

Newton Abbot Police

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Dear Business Owner

**CALL TO ACTION**

Recently within the town centre of Newton Abbot and surrounds, there appears to be a spike in a minority of young people carrying bladed articles on their person and associated anti-social behaviour with large groups of young people who may be found intimidating.

With this in mind our local Sector Inspector can and has authorised certain legislative powers to deter this behaviour via a dispersal order which can be exercised by local PCSO’S and Police Officers, coupled with issuing anti-social escalation warning letters to offenders create awareness with their responsible adults.

We also work very closely with Newton Abbot Security Team and share information with Teignbridge Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team to keep them abreast of the few offending people who spoil it for the rest.

Newton Abbot Police are also actively involved with several other pertinent support agencies thus forming a multi-agency targeted approach to tackling this, thus helping reduce the impact on everyone.

The more disconcerting element of this demographic is the propensity for a minority of young people thinking it ‘cool’ to carry bladed articles. Whilst we are unable to Police everywhere that young people can obtain bladed articles i.e. within the home environment, we seek to minimise the risk of such behaviour developing by reducing the opportunity for young people to access such items via retailers and appeal to retailers who stock such items to increase their vigilance around ensuring the security and sale of such items in a bid to minimise any possible future incidents involving these items.

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Whilst most business do have an age challenge policy in place both at the tills and self-service checkouts. The Newton Abbot Town Centre Neighbourhood Policing Team have recently approached retailers who have fallen victim to such articles being stolen thus having bypassed the age challenge. The response in minimising theft of such items has been fantastic with a positive approach by some retailers even taking certain lines off sale.

Whilst this correspondence may not pertain directly to your business, we would urge local businesses to be aware and remain vigilant about this potential trend and **would seek to urge you and your staff to be vigilant, challenge and actively report to the Police,** if they see anyone carrying bladed articles in public along with any anti-social behaviour which will not be tolerated.

We want to proactively create awareness around this subject and can only do this with your co-operation. We all have a civil duty to keep our community safe and to maintain Newton Abbot as a shopping destination, working together.

We have included some legislation to raise your awareness that you may choose to display in your staff areas on the following sheet.

Yours sincerely

Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Policing Team – Dec 2017

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Please find herewith the recent government guidelines pertaining to the carrying and sale of offensive weapons.

**Carrying an article with a blade or point or an offensive weapon in a public place**

Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 and section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 respectively provide for offences of having an offensive weapon in a public place **without lawful authority or reasonable excuse and having an article with blade or sharply pointed in a public place without lawful authority or good reason**. Section 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 provides that it an offence to have an article within either of the above offences on school premises.

Sections 139 and 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 apply to any article which has a blade or point except a folding pocketknife unless the cutting edge of its blade exceeds **7.62 centimetres (3 inches).**

Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 provides that an offensive weapon is any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person, or intended

by the person having it with him for such use by him or by some other person.

In these contexts ‘public place’ includes any highway and any other premises or place to which at the material time the public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise. By way of example the following have held to be a public place: a field where point-to-point races are held; a football stadium; hospital grounds where visitors to the hospital and their friends were permitted to enter; and a public house car park.

**Sale of knives and offensive weapons to persons under 18**

Section 141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes it an offence to sell or let on hire to a person under 18 years:

 any knife, knife blade or razor blade

 any axe

 any sword

 any other article which has a blade or which is sharply pointed and which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person

The maximum penalty for this offence is six months imprisonment, or a fine, or both.