

**Knife Crime Sentencing  
Quarterly Brief  
April to June 2009  
England and Wales**

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics Bulletin

Published 10 September 2009

## Knife Crime Statistics April to June 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](http://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 fair comparison over time the tables in this bulletin including, Q4 2007 and Q1 2008, are available for download from the Ministry of Justice website [www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm)

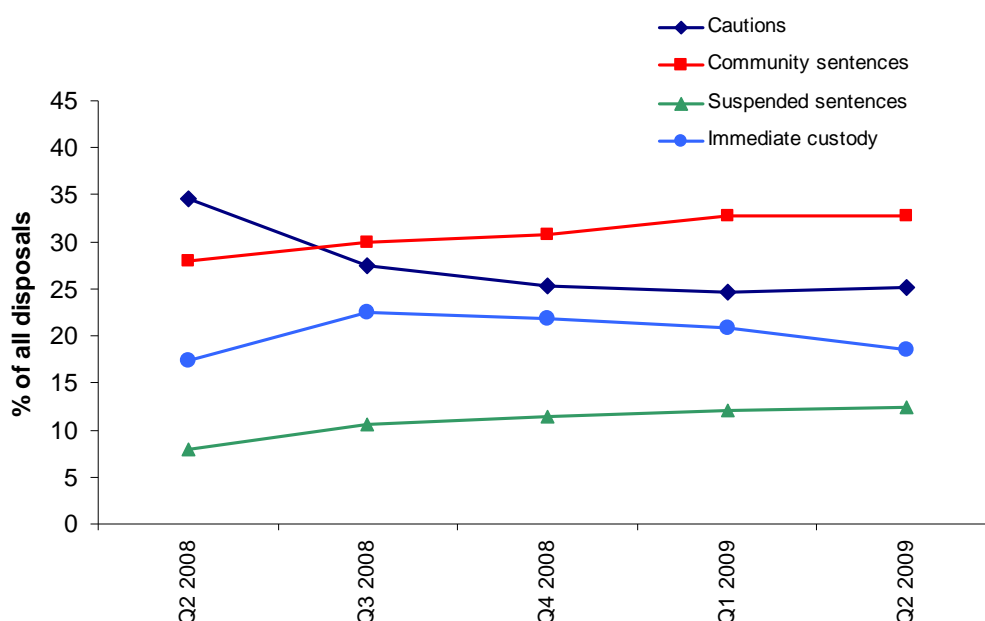
This publication has been prepared by Offender Management and Sentencing Analytical Services.

## Key points – Q2 2009 compared to Q2 2008 (unless otherwise stated)

### 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 13% between Q2 2008 and Q2 2009 (7,100 to 6,200). This drop was more marked for juvenile offenders where the decrease was 23% (1,700 to 1,300), compared to adult offenders which decreased by 9% (5,400 to 5,000).

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



- The proportion of offenders receiving cautions<sup>1</sup> for knife or offensive weapon possession decreased while the proportion of immediate custodial sentences, suspended sentence orders and community sentences rose between Q2 2008 and Q2 2009:
  - In Q2 2009 25 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 Q2 2008.

<sup>1</sup> Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings.

- In Q2 2009 19 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in immediate custody compared to 17 per cent (1,200) in Q2 2008.
- In Q2 2009 12 per cent (770) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 8 per cent (570) in Q2 2008.
- In Q2 2009 33 per cent (2,000) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 28 per cent (2,000) in Q2 2008.
- **Where immediate custodial sentences are given for these offences there has been an increase in the proportion of longer sentences:**
  - In Q2 2009 31 per cent (360) of sentences were recorded as being over six months compared to 15 per cent (190) in Q2 2008.
  - The average length of a custodial sentence was 194 days in Q2 2009. This had increased from 137 days in Q2 2008.
- **The proportion of juvenile offenders receiving reprimands and final warnings decreased** from 45 per cent (770) to 35 per cent (470). This was balanced by an increase in the proportion receiving community sentences (from 43 per cent (740) to 54 per cent (710)).
- **For adult offenders the proportion receiving cautions decreased** from 31 per cent (1,700) to 22 per cent (1,100). This was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of suspended sentence orders (10 per cent (570) to 16 per cent (770)) and community sentences (23 per cent (1,300) to 27 per cent (1,300)) given. The proportion of immediate custodial sentences given increased slightly from 21 per cent (1,100) to 22 per cent (1,100).
- **In the 16<sup>2</sup> TKAP police force areas the extent and direction of change between Q2 2008 and Q2 2009 were similar to non-TKAP police force areas with the exception of immediate custody which increased (16 per cent to 19 per cent) in TKAP forces areas but slightly decreased (20 per cent to 19 per cent) in non-TKAP police forces areas:**
  - In Q2 2009, 24 per cent (980) of all possession offences resulted in a caution in the 16 TKAP areas. This compares with 34 per cent (1,600) in Q2 2008.
  - In Q2 2009 13 per cent (520) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 8 per cent (390) in Q2 2008.
  - In Q2 2009 35 per cent (1,400) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 30 per cent (1,400) in Q2 2008.

---

<sup>2</sup> Phase 2 police force areas. See explanatory notes for more information.

- **In the 10<sup>3</sup> TKAP police force areas the extent and direction of change in proportions of types of disposals given between Q2 2008 and Q2 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 Q2 2009 there were 1,600 court order starts under probation supervision** for possession of an offensive weapon, this represents an increase of 22 per cent from Q2 2008 (1,300). This was driven by the increase in SSOs, which rose from 320 to 520 (66 per cent increase) over the period, although community orders also rose by 100 (10 per cent).
- **There were small changes in the proportion of those given unpaid work** as a percentage of all requirements started. For suspended sentence orders 28 per cent were given unpaid work in Q2 2009 compared to 27 per cent in Q2 2008. Whereas for community orders a slight decrease was seen between quarters to 37 per cent in Q2 2009 from 38 per cent in Q2 2008.
- **Where unpaid work requirements were started for these offences, there has been an increase in the proportion of longer requirements:**
  - For community orders, in Q2 2009, 20 per cent of unpaid work requirements were recorded as being 200 hours or longer compared to 11 per cent in Q2 2008. This was mirrored by shorter requirements (0-80 hours) decreasing to 36 per cent in Q2 2009 from 44 per cent in Q2 2008.
  - For suspended sentence orders, in Q2 2009 24 per cent of unpaid work requirements were recorded as being 200 hours or longer compared to 15 per cent in Q2 2008. Over the same period shorter requirements (0-80 hours) decreased to 21 per cent in Q2 2009 from 31 per cent in Q2 2008.

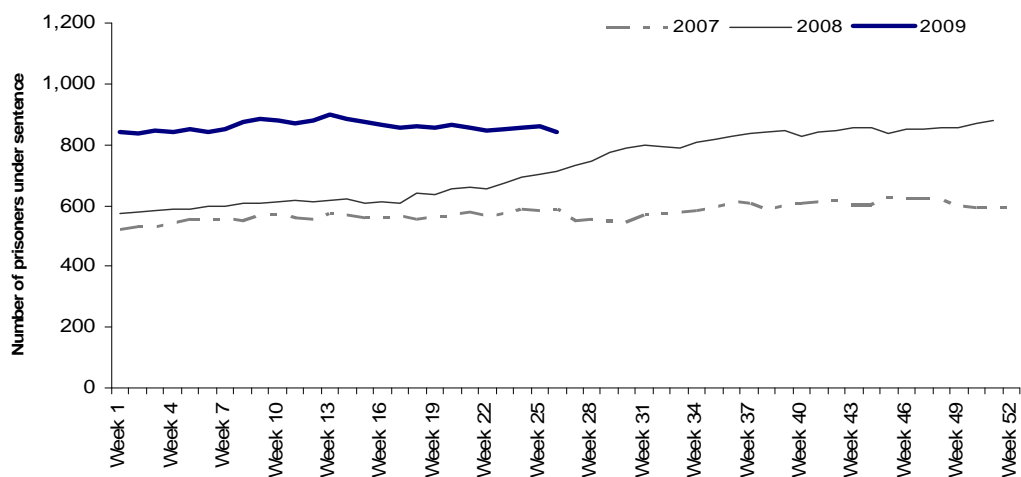
**Prison population**

- The population in prison serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon increased between 2008 and 2009. On average, there was a 32 per cent increase (about 210) in the number of prisoners serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon between Q2 2008 and Q2 2009.

---

<sup>3</sup> Phase 1, Tier 1 police force areas. See explanatory notes for more information.

Figure 2: Prison population under sentence for possession of an offensive weapon<sup>4</sup> (excludes breaches and recalls)



<sup>4</sup> 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 Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
<b>number of offences</b>						
<b>England and Wales<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>7,143</b>	<b>7,300</b>	<b>6,915</b>	<b>6,695</b>	<b>6,231</b>	<b>-13</b>
Caution <sup>2</sup>	2,467	2,010	1,755	1,654	1,570	-36
Absolute/Conditional discharge	426	274	225	240	217	-49
Fine	268	252	291	257	217	-19
Community sentence	2,002	2,191	2,130	2,195	2,043	2
Suspended sentence	566	777	791	812	772	36
Immediate custody	1,244	1,639	1,515	1,396	1,159	-7
Other disposal	170	157	208	141	253	49
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Caution <sup>2</sup>	35	28	25	25	25	
Community sentence	28	30	31	33	33	
Suspended sentence	8	11	11	12	12	
Immediate custody	17	22	22	21	19	
<b>number of offences</b>						
<b>Non-TKAP police forces<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>2,508</b>	<b>2,445</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>2,149</b>	<b>-10</b>
Caution <sup>2</sup>	869	733	694	609	594	-32
Absolute/Conditional discharge	143	88	73	83	76	-47
Fine	81	77	102	92	83	2
Community sentence	590	716	704	733	626	6
Suspended sentence	174	239	275	264	249	43
Immediate custody	474	582	512	469	400	-16
Other disposal	68	73	85	60	121	78
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Caution <sup>2</sup>	36	29	28	26	28	
Community sentence	25	29	29	32	29	
Suspended sentence	7	10	11	11	12	
Immediate custody	20	23	21	20	19	

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

2. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

3. 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, April to June 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 Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
<b>TKAP Phase II - 16 forces<sup>1</sup></b>						
<b>number of offences</b>						
	<b>4,744</b>	<b>4,792</b>	<b>4,470</b>	<b>4,385</b>	<b>4,082</b>	<b>-14</b>
Caution <sup>2</sup>	1,598	1,277	1,061	1,045	976	-39
Absolute/Conditional discharge	283	186	152	157	141	-50
Fine	187	175	189	165	134	-28
Community sentence	1,412	1,475	1,426	1,462	1,417	0
Suspended sentence	392	538	516	548	523	33
Immediate custody	770	1,057	1,003	927	759	-1
Other disposal	102	84	123	81	132	29
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Caution <sup>2</sup>	34	27	24	24	24	
Community sentence	30	31	32	33	35	
Suspended sentence	8	11	12	12	13	
Immediate custody	16	22	22	21	19	
<b>TKAP Phase I - 10 forces<sup>3</sup></b>						
<b>number of offences</b>						
	<b>3,692</b>	<b>3,815</b>	<b>3,479</b>	<b>3,387</b>	<b>3,162</b>	<b>-14</b>
Caution <sup>2</sup>	1,193	1,010	801	777	732	-39
Absolute/Conditional discharge	196	141	119	119	110	-44
Fine	154	126	147	123	94	-39
Community sentence	1,123	1,178	1,113	1,121	1,118	0
Suspended sentence	329	435	416	434	417	27
Immediate custody	618	865	790	758	591	-4
Other disposal	79	60	93	55	100	27
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Caution <sup>2</sup>	32	26	23	23	23	
Community sentence	30	31	32	33	35	
Suspended sentence	9	11	12	13	13	
Immediate custody	17	23	23	22	19	
<b>TKAP Phase II - 6 forces<sup>4</sup></b>						
<b>number of offences</b>						
	<b>1,052</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>-13</b>
Caution <sup>2</sup>	405	267	260	268	244	-40
Absolute/Conditional discharge	87	45	33	38	31	*
Fine	33	49	42	42	40	*
Community sentence	289	297	313	341	299	3
Suspended sentence	63	103	100	114	106	68
Immediate custody	152	192	213	169	168	11
Other disposal	23	24	30	26	32	*
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Caution <sup>2</sup>	38	27	26	27	27	
Community sentence	27	30	32	34	33	
Suspended sentence	6	11	10	11	12	
Immediate custody	14	20	21	17	18	

1 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

2. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

3. 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

4. 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

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, April to June 2009, England and Wales

**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 Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
<b>number of offences</b>						
<b>Aged 10 to 17</b>	<b>1,719</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>-23</b>
Reprimands & final warnings	770	640	515	517	467	-39
Absolute/conditional discharge	48	26	29	19	27	*
Fine	15	8	11	8	2	*
Community sentence	744	889	796	736	708	-5
Immediate custody	116	141	139	102	84	-28
Other disposal	25	35	25	22	29	*
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Reprimands & final warnings	45	37	34	37	35	
Community sentence	43	51	52	52	54	
Immediate custody	7	8	9	7	6	
<b>number of offences</b>						
<b>Aged 18 and over</b>	<b>5,423</b>	<b>5,559</b>	<b>5,392</b>	<b>5,288</b>	<b>4,908</b>	<b>-9</b>
Caution	1,696	1,370	1,237	1,136	1,102	-35
Absolute/Conditional discharge	378	248	196	221	189	-50
Fine	253	244	280	249	215	-15
Community sentence	1,258	1,302	1,334	1,459	1,335	6
Suspended sentence	565	775	786	810	771	36
Immediate custody	1,128	1,498	1,376	1,294	1,072	-5
Other disposal	145	122	183	119	224	54
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Caution	31	25	23	21	22	
Community sentence	23	23	25	28	27	
Suspended sentence	10	14	15	15	16	
Immediate custody	21	27	26	24	22	

\*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'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, April to June 2009, England and Wales

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

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages					Percentage change Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
<b>Possession of an article with a blade or point</b>	<b>number of offences</b>					
	<b>3,511</b>	<b>3,644</b>	<b>3,447</b>	<b>3,498</b>	<b>3,080</b>	<b>-12</b>
Caution <sup>1</sup>	870	621	541	516	475	-45
Absolute/Conditional discharge	257	173	144	152	129	-50
Fine	156	140	157	136	106	-32
Community sentence	1,113	1,206	1,141	1,301	1,130	2
Suspended sentence	298	452	454	500	439	47
Immediate custody	730	966	909	809	642	-12
Other disposal	87	86	101	84	159	83
	<b>percentage of total offences</b>					
Caution <sup>1</sup>	25	17	16	15	15	
Community sentence	32	33	33	37	37	
Suspended sentence	8	12	13	14	14	
Immediate custody	21	27	26	23	21	
<b>Possession of an offensive weapon</b>	<b>number of offences</b>					
	<b>3,632</b>	<b>3,656</b>	<b>3,468</b>	<b>3,197</b>	<b>3,151</b>	<b>-13</b>
Caution <sup>1</sup>	1,597	1,389	1,214	1,138	1,095	-31
Absolute/Conditional discharge	169	101	81	88	88	-48
Fine	112	112	134	121	111	-1
Community sentence	889	985	989	894	913	3
Suspended sentence	268	325	337	312	333	24
Immediate custody	514	673	606	587	517	1
Other disposal	83	71	107	57	94	13
	<b>percentage of total offences</b>					
Caution <sup>1</sup>	44	38	35	36	35	
Community sentence	24	27	29	28	29	
Suspended sentence	7	9	10	10	11	
Immediate custody	14	18	17	18	16	

1. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

### 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, April to June 2009, England and Wales

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

Number of offences and percentages						
Sentence length	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Percentage change Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
<b>number of offences</b>						
<b>England and Wales<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>1,244</b>	<b>1,639</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>1,396</b>	<b>1,159</b>	<b>-7</b>
Up to and including 3 months	600	696	642	565	449	-25
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	455	567	449	426	347	-24
Over 6 months	187	368	417	403	361	93
<b>percentage of total offences</b>						
Up to and including 3 months	48	42	42	40	39	
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	37	35	30	31	30	
Over 6 months	15	22	28	29	31	

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

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

### 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, April to June 2009, England and Wales

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

	Average sentence length					Percentage change Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
Average sentence length ( days)						
<b>England and Wales<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>137</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>194</b>	42
<b>TKAP Phase II - 16 forces<sup>2</sup></b>	147	169	172	185	184	25
Phase I - 10 forces <sup>3</sup>	143	166	174	190	185	29
Phase II - 6 forces <sup>4</sup>	163	183	167	178	183	12
<b>Non-TKAP police forces<sup>5</sup></b>	120	176	193	180	214	79

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

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. 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

4 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

5. 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, April to June 2009, England and Wales

**Table 6: Court order starts for possession of an offensive weapon<sup>1</sup>**

Court Order starts	Number of starts and percentages					Percentage change Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
	<b>number of starts</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,332</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>1,562</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>1,622</b>	<b>22</b>
Community order	959	1,043	1,003	1,132	1,059	10
SSO	316	509	500	551	524	66
Pre CJA orders	57	60	59	45	39	*
	<b>percentage of total starts</b>					
Community order	72	65	64	66	65	
SSO	24	32	32	32	32	
Pre CJA orders	4	4	4	3	2	

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 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.

## Knife Crime statistics quarterly brief, April to June 2009, England and Wales

**Table 7: Requirement starts for possession of offensive weapon<sup>1</sup>**

	Number of requirements and percentages					Percentage change Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
<b>number of requirements</b>						
<b>Community Order</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>1,622</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>1,653</b>	<b>9</b>
Unpaid Work	582	605	549	646	616	6
Supervision	501	531	538	612	570	14
Accredited Program	140	143	144	151	112	-20
Curfew	115	138	124	168	154	34
Drug treatment	47	71	63	67	50	*
Specified Activity	64	63	65	93	70	9
Alcohol treatment	35	36	45	47	43	*
Mental Health	10	10	19	27	17	*
Exclusion	2	5	6	4	3	*
Residential	8	3	5	5	8	*
Attendance Centre	5	10	6	10	5	*
Prohibited Activity	3	7	5	6	5	*
<b>percentage of all requirements</b>						
Unpaid work	38	37	35	35	37	
Supervision	33	33	34	33	34	
Other requirements	28	30	31	31	28	
<b>number of requirements</b>						
<b>Suspended Sentence Order</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>65</b>
Supervision	225	346	357	374	348	55
Unpaid Work	151	236	232	256	259	72
Accredited Program	72	114	124	125	127	76
Curfew	52	76	72	90	79	52
Drug treatment	18	23	25	31	27	*
Alcohol treatment	17	25	26	34	32	*
Specified Activity	17	27	34	33	29	*
Prohibited Activity	4	7	12	9	10	*
Exclusion	2	7	8	6	2	*
Mental Health	2	2	7	4	10	*
Residential	4	2	2	6	9	*
Attendance Centre	2	0	1	4	2	*
<b>percentage of all requirements</b>						
Unpaid work	27	27	26	26	28	
Supervision	40	40	40	38	37	
Other requirements	34	33	35	35	35	

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 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 weapon<sup>1</sup>**

	Number of requirements and percentages					Percentage change Q2 2008 to Q2 2009
	Q2 2008	Q3 2008	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	
<b>number of requirements</b>						
<b>Community Order</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>0-80 hours</b>	253	248	219	241	238	-6
<b>81-150 hours</b>	226	274	239	257	252	12
<b>151-199 hours</b>	35	30	33	47	43	*
<b>200-250 hours</b>	58	108	96	113	110	90
<b>251-300 hours</b>	4	8	11	21	20	*
<b>percentage of total requirements</b>						
<b>0-80 hours</b>	44	37	37	35	36	
<b>81-150 hours</b>	39	41	40	38	38	
<b>151-199 hours</b>	6	4	6	7	6	
<b>200-250 hours</b>	10	16	16	17	17	
<b>251-300 hours</b>	1	1	2	3	3	
<b>number of requirements</b>						
<b>Suspended sentence order</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>0-80 hours</b>	49	65	62	59	54	*
<b>81-150 hours</b>	80	124	111	124	129	61
<b>151-199 hours</b>	6	13	14	17	13	*
<b>200-250 hours</b>	22	41	40	47	56	*
<b>251-300 hours</b>	2	3	1	7	4	*
<b>percentage of total requirements</b>						
<b>0-80 hours</b>	31	26	27	23	21	
<b>81-150 hours</b>	50	50	49	49	50	
<b>151-199 hours</b>	4	5	6	7	5	
<b>200-250 hours</b>	14	17	18	19	22	
<b>251-300 hours</b>	1	1	0	3	2	

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 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.

### 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).

### Future bulletins

To give a good representation of the trends occurring during the life of TKAP, future bulletins will compare the most recent quarter with a pre-TKAP baseline quarter (January – March 2008). The statistical tables will continue to show the most recent four quarters of data alongside the baseline comparison data.

This change in methodology is being implemented because TKAP Phase 1 started in June 2008 and if the current methodology was continued 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](http://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. A breakdown of the 16 forces by Phase 1, Tier 1 and the 6 new forces are given in Appendix A.

**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.

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](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm)

**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](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/knife-crime-sentencing.htm)

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

**Ministry of Justice**  
**Offender Management and Sentencing – Analytical Services**  
7th floor  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ  
Tel: 020 3334 6037

General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

©Crown copyright  
Produced by the Ministry of Justice

Alternative formats are available on request from [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)