

# “CHURCHES ARE CRITICAL PARTNERS IN REDUCING KNIFE CRIME”, SAYS NEW REPORT

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*‘Who is My Neighbour?’* report pleas for united action

against gang-related crime

As knife crime becomes a heightened national concern, Churches Together in England have published a timely report. It recommends ways in which the Government, churches and the police service can work together more effectively to reduce gang-related crime linked to drugs, guns and knives.

*With a foreword by the Bishop for Liverpool, The Rt Revd James Jones, ‘Who Is my neighbour? : a church response to social disorder linked to gangs, drugs, guns and knives’* is produced by Churches Together in England and is to be launched on Monday 21 July in Westminster. The launch reception will be hosted by David Lammy MP, with church representatives, politicians and police officials in attendance.

The Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in England said, “This report reaffirms our belief that the Christian Church is a sign of God's love for our world. It emphasises the unique value of each young person’s life, and seeks to inspire the churches to reach out to young people in inner cities caught up in social disorder, as an act of good neighbourliness”.

*At a time when gun and knife crime reports and discussions are dominating the headlines, ‘Who Is my neighbour?’* is an expression of the Church’s deep concern about social disorder and violent crime, especially the death of young people. The report highlights these worries and suggests practical ways to work together to address the issues head on. The recommendations encourage long-term strategic partnerships between churches, community groups, the police, criminal justice partners and local authorities.

The Revd Dr Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance said: “This report has a vital and timely message. I hope that church leaders will use it to inform the way they work with young people, government, the police and Criminal Justice agencies; but also step up their efforts to tackle the underlying

causes of the alarming trend of rising knife crime.”

Among the recommendations are: that churches should develop strategies to better support families, promote listening events for young people and encourage members to move back into deprived areas; that the Government should empower local people to tackle these issues themselves, and encourage inter-faith and inter-generational projects; that the police deepen its involvement with Restorative Justice projects and work closer with churches as key partners.

Plans are currently being drawn up for a series of receptions and discussion forums, based on this publication, in 10 key cities across the country to enable the findings to be applied in a regional setting and engage with local issues.

Ends

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

· Media enquiries: Bishop Dr Joe Aldred 0777 563 2288

· Churches Together in England was created in 1990, and is the officially recognised inter-church body for England. Churches Together in England is the officially recognised body co-ordinating the life of its member Churches listed below:

*Antiochian Orthodox Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Cherubim & Seraphim Council of Churches, Church of England, Church of God of Prophecy, Church of Scotland (in England), Congregational Federation, Council of African & Afro-Caribbean Churches, Coptic Orthodox Church, Council of Oriental Orthodox Christian Churches, Diocese of Sourozh, Evangelische Synode Deutscher Sprache in Großbritannien, Free Churches' Council, Ichthus Christian Fellowship, Independent Methodist Churches, International Ministerial Council of Great Britain, Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches, Lutheran Council of Great Britain, Methodist Church, Moravian Church, New Testament Assembly, New Testament church of God, Oecumenical Patriarchate Archdiocese of Thyateria & Great Britain, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Religious Society of Friends, Roman Catholic Church, Russian Orthodox Church, Salvation Army, Trans Atlantic & Pacific Alliance of Churches, United Reformed Church, Wesleyan Holiness Church.*

For further information visit: [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net)