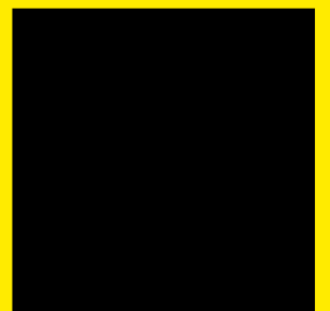




Steer Clear Newsletter June 2026



Steer Clear and our referral pathway

Steer Clear is an early intervention programme which supports young people aged 10-17 living in West Mercia who are on the periphery of becoming involved in knife crime. We provide early intervention through group work and 121 intensive support.

We can work with young people (including those who have social workers, SGOs, are LAC etc) as long as they have not previously accessed the service and have no knife-crime related offences currently in place.

All Steer Clear referrals are triaged by the service manager, Rachel Barry, and professionals from the police, YOT and social services.

Anybody can make a referral into the service, with the young person's consent.

Our referral link can be found below:

[Steer Clear | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/steer-clear) (access to the PDF version of our Steer Clear workbook can also be found here)

Team:

Service Manager – Rachel Barry

Practitioner – Kelly Hurst

Practitioner – Bruce Robinson

Latest News

The government recently released new guidance regarding child knife possession offences, meaning we have had to make changes to our thresholds which are now as follows:

Criteria:

- Aged 10-17 living in West Mercia
- There has been intel that a young person may be carrying a knife, but they have not been found with a knife
- A young person has been made verbal threats to stab (in person or online)
- Photos of a young people with knives has been created and shared on social media
- A young person is associating with others who are known to carry knives but do not carry themselves

Examples of eligible referrals:

- A knife has been found at home, hidden in a young person's room. The young person says that they don't feel safe in the community so they're considering carrying it with them, or won't say why they have it.
- A young person tells a professional that they're thinking about carrying a knife.
- A young person is beginning to show interest in knives and is posting pictures of knives online, and watching videos of violence.
- A young person threatens to stab another young person.
- A parent or professional is concerned that a young person may be/may start carrying a knife but there is no evidence that this is happening

Exclusion Criteria:

- Young people must not currently be involved or working with the Youth Justice System
- Young people must not hold any previous convictions for weapons

If you know of a young person who is carrying a knife in the community/in school, this **MUST** be reported to the police. Under the new government guidance for knife possession offences, the Police must notify Youth Justice within 24 hours. Steer Clear will be unable to accept referrals for young people in these circumstances.

[Government guidance for child knife possession offences \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

The Children's Society

Over the last year we support 114 young people across West Mercia, providing 1:1 support. At the end of support, we ask young people to anonymously answer the following question:

“Now you have completed the Steer Clear intervention, how likely are you to carry a knife?”

80% of our leavers said they would “definitely not” carry a knife. 20% said they were “unsure but would consider what they’d learnt from the programme” and 0% said they would “definitely” want to carry a knife in the future.

Workshops for parents and professionals are still offer. We know there are anxieties around knife crime at the moment and Steer Clear hope we can offer a space where we can speak to parents about how young people are supported by our service and offer local signposting for onwards support.

Professionals are also offered a 1hr30 workshop to understand how Steer Clear supports young people from a youth-work perspective. The link to sign up is below:

[Steer Clear Knife Crime Awareness Workshop Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

Further information can be found by reaching out to Rachel.barry@childrenssociety.org.uk.

121 Support

At Steer Clear we offer up to 6 months’ of intensive 121 support to young people. We have two practitioners who deliver support across all 4 areas of West Mercia.

During the 6 months, practitioners will educate young people on the dangers and consequences of carrying knives – exploring themes such as the law on carrying knives, joint enterprise, the age of responsibility, and exploring why some people carry knives followed by discussions on how they can keep themselves safe within the community without the need to carry a weapon. From what our young people have said to our practitioners, the most common reason that young people may carry knives is out of fear and the need to carry a knife for protection.

The Children's Society

Throughout the intervention, our practitioners weave in conversations about online harms and accessing violent content to their sessions. This is due to the triage panel seeing a number of referrals which indicate that a young person has made threats or brandished a weapon online, or been on the receiving end of a threat involving a knife. Our practitioners are discussing how threatening behaviour online and exposure to violent content (and sometimes fake news) can impact our mental health, but also incite fear in people, therefore sometimes leading to people feeling the need to carry a knife in order to 'protect' themselves.

Additionally, our practitioners support young people to develop self-regulatory skills and build positive relationships with friends, family and school.

Steer Clear continues to support young people into diversionary activities across West Mercia. Recently, young people have taken up activities such as joining a rugby club, acting classes and apprenticeships as their diversionary activity. We are always on the lookout to build our directory of activities and places that can offer young people positive activities, so please do reach out if you are aware of organisations we can partner with.

Parents' feedback:

- 100% responded with "definitely" when asked if the service responds to their family's needs
- 92% said agreed that they would recommend TCS services to somebody who needed similar support
- *"[Steer Clear] is helpful in preventing knife crime, especially for SEN children"*
- *"[Steer Clear] gave my daughter the space to speak freely and feel safe"*
- *"The root of the problem was addressed thoroughly and agreeably whilst attending to all aspects of my child's life"*
- *"C has enjoyed his time working with you. We so appreciate your work and efforts to instil & embed for him skills that might support him now and into adulthood to keep himself and others safe."*

Case Study

Reason for Referral

Z was a 17 year old male, out of education for 2 years.

Z was referred to Steer Clear due to behaviours involving theft. The victim alleged Z had a knife. Z denies this allegation.

Initial engagement with professional

Prior to the initial session, the practitioner had spoken to Z's referrer who had said Z was not in school and hadn't been for a long time due to his behaviour and refusal to attend. They were currently looking at alternative options for him.

Despite initial apprehension, Z late demonstrated enthusiasm and engagement during the sessions.

Z scored 2/30 on the initial knowledge quiz. This quiz is completed at the start of intervention with young people as a guide for the practitioner to know the level of support and information needed for the sessions. The quiz focusses on questions around the law, conflict resolution and online harms.

The practitioner delivered sessions on the law around knife crime, joint enterprise and keeping safe in the community. Practitioner also offered to support Z in finding an education setting.

What work are we doing with the young person?

Education on Knife

Crime: Informing Z about the repercussions of weapon possession. Using the Steer clear workbook, Steer Clear presentations and external sources. Educating Z about Joint enterprise, and the laws around this.

The practitioner liaised with a local college provider and got Z enrolled for Maths and English functional skills. Z's practitioner also liaised with another provider who would take Z on for an apprenticeship once the functional skills were completed.

Building Confidence: Reinforcing resilience and the importance of self-improvement and anger triggers Z and their practitioner held conversations discussing that mistakes do happen, but what's important is how we come back and reinvent ourselves to be better people.

Friendship Dynamics: Advising on identifying supportive versus exploitative friendships, and encouraging Z to integrate back into a school and social environment.

Conclusion:

The Children's Society

Z demonstrated significant progress in communicating with his practitioner verbally and non-verbally, and showing up every week to the sessions and showing great effort, this predicts an improvement in behaviour and relationships, envisioning a positive future trajectory. With Z now going back into an education setting, as evidence tells us, he is more likely to stay on a positive path in future and be able to socialise with more friends and have more trusted adults to communicate with.

Z gained knowledge, skills and resources to further brighten his future, make good choices and empower others to do the same.

Z completed another knowledge quiz at the end of the of support. Z scored 21/30 showing a huge increase in knowledge and awareness.