

Tackling youth crime and violence

A summary of the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit 2025/26 annual report



Making Kent and Medway safer

The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) works to keep our streets, schools and communities safer, focused on children and young people.

The VRU brings together the police, councils, the NHS and other organisations to reduce levels of violence and crime. Every year, we share what's been working. Here are some highlights from our [2026 report](#).

Fewer knife crimes

Knife crime is going down. Across the UK it dropped by 5%, but Kent did even better with a 10% drop.

Serious violence involving knives:

- Fell by nearly a quarter for under-18s
- Dropped by almost 5% for 18-25-year-olds

That's real progress.

Supporting young people

Two schools in Medway joined the Young Futures programme. It helps young people aged 10-17 who might be at risk of violence, knife crime, or being exploited. So far, 17 young people have taken part and received extra support to help them stay safe and make positive choices.

Going into schools

The VRU safety roadshow visited nine secondary schools in Ashford, speaking to more than 2,100 Year 9 students. They had honest conversations about issues such as:

- Staying safe online
- Gangs and knife crime
- Extremism

These talks give young people the facts and space to ask questions.

Help in hospital

When someone comes into A&E, they might be feeling scared or vulnerable. That's when help can really make a difference. Special A&E Navigators worked with young people in two hospitals, supporting them with issues they might be facing like:

- County lines
- Exploitation
- Domestic abuse



The aim is to make sure young people leave hospital feeling they're supported.





Kent Fire &
Rescue Service



Kent
Police



Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You



Public Health
England

NHS



HM Prison &
Probation Service



Safer streets

Some young people might not be in a formal, well-established gang but their behaviour can still be threatening. The VRU has been working to break up these 'young street groups' to help keep our streets safer.

Catch 22 support



The Catch 22 programme helps reduce serious youth violence. In the past year, 111 young people took part. Each person gets support that fits their situation, helping them deal with challenges and move forward.

Positive ways to spend time

There are loads of better options than getting caught up in trouble. The VRU supports activities that are fun, active and positive, including Sports Connect. Sessions took place in schools and town centres, giving young people safe spaces to enjoy themselves and try something new.

Safer knives at home



Did you know knives can be safer too?

Homes, schools and organisations across Kent and Medway can swap sharp-pointed knives for science-backed, rounded-end knives, which reduce the risk of serious injury.

So far, over 1,500 knives have been exchanged — making spaces safer.



Want to find out more?

If you're interested in getting involved or finding out more about how we help children and young people in Kent and Medway you can visit our website, [contact our team](https://www.kentandmedwayvru.co.uk) or read our report online.

www.kentandmedwayvru.co.uk

