

**Knife Crime Sentencing
Quarterly Brief
July to September 2009
England and Wales**

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Knife Crime Statistics July to September 2009

Introduction

In June 2008 the Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) Phase 1 was launched focussing resources on rapid, intensive work in 10 areas of England and Wales to tackle knife crime. The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) Phase 2 was launched in April 2009 and although there is still a focus on reducing the carrying of knives and knife related violence the primary aim is to reduce all serious youth violence, specifically among 13 to 24 years olds. The initiative was implemented in 16 areas (15 police forces and the British Transport Police). Information on this initiative can be found at:

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tackling_knives.htm

This bulletin contains key statistics describing the trends in cautioning and sentencing, probation supervision and the prison population for possession of a knife or offensive weapon in England and Wales. It has been prepared from readily available management information to monitor trends. It is planned that this is a temporary release to cover the life and impact of the scheme. The bulletin now covers all 16 TKAP areas as TKAP Phase 2 has commenced (see explanatory notes for full details).

The information presented generally combines both offences of possession of an article with a blade or point and offences of possession of an offensive weapon (which could be a knife) – see explanatory notes for fuller explanation. A breakdown for the separate offences is given for disposals in Table 3 but is not available for probation and prison data. The sources of data used do not enable us separately to identify other offences involving a knife, such as wounding offences. Full details on data quality and definitions are given in the notes at the end of the text.

The key events that might be expected to affect the statistics were:

Prime Minister's statement

- On 5 June 2008 the Prime Minister said:

“What I want to see is anybody who is using a knife goes to prison; anybody who is carrying a knife is subject to either prison or a strong community payback that forces them to give service to the community ... There should be a presumption of either prison or a tough community payback. There's a presumption to prosecute. We are clear that punishment will be severe – either prison or a tough community payback”.

Sentencing

- On 21 May 2008, the Court of Appeal issued the judgment in *Povey* that said that, because of prevalence, magistrates should normally sentence those convicted of knife crime possession offences at the top end of the range.
- The Sentencing Guidelines Council issued an update to the magistrates' courts guidelines, with effect from 4 August 2008, which set out the effect of the Court of Appeal judgment and made it clear that, for the time being, the starting point for the lowest level of knife possession should be 12 weeks' custody. This applies to adults (aged 18 and over).
- This applies in cases where a first time offender pleads not guilty to possession of a knife in non-dangerous circumstances. A guilty plea would attract a discount in the normal way, as would any personal mitigation, and could take the sentence below the custody threshold.
- Since September 2008 all probation areas are able to provide intensive delivery of 300 hour Community Payback sentences for unemployed offenders convicted of knife crime offences, who are on the brink of custody. In January 2009 this offer of intensive delivery of a minimum of 18 hours per week over three days was extended to Community Payback sentences of any length imposed for an offence of knife crime, when an offender is unemployed.

All statistics quoted in this quarterly brief are provisional and subject to change.

To enable a fuller comparison over time the tables in this bulletin from Q4 2007, are available for download from the Ministry of Justice website www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm

This publication has been prepared by Justice Statistics Analytical Services.

Key points – Q3 2009 compared to Q1 2008¹ (unless otherwise stated)

Note on comparisons

TKAP Phase 1 started in June 2008. Previous bulletins have compared the latest quarterly data with the same quarter of the previous year. However, if we were to compare the figures for latest quarter (Q3 2009) with the same quarter of the previous year, we would be comparing two periods affected by TKAP which would not show changes pre and post the TKAP implementation. In this edition we therefore present comparisons between the latest quarter and the figures for Q1 2008, the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP, in order to give a better summary of the changes that have occurred since the Programme began.

It is important to note that most of the sizeable changes in the data occurred between Q1 2008 and Q3 2008, therefore changes between Q1 2008 and the latest data for Q3 2009 will mainly reflect the changes between Q1 2008 and Q3 2008.

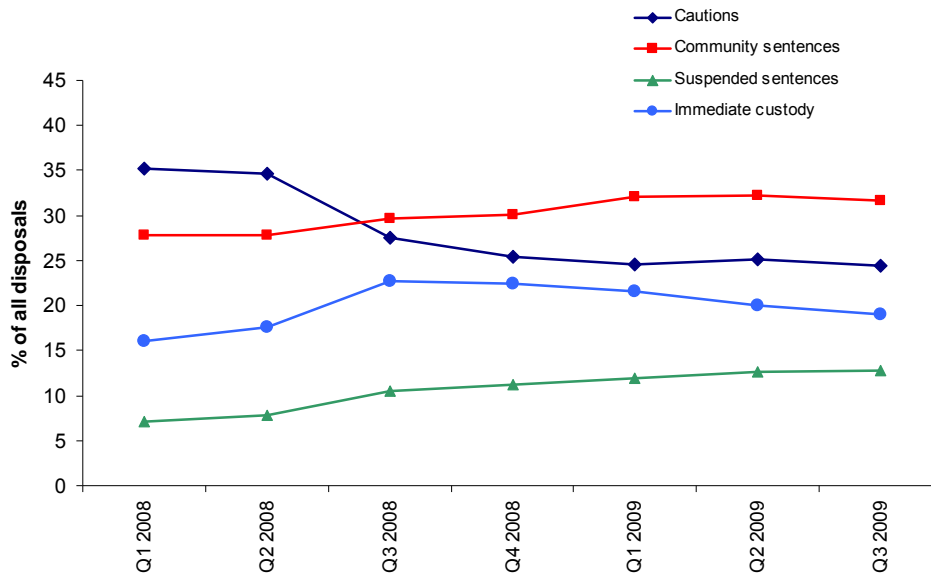
The tables also include figures for Q3 2008 so that comparisons with that quarter can be made, although most of the series have been relatively stable in recent quarters.

Cautioning and sentencing statistics (Tables 1 to 5)

- **The total number of disposals (cautions and sentences) given for knife or offensive weapon possession has decreased by 11% between Q1 2008 and Q3 2009 (7,200 to 6,400).** This drop was more marked for juvenile offenders where the decrease was 25% (1,600 to 1,200), than for adult offenders where the decrease was 6% (5,500 to 5,200).

¹ The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP – see explanatory notes for details

Figure 1: Disposals for knife and offensive weapon possession for England and Wales



- **The proportion of offences receiving cautions² for knife or offensive weapon possession decreased while the proportion of immediate custodial sentences, suspended sentence orders and community sentences rose between Q1 2008 and Q3 2009. The majority of this change was seen between Q2 2008 and Q3 2008 since then trends have levelled out:**

 - In Q3 2009 24 per cent (1,600) of all possession offences resulted in a caution in England and Wales. This compares with 35 per cent (2,500) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q3 2009 19 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in immediate custody compared to 16 per cent (1,100) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q3 2009 13 per cent (820) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 7 per cent (510) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q3 2009 32 per cent (2,000) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 28 per cent (2,000) in Q1 2008.
- **Where immediate custodial sentences are given for these offences there has been an increase in the proportion of longer sentences:**

 - In Q3 2009 33 per cent (400) of sentences were recorded as being over six months compared to 15 per cent (170) in Q1 2008.
 - The average length of a custodial sentence was 197 days in Q3 2009. This had increased from 140 days in Q1 2008.

² Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings.

- **For offences committed by juvenile offenders the proportion of offences receiving reprimands and final warnings decreased** from 47 per cent (760) to 32 per cent (390). This was balanced by an increase in the proportion receiving community sentences (from 42 per cent (690) to 55 per cent (680)).
- **For offences committed by adult offenders the proportion of offences receiving cautions decreased** from 32 per cent (1,800) to 23 per cent (1,200). This was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of suspended sentence orders (9 per cent (510) to 16 per cent (820)), community sentences (24 per cent (1,300) to 26 per cent (1,300)) and immediate custodial sentences (19 per cent (1,100) to 22 per cent (1,100)) given.
- **In the 16³ TKAP police force areas the extent and direction of change between Q1 2008 and Q3 2009 were similar to non-TKAP police force areas:**
 - In Q3 2009, 24 per cent (1,000) of all possession offences resulted in a caution in the 16 TKAP areas. This compares with 34 per cent (1,600) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q3 2009 13 per cent (530) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 7 per cent (340) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q3 2009 33 per cent (1,400) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 29 per cent (1,400) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q3 2009 18 per cent (760) of all possession offences resulted in immediate custodial sentences compared to 16 per cent (740) in Q1 2008.
- **In the 10⁴ TKAP police force areas the extent and direction of change in proportions of types of disposals given between Q1 2008 and Q3 2009 were similar to the 6 new TKAP police force areas**

Probation supervision statistics (Tables 6, 7 and 8; these figures mainly cover offenders aged 18 or over)

- **In Q3 2009 there were 1,600 court order starts under probation supervision** for possession of an offensive weapon, this represents an increase of 17 per cent from Q1 2008 (1,400). This was driven by the increase in SSOs, which rose from 340 to 540 (57 per cent increase) over the period, although community orders also rose by 30 to 1,000 (3 per cent).
- **There were changes in the proportion of those given unpaid work** as a percentage of all requirements started. For suspended sentence orders 29 per cent were given unpaid work in Q3 2009 compared to 22 per cent in Q1 2008. Whereas for community orders a decrease was seen to 35 per cent in Q3 2009 from 37 per cent in Q1 2008.

³ Phase 2 police force areas. See explanatory notes for more information.

⁴ Phase 1, Tier 1 police force areas. See explanatory notes for more information.

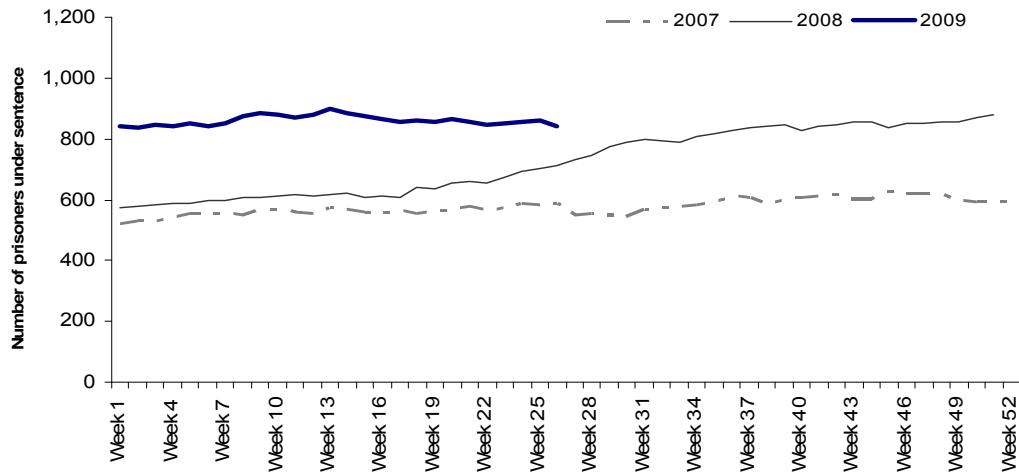
- **Where unpaid work requirements were started for these offences, there has been an increase in the proportion of longer requirements:**
 - For community orders, in Q3 2009, 17 per cent of unpaid work requirements were recorded as being 200 hours or longer compared to 8 per cent in Q1 2008. This was mirrored by shorter requirements (0-80 hours) decreasing to 35 per cent in Q3 2009 from 48 per cent in Q1 2008.
 - For suspended sentence orders, in Q3 2009 23 per cent of unpaid work requirements were recorded as being 200 hours or longer compared to 11 per cent in Q1 2008. Over the same period shorter requirements (0-80 hours) decreased to 25 per cent in Q3 2009 from 36 per cent in Q1 2008.

Prison population⁵

- The population in prison serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon increased between 2008 and 2009. On average, there was a 44 per cent increase (about 260) in the number of prisoners serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon between Q1 2008 and Q2 2009.

⁵ There is no updated prison population data beyond the end of June because data collection issues have emerged since the roll-out of a new case management system for prisons (Prison-NOMIS). We are working to resolve these as soon as possible

Figure 2: Prison population under sentence for possession of an offensive weapon⁶ (excludes breaches and recalls)



⁶ Includes having an article with a blade or a point

Appendix A: Statistical tables

Table 1 (Part 1): Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence, England and Wales and non-TKAP police forces

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages						Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
	Q1 2008 ¹	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
number of offences							
England and Wales²	7,152	7,323	6,930	6,731	6,314	6,399	-11
Caution ³	2,522	2,017	1,758	1,657	1,584	1,564	-38
Absolute/Conditional discharge	461	276	234	245	227	227	-51
Fine	327	257	293	259	223	208	-36
Community sentence	1,987	2,173	2,089	2,157	2,033	2,022	2
Suspended sentence	508	773	780	804	798	822	62
Immediate custody	1,145	1,660	1,550	1,449	1,267	1,215	6
Other disposal	202	167	226	160	182	341	69
percentage of total offences							
Caution ³	35	28	25	25	25	24	
Community sentence	28	30	30	32	32	32	
Suspended sentence	7	11	11	12	13	13	
Immediate custody	16	23	22	22	20	19	
number of offences							
Non-TKAP police forces⁴	2,415	2,515	2,451	2,324	2,193	2,212	-8
Caution ³	896	735	696	611	600	551	-39
Absolute/Conditional discharge	184	88	75	83	80	100	-46
Fine	97	80	102	92	86	71	-27
Community sentence	592	711	696	711	629	638	8
Suspended sentence	165	234	268	264	262	290	76
Immediate custody	402	592	527	495	452	454	13
Other disposal	79	75	87	68	84	108	37
percentage of total offences							
Caution ³	37	29	28	26	27	25	
Community sentence	25	28	28	31	29	29	
Suspended sentence	7	9	11	11	12	13	
Immediate custody	17	24	22	21	21	21	

1. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

2. England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

3. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

4. Non-TKAP police forces refers to those that have never been part of TKAP, Phase I or Phase II

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the police's administrative IT system which, as with any large scale recording system, is subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the police.

Knife Crime statistics quarterly brief, July to September 2009, England and Wales

Table 1 (Part 2): Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence, TKAP

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages						Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
	Q1 2008 ¹	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
TKAP Phase II - 16 forces²							
	number of offences						
	4,737	4,808	4,479	4,407	4,121	4,187	-12
Caution ³	1,626	1,282	1,062	1,046	984	1,013	-38
Absolute/Conditional discharge	277	188	159	162	147	127	-54
Fine	230	177	191	167	137	137	-40
Community sentence	1,395	1,462	1,393	1,446	1,404	1,384	-1
Suspended sentence	343	539	512	540	536	532	55
Immediate custody	743	1,068	1,023	954	815	761	2
Other disposal	123	92	139	92	98	233	89
	percentage of total offences						
Caution ³	34	27	24	24	24	24	
Community sentence	29	30	31	33	34	33	
Suspended sentence	7	11	11	12	13	13	
Immediate custody	16	22	23	22	20	18	
TKAP Phase I - 10 forces⁴							
	number of offences						
	3,635	3,827	3,482	3,405	3,186	3,222	-11
Caution ³	1,210	1,013	801	778	734	732	-40
Absolute/Conditional discharge	188	144	124	121	112	105	-44
Fine	179	128	148	123	97	103	-42
Community sentence	1,097	1,164	1,083	1,116	1,105	1,082	-1
Suspended sentence	280	438	412	426	432	422	51
Immediate custody	594	873	807	777	628	584	-2
Other disposal	87	67	107	64	78	194	123
	percentage of total offences						
Caution ³	33	26	23	23	23	23	
Community sentence	30	30	31	33	35	34	
Suspended sentence	8	11	12	13	14	13	
Immediate custody	16	23	23	23	20	18	
TKAP Phase II - 6 forces⁵							
	number of offences						
	1,102	981	997	1,002	935	965	-12
Caution ³	416	269	261	268	250	281	-32
Absolute/Conditional discharge	89	44	35	41	35	22	*
Fine	51	49	43	44	40	34	*
Community sentence	298	298	310	330	299	302	1
Suspended sentence	63	101	100	114	104	110	75
Immediate custody	149	195	216	177	187	177	19
Other disposal	36	25	32	28	20	39	*
	percentage of total offences						
Caution ³	38	27	26	27	27	29	
Community sentence	27	30	31	33	32	31	
Suspended sentence	6	10	10	11	11	11	
Immediate custody	14	20	22	18	20	18	

1. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

2. The Tackling Knives Action Programme police forces (Phase 2) are: Bedfordshire, the British Transport Police, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, The Metropolitan Police, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Thames Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire,- see explanatory notes for more details

3. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

4. The Tackling Knives Action Programme police forces (Phase 1, Tier 1) were: Essex, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Thames Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire - see explanatory notes for more details

5. The Tackling Knives Action Programme six new police forces introduced in April 2009 (Phase II) were: Bedfordshire, the British Transport Police, Hampshire, Kent, South Yorkshire and Northumbria - see explanatory notes for more details

*Indicates that one or more of the comparative numbers are less than 50. For small numbers this could give misleading percentage changes.

Data Source and Quality

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Table 2: Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence by age group

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages						Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
	Q1 2008 ¹	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
number of offences							
Aged 10 to 17	1,630	1,746	1,524	1,410	1,329	1,223	-25
Reprimands & final warnings	759	643	516	518	472	386	-49
Absolute/conditional discharge	40	27	31	22	28	28	*
Fine	15	9	12	8	2	1	-93
Community sentence	688	886	791	722	698	676	-2
Immediate custody	95	144	142	115	101	100	5
Other disposal	31	33	28	24	28	30	*
percentage of total offences							
Reprimands & final warnings	47	37	34	37	36	32	
Community sentence	42	51	52	51	53	55	
Immediate custody	6	8	9	8	8	8	
number of offences							
Aged 18 and over	5,522	5,577	5,401	5,318	4,980	5,176	-6
Caution	1,763	1,374	1,239	1,138	1,111	1,178	-33
Absolute/Conditional discharge	421	249	203	223	198	199	-53
Fine	312	248	281	251	221	207	-34
Community sentence	1,299	1,287	1,298	1,435	1,335	1,346	4
Suspended sentence	506	769	774	801	798	820	62
Immediate custody	1,050	1,516	1,408	1,334	1,163	1,115	6
Other disposal	171	134	198	136	154	311	82
percentage of total offences							
Caution	32	25	23	21	22	23	
Community sentence	24	23	24	27	27	26	
Suspended sentence	9	14	14	15	16	16	
Immediate custody	19	27	26	25	23	22	

1. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

*Indicates that one or more of the comparative numbers are less than 50. For small numbers this could give misleading percentage changes.

Data Source and Quality

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Table 3: Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence by offence code

Disposal Category	Q1 2008 ¹	Number of offences and percentages					Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
		Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
Possession of an article with a blade or point		number of offences					
	3,401	3,658	3,455	3,514	3,131	3,298	-3
Caution ²	936	624	540	519	479	472	-50
Absolute/Conditional discharge	258	174	151	154	134	135	-48
Fine	161	144	159	137	109	102	-37
Community sentence	1,023	1,196	1,113	1,271	1,122	1,192	17
Suspended sentence	260	453	450	495	456	491	89
Immediate custody	648	979	927	843	716	717	11
Other disposal	115	88	115	95	115	189	64
		percentage of total offences					
Caution ²	28	17	16	15	15	14	
Community sentence	30	33	32	36	36	36	
Suspended sentence	8	12	13	14	15	15	
Immediate custody	19	27	27	24	23	22	
Possession of an offensive weapon		number of offences					
	3,751	3,665	3,475	3,217	3,183	3,101	-17
Caution ²	1,586	1,393	1,218	1,138	1,105	1,092	-31
Absolute/Conditional discharge	203	102	83	91	93	92	-55
Fine	166	113	134	122	114	106	-36
Community sentence	964	977	976	886	911	830	-14
Suspended sentence	248	320	330	309	342	331	33
Immediate custody	497	681	623	606	551	498	0
Other disposal	87	79	111	65	67	152	75
		percentage of total offences					
Caution ²	42	38	35	35	35	35	
Community sentence	26	27	28	28	29	27	
Suspended sentence	7	9	9	10	11	11	
Immediate custody	13	19	18	19	17	16	

1. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

2. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings.

Data Source and Quality

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Table 4: Custodial sentences for knife and offensive weapon possession offences, by sentence length

Sentence length	Q1 2008 ¹	Number of offences and percentages					Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
		Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
number of offences							
England and Wales ^{2,3}	1,145	1,660	1,550	1,449	1,267	1,215	6
Up to and including 3 months	580	711	661	598	498	478	-18
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	388	570	462	444	381	338	-13
Over 6 months	169	371	420	405	386	397	135
percentage of total offences							
Up to and including 3 months	51	43	43	41	39	39	
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	34	34	30	31	30	28	
Over 6 months	15	22	27	28	30	33	

1. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

2. England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

3. Total figures include offences where sentence length was not recorded by the police

Data Source and Quality

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Table 5: Average sentence length of immediate custodial sentences for knife and offensive weapon possession offences

	Average sentence length						Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
	Q1 2008 ¹	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
	Average sentence length (days)						
England and Wales²	140	171	178	184	192	197	41
TKAP Phase II - 16 forces³	144	168	171	189	182	194	35
Phase I - 10 forces ⁴	145	165	173	193	182	201	38
Phase II - 6 forces ⁵	139	181	166	173	175	174	25
Non-TKAP police forces⁶	123	176	191	175	209	200	63

1. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

2. England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

3. The Tackling Knives Action Programme police forces (Phase 2) are; Bedfordshire, the British Transport Police, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, The Metropolitan Police, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Thames Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, - see explanatory notes for more details

4. The Tackling Knives Action Programme police forces (Phase 1, Tier 1) were: Essex, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Thames Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire - see explanatory notes for more details

5. The Tackling Knives Action Programme six new police forces introduced in April 2009 (Phase II) were: Bedfordshire, the British Transport Police, Hampshire, Kent, South Yorkshire and Northumbria - see explanatory notes for more details

6. Non-TKAP police forces refers to those that have never been part of TKAP, Phase I or Phase II

Data Source and Quality

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Table 6: Court order starts for possession of an offensive weapon¹

Court Order starts	Q1 2008 ²	Number of starts and percentages					Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
		Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	
number of starts							
Total	1,381	1,612	1,562	1,728	1,622	1,611	17
Community order	992	1,043	1,003	1,132	1,059	1,024	3
SSO	342	509	500	551	524	536	57
Pre CJA orders	47	60	59	45	39	51	*
percentage of total starts							
Community order	72	65	64	66	65	64	
SSO	25	32	32	32	32	33	
Pre CJA orders	3	4	4	3	2	3	

1. Includes having an article with a blade or a point

2. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

*Indicates that one or more of the comparative numbers are less than 50. For small numbers this could give misleading percentage changes.

Data Sources and Quality

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Table 7: Requirement starts for possession of offensive weapon¹

Number of requirements and percentages							
	Q1 2008 ²	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
number of requirements							
Community Order	1,579	1,622	1,569	1,836	1,653	1,585	0
Unpaid Work	589	605	549	646	616	560	-5
Supervision	531	531	538	612	570	547	3
Accredited Program	141	143	144	151	112	119	-16
Curfew	125	138	124	168	154	129	3
Drug treatment	55	71	63	67	50	60	9
Specified Activity	73	63	65	93	70	77	5
Alcohol treatment	24	36	45	47	43	53	*
Mental Health	19	10	19	27	17	18	*
Exclusion	4	5	6	4	3	2	*
Residential	5	3	5	5	8	6	*
Attendance Centre	7	10	6	10	5	8	*
Prohibited Activity	6	7	5	6	5	6	*
percentage of all requirements							
Unpaid work	37	37	35	35	37	35	
Supervision 34		33	34	33	34	35	
Other requirements	29	30	31	31	28	30	
number of requirements							
Suspended Sentence Order	635	865	900	972	934	963	52
Supervision	255	346	357	374	348	350	37
Unpaid Work	142	236	232	256	259	284	100
Accredited Program	100	114	124	125	127	100	0
Curfew	54	76	72	90	79	96	78
Drug treatment	28	23	25	31	27	14	*
Alcohol treatment	21	25	26	34	32	38	*
Specified Activity	17	27	34	33	29	44	*
Prohibited Activity	3	7	12	9	10	4	*
Exclusion	2	7	8	6	2	8	*
Mental Health	2	2	7	4	10	8	*
Residential	10	2	2	6	9	13	*
Attendance Centre	1	0	1	4	2	4	*
percentage of all requirements							
Unpaid work	22	27	26	26	28	29	
Supervision 40		40	40	38	37	36	
Other requirements	37	13	35	35	35	34	

1. Includes having an article with a blade or a point

2. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

*Indicates that one or more of the comparative numbers are less than 50. For small numbers this could give misleading percentage changes.

Data Sources and Quality

These figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems, which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. All data is provisional.

Table 8: Unpaid work requirements started by length of requirement given for possession of offensive weapon¹

Number of requirements and percentages							
	Q1 2008 ²	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q3 2009
number of requirements							
Community Order	622	668	598	679	663	616	-1
0-80 hours	300	248	219	241	238	216	-28
81-150 hours	246	274	239	257	252	258	5
151-199 hours	24	30	33	47	43	36	*
200-250 hours	51	108	96	113	110	92	80
251-300 hours	1	8	11	21	20	14	*
percentage of total requirements							
0-80 hours	48	37	37	35	36	35	
81-150 hours	40	41	40	38	38	42	
151-199 hours	4	4	6	7	6	6	
200-250 hours	8	16	16	17	17	15	
251-300 hours	0	1	2	3	3	2	
number of requirements							
Suspended sentence order	139	246	228	254	256	304	119
0-80 hours	50	65	62	59	54	75	50
81-150 hours	61	124	111	124	129	134	120
151-199 hours	12	13	14	17	13	24	*
200-250 hours	14	41	40	47	56	65	*
251-300 hours	2	3	1	7	4	6	*
percentage of total requirements							
0-80 hours	36	26	27	23	21	25	
81-150 hours	44	50	49	49	50	44	
151-199 hours	9	5	6	7	5	8	
200-250 hours	10	17	18	19	22	21	
251-300 hours	1	1	0	3	2	2	

1. Includes having an article with a blade or a point

2. The last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

*Indicates that one or more of the comparative numbers are less than 50. For small numbers this could give misleading percentage changes.

Data Sources and Quality

These figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems, which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. All data is provisional.

Explanatory notes

Data quality and sources

All the data are drawn from administrative sources. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the detail is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system. While the figures shown have been checked as far as practicable, they should be regarded as approximate and not necessarily accurate to the last whole number shown in the tables. They are fit to be used for purposes of looking at trends and for comparing the relative magnitude of components.

Unless otherwise stated, numbers in the text have been rounded for ease of reading using the following rules:

Numbers of 100,000 and over are rounded to the nearest 1,000
Numbers from 1,000 – 99,999 are rounded to the nearest 100
Numbers from 10 – 999 are rounded to the nearest 10
Numbers under 10 are unrounded.

Tables 1-5

The data presented in tables 1-5 in this Bulletin are drawn from an extract of data held by the Ministry of Justice taken from the Police National Computer (PNC).

The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the police. Police forces tend to record cautions more promptly on the PNC than court sentences, so that the cautions figures for the latest quarter shown in the tables will tend to be more complete than the sentencing figures. In addition, in some areas, the police may record a 'deferred sentence' which will be updated at a later date when the final outcome is known. 'Deferred sentences' appear in the tables as 'other disposals' and therefore lead to higher figures for the latest quarter. Figures for all quarters may be revised in later editions of this Bulletin.

Tables 6-8 and figure 3

The probation data have been processed from data collected and held centrally by the Ministry of Justice. The data are drawn from the local probation administrative IT systems from each of the 42 probation areas in England and Wales. The figures showing the numbers starting court orders relate to the number of *offenders* starting probation supervision in a given period. The numbers drawn from the PNC data in tables 1-5 relate to the total number of *offences* committed by offenders given particular disposals, which will naturally be greater than the number of offenders. Also, the probation data only show offenders convicted of the more general offence of 'possession of an offensive weapon'. This will include possession of knives, as well the particular offence of 'possession of an article with a blade or point', but these cannot be separately distinguished in the probation data.

Prison population data presented in this brief are drawn from the prison administrative IT systems. The figures showing the numbers under sentence refer to the number of *offenders* serving a custodial sentence. Figures drawn from PNC data refer to the number of *offences* committed by offenders given particular disposals. Prison establishments routinely provide records of the numbers of persons held in custody at the end of each month, broadly subdivided according to age, sex, custody type and sentence length. The records are collated and processed centrally. However, data recorded by prisons only show the numbers serving a sentence for the general offence of “possession of an offensive weapon”. This offence includes the possession of a knife but can also include possession of other dangerous weapons (excluding firearms).

There is no updated prison population data beyond the end of June because data collection issues have emerged since the roll-out of a new case management system for prisons (Prison-NOMIS). We are working to resolve these as soon as possible.

Quarterly comparisons

As stated in the previous bulletin, to give a good representation of the trends occurring during the life of TKAP, the most recent quarter is compared with a pre-TKAP baseline quarter (January – March 2008), the last full quarter before TKAP was introduced.

To ensure consistency in the time series, tables covering the full time series since the first publication of the bulletin (Q4 2007 to Q2 2009), can be downloaded from the Ministry of Justice website www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm

This change in methodology is being implemented because TKAP Phase 1 started in June 2008 and if we were to compare the latest quarter with the same quarter of the previous year we would be comparing 2 periods affected by TKAP. Therefore the new methodology will give a better representation of the trends and impact of TKAP.

Definitions

TKAP Phase 1, Tier 1 – The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) focused resources on rapid, intensive work in specific areas of the country to tackle knife crime primarily among teenagers. TKAP Phase 1 started in June 2008 and 10 areas were selected (known as Tier 1), these are Essex, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Thames Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. An additional four areas, Bedfordshire, Northumbria, South Yorkshire and the British Transport Police, were selected later in 2008 and these were known as TKAP Tier 2 areas. These areas were not included in the TKAP monitoring programme.

TKAP Phase 1 finished in March 2009 and a report which provides an overview of key findings can be found online on the Home Office research publication website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/horr18c.pdf

TKAP Phase 2 - In April 2009, TKAP Phase 2 was launched and although there is still a focus on reducing the carrying of knives and knife related violence the primary aim is to reduce all serious youth violence, specifically among 13 to 24 years olds. The initiative was implemented in the TKAP Tier 1 and 2 areas with an additional two areas, Kent and Hampshire, making a total of 16 police force areas.

These 16 areas are now the focus of the monitoring programme and are therefore reported in this bulletin.

England and Wales – Total figures for England and Wales now include all police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport Police. The Home Office is responsible for policing the 43 police forces in England and Wales. There are also other authorities who prosecute offenders such as DWP, HMRC, MOD and BTP. Previously only the 43 police forces governed by the Home Office were reported on, but now, as the British Transport Police is part of TKAP, they are included in the total figures for England and Wales.

Offences included: The PNC data (tables 1-5) produced in this brief are the number of offences committed not number of offenders. The offences relate to possession offences rather than offences where a knife was used. The offence codes included in the dataset are as follows:

00811 – Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse. Prevention of Crime Act 1953 Section 1.

00828 – Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse on school premises. Criminal Justice Act 1988 Section 139 A (2) as amended by Offensive Weapons Act 1996 Section 4 (1).

00826 – Having an article with a blade or a point in a public place. Criminal Justice Act 1988 Section 139 (1) as amended by Offensive Weapons Act 1996 Section 3 (1).

00827 – Having an article with a blade or a point on school premises. Criminal Justice Act 1988 Section 139 (2) as amended by Offensive Weapons Act 1996 Section 4 (1).

Juvenile – A juvenile offender is aged between 10 and 17.

Adult – An adult offender is aged 18 and over.

Offensive weapon – there are three classes of offensive weapons. Those made for causing injury; those adapted for such a purpose; and those not so made or adapted, but carried with the intention of causing injury. These consist of all listed on the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) Order 1988 as amended, some examples include: a swordstick, that is, a hollow walking-stick or cane containing a blade which may be used as a sword; the weapon sometimes known as a "belt buckle knife", being a buckle which incorporates or conceals a knife.

Caution – given by, or on the instructions of, a senior police officer where there is sufficient evidence for a conviction and it is not considered to be in the public interest to institute criminal proceedings. For **adult** offenders, who must admit guilt and consent to a caution.

Reprimand and final warning – available for **juvenile** offenders. Reprimands can be given to first-time offenders for minor offences. Any further offending results in either a final warning or charge. The final warning triggers immediate referral to a local youth offending team. Reprimands and final warnings for juveniles are the equivalent of cautions for adults. Therefore in the tables reprimands and final warnings are counted under the 'cautions' disposal category.

Community sentence – for **adults** the main community sentence, which is supervised by the Probation Service, is the community order introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 for offences committed on or after 4 April 2005. The court must add at least one (but could potentially add all 12) of the following requirements: supervision, unpaid work, specified activities, prohibited activities, accredited programmes, curfew, exclusion, residence, mental health treatment, drug rehabilitation, alcohol treatment and attendance centre requirement for under 25s. For **juveniles** the main community sentences used are the referral order, for first-time offenders who plead guilty on their first court appearance and do not merit a discharge or custodial sentence, and the supervision order (up to 3 years, may have additional requirements) although curfew orders, reparation orders, action plan orders and attendance centre orders are also available. Youth Offending Teams supervise orders for juveniles.

Suspended Sentence – available for **adults** only. It is a sentence of custody of under 12 months, suspended for a period ranging from six months to two years. During the suspension period the court sets a number of requirements, from the same options as are available for the community order, and these are supervised by the Probation Service.

Immediate custody – **adults** aged 21 or over may receive sentences of unsuspended imprisonment and those aged 18 to 20 may be sentenced to detention in a young offender institution. The maximum sentence available is 4 years for possession of a bladed article in a public place or an offensive weapon. **Juveniles** aged 12-17 may receive a detention and training order of 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 18 or 24 months. The order is served partly in custody (in local authority children's homes, secure training centres or prison service young offender institutions) and partly in the community under the supervision of a probation officer, social worker or member of a youth offending team.

Contact points for further information

Current and previous editions of this publication are available for download at www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm.

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