 2 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both

Dealing drugs is more serious than using or having them on you & carries heavier sentences

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GETTING IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE

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If you're between 10-17 you can be arrested & taken to court if you commit a crime

You are treated differently from adults - dealt with by youth courts, given different sentences & sent to special secure centres for young people - not adult prisons. You might get a worker from the Youth Offending Team who can guide you through the process & support you



STOP & SEARCH

If the police have reasonable grounds to suspect a crime is being committed you - or the vehicle you are in - can be stopped, detained & searched

Any items found may be seized - like knives, drugs, firearms & phones

The police should explain on what basis they are searching you

Police can only take you somewhere if they arrest you or you agree to go. If you get arrested you must be told why, the officer's name/badge number & the station they are from

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WHAT IF I'M ARRESTED?

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If you're under 18 the police must not question you unless your parent, guardian or an independent person is present. You're also allowed a private conversation with that person beforehand - so long as it wouldn't help you escape, destroy evidence or risk the safety of others

You also have the right to free & independent legal advice - a solicitor - we'd always recommend you get one

The custody officer must make sure you get given written notice of your rights, what you're entitled to whilst in custody & that interviews are conducted in a proper manner

Anybody vulnerable - such as a young person or those with mental health or learning difficulties - is entitled to an APPROPRIATE ADULT - this could be a family member, friend, volunteer or support worker. It's different to a solicitor as they are there to support you with the process rather than give legal advice



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AT THE POLICE STATION

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If you're over 16 you'll need to give your fingerprints & be photographed. If you're 15/16 you & your parents will need to give permission - if you're under 14 your parents permission is required



If you've been charged the police are allowed to take hair & saliva samples - if you haven't been charged you & your parent must agree for the samples to be taken. Blood & urine samples cannot be taken unless both you & your parent have agreed to this - even if you have been charged

The police have the right to search you at the police station but you can have an adult - like your parent - present. If clothing is removed it needs to be done by someone of the same sex & it must be done in private if you're searched intimately - like if they think you have drugs up your bum

You can be held for 24 hours - an extra 12 hours can be added if the crime you are suspected of is of a serious nature. The police could even ask the court to extend the time up to 96 hours [4days]- but after this you must be released if you haven't been charged

You might get released under investigation & hear more from the police - or be charged - at a later date



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EXPLOITATION & THE LAW

#ExploitationWeek

If you have been exploited - under the Modern Slavery Act you could be viewed as a victim of trafficking - which could give you a defence against some [but not all] offences you may have been charged with

The police, your social worker or other agencies can complete something called the National Referral Mechanism [NRM] which will decide if you have been a victim of modern slavery due to exploitation

This could stop you being wrongly prosecuted for criminal behaviour that you have been forced or manipulated to commit



What's MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING? Both terms are fancy legal ways of describing exploitation - which hopefully you understand after reading our first post. You don't have to move countries, counties or even towns to be trafficked or be found to be the victim of modern slavery

You might feel worried about talking about what's happened to you because you're scared those exploiting you might hurt you or your family. The police & children's services can help keep you safe



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