**Copy Outline:**

**Stats:**

* 2017 (Jan-Aug) – **3,537** violent crimes per month (avg) in S. Yorkshire
* 2016 (Jan-Dec) – **2,305** violent crimes per month (avg) in S. Yorkshire
* 2015 (Jan-Dec) – **1,830** violent crimes per month (avg) in S. Yorkshire
* According to <http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Police_Force/South_Yorkshire_Police>
* 2017 (Jan-Aug) – **103** possession of weapon charges per month (avg) in S. Yorkshire
* 2016 (Jan-Dec) – **82** possession of weapon charges per month (avg) in S. Yorkshire
* 2015 (Jan-Dec) – **56** possession of weapon charger per month (avg) in S. Yorkshire
* According to <http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Police_Force/South_Yorkshire_Police>
* Some of this will be down to population growth but still a worrying statistic.

**Drop The Knife:**

* Knife crime awareness campaign calling for a county-wide knife surrender: (‘There is only ever one outcome**; carry a knife, lose your life.’)  
  -** Knife surrender initially ran from July 20 to July 31 (2017) in Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster, and Rotherham. (<http://southyorks.police.uk/news-syp/save-your-life-drop-knife>)
* A total of 54 bladed weapons ranging from kitchen knives to samurai swords were handed over to South Yorkshire police. (<http://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/help-and-advice/z-crime-types/knife-crime>)

**Recent Events:**

* 14-year-old boy threatened with a knife on Herries Road, Sheffield, while walking home from school on Monday 16 October. (<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/sheffield-schoolboy-threatened-with-knife-and-attacked-in-street-robbery-1-8810303>)
* Man stabbed and rushed to hospital after an altercation outside Sheffield Cathedral on Wednesday 18 October. The knifeman reportedly ran from the scene and is still at large. (<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/video-knifeman-reportedly-at-large-in-sheffield-city-centre-after-stabbing-1-8811164>)
* Five people stabbed in two separate fights in Sheffield city centre in the early hours of Saturday 30 September. Four people were arrested, two of which were arrested on suspicion of attempted murder. (<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/648812/Sheffield-city-centre-stabbing-Bakers-Pool-South-Yorkshire>)
* Two people stabbed in Sheffield’s Area nightclub at around 2.20am on Sunday 1 October. The incident at the popular nightclub on Burgess Street took place less than 24 hours after five people were stabbed in Sheffield city centre the previous night. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-41484514>)

**Quotes:**

Ben Hawker, 26, eight-year resident of Sheffield:

***Considering the recent stabbings, do you still feel safe in Sheffield?***

“Yeah, I do. And if I’m being brutally honest, partly because I’m not a woman and I’m not someone who’s really that vulnerable. I think I generally know where to stay safe, I’m pretty good at avoiding a lot of problematic places so I still feel quite safe.”

“In my view, what’s happening here isn’t symptomatic of South Yorkshire. It’s more symptomatic of the UK lately because I’m aware that crime has gone up.”

***Do you have any thoughts on why we’ve seen this rise in crime rates?***

“Obviously, our economy is struggling a bit. Crime isn’t something people do for fun. Generally, people are driven to it. Most people do it out of necessity so desperate situations mean people employ desperate measures. That would be my best guess.”

***What are your thoughts on the Drop The Knife campaign?***

“I think that’s really good. I think South Yorkshire police have always been keen to get up and act on these things. They’ve been very forthright with that, which I think is really good. So I think it’s a great campaign.”

“I’m not sure whether it’ll get the best response because I think people going will be very, very nervous walking into a police station with their knives.”

“Another avenue might have been more effective but I certainly doubt it’s going to be more damaging than good.”

***Do you carry a knife or know anyone that carries a knife?***

“My dad carried a knife for the purpose of gathering mushrooms. But no, I don’t know anyone that carries a knife for violent purposes and, being honest, in Sheffield it’s unheard of. I don’t think I know anyone who knows anyone who carries around a knife.”

Dan Manderfield, 20, third-year Biology student at the University of Sheffield:

***Considering the recent stabbings, do you still feel safe in Sheffield?***

“I wouldn’t say I feel less safe. It’s a safe city.”

***What are your thoughts on the Drop The Knife campaign?***

“I don’t see how it would work because, obviously, if you wanted a knife to stab someone why would you go ‘here you go, have a knife’.”

“I have knives but that’s because I do bush craft when I’m at home. I live quite near a farm so we go and build stuff. So I have them but I would never take one out with me, even for self-defence. I know people have them for self-defence but that shouldn’t be a thing because you can always have it nicked off you and then sh\*t happens.”

“The people that want to do it wouldn’t surrender it, it’s only the nice guys who would do it. No, I don’t see how that would work. I don’t see the point, really.”

***What do you think would be a better solution?***

“I mean, making more people aware of it or if there’s some way of reporting it easier. I don’t know, but I don’t think the idea of ‘if you’ve got a knife, do you want to come and bring it to the police station’, I don’t see how that’s going to work.”

***Do you carry a knife or know anyone that does?***

“I don’t just carry it about. I take it if I’m going to do some kind of woodwork or something out in the field. I don’t just wander around with it. I don’t see the point in wandering around with one, even for self-defence. If you feel that threatened just don’t go out, or stay with a lot of people. There are ways around it, you don’t need to have a knife on you.”

**Copy (Draft):**

Knife crime rates in South Yorkshire have skyrocketed since 2015, causing concern over police tactics.

After a grisly weekend in Sheffield saw seven people stabbed over a two-day span, South Yorkshire Police have made tackling knife crime in the area one of their primary objectives.

Five people were stabbed in two separate fights in Sheffield city centre in the early hours of Saturday 30 September. Less than 24 hours later, two more people were stabbed in Sheffield’s Area nightclub at around 2.20am on Sunday 1 October.

Despite police efforts since then, another man was stabbed and rushed to hospital after an altercation outside Sheffield Cathedral on Wednesday 18 October. The knifeman reportedly fled the scene and is still at large.

South Yorkshire Police’s #DropTheKnife campaign, which began in July 2017, is a knife crime awareness campaign calling for a county-wide knife surrender.

A total of 54 bladed weapons ranging from kitchen knives to samurai swords were handed over to South Yorkshire police during their initial knife surrender, which ran from July 20 to July 31.

However, this approach has drawn some criticism from local residents and activists.

Hanif Mohammed, Project Manager at In2Change, said of the #DropTheKnife campaign: “I just feel as though it’s a general tick-the-box exercise of ‘raising awareness’”.

Mr Mohammed served a 10-year sentence for manslaughter due to his involvement in the stabbing of a young man in Todmorden, Yorkshire in 2008. He now dedicates his time to In2Change, a non-profit organisation that aims to keep young people away from crime.

Mr Mohammed added: “If the police are hated and they’re trying to deliver this message, who’s going to buy into it? Certainly not the people carrying weapons.”

The average number of violent crimes in South Yorkshire has nearly doubled from 1,830 per month in 2015 to 3,537 per month as of August 2017. The average number of possession of weapons charges has risen from 56 per month to 103 per month over the same span.

Dan Manderfield, a third-year Biology student at the University of Sheffield, said: “That’s scary because I started here in 2015, to think it’s gone up that much since I’ve been here.”

When asked about the #DropTheKnife campaign, Mr Manderfield said: “I don’t see how it would work because, obviously, if you wanted a knife to stab someone why would you go ‘here you go, have a knife’.”

Mr Manderfield, 20, added: “The people that want to do it wouldn’t surrender it, it’s only the nice guys who would do it.”