Knife Amnesty Bin Consultation Findings

Background

The Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) is working with key partners and stakeholders to explore the introduction of a pilot knife amnesty bin scheme.

Feedback from up to 300 young people engaged via *Shape Your Safety: Young Voices* events over recent years has also highlighted support for amnesty bins.

Young people identified solutions to tackle knife crime within their local area. One of those solutions was the installation of bins in key community locations as a way to encourage the safe disposal of knives.

Some of them also suggested introducing regular amnesty opportunities within educational settings or in the community, providing young people with a safe, judgement-free way to surrender knives.

Ideas for re-purposing surrendered knives to make public artworks, symbolising peace and anti-violence, were also put forward.

The young people's depth of understanding provides a valuable context for shaping prevention and early intervention approaches. It has also been used to support the development of the Cleveland Knife Crime Action Plan.

The proposal responds directly to feedback from the public - particularly from families and friends, who have lost loved ones to knife crime and who have also campaigned for accessible amnesty bins across Stockton. This *You Said, We Did* approach demonstrates our commitment to listening to communities, taking meaningful action and being transparent about the changes, which we make in response to public concerns and feedback.

On 29 July 2026, Cleveland Police's *Operation Artemis* took place in Stockton-on-Tees.

As part of this community-focused initiative, partners undertook consultation and engagement activities to gather public views on potential placement of knife amnesty bins within Stockton town centre.

Purpose

The consultation aimed to understand residents' perceptions and experiences of knife crime, identify community concerns and gather views on suitable locations for knife amnesty bins.

This feedback will help inform decisions on the placement of bins and support wider efforts to reduce knife crime and improve community safety.

Delivery

Engagement activities were delivered by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Matt Storey, his office (OPCC) and CURV.

Activities took place across Stockton town centre and within a local community centre to capture a broad range of views.

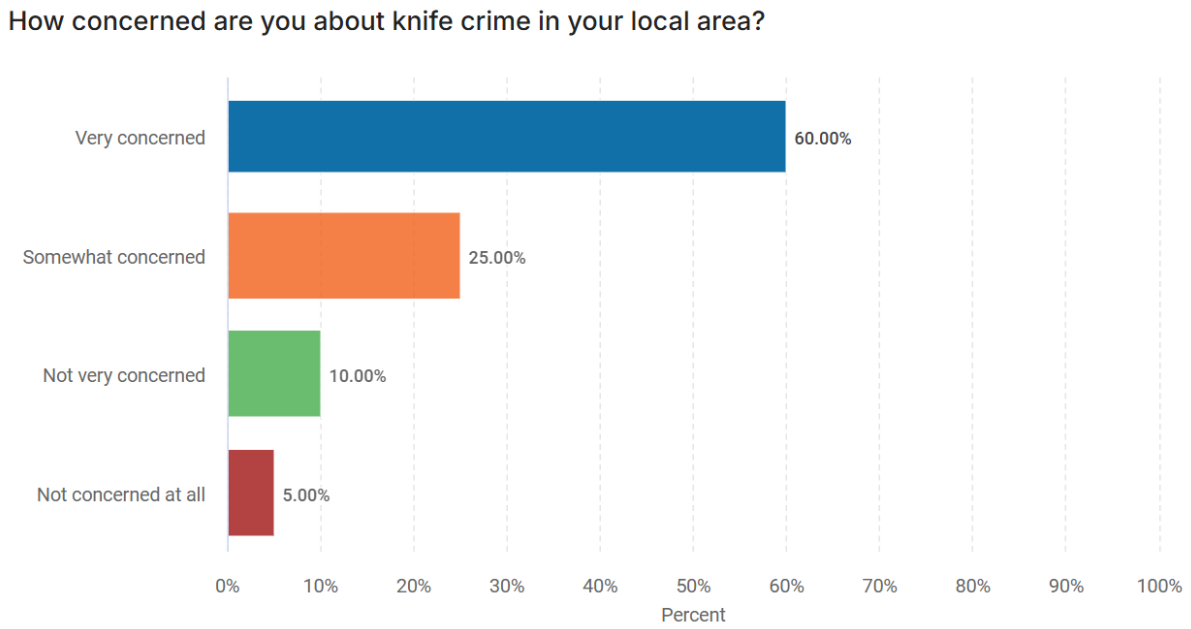
A total of 100 face-to-face responses were collected on the day.

Questions

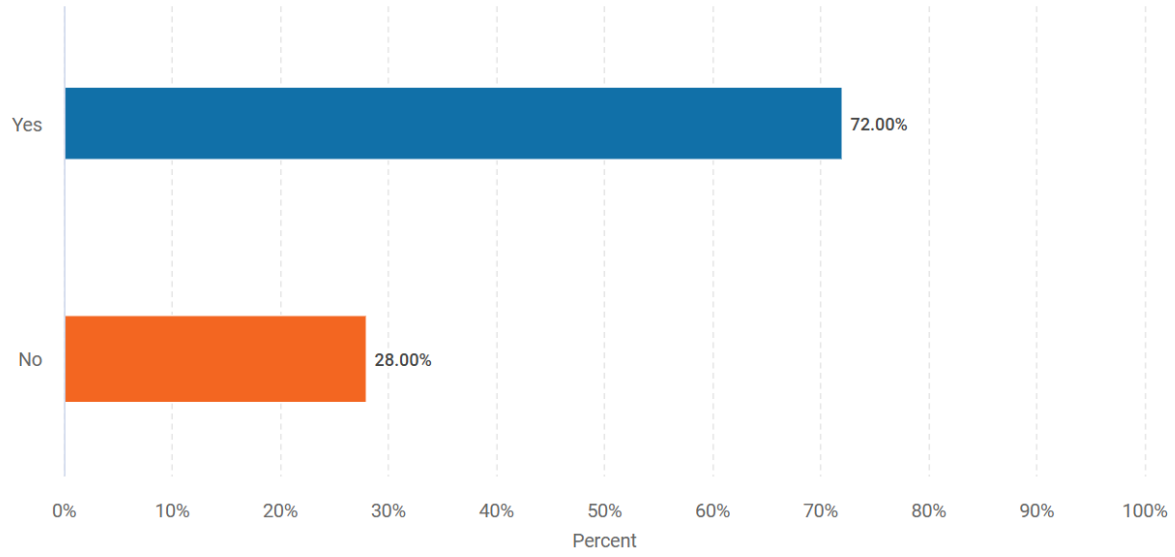
This was a short survey to understand local residents' perceptions and views on installing a knife amnesty bin within their local community.

The following four questions were asked:

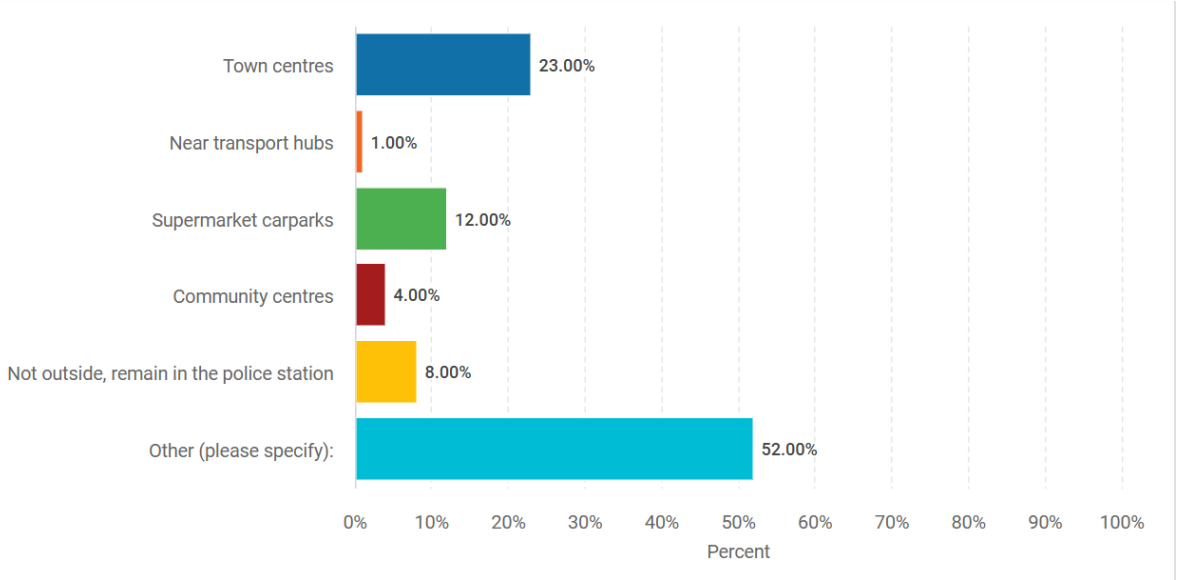
1. How concerned are you about knife crime in your local area?



2. Are you aware of what a knife amnesty bin is?



3. Where do you think a knife amnesty bin should be located?



During face-to-face consultations on potential knife amnesty bin locations, **23%** of respondents selected town centres, followed by 12% who preferred supermarket car parks**.**

Transport hubs were the least preferred option, selected by just 1% of respondents.

The largest proportion (52%) selected the *Other* option, with comments commonly highlighting the following:

- **Widely accessible locations**: The most common response was "all", "everywhere", "all above", or "all but police stations." Many respondents favoured having bins available across multiple community locations rather than restricting them to one place.
- **Town centres**: This was one of the most frequently named locations. Respondents appear to see town centres as an accessible, visible and convenient place for disposal.
- **Community venues**: Community centres, community hubs, libraries, advice centres and town halls were repeatedly suggested, indicating support for trusted public buildings.
- **Transport hubs**: Several respondents identified bus stations, train stations and other transport hubs as suitable locations due to high levels of accessibility.
- **Car parks**: Community car parks, supermarket car parks, residential car parks and Stockton Waterfront car park were all mentioned, suggesting respondents value easy access by car and discrete disposal opportunities.
- **Security and visibility**: There were mixed views on this. Some respondents wanted bins in visible locations "where people can see them for security", while others preferred "discrete areas" or locations with less CCTV. Security concerns were raised several times.
- **Avoiding police stations**: A notable theme was support for locations other than police stations. Multiple respondents specifically stated "all but police stations" or "all apart from police stations", suggesting some people may be reluctant to attend a police site.
- **Hotspot locations**: A small number of people suggested placing bins in areas associated with knife crime or antisocial behaviour, including Hartington Road and Dovecot Street.
- **Parks and green spaces:** A minority of respondents suggested parks, green spaces and open public areas.

In addition, only one question was extended to the general public through an online poll.

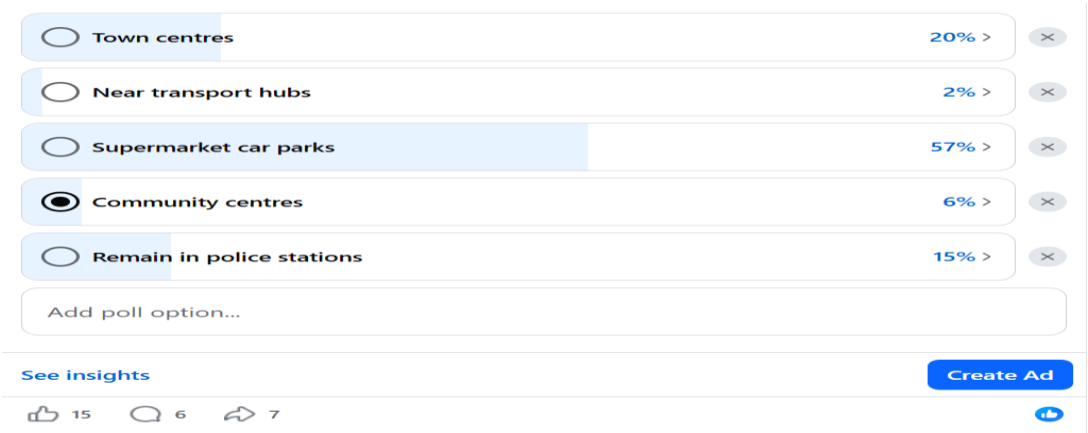
This was shared on both the OPCC and Cleveland Police Facebook pages, receiving a total of 602 responses, detailed in the graph below.

In contrast to the findings of the face-to-face consultation, the most commonly selected location for amnesty bins from online responses was supermarket car parks (57%.) This was followed by town centres (20%.). Transport hubs were the least favoured option, selected by just 2% of respondents in a response very similar to the face to face consultation.

Respondents most commonly supported all proposed locations, with many highlighting the importance of accessibility.

Comments also raised concerns about ensuring knife amnesty bins are secure if located outdoors. Alternative suggestions included fire stations as potential locations.

One respondent noted that while knife amnesties are valuable, they should be accompanied by enforcement measures, saying: *'Knife amnesties are great, but we also need enforcement - knife arches erected in the town centre and stop searches. British Transport Police do this at railway stations."*



When combining the results of both consultations (702 responses in total), supermarket car parks emerged as the preferred location for knife surrender bins. This was selected by approximately 51% of respondents.

Town centres were the second most favoured option (20%), followed by police stations (14%). A smaller proportion selected other locations (7%), community centres (6%) or locations near transport hubs (2%).

4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about knife crime or knife amnesty bins in your community?

This final question was an open-text box for face-to-face respondents only The main themes identified by 40 respondents were:

- **Enforcement and policing**: The most common theme was a desire for stronger enforcement, including increased police presence, more stop and search activity, tougher sentences and greater consequences for carrying knives.
- **Security of knife amnesty bins**: Several respondents expressed concerns about bins being located outdoors, highlighting the need for secure, tamper-proof and anonymous disposal facilities to prevent theft or misuse.
- **Education and prevention**: Respondents emphasised the importance of educating young people, raising awareness of the risks of carrying knives and promoting respect and positive behaviours through schools and community initiatives.
- **Youth involvement**: A number of comments linked knife crime to young people and suggested that prevention efforts should focus on engaging and supporting the younger generation.
- **Links to drugs and wider crime**: Several respondents believed knife crime is closely associated with drug-related activity, antisocial behaviour, shoplifting and wider criminality within communities.
- **Awareness and communication**: Some respondents felt more public awareness was needed regarding knife crime, knife amnesty initiatives and the role of the OPCC - particularly through social media and community engagement.
- **Support for knife amnesty bins**: Many respondents viewed knife amnesty bins positively, describing them as a good idea and supporting wider availability.
- **Local concerns and hotspot areas**: Some respondents referenced specific locations (Hartington Road, Valley Road), where they perceived higher levels of violence, weapon carrying or antisocial behaviour took place. They suggested targeted interventions in these areas.