

Tackling knife crime on public transport

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Greater Manchester's TravelSafe Partnership (TSP) is stepping up enforcement to reassure the travelling public following a number of knife-related incidents on public transport.

While knife crime is not unique to public transport, tackling it remains a top priority for the TSP and Greater Manchester Police, with activity increasing at hotspots across the public transport network.

The public transport network is covered by CCTV which is monitored 24/7, and TravelSafe will support GMP in all investigations, including sharing footage of incidents to inform criminal proceedings.

Last week, following a press appeal using CCTV, three male youths were arrested and charged following reports of knife-point robberies at the tram stop in Failsworth.

A 34-year-old man was stabbed at the Market Street Metrolink stop in Manchester on Sunday 8th January. His injuries are not thought to be life-threatening, and enquiries are ongoing.

The TSP has also been made aware of a group of youths being threatened with a knife at Radcliffe tram stop, and in a separate incident a bus driver being threatened with a knife in Bury.

As well as operational activity, the TSP delivers a programme of education and behaviour change which saw over 50,500 young people engaged last academic year. This includes joint work with the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit at colleges across the city-region.

Vernon Everitt, Transport Commissioner for Greater Manchester, said: “While incidents like this are thankfully extremely rare on our public transport network, we will continue to do everything we can to support Greater Manchester Police in dealing with it.

“The safety of passengers and transport staff is of paramount importance as we make further improvements to transport as part of building the integrated Bee Network. The police take a zero tolerance approach to knife crime and the TravelSafe Partnership will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that the people responsible are identified and held accountable.

“The Partnership will continue to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour in all its forms by providing a visible daily presence and also during special operations, supported by control rooms which operate 24/7 and monitor feeds from more than 3,800 CCTV cameras across the network.

“Passengers can also discreetly report any incidents of crime or antisocial behaviour on public transport using the GMP’s LiveChat service.”

GMP’s Transport Unit patrol the public transport network and through the TSP, use a variety of tactics to address and deter all crime and anti-social behaviour.

They include the specialist resources including knife arches, handheld metal detectors, dog units and drones are regularly deployed across the network.

In recent months the TSP and Keolis Amey Metrolink have funded an additional two knife arches for the Transport Unit to ensure these dedicated resources are available.

Anyone found in possession of a bladed article will be arrested. In December alone the GMP Transport Unit, who regularly patrol the network in plain clothes, made 12 arrests for carrying knives across the transport network.

Carrying a knife can result in four years in prison and could also lead to serious consequences, including personal injury, injury to others or even death.

GMP Chief Superintendent Mark Dexter said: “Tackling knife-crime remains a priority for GMP and we are committed to working with our partners through the TravelSafe Partnership and the GM Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)* to address the issues faced.

“Last month, GMP also established Operation Venture, which is a new team of full-time, specially selected, and ring-fenced officers who are solely focused on violent crime and serious criminality. They will be out targeting violent crime across Greater Manchester, including on public transport, to provide support and safety in the fight against serious violence and knife crime.

“Tackling knife crime however cannot be done through policing alone and I would like to ask parents to speak to your children about the dangers of carrying weapons as, although not exclusive, the majority of cases do involve young people.

“If you carry a knife or weapon, we urge you to surrender it at one of our 13 Forever Amnesty bins located across Greater Manchester.”

To discreetly report any incidents of crime or antisocial behaviour on public transport, use the GMP LiveChat service [here](#).

To find your nearest Forever Amnesty bin, visit [the GMP website](#).

Photo credit: Metrolink