

# Wiltshire Knife Amnesty and Crime Prevention Operation

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We're launching our knives amnesty and knife crime prevention fortnight, starting today (Monday 16 September).

As part of Op Sceptre - the national knife crime prevention initiative, also launched today, bringing together police forces co-ordinating ways to tackle knife crime - we will be appealing for people to hand in unwanted or illegal knives and bladed weapons during the period of the amnesty: Monday 16 - Sunday 29 September 2019.

Knives are used as an everyday tool in the home and in industry, but when placed in the wrong hands or adapted for the wrong purpose this can have devastating consequences.

Recorded knife crime figures for Wiltshire are very stable; between June 2018 and June 2019 the county saw a rise of just 7%, meaning knife crime is only 0.63% of all our recorded crime in this time period.

Special amnesty bins are available at 13 locations across the county. This is double the number of bins to last year's amnesty in September 2018.

The locations are:

Swindon's Gablecross Police Station  
Broadgreen Community Centre, Swindon  
Town Centre policing point, Swindon  
Pinetrees Community Centre, Swindon  
Marlborough Police Station  
Melksham Police Station  
St Andrews Church, Melksham  
Monkton Park, Chippenham  
Trowbridge Police Station  
St James Church, Trowbridge  
St James Church, Devizes  
Bourne Hill, Salisbury  
SP2 Community Centre, Salisbury

The knife amnesty gives people the chance to dispose of knives and weapons by simply taking them to one of the specified police stations, churches or community centres and dropping them in to an amnesty bin; those handing in knives and weapons will not face prosecution for possession of a knife or weapon and can remain anonymous.

Any incidents of knife crime are a major concern but the public should be reassured that we will continue to vigorously investigate offences linked to any knives or weapons recovered.

Assistant Chief Constable Maggie Blyth said: "We want to raise the awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife or owning an illegal weapon.

"Wiltshire cannot be compared to what is happening in the more urban areas of Britain but we are never complacent; we must let the public know what we can do to remove knives from our streets.

"Carrying a knife should not be considered the norm. Fortunately in Wiltshire very few choose to leave the house with a knife or blade, and sadly the reality is that those who do are more likely to be involved in a violent act or be injured.

"Education is key, and we need to be passing this on to our children that it's never OK to carry a knife.

"If you need one for work then you should minimise the time you have it on your person and only keep it for the purposes of work.

"We hope this fortnight will give people a chance to safely dispose of knives they no longer use and think about the knives or weapons they may have in their property. People may not know that a knife hung up in the shed is illegal or haven't considered the risk of an ornamental knife they own.

"During the amnesty we are also encouraging people to hand in illegal knives such as zombie knives, butterfly knives, flick knives, machetes and lock knives. This is a chance to avoid prosecution by disposing of knives safely in an amnesty bin.

"Please do the right thing to help keep Wiltshire safe."

Angus Macpherson, Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon, said: "As we have seen in the news, knife crime wrecks lives - not only the life of the victim but their families and friends. Directly and indirectly there are many people whose lives can be destroyed just because of one incident - it's not just the victim and perpetrator who are affected.

"The success of last year's amnesty means this is great way to encourage people to do the right thing and hand in any illegal weapons. Even one knife off the streets is one less that can be used to harm or threaten our communities.

"The reality is that the police cannot tackle this alone and need to draw upon those same communities to play an equal part; people giving the police intelligence and information to help them build a case against individuals and subsequently tackle the issue.

"Parents and schools can also do their bit by checking what their children are carrying in their bags; it's a good way to educate youngsters too that being caught with a knife could mean they end up in serious trouble as well as risking being injured themselves.

"Wiltshire is a safe county and together with good education and prevention we can continue to keep it that way."

Anyone handing in a knife or weapon during the amnesty is advised to check the opening times of their nearest bin by visiting the Wiltshire Police website or calling 101.

If you have information about someone who carries a knife or is involved knife

crimes please call us on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Information can also be left anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

***Message Sent By***

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