



## ENFORCEMENT BLITZ LAUNCHED

Police across Scotland are preparing to launch a second wave of enforcement as part of a year-long anti-violence campaign.

During the next four weeks, police will be out in force targeting people who carry knives and weapons. The month-long crackdown follows an earlier period of enforcement which led on from the nationwide knife amnesty during the summer.

During the first phase, which ran from Friday 30 June to Sunday 6 August, police seized more than 1,000 knives and other weapons – 575 knives and 492 other weapons, including swords, machetes and meat cleavers.

Since the amnesty and the original enforcement phase, police have continued to target weapons carriers. Alleged incidents include;


- Grampian Police seized an improvised weapon (a 45cm long metal pole with a home made handle) from a 15 year-old in a park in Elgin.
- Central Scotland Police arrested two men, aged 23 and 26 in Bridge of Allan for possession of a samurai sword.
- Strathclyde Police caught a 14 year-old boy in Pollok carrying a six inch blade.
- Police in Livingston caught a 17 year old man carrying a concealed meat cleaver.

For four weeks from Monday 6 November, police will be using intelligence and the latest technology to target people who have ignored all the warnings and continue to carry weapons.

Officers will be stopping and searching people suspected of carrying weapons, using hand held metal detectors, Kevlar gloves and Ferroguard poles. All of these items were used by officers during the first wave of enforcement.

Chief Inspector Alex McGuire from the Safer Scotland co-ordination unit, said:

“We have sent out repeated warnings that we will no longer tolerate knife crime. In July we seized more than 1,000 weapons from our streets, and we warned that there was more enforcement to come.



Yet a small minority continue to ignore our warnings and seem to think they are above the law.

“I want to send out a strong message to these people today, that we are not going away. In the weeks ahead, officers the length and breadth of Scotland will be actively searching for knife carriers. We now have even more ways of searching for weapons effectively and we will continue to do everything possible to tackle knife crime.”

Officers leading the campaign are hopeful though that the message is finally getting through, and ultimately less weapons will be seized during the forthcoming phase of enforcement.

During the next month, forces will be carrying out a whole raft of operations to target hot spot areas, including intelligence-led searches in areas that are known to have problems with violence or disorder.

Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson said:

“Earlier this year, Scotland held its first national knives amnesty, giving those involved in knife carrying an opportunity put this behind them and surrender their weapons to the police. More than 12,500 blades were handed in – each of which had the potential to cause death and bloodshed.

“Today’s campaign will send a clear message to persistent knife carriers who have ignored that opportunity and our warnings - that they will be caught, that they will be dealt with under tough new prosecution guidelines and that due to new changes in the law introduced from 1 September, could face up to four years in prison.

“Recorded crime in Scotland is falling and recorded violent crime rates are at their lowest level since devolution, but knife crime continues to be a major blight on too many of our hard-pressed communities. This campaign will re-assure the public that action will continue be taken to address this problem and make knife carriers think twice before they take to the streets with these deadly weapons in their pocket.”

This is the latest stage of the year-long Safer Scotland campaign, previous strands include a blitz on alcohol and an educational phase.