



Ministry
of Justice

Knife Possession Sentencing Quarterly Brief October to December 2013 England and Wales

Ministry of Justice
Statistics Bulletin

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Introduction

This bulletin presents 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. This bulletin does not cover all knife crimes (offences involving a knife) as published by the Office for National Statistics¹. Details of other official statistics publications regarding knife related statistics can be found on page 28 of this bulletin.

The information presented combines both offences of possession of an article with a blade or point and offences of possession of an offensive weapon. The detailed offence codes used in this bulletin are outlined in the glossary section.

Also included in this bulletin are statistics on the recently introduced offences of aggravated possession of a knife or offensive weapon. These are included in their own separate table and are not included in other totals to enable consistent comparisons over time.

Recent Developments

- **New offence of aggravated knife possession (Tables 8-9, pages 18-19)**

From 3 December 2012, new offences of aggravated knife possession came into force as part of the provisions introduced in the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012. Initial disposals given for offenders dealt with against these new offences were included for the first time in the January to March 2013 Quarterly Bulletin

- **Methodological change introduced in Q4 2012**

From the fourth quarter of 2012 the figures presented in this bulletin were based on new estimates of the number and breakdown of disposals given for the possession of a knife or an offensive weapon. The estimates were introduced following a detailed analysis that tracked changes in the disposal figures from those initially published for each quarter to those released over the following year as data held on the PNC was updated with new information. It has now been a full year since the new methodology was introduced and Annex B provides comparisons and commentary on the accuracy of the estimated final disposal outcomes for Q4 2012.

The background and methodology used to derive these estimates was published in the October to December 2012 release of this bulletin – [click here for link](#) –

¹ www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-june-2013/stb-crime-in-england-and-wales--year-ending-june-2013.html#tab-Offences-involving-knives-and-sharp-instruments

This statistical brief, along with the full tables (including both current and estimated figures) are available from the Ministry of Justice Website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/knife-possession-sentencing-quarterly>

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

- On 21 May 2008, the Court of Appeal issued the judgment in *Povey*² that said, 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 the starting point for the lowest level of knife possession amongst adults should be 12 weeks' custody.
- 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 have been 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.
- From 3 December 2012, a new offence of aggravated knife possession came into force. Anyone aged 16 or over who uses a knife or offensive weapon to threaten and endanger others will face a mandatory custodial sentence, unless the court considers there to be particular circumstances which would make it unjust to do so.³

This publication has been prepared by Justice Statistics Analytical Services. If you have any feedback, questions or request for further information about these statistics, please direct them to the appropriate contact given at the end of this report.

² Povey & Ors, R. v, Court of Appeal - Criminal Division, May 21, 2008, [2008] EWCA Crim 1261.

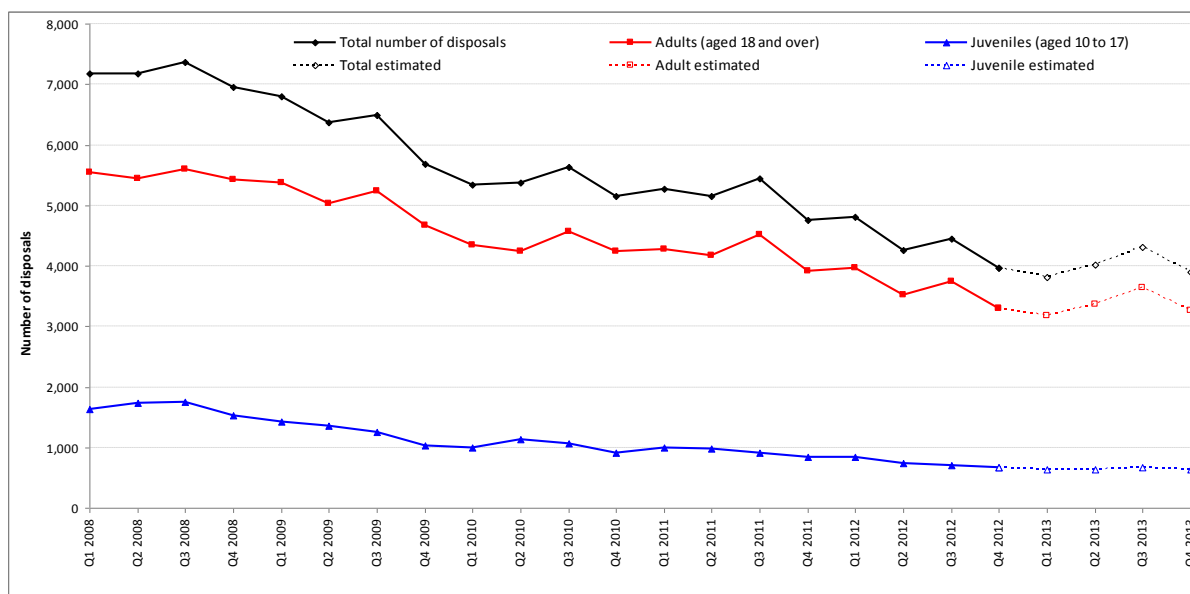
³ For legislation, see: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/contents/enacted

Key findings

Estimates indicate that the final disposal⁴ figures for Q4 2013 will show:

- 3,897 disposals were given for possession of a knife or offensive weapon offence, two per cent lower than in Q4 2012, and a 10 per cent decrease on the previous quarter. A similar pattern can be seen in each of the last six years where Q4 figures are lower than Q3 suggesting a seasonal trend. The number of disposals given for possession offences is now 46 per cent lower than the peak seen in Q3 2008 (7,276).
- Over 5 times as many adults offenders (3,259) were cautioned or convicted for possession offences compared to 638 juveniles offenders – a ratio that has generally been increasing over the last 4 years as the number of juveniles cautioned or convicted has fallen at a faster rate than for adults. Since Q4 2012, the number of convictions or cautions given to juveniles for possession offences fell by four per cent while, for adults, the number of disposals fell by one per cent

Figure 1: Number of disposals given for knife and offensive weapon possession offences by age, in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q4 2013



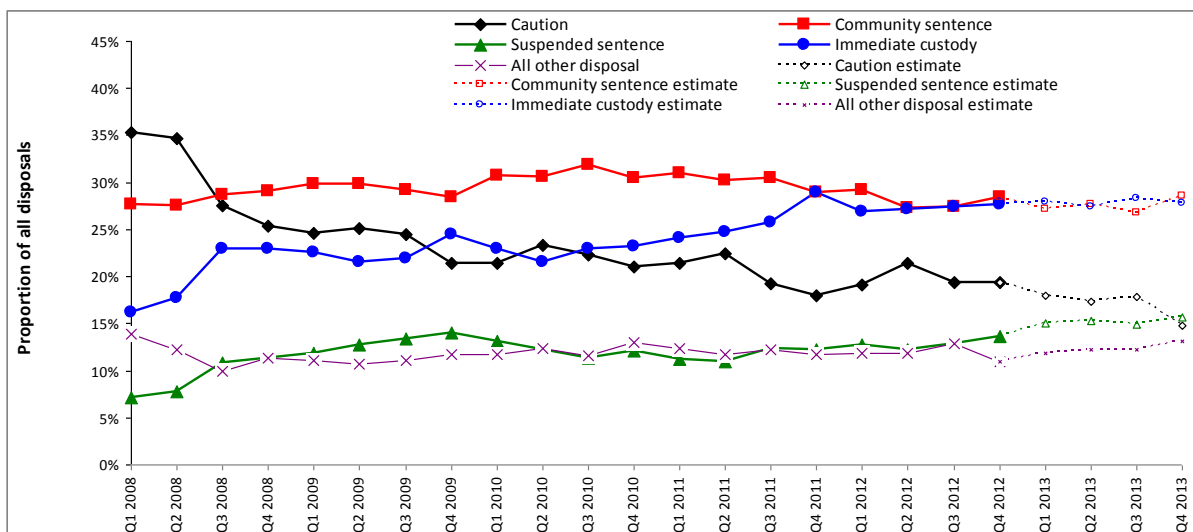
Knife Possession offences by disposal type

- The most common disposals for possession of a knife or an offensive weapon were a community sentence (29 per cent) and an immediate custodial sentence (28 per cent)

⁴ The disposal used in figures and tables in this bulletin is the most severe disposal of those given as a result of being found guilty, and may also depend on other offences dealt with at the same time.

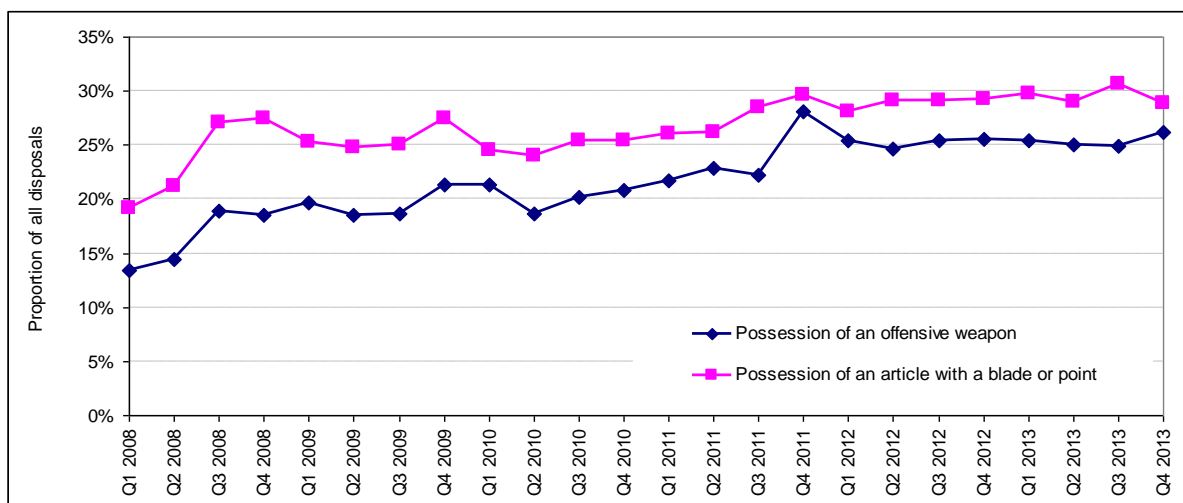
- The proportion of possession offences resulting in community sentences and immediate custody sentences has remained fairly steady over the last year with neither changing by more than two percentage points in the last five quarters. Similarly there has been little change in the proportion of fines and discharges given. However, there was a four percentage points fall in the proportion of cautions given from Q4 2012, to 15 per cent in Q4 2013 and the proportion of offences resulting in suspended sentences increased by two percentage points to 16 per cent. Note that figures for the latest quarter are estimated so this may change slightly once final outcomes are known.
- Over the longer term, the proportion of possession offences resulting in an immediate custody has increased since 2008 (from 16 per cent in Q1 2008 to 28 per cent in Q4 2013). The increase started particularly during 2008 when changes were made to the sentencing guidelines for knife possession as outlined earlier in this bulletin. Contrasting to this, the proportion of possession offences resulting in a police caution has fallen since 2008.

Figure 2: Proportion of type of disposal given for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q4 2013



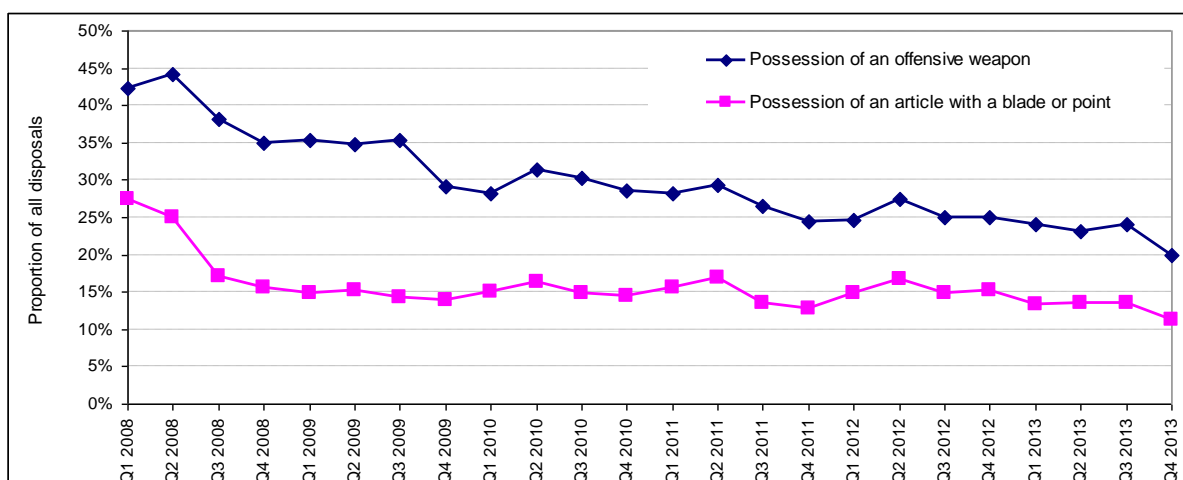
- A greater proportion of offences (59 per cent) involved the possession of an article with a blade or point, than possession of an offensive weapon (41 per cent). Over the last four quarters the proportion of possession offences involving an article with a blade has seen no change.
- Offenders convicted of offences involving the possession of an article with a blade or point are more likely to be given an immediate custodial sentence than offenders convicted of offences involving an offensive weapon, 29 per cent compared to 26 per cent.

Figure 3: Proportion of offences resulting in custodial sentences given for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q4 2013



- The proportion of cautions given to offenders is almost twice as high for possession of an offensive weapon (20 per cent) than for the possession of an article with a blade or point (11 per cent).

Figure 4: Proportion of offences resulting in cautions for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q4 2013

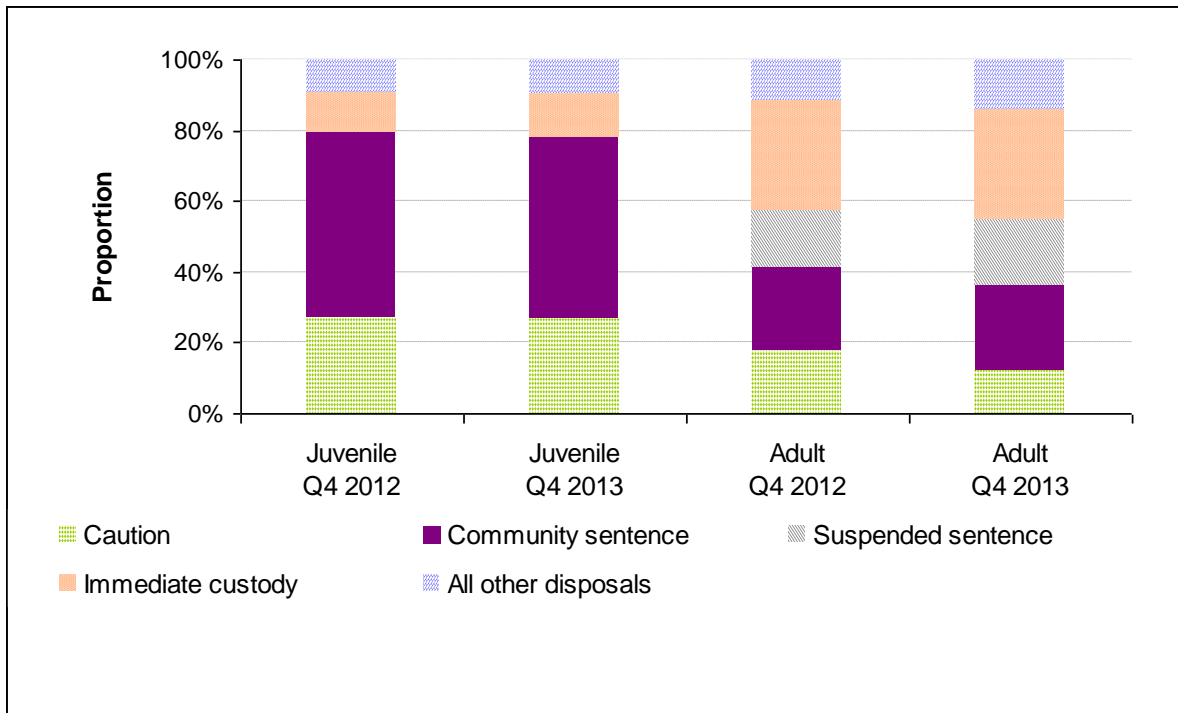


- Over half of all juveniles (51 per cent) receiving disposals for possession offences were given a community sentence, while nearly a third (27 per cent) were given a youth caution⁵. 12 per cent were given an immediate custodial sentence, up one percentage point on the same period one year ago and three percentage points on the same period three years ago. The proportion of juveniles given a youth caution has remained the same over the last year but is now three percentage points lower than three years ago.

⁵ Since April 8th 2013 youth cautions were introduced replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders.

- Three in ten adult offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, the same as a year ago but up over the longer term. The proportion of cautions given has fallen in the last year - from 18 per cent in Q4 2012 to 12 per cent in Q4 2013.

Figure 5: Proportion of type of disposal given for knife and offensive weapon possession for juveniles and adults, in England and Wales, Q4 2012 and Q4 2013



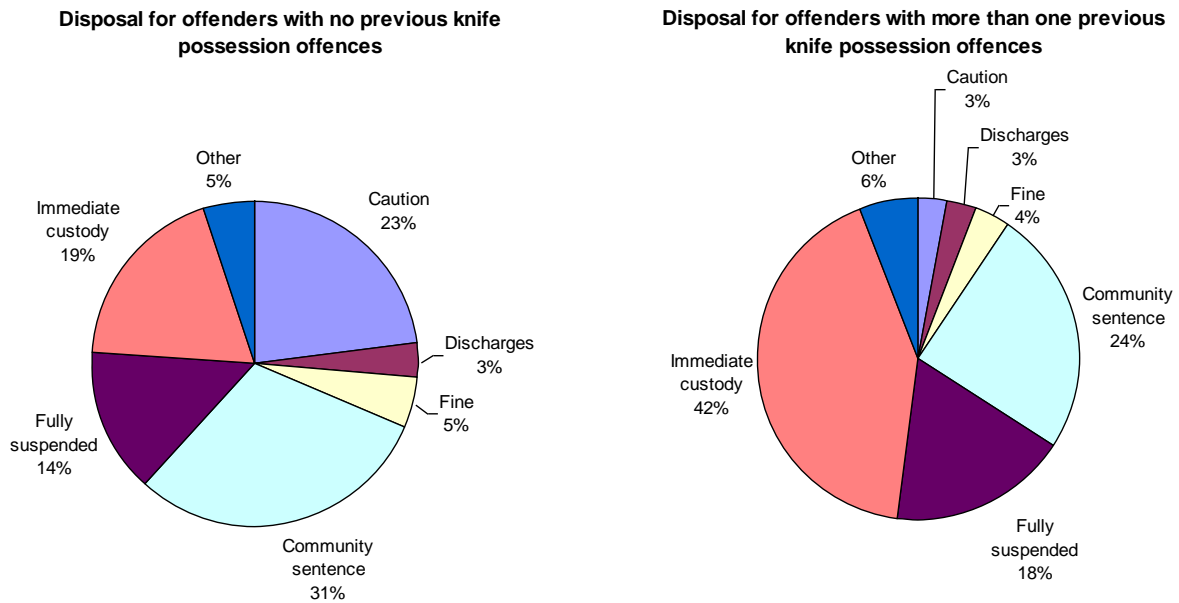
- Immediate custodial sentences given for possession offences were for 226 days, or 7.5 months, on average. This is five per cent longer than average sentence lengths given in Q4 2012 (215 days) but slightly lower than the 229 days for the previous quarter. The latest quarter represents an increase of 71 per cent or 4.4 months, compared to the end of 2007.

Criminal history of those cautioned or sentenced for knife possession offences

- The types of disposal given for knife possession offences are correlated with the number of previous cautions or convictions for possession offences. For offenders with no previous knife possession offences, 23 per cent received a caution in 2013 whereas 30 per cent received a community sentence and 19 per cent were given immediate custody. However, for offenders with at least one previous possession offence on their record, 42 per cent were sentenced to immediate custody in 2013, while only three per cent received a caution.
- Juvenile offenders having more than one previous knife possession offence on their record are most likely to receive a community sentence (59 per cent) or immediate custody (24 per cent). Only four per cent of juvenile offenders with one or more previous receive a youth caution⁴.

- The custody rate of adult offenders rises in relation with their number of previous possession offences, with 54 per cent of those offenders with three or more previous offences receiving an immediate custody sentence compared to 22 per cent for those with no previous possession offence.

Figure 6: Number of previous convictions or cautions for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon for offenders convicted or cautioned for a possession offence in 12 months ending December 2013, in England and Wales



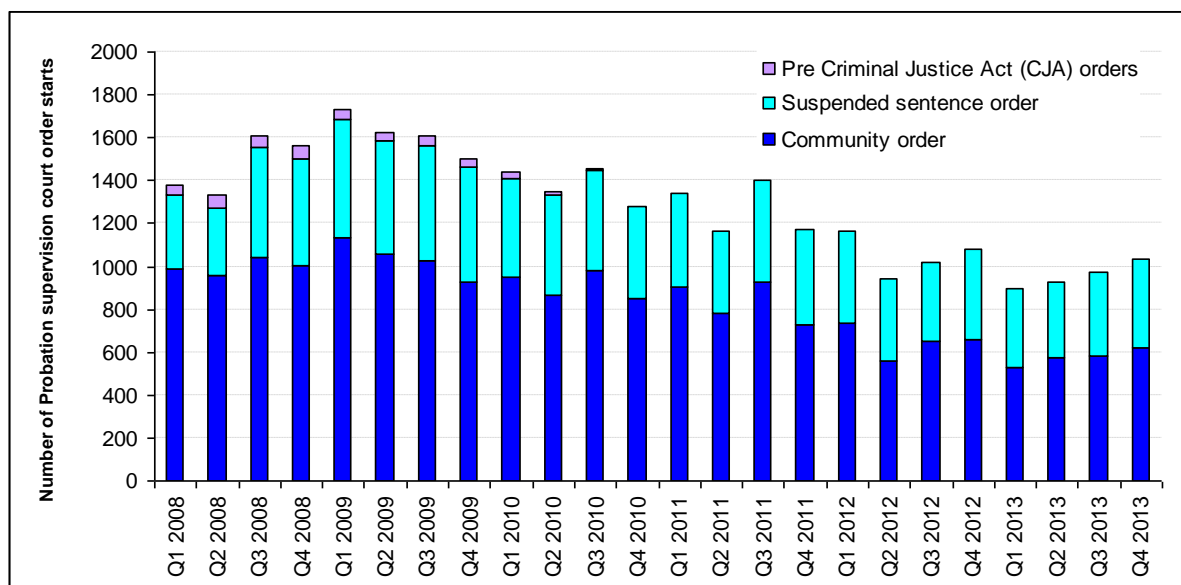
New aggravated knife or offensive weapon possession offences

- At present, a total of 186 offences (140 by adults, 46 by juveniles) have been dealt with in relation to one of the new aggravated knife possession offences that came into effect from 3 December 2012.
- Of the 46 offences committed by juveniles, 21 offences were committed by offenders aged between 10 and 15 when sentenced. (Sentencing guidelines differ for these age bands as explained page 4).
- Of the 165 new offences of aggravated knife possession where offenders were aged 16 and over, 101 offences or 61 per cent have received an immediate custodial sentence. Please note however that these figures are provisional and are likely to change, in particular the number of immediate custodial sentences is likely to rise, once all sentences have been finalised.

Offenders commencing probation

- 1,032 offenders started a court order under probation supervision for possession offences. This is down five per cent from Q4 2012 and 12 per cent from Q4 2011. These changes reflect the general trends in the number of possession offences dealt with over the period.
- The most common requirement placed on offenders starting court orders for possession offences was supervision – 37 per cent of suspended sentence orders (SSOs) and 36 per cent of community orders (COs). The proportion of offenders placed on the requirement to carry out unpaid work was lower – 24 per cent of SSOs and 27 per cent of COs, respectively. The use of unpaid work as a requirement has fallen over recent years – down eight percentage points since Q4 2010 for COs and down three percentage points for SSOs over the same period.
- Where unpaid work requirements were placed upon those starting a community order for possession offences, 43 per cent were for less than 80 hours and 39 per cent were for 81 to 150 hours. For those starting suspended sentence orders, 19 per cent were for under 80 hours and 54 per cent were for 81 to 150 hours.

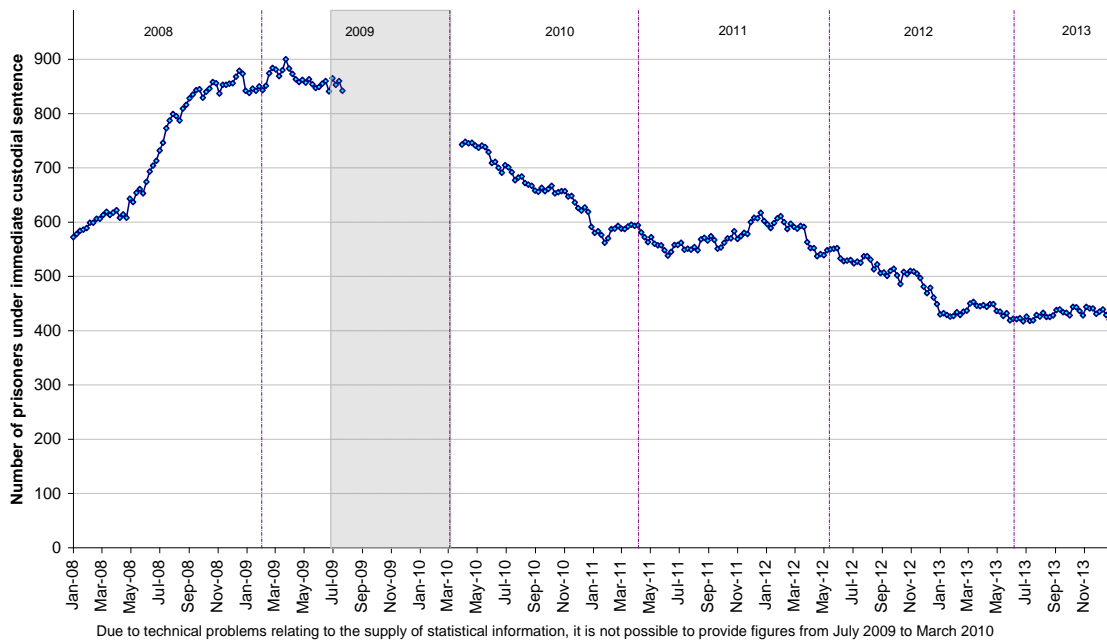
Figure 7: Number of offenders commencing a court order under probation supervision for possession of an offensive weapon, in England and Wales from Q1 2008 to Q4 2013



Offenders in prison for knife possession offences

- 420 offenders were in prison serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon on 27 December 2013, down six per cent from a year ago and continuing the reductions seen in the prison population for this offence since early 2009. This trend comes despite the generally increasing use and length of custodial sentences for possession offences, and is likely to be primarily related to the reductions in the total number of offences dealt with over the period.

Figure 8: Prison population under sentence for possession of an offensive weapon⁶ (excludes recalls) in England and Wales, between 2008 - 2013



⁶ Includes having an article with a blade or a point.

Appendix A: Statistical Tables

Table 1: Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence, in England and Wales

Disposal Category ¹	Number of offences and percentage change							% change, Q4 2012 to estimated Q4 2013
	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013 ^E	Q2 2013 ^E	Q3 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	
Number of offences								
England and Wales²	5,159	4,763	3,969	3,815	4,012	4,307	3,897	-2%
Caution ³	1,085	859	767	686	696	768	578	-25%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	204	158	114	137	120	154	132	16%
Fine	240	196	152	173	186	183	184	21%
Community sentence	1,575	1,380	1,127	1,038	1,112	1,152	1,113	-1%
Suspended sentence	628	583	541	573	614	641	612	13%
Immediate custody	1,200	1,381	1,100	1,065	1,101	1,219	1,083	-2%
Other disposal ⁴	227	206	168	143	183	190	195	16%
Percentage of total offences								
Caution ³	21%	18%	19%	18%	17%	18%	15%	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	
Fine	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	
Community sentence	31%	29%	28%	27%	28%	27%	29%	
Suspended sentence	12%	12%	14%	15%	15%	15%	16%	
Immediate custody	23%	29%	28%	28%	27%	28%	28%	
Other disposal ⁴	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	

¹ The disposal given in this table is only the most severe of the disposals given as a result of the offender being found guilty and may also depend on other offences committed at the same time.

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

³ Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and warnings or youth cautions. Youth cautions were introduced on April 8th 2013 replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>

⁴ Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing

^E Denotes where estimated figures have been used. The estimates are based on historical data changes. Please see explanatory notes of bulletin for further details.

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

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

Disposal Category ²	Number of offences and percentages							% change, Q4 2012 to estimated Q4 2013
	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013 ^E	Q2 2013 ^E	Q3 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	
Number of offences								
Aged 10 to 17³	912	844	665	631	642	661	638	-4%
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ⁴	272	204	180	203	177	189	173	-4%
Absolute/conditional discharge	14	15	15	20	17	18	25	*
Fine	3	2	1	2	2	1	0	*
Community sentence	492	489	352	321	327	341	327	-7%
Immediate custody	81	99	75	59	81	76	77	3%
Other disposal ⁵	50	35	42	26	38	36	36	*
Percentage of total offences								
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ⁴	30%	24%	27%	32%	28%	29%	27%	
Absolute/conditional discharge	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	
Fine	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Community sentence	54%	58%	53%	51%	51%	52%	51%	
Immediate custody	9%	12%	11%	9%	13%	11%	12%	
Other disposal ⁵	5%	4%	6%	4%	6%	5%	6%	
Number of offences								
Aged 18 and over³	4,246	3,917	3,303	3,184	3,370	3,646	3,259	-1%
Caution	813	654	587	483	519	579	405	-31%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	190	143	99	117	103	136	107	8%
Fine	237	194	151	171	184	182	184	22%
Community sentence	1,083	891	774	717	785	811	786	2%
Suspended sentence	626	583	541	573	614	641	612	13%
Immediate custody	1,118	1,282	1,025	1,006	1,020	1,143	1,006	-2%
Other disposal ⁵	177	170	126	117	145	154	159	26%
Percentage of total offences								
Caution	19%	17%	18%	15%	15%	16%	12%	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	
Fine	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	
Community sentence	26%	23%	23%	23%	23%	22%	24%	
Suspended sentence	15%	15%	16%	18%	18%	18%	19%	
Immediate custody	26%	33%	31%	32%	30%	31%	31%	
Other disposal ⁵	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	

¹ Includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² The disposal given in this table is only the most severe of the disposals given as a result of the offender being found guilty and may also depend on other offences committed at the same time.

³ The difference between the totals in Table 1 and the adult / juvenile breakdown is where there is no age recorded on the system

⁴ Since April 8th 2013 youth cautions were introduced replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>

⁵ Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing

^E Denotes where estimated figures have been used. The estimates are based on historical data changes. Please see explanatory notes of bulletin for further 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

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 3: Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence by type of offence, in England and Wales

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages							% change, Q4 2012 to estimated Q4 2013
	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q1 2013 ^E	Q2 2013 ^E	Q3 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	
Possession of an article with a blade or point								
	Number of offences							
	2,759	2,614	2,300	2,161	2,416	2,555	2,293	0%
Caution ¹	399	333	351	288	328	348	259	-26%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	130	103	75	86	85	103	91	21%
Fine	131	117	92	105	125	105	112	22%
Community sentence	897	833	689	623	683	716	679	-1%
Suspended sentence	375	332	318	340	377	404	367	15%
Immediate custody	700	776	674	644	702	782	663	-2%
Other disposal ²	133	120	101	75	116	97	122	21%
	percentage of total offences							
Caution ¹	14%	13%	15%	13%	14%	14%	11%	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	
Fine	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	
Community sentence	32%	32%	30%	29%	28%	28%	30%	
Suspended sentence	14%	13%	14%	16%	16%	16%	16%	
Immediate custody	25%	30%	29%	30%	29%	31%	29%	
Other disposal ²	5%	5%	4%	3%	5%	4%	5%	
Possession of an offensive weapon								
	Number of offences							
	2,400	2,149	1,669	1,654	1,596	1,752	1,604	-4%
Caution ¹	686	526	416	398	368	420	319	-23%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	74	55	39	51	35	51	41	*
Fine	109	79	60	68	61	78	72	20%
Community sentence	684	547	438	415	429	436	434	-1%
Suspended sentence	253	251	223	233	237	237	245	10%
Immediate custody	500	605	426	421	399	437	420	-1%
Other disposal ²	94	86	67	68	67	93	73	9%
	percentage of total offences							
Caution ¹	29%	24%	25%	24%	23%	24%	20%	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	
Fine	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	
Community sentence	29%	25%	26%	25%	27%	25%	27%	
Suspended sentence	11%	12%	13%	14%	15%	14%	15%	
Immediate custody	21%	28%	26%	25%	25%	25%	26%	
Other disposal ²	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	

¹ Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and warnings or youth cautions. Youth Cautions were introduced on April 8th 2013 replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>

² Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing

^E Denotes where estimated figures have been used. The estimates are based on historical data changes. Please see explanatory notes of bulletin for further details.

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 becomes available.

Table 4: Proportion of knife and offensive weapon possession offences resulting in an immediate custodial sentence, by sentence length, in England and Wales¹

Sentence length	Offences resulting in an immediate custody						
	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013
	Percentage of total offences						
Up to and including 3 months	42%	35%	33%	36%	39%	34%	32%
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	29%	29%	32%	28%	28%	27%	28%
Over 6 months	29%	36%	35%	36%	33%	39%	40%

¹ England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² Figures are based on the current figures and not the estimates used in Tables 1 to 3.

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

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

	Average Sentence length							% change, Q4 2012 to Q4 2013
	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	
	Average sentence length (days)							
England and Wales¹	184	218	215	222	205	229	226	5%

¹ England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² Figures are based on the current figures and not the estimates used in Tables 1 to 3.

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 6a: Number of previous convictions or cautions for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon for offenders convicted or cautioned for a possession offence 12 months ending December 2013, in England and Wales⁶

Disposal Category ^{1,5}	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
	Number of offenders				
England and Wales²	11,162	2,373	803	667	15,005
Caution ³	2,562	95	15	9	2,681
Absolute/Conditional discharge	390	71	23	16	500
Fine	556	105	17	17	695
Community sentence	3,373	651	179	110	4,313
Suspended sentence	1,616	437	139	116	2,308
Immediate custody	2,117	886	379	357	3,739
Other disposal ⁴	548	128	51	42	769
	Percentage				
Caution ³	23%	4%	2%	1%	18%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Fine	5%	4%	2%	3%	5%
Community sentence	30%	27%	22%	16%	29%
Suspended sentence	14%	18%	17%	17%	15%
Immediate custody	19%	37%	47%	54%	25%
Other disposal ⁴	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%

¹ The disposal given in this table is only the most severe of the disposals given as a result of the offender being found guilty and may also depend on other offences committed at the same time .

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

³ Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and warnings or youth cautions. Youth cautions were introduced on April 8th 2013 replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>.

⁴ Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁵ Please note that the figures in this table are based on current figures and not the estimates used in Tables 1 to 3. In particular the number of immediate custodial sentences will rise as sentences passed by the Crown court become available on the Police National Computer.

⁶ Figures are based on counting the number of cautioning and sentencing occasions for offences committed by offenders which were prosecuted by police forces in England and Wales including the British Transport Police. Offenders may appear more than once in the year, where they have been sentenced on multiple occasions within the year.

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 6b: Number of previous convictions or cautions for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon for offenders convicted or cautioned for a possession offence 12 months ending December 2012, in England and Wales⁶

Disposal Category ^{1,5}	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
	Number of offenders				
England and Wales²	12,424	2,559	856	662	16,501
Caution ³	3,283	118	22	6	3,429
Absolute/Conditional discharge	447	88	17	16	568
Fine	569	110	25	16	720
Community sentence	3,686	641	183	104	4,614
Suspended sentence	1,458	414	126	92	2,090
Immediate custody	2,500	1,070	443	395	4,408
Other disposal ⁴	481	118	40	33	672
	Percentage				
Caution ³	26%	5%	3%	1%	21%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%
Fine	5%	4%	3%	2%	4%
Community sentence	30%	25%	21%	16%	28%
Suspended sentence	12%	16%	15%	14%	13%
Immediate custody	20%	42%	52%	60%	27%
Other disposal ⁴	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%

¹ The disposal given in this table is only the most severe of the disposals given as a result of the offender being found guilty and may also depend on other offences committed at the same time .

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

³ Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and warnings or youth cautions. Youth cautions were introduced on April 8th 2013 replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>.

⁴ Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁵ Please note that the figures in this table are based on current figures and not the estimates used in Tables 1 to 3. In particular the number of immediate custodial sentences will rise as sentences passed by the Crown court become available on the Police National Computer.

⁶ Figures are based on counting the number of cautioning and sentencing occasions for offences committed by offenders which were prosecuted by police forces in England and Wales including the British Transport Police. Offenders may appear more than once in the year, where they have been sentenced on multiple occasions within the year.

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 7a: Number of previous convictions or cautions for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon for offenders convicted or cautioned for a possession offence 12 months ending December 2013, split by age group in England and Wales^{1,6}

Disposal Category ^{2,5}	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
Number of offenders					
Aged 10 to 17⁷	2,158	240	47	17	2,462
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	713	12	0	0	725
Absolute/Conditional discharge	59	9	1	2	71
Fine	4	0	0	0	4
Community sentence	1,141	150	26	4	1,321
Immediate custody	153	49	15	9	226
Other disposal ⁴	88	20	5	2	115
Percentage of offenders					
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	33%	5%	*	*	29%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3%	4%	*	*	3%
Fine	0%	0%	*	*	0%
Community sentence	53%	63%	*	*	54%
Immediate custody	7%	20%	*	*	9%
Other disposal ⁴	4%	8%	*	*	5%
Number of offenders					
Aged 18 and over⁷	9,001	2,132	756	650	12,539
Caution	1,848	83	15	9	1,955
Absolute/Conditional discharge	331	62	22	14	429
Fine	552	105	17	17	691
Community sentence	2,231	500	153	106	2,990
Suspended sentence	1,616	437	139	116	2,308
Immediate custody	1,963	837	364	348	3,512
Other disposal ⁴	460	108	46	40	654
Percentage of offenders					
Caution	21%	4%	2%	1%	16%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Fine	6%	5%	2%	3%	6%
Community sentence	25%	23%	20%	16%	24%
Suspended sentence	18%	20%	18%	18%	18%
Immediate custody	22%	39%	48%	54%	28%
Other disposal ⁴	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%

¹ England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² The disposal given in this table is only the most severe of the disposals given as a result of the offender being found guilty and may also depend on other offences committed at the same time.

³ Since April 8th 2013 youth cautions were introduced replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>.

⁴ Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁵ Please note that the figures in this table are based on current figures and not the estimates used in Tables 1 to 3. In particular the number of immediate custodial sentences will rise as sentences passed by the Crown court become available on the Police National Computer.

⁶ Figures are based on counting the number of cautioning and sentencing occasions for offences committed by offenders which were prosecuted by police forces in England and Wales including the British Transport Police. Offenders may appear more than once in the year, where they have been sentenced on multiple occasions within the year.

⁷ The difference between the totals in Table 6a and the adult / juvenile breakdown in this table, is where there is no age recorded on the system.

* 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

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 7b: Number of previous convictions or cautions for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon for offenders convicted or cautioned for a possession offence 12 months ending December 2012, split by age group in England and Wales^{1,6}

Disposal Category ^{2,5}	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
Number of offenders					
Aged 10 to 17⁷	2,504	245	44	24	2,817
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	799	3	0	0	802
Absolute/Conditional discharge	50	5	0	0	55
Fine	3	1	0	1	5
Community sentence	1,325	141	26	11	1,503
Immediate custody	219	78	14	8	319
Other disposal ⁴	108	17	4	4	133
Percentage of offenders					
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	32%	1%	*	*	28%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	2%	2%	*	*	2%
Fine	0%	0%	*	*	0%
Community sentence	53%	58%	*	*	53%
Immediate custody	9%	32%	*	*	11%
Other disposal ⁴	4%	7%	*	*	5%
Number of offenders					
Aged 18 and over⁷	9,918	2,313	812	638	13,681
Caution	2,484	115	22	6	2,627
Absolute/Conditional discharge	397	83	17	16	513
Fine	566	109	25	15	715
Community sentence	2,360	499	157	93	3,109
Suspended sentence	1,458	414	126	92	2,090
Immediate custody	2,280	992	429	387	4,088
Other disposal ⁴	373	101	36	29	539
Percentage of offenders					
Caution	25%	5%	3%	1%	19%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4%	4%	2%	3%	4%
Fine	6%	5%	3%	2%	5%
Community sentence	24%	22%	19%	15%	23%
Suspended sentence	15%	18%	16%	14%	15%
Immediate custody	23%	43%	53%	61%	30%
Other disposal ⁴	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%

¹ England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² The disposal given in this table is only the most severe of the disposals given as a result of the offender being found guilty and may also depend on other offences committed at the same time.

³ Since April 8th 2013 youth cautions were introduced replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>

⁴ Represent cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁵ Please note that the figures in this table are based on current figures and not the estimates used in Tables 1 to 3. In particular the number of immediate custodial sentences will rise as sentences passed by the Crown court become available on the Police National Computer.

⁶ Figures are based on counting the number of cautioning and sentencing occasions for offences committed by offenders which were prosecuted by police forces in England and Wales including the British Transport Police. Offenders may appear more than once in the year, where they have been sentenced on multiple occasions within the year.

⁷ The difference between the totals in Table 6a and the adult / juvenile breakdown in this table, is where there is no age recorded on the system.

* 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

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 8: Offences involving threatening with a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence in England and Wales, Q1 2013 to Q4 2013

Number of offences and percentages					
Disposal Category	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Total
Number of offences					
England and Wales¹	15	43	59	69	186
Caution ²	2	0	1	3	6
Absolute/Conditional discharge	0	0	0	0	0
Fine	0	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	2	14	12	10	38
Suspended sentence	2	6	10	11	29
Immediate custody	9	21	34	40	104
Other disposal ³	0	2	2	5	9
Percentage of total offences					
Caution ²	*	*	2%	4%	3%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	*	*	0%	0%	0%
Fine	*	*	0%	0%	0%
Community sentence	*	*	20%	14%	20%
Suspended sentence	*	*	17%	16%	16%
Immediate custody	*	*	58%	58%	56%
Other disposal ³	*	*	3%	7%	5%

¹ England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and warnings or youth cautions. Youth cautions were introduced on April 8th 2013 replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>

³ Other disposals may represent cases where an offender has been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁴ An additional breakdown showing previous knife possession offences for these offenders is available in table 8a. of the accompanying excel tables.

* 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

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 9: Offences involving threatening with a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence by age group in England and Wales, 2013

Disposal Category	Number of offences			Total
	Adults	Juveniles		
		10-15	16-17	
Number of offences				
England and Wales^{1,4}	140	21	25	186
Caution ²	3	3	0	6
Absolute/Conditional discharge	0	0	0	0
Fine	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	11	15	12	38
Suspended sentence	29	0	0	29
Immediate custody	88	3	13	104
Other disposal ³	9	0	0	9

¹ England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas and the British Transport Police.

² Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and warnings or youth cautions. Youth cautions were introduced on April 8th 2013 replacing reprimands and warnings for young offenders. The guidance is published at the link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/out-of-court-disposals>

³ Other disposals may represent cases where an offender has been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁴ An additional breakdown showing previous knife possession offences for these offenders is available in table 8a of the accompanying excel tables.

Data Source and Quality

These figures have been drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC) 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 becomes available.

Table 10: Offenders commencing a court order under probation supervision¹, in England and Wales

Number of starts and percentages								
Court order starts	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	% change, Q4 2012 to Q4 2013
number of starts								
England and Wales	1,278	1,172	1,084	895	927	972	1,032	-5%
Community order	853	727	662	530	577	583	621	-6%
Suspended sentence order	423	445	422	365	348	388	411	-3%
Pre CJA orders	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	*
percentage of total starts								
Community order	67%	62%	61%	59%	62%	60%	60%	
Suspended sentence order	33%	38%	39%	41%	38%	40%	40%	
Pre CJA orders	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

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

*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

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 and are subject to revision in future editions.

Table 11: Requirement starts for possession of offensive weapon¹, in England and Wales

Number of requirements and percentages

	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	% change, Q4 2012 to Q4 2013
Number of requirements								
Community order	1,346	1,246	1,049	869	928	935	1,000	-5%
Unpaid Work	472	399	335	259	276	273	270	-19%
Supervision	450	415	345	301	314	326	358	4%
Curfew	62	132	57	66	69	69	97	70%
Accredited program	92	69	49	59	52	50	59	*
Specified activity	92	103	37	94	119	108	91	*
Drug treatment	92	38	95	23	33	35	31	*
Alcohol treatment	39	51	93	34	27	45	44	*
Mental health	19	11	16	9	11	13	20	*
Exclusion	3	7	4	5	3	2	5	*
Residential	6	7	4	7	4	2	2	*
Attendance centre	16	8	10	9	17	11	20	*
Prohibited activity	3	6	4	3	3	1	3	*
Percentage of total requirements								
Unpaid work	35%	32%	32%	30%	30%	29%	27%	
Supervision	33%	33%	33%	35%	34%	35%	36%	
Other requirements	32%	35%	35%	36%	36%	36%	37%	
Number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order	781	770	767	642	621	623	679	-11%
Unpaid work	211	205	193	156	148	151	160	-17%
Supervision	289	269	274	232	233	232	250	-9%
Curfew	76	89	75	66	64	51	75	0%
Accredited program	76	61	57	64	50	53	61	7%
Specified activity	49	73	78	56	57	68	65	-17%
Drug treatment	22	21	26	11	26	14	23	*
Alcohol treatment	33	25	35	33	18	32	23	*
Mental health	6	3	2	8	7	8	9	*
Exclusion	6	2	3	3	9	3	4	*
Residential	3	12	16	7	5	4	3	*
Attendance centre	2	5	2	2	3	2	3	*
Prohibited activity	8	5	6	4	1	5	3	*
Percentage of total requirements								
Unpaid work	27%	27%	25%	24%	24%	24%	24%	
Supervision	37%	35%	36%	36%	38%	37%	37%	
Other requirements	36%	38%	39%	40%	39%	39%	40%	

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

*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

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 and are subject to revision in future editions.

Table 12: Unpaid work requirements started by length of requirement given for possession of offensive weapon¹, in England and Wales

Number of requirements and percentages								
	Q4 2010	Q4 2011	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	% change, Q4 2012 to Q4 2013
number of requirements								
Community order	503	440	368	270	271	260	269	-20%
0-80 hours	208	174	144	108	95	93	117	-33%
81-150 hours	188	191	165	112	109	121	105	-5%
151-199 hours	37	21	21	12	21	17	15	*
200-250 hours	64	48	36	34	43	27	32	*
251-300 hours	6	6	2	4	3	2	0	*
percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	41%	40%	39%	40%	35%	36%	43%	
81-150 hours	37%	43%	45%	41%	40%	47%	39%	
151-199 hours	7%	5%	6%	4%	8%	7%	6%	
200-250 hours	13%	11%	10%	13%	16%	10%	12%	
251-300 hours	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	
number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order	223	224	206	169	148	140	153	-26%
0-80 hours	53	49	51	43	25	23	29	*
81-150 hours	100	122	106	86	82	78	83	-22%
151-199 hours	12	17	8	14	10	11	13	*
200-250 hours	53	31	38	25	29	28	26	*
251-300 hours	5	5	3	1	2	0	2	*
percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	24%	22%	25%	25%	17%	16%	19%	
81-150 hours	45%	54%	51%	51%	55%	56%	54%	
151-199 hours	5%	8%	4%	8%	7%	8%	8%	
200-250 hours	24%	14%	18%	15%	20%	20%	17%	
251-300 hours	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	

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

*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

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 and are subject to revision in future editions.

Appendix B: Assessing the accuracy of estimation method

This appendix aims to assess the accuracy of the methodology introduced in the September to December 2012 bulletin, to estimate the number and breakdown of disposals given for the possession of a knife or an offensive weapon in the most recent four quarters.

These estimates were introduced to account for the changes seen in the disposal figures from those initially published for each quarter to those released over the following year as data held on the Police National Computer (PNC) was updated with new information. In particular the number of immediate custodial sentences recorded on the PNC was seen to increase significantly over time – as sentences passed by the Crown court became available on the system. As the scale of the changes to these figures over time was very stable, a new methodology was introduced to predict these final sentencing figures for the most recent four quarters.

It has been now been one year since this new methodology of estimating disposal figures was introduced, we can therefore now assess the accuracy of the estimation method used. Table 13 below illustrates the accuracy of the estimation process that was used to provide the statistics that were published for Q4 2012.

Table13: Changes in the number of disposals reported for knife possession offences in Q4 2012 between the non-estimated figures, the estimated figures and the final actual figures

	Q4 2012 - non estimated	Q4 2012 - estimated	Q4 2012 - actual figures	% change - non estimated to actual figures	% change - estimated to actual figures
Caution	773	778	767	-1%	-1%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	105	112	114	9%	2%
Fine	145	153	152	5%	-1%
Community sentence	1,173	1144	1,127	-4%	-1%
Suspended sentence	550	536	541	-2%	1%
Immediate custody	915	1092	1,100	20%	1%
Other disposal	309	167	168	-46%	1%
All disposals	3,970	3,982	3,969	0%	0%

The table compares the Q4-2012 non-estimated and estimated figures by disposal group with the actual figures published one year on. As outlined above, figures show that there were large differences between the non-estimated and the actual final figures for those receiving an immediate custodial sentence or other disposal, with differences of 20 per cent and 46 per cent respectively. When comparing the estimated figures for these disposals there is little change between the two, with figures differing by around 1-2% at most. This shows that the methodology being used has been successful in predicting the changes seen in disposals over the year and future bulletins will continue to use this methodology. We will continue to review this methodology and provide updates on the accuracy of our estimates.

Explanatory notes

Data quality and sources

Tables 1 to 9

The statistics presented in tables 1 to 9 in this Bulletin are drawn from an extract of data held on the Police National Computer (PNC) as at 1 November 2013.

The PNC is a large administrative database containing information about police cautions and court convictions held by individual offenders in England and Wales. As an administrative system, the PNC is regularly updated as new information about particular individuals becomes available. For example, an offender with previous convictions may have recently been charged with another offence, appeared in court against this charge and then been subsequently convicted of this offence. This information would then be updated accordingly against that individual's record in the PNC.

As these updates involve some element of manual data entry alongside more automated systems, there can be delays in the database becoming updated with the latest information about an offender's convictions. As such, the number of cautions/convictions recorded in the PNC extract for knife possession offences in recent quarters, in particular for the most recent quarter included in this bulletin, is likely to be lower than the actual number of cautions/convictions given in the period.

In addition, the different disposals recorded in the PNC extract for knife possession offences in recent quarters are also subject to some change. This is partly due to the delays in updating recent court outcomes on the PNC, but is also due to the fact that, while some individuals will have been convicted of a knife possession offence in a magistrate's court during the quarter, information about the disposal they received is not yet available as the case has been passed to the Crown court for sentencing at a later date. These cases will be updated when information about the final sentence given for the offence becomes available.

As a result of these updates, the statistics presented in this bulletin are based on estimates of what the final sentencing outcomes will be for the latest period once all data updates have been made.

The estimates were introduced from the Q4 2012 edition of this bulletin and followed detailed analysis that tracked changes in the disposal figures from those initially published for each quarter to those released over the following year as data held on the PNC was updated with new information.

The background to and methodology used to derive these estimates was published in the October to December 2012 release of this bulletin – [click here for link](#) – and this has been reviewed in Appendix B.

Tables 10 to 12 and Figures 7 and 8

The probation data has 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 35 probation trusts 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 to 5 relate to the total number of *offences* committed by offenders given particular disposals, which are likely to be greater than the number of offenders. Also, the probation data shows 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).

Due to technical problems relating to the supply of data for statistical purposes it has not been possible to provide data relating to the prison population for specific offence types from July 2009 to March 2010.

Glossary

This glossary provides a brief description of the main terms used in the Commentary section of this report. For further information, please contact the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division using the details provided in the contacts section at the end of this bulletin.

Adult: An offender aged 18 and over.

Caution: A warning given to adults offenders who admit guilt and agree to be cautioned. They are issued 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.

Community sentence: An alternate to custodial sentence (sending offenders to prison) which allows offenders to make amends for their crimes. For juveniles the main community sentence used are the referral order and the Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO). With a community sentence there are specific things the offender can, can't and must do while serving their sentence. Elements of custodial sentence include;

- 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

England and Wales – Total figures for England and Wales now include all police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport Police (BTP). 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:

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP),
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC),
- Ministry of Defence (MOD) and
- British Transport Police (BTP).

Immediate custody: Unsuspended imprisonment for adults aged 21 or over and detention in a young offender institution for those aged 18 to 20. The maximum sentence available is 4 years for possession of a bladed article in a public place or an offensive weapon. Juveniles aged 12 to 17 may receive a detention and training order of 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 18 or 24 months

Juvenile: An offender between the ages 10 and 17.

Offences included: The PNC data (tables 1 to 5) produced in this brief are the number of offences committed **not** the 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).

New offence codes include: The PNC data (tables 8 and 9) produced in this brief are the number of offences committed **not** the number of offenders. The offences relate to threatening offences rather than offences where a knife was used. The offence codes included in the dataset are as follows:

- **00861** – Threaten with an offensive weapon in a public place.
- **00862** – Threaten with a blade/sharply pointed article on a school premises
- **00863** – Threaten with an offensive weapon on a school premises.
- **00864** – Threaten with a blade/sharply pointed article in a public place.

Offensive weapon: Any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person, or intended by the person having it with him for such. Examples includes: a swordstick, a hollow walking-stick or cane containing a blade.

Reprimand and warning: Issued to juvenile first time offenders for minor offences. Reprimand and warning for juveniles are equivalent of cautions for adults.

Youth cautions: Introduced on April 8th 2013. They are formal out-of-court disposals for young offenders (aged 10 to 17) and intended to allow a more flexible response to offending than the preceding Final Warning Scheme.

Suspended Sentence: A custody sentence of less than 12 months, suspended for a period ranging from six months to two years available for **adult** only.

Contact points for further information

Current and previous editions of this publication are available for download at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/knife-possession-sentencing-quarterly

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

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Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from www.statistics.gov.uk

Other knife and sharp object related statistical releases

Other government departments also release statistics relating to knives and sharp objects. Below are some links and brief outlines of other available sources.

- The Home Office provide a guidance document regarding the law for knives and offensive weapons:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/186911/Knives_and_offensive_weapons_information_GDS_FAQ.pdf

www.gov.uk/find-out-if-i-can-buy-or-carry-a-knife

- The Home Office also publish statistics of offences involving knives and sharp instruments. This is contained within the *Crime in England and Wales* statistical bulletin and has a section called *Offences involving knives and sharp instruments*.

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-june-2013/stb-crime-in-england-and-wales--year-ending-june-2013.html#tab-Offences-involving-knives-and-sharp-instruments

- The Department for Health release hospital admission data for assaults on an ad hoc basis. Within this data there is a category for *X99 - Assault by sharp object*. The link for the most recently released publication is listed below and the data can usually be found in the *Monthly HES data – Monthly topic of interest* section of the HES online website.

www.hscic.gov.uk/hes

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