

MAYOR OF LONDON

Caroline Russell AM
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Date: 8 November 2022

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for forwarding the pre-print research published by the University of Strathclyde in collaboration with the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), and asking if I would make a case to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to pause the sharing of images of knives on social media from MPS accounts until the additional research can be considered. Thank you also for your further letter on this matter and I am sorry for the delay in my response.

I agree that the existing evidence, including the discussions that London's VRU has had with young people, is important, and the VRU has been clear in its approach to not sharing such images.

Young people explained that images of knives on social media are being used as an intelligence source and have raised concerns that it can lead to young people getting hold of more dangerous weapons to protect themselves.

Research – led by University College London – is looking into the effect that images of knives have on young people's perceptions of safety in London.

To accompany this research, which is nearing completion, the VRU's Young People's Action Group is carrying out peer research in London to further add to and inform the debate on the impact of knife imagery. It is expected that these pieces of research will be published later this year.

I will ask the new MPS Commissioner to examine this new, London-specific evidence when it becomes available.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts about this issue with me.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London