



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

School knife detector plans backed

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Plans to install airport-style metal detectors at some of the country's toughest secondary schools in a bid to curb knife crime among pupils have been welcomed by teaching unions. The measure is expected to form the centrepiece of the **Government's new action plan for tackling violence which will be unveiled next month by Home Secretary Jacqui Smith.**

Chris Keates, general secretary of the NASUWT teaching union, welcomed the fact that the Government was now taking up a proposal first put forward by the union three years ago. *"Compared with what takes place on the streets, schools remain relative safe havens of peace and security. Schools must however have a range of options available to them to make sure they stay that way, random airport-style security checks are one such option and act as both a deterrent and detection strategy,"* he said.

John Bangs, the head of education at the National Union of Teachers, said that with knife crime rising "exponentially", it was a "sad inevitability" that schools should be offered the option of metal detectors. *"Particularly where schools are in the centre of estates where there are gangs on the streets, it has got to be an option and a consideration for head teachers,"*

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said that it was important to send a message to children and young people that it was not in their interests to carry knives. *"I think it is a good idea if we look at the ways in which some schools it might be appropriate to use search arches, I want young people to know that it doesn't make them safer to carry a knife - it actually makes them more likely to be a victim."* **she told BBC One's The Andrew Marr Show.**

Ministers were said to be particularly keen to encourage use of detectors **in the worst affected cities - Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and London, where 27 teenagers were murdered last year.**

Ms Smith also confirmed that the **Government was looking at whether alcohol was too cheap** in the wake of the case of Gary Newlove who was killed by a group of teenagers who had been drinking. *"I think we need to look at whether or not both pricing and promotion is having an impact. That's work that's already under way, and of course we'll respond to what the conclusions of that are,"* she said.