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# *City of Newton Police Department*

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Date: February 20, 2022  
To: Newton City Council – Public Safety & Transportation Committee  
From: Chief John Carmichael  
Ref: Newton Police Department [Knife and Firearm] Related Calls

Dear PS&T Chair Councilor Downs,

During the January 5, 2022 PS&T meeting regarding police statistics, I presented Newton Police Department data relative to mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse among other public safety concerns facing Newton.

Based on discussion during the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, and recognizing recent trends in calls for service involving knives and firearms, NPD has assembled internal data to identify such trends.

As a result, in the 2021 calendar year, the Newton Police Department identified **79** incidents involving a knife (edged weapon). Of the 79 incidents where a knife was involved, the Newton Police Department submitted **14** incidents to the FBI's National Incident Based Crime Reporting System (NIBRS) due to a knife being used in the commission of a crime. These incidents included armed robbery, assault w/dangerous weapon, carrying dangerous weapon, threats, etc.

The remaining **65** incidents involved events such as emergency hospitalizations of persons posing risk of serious harm by reason of mental illness pursuant to MGL c. 123 § 12 [involuntary/voluntary psychological evaluations], ambulance transports, and police investigations.



In addition to the knife incidents, the Newton Police Department identified 41 incidents and/or investigations involving firearms. The majority of firearms involved incidents, are classified as investigations, mental health crisis related, or crime guns. 12 of the incidents involved student(s) posting about firearms or threats.

In the last 3-4 weeks of 2022, the Newton Police Department has removed five illegal firearms from violent criminals during three separate incidents. One incident involved two men who were preparing to start shooting at each other after an altercation, one involved an investigative partnership with the ATF at an MBTA stop, and one involved a hit & run crash where the operator fled with a stolen firearm believed to be used by the suspect in a shooting in Cambridge. Five illegal guns were recovered and four individuals were arrested.

While this data establishes trends for a variety of incidents, the data also supports the frequency of emotionally disturbed person calls and crime incidents involving weapons, and the effectiveness of officer crisis intervention training, officer tactical training & integrating communication and de-escalation tactics, mental health first aid, our Jail Diversion co-response model, and the success in partnerships with our newly created Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT).

Additionally, the outcomes of this data supports the philosophy of community policing in that the Newton Police Department continues to transform organizationally to address these issues successfully, while instilling problem-solving oriented policing and addressing underlying root causes of these issues, and demonstrating alternatives to arrest in certain cases.

Many times I have heard comments such as the police are traditionally not well-trained or prepared to mitigate mental health crisis; however, on the contrary our officers, clinician, and our community based partners do a phenomenal job successfully managing these sometimes dangerous, dynamic and unpredictable calls for service.

Respectfully submitted,



Chief John Carmichael

