



Ministry
of Justice

Knife Possession Sentencing Quarterly Brief April to June 2014 England and Wales

Ministry of Justice
Statistics Bulletin

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Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Key Findings	5
Appendix A: Statistical Tables	14
Appendix B: Assessing the accuracy of estimation method	28
Explanatory notes	29
Glossary	31
Contacts	33

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 33 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.

Statistics on offences of aggravated possession of a knife or offensive weapon are included in their own separate table and are not included in other totals to enable consistent comparisons over time (since these offences were only introduced from 3 December 2012).

Recent Developments

- **New table 5 showing knife possession statistics at police force area**

In this statistical bulletin (as announced in our June 2014 publication), we have introduced more detailed knife possession statistics at a police force area level to provide information at a more disaggregated level. We are planning on making more changes to this publication in future, therefore any feedback on these changes, or any other changes you would like to see to this statistical bulletin, would be greatly appreciated

- **Aggravated knife possession (Tables 8-9, pages 20-21)**

From 3 December 2012, aggravated knife possession offences 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 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

¹ www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/stb-crime-stats.html#tab-Offences-Involving-Knives-and-Sharp-Instruments

updated with new information. The estimates are revised when more recent data becomes available this means the estimates for a given quarter could change between bulletins. It has now been over a year since the new methodology was introduced and Appendix B provides comparisons and commentary on the accuracy of the estimated final disposal outcomes for Q2 2013.

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](#)

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

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

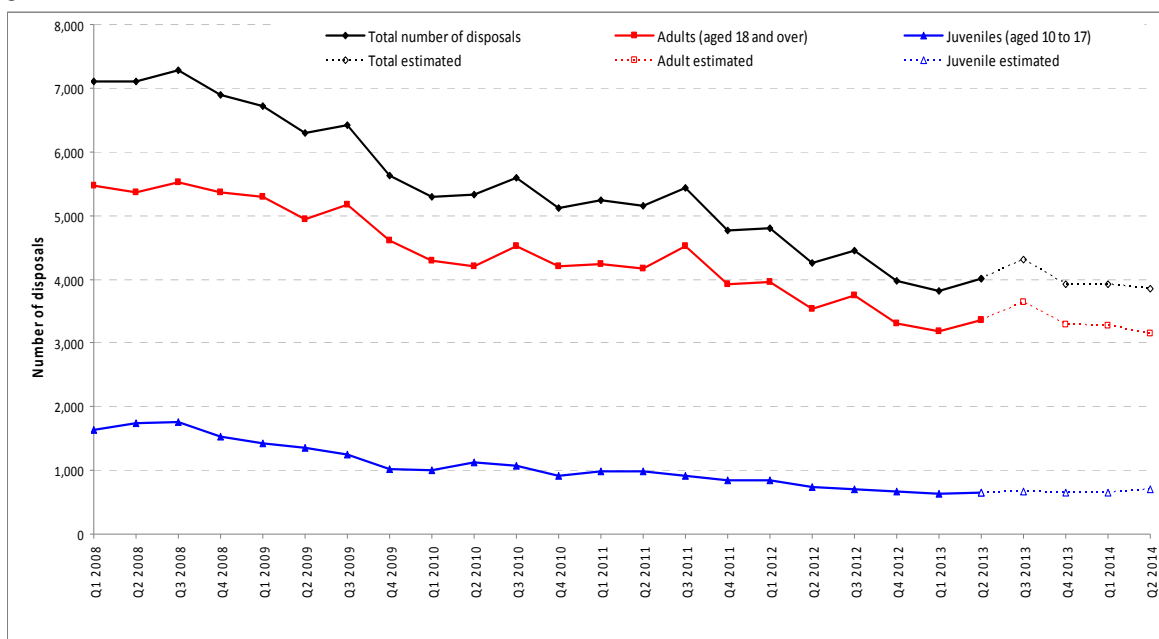
Key findings

Estimates indicate that the final disposal⁴ figures for the period April to June 2014 (Q2 2014) will show:

- 3,842 disposals were given for possession of a knife or offensive weapon offence, two per cent lower than the previous quarter and four per cent lower than in Q2 2013. The latest estimate for all offenders appears to show a continued downward trend in the number of disposals where the number of cautions or convictions given for these offences have almost halved since the peak seen in Q3 2008 (7,280)
- Over time the number of disposals for juvenile offenders cautioned or convicted for possession offences has decreased at a faster rate to disposals for adult offenders – where the number of cautions or convictions given for these offences to juvenile offenders is now 60 per cent lower than the peak seen in Q3 2008, compared to 43 per cent lower for adult offenders. However, whereas volumes of disposals for adult offenders has continued to fall, in recent quarters there has been a slight increase in the number of juvenile offenders cautioned or convicted for these offences. 700 juvenile offenders were cautioned or convicted for knife possession offences in Q2 2014, 7 per cent higher than the previous quarter and 9 per cent higher than in Q2 2013
- A third (33 per cent) of adult offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, an increase from 30 per cent in the same period a year ago and up over the longer term. The proportion of adult offenders given cautions has significantly fallen over time where the latest proportion (13 per cent) is two percentage points lower than in the same quarter a year ago, and 17 percentage points lower than in Q2 2008 (where it was 30 per cent). There has been a slight increase when comparing this quarter to last quarter (Q1 2014 where it was 11 per cent), however given the downward trend over the longer term and the estimation method applied, this slight increase on last quarter's figures may just be due to seasonality for example rather than a change in the trend.
- There has been a fall in the proportion of juvenile offenders given an immediate custodial sentence where only 8 per cent of juveniles were given an immediate custodial sentence this quarter – down 4 percentage points from the same period a year ago. There has been an increase (from 51 to 53 per cent) in the proportion of juveniles given a community sentence over the same period. The proportion of juveniles given a youth caution has risen by four percentage points from the same period a year ago and is now 32 per cent, although it is still significantly lower than in the same quarter in 2008 where 47 per cent of juvenile offenders received cautions.

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.

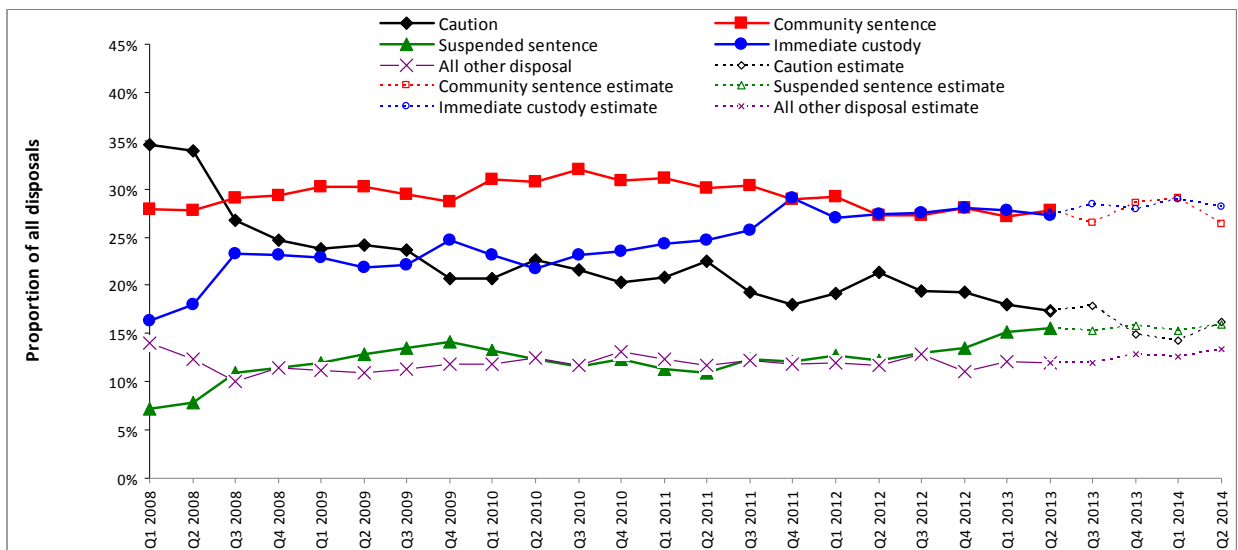
Figure 1: Number of disposals given for knife and offensive weapon possession offences by age, in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q2 2014



Knife Possession offences by disposal type

- The most common disposals for possession of a knife or an offensive weapon continue to be an immediate custodial sentence (28 per cent) and a community sentence (26 per cent). Just under three quarters (70 per cent) of all disposals were for either an immediate custody, suspended sentence order or community sentence.
- The proportion of offenders receiving cautions (16 per cent) has increased slightly by two percentage points since we saw the lowest levels recorded on the Police National Computer last quarter (14 per cent), although the proportion of offenders getting a caution is still significantly lower when looking at longer trends where over a third of offenders received a caution in Q2 2008. Note that figures for the latest four quarters are estimated so these figures 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 Q2 2014). 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 significantly fallen since 2008.

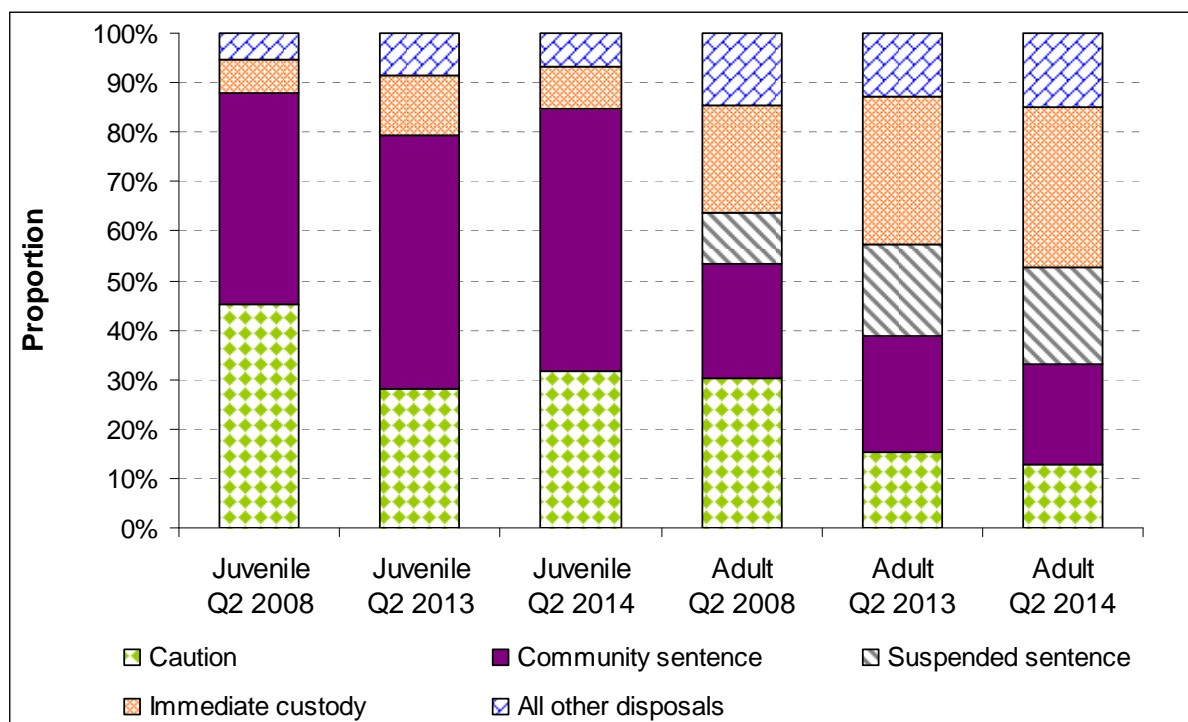
Figure 2: Proportion of type of disposal given for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q2 2014



- Over half of all juveniles (53 per cent) receiving disposals for possession offences were given a community sentence, while nearly a third (32 per cent) were given a youth caution⁵. Only eight per cent of juveniles were given an immediate custodial sentence, down four percentage points on the same period one year ago and down three percentage points on the same period two years ago. The proportion of juveniles given a youth caution increased by four percentage points to 32 per cent compared to the same period a year ago and increased by two percentage points compared to three years ago although it is still significantly lower than in the same quarter in 2008 where 47 per cent of juvenile offenders received cautions.
- Almost a third of adult offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, a slight increase of 3 percentage points to a year ago and is up over the longer term. The proportion of cautions given has fallen in the last year - from 15 per cent in Q2 2013 to 13 per cent in Q2 2014.

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

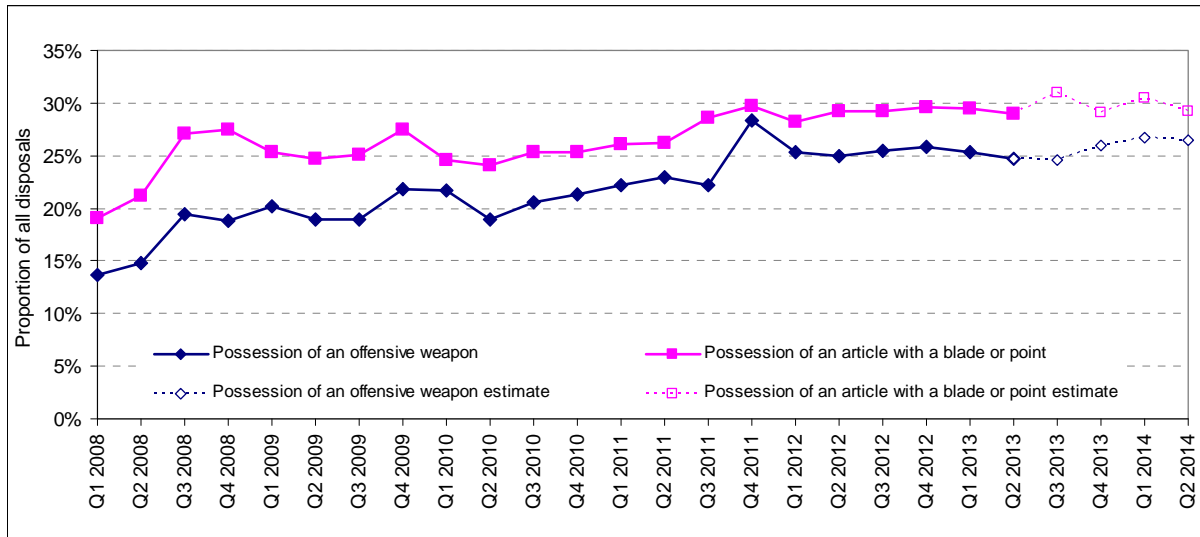
Figure 3: Proportion of type of disposal given for knife and offensive weapon possession for juveniles and adults, in England and Wales, Q2 2008, Q2 2013 and Q2 2014



Knife possession offences by type of offence

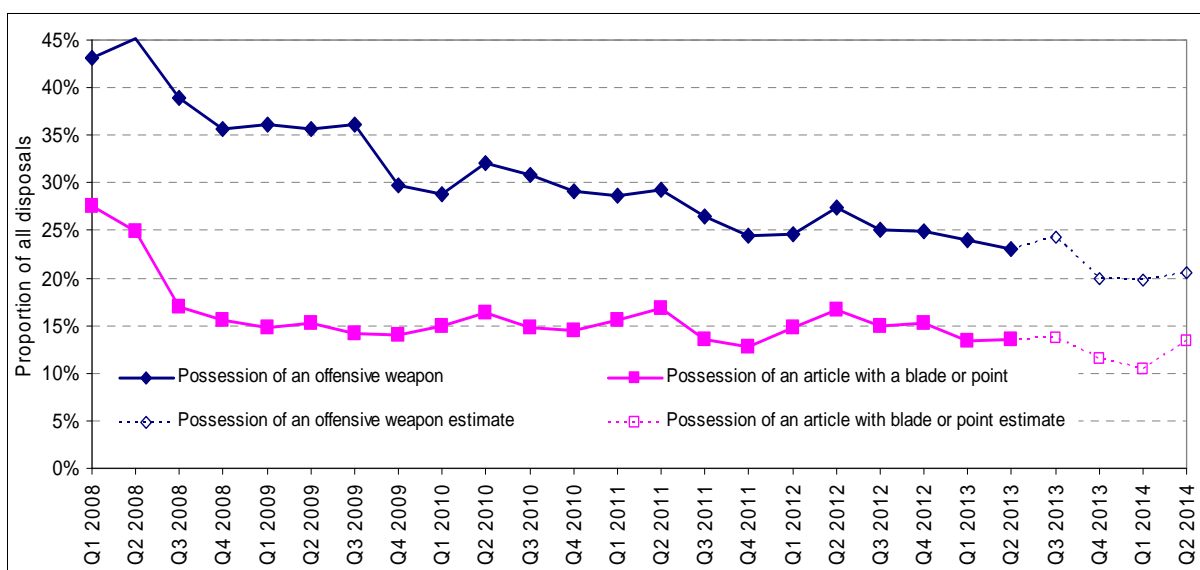
- In Q2 2014, 62 per cent of knife possession offences resulting in a caution or sentence involved the possession of an article with a blade or point, and 38 per cent involved the possession of an offensive weapon. Over the last four quarters the number of possession offences involving an article with a blade or point has decreased slightly by one per cent while possession offences for an offensive weapon fell by eight per cent. This trend is also apparent over the longer term where there has been a steeper decline in the number of possession offences for an offensive weapon compared to possession offences of an article with a blade or point.
- 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 4: Proportion of offences resulting in custodial sentences given for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q2 2014



- Offenders convicted of offences involving an offensive weapon are more likely to be given a caution (21 per cent) than offenders convicted of offences involving the possession of an article with a blade or point (where 13 per cent were given cautions). The differences in the disposal types given for the two separate offence types combined with the change in the case-mix of possession offences over time (i.e. fewer offences involving an offensive weapon now than in recent years) may partly explain the differences in disposal type seen for possession offences over time.

Figure 5: Proportion of offences resulting in cautions for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q2 2014



Knife possession offences by length of immediate custodial sentence

- Over time there has been an increase in the length of sentence for offenders given immediate custodial sentences for possession offences. In the latest quarter, a third of offenders who were given an immediate custodial sentence received a sentence up to and including three months compared to over half (54 per cent) of offenders who were given the same sentence length at the end of 2007. 29 per cent of offenders were sentenced for 3 – 6 months in the latest quarter compared to 33 per cent of offenders given the same sentence length at the end of 2007. Whereas 38 per cent of offenders were sentenced for over 6 months in the latest quarter, compared to only 13 per cent of offenders at the end of 2007.
- The average immediate custodial sentence length given for possession offences in the latest quarter was 232 days, or 7.7 months - around one month longer than in Q2 2013 (202 days) and 2 per cent longer than the 227 days two years ago. The latest quarter represents an increase of 77 per cent or 3.4 months, compared to the end of 2007.

Knife possession offences by Police Force Area

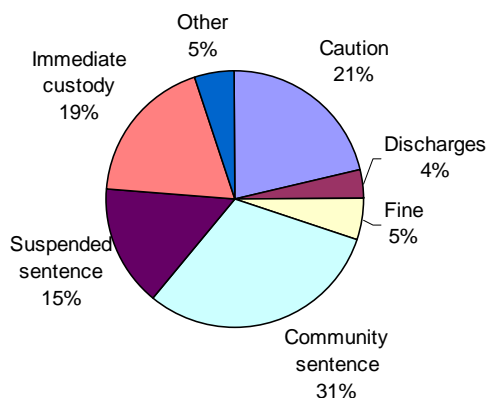
- In the 12 months ending June 2014, the rate of offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon ranged from 13 to 51 per 100,000 of the population for each police force area.
- All police force areas have seen a decrease in the number of knife possession offences since the 12 months ending June 2008.

Criminal history of those cautioned or sentenced for knife possession offences

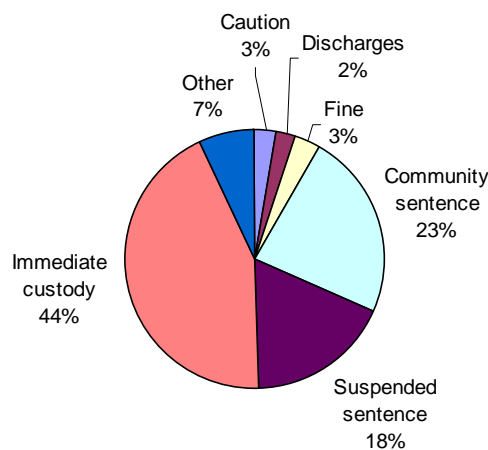
- The types of disposal given for knife possession offences are correlated with the number of previous cautions or convictions for possession offences. For offenders with no previous knife possession offences, 21 per cent received a caution in the 12 months ending June 2014 whereas 31 per cent received a community sentence and 19 per cent were given immediate custody. However, for offenders with at least one previous possession offence on their record, 44 per cent were sentenced to immediate custody in the 12 months ending June 2014, while only three per cent received a caution.
- Juvenile offenders having one or more previous knife possession offence on their record are most likely to receive a community sentence (59 per cent) or immediate custody (24 per cent), whereas juvenile offenders with no previous knife possession offences are more likely to receive a community sentence (54 per cent) or a youth caution (34 per cent). Only three 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 56 per cent of adult 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 June 2014, in England and Wales

Disposal for offenders with no previous knife possession offences



Disposal for offenders with one or more previous knife possession offences



Aggravated knife or offensive weapon possession offences

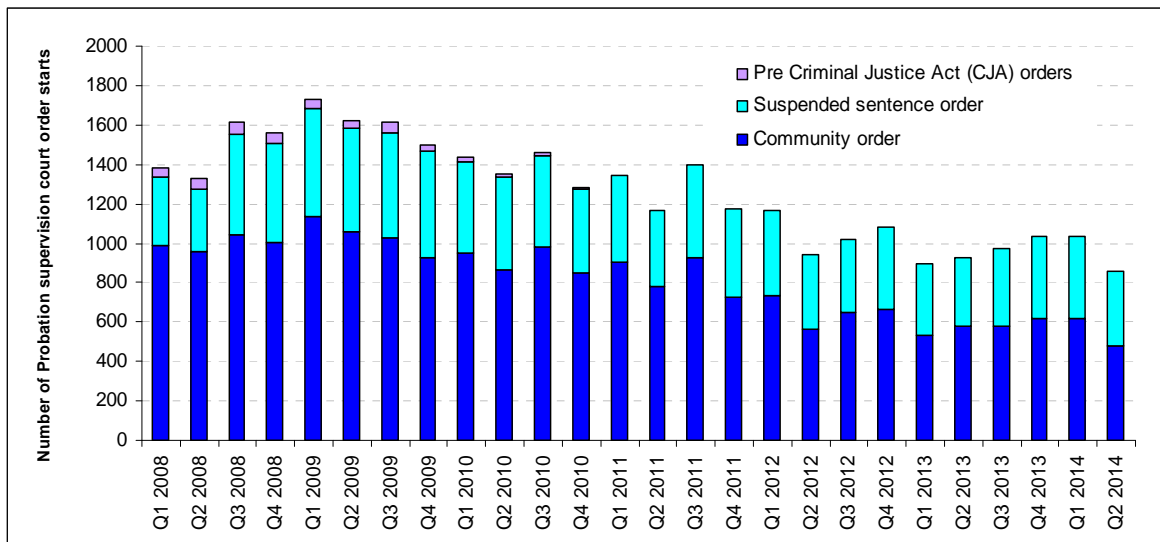
- In the 12 months ending June 2014 a total of 314 offences (245 by adults, 69 by juveniles) have been dealt with in relation to one of the aggravated knife possession offences that came into effect from 3 December 2012.
- Of the 69 offences committed by juveniles, 39 offences were committed by offenders aged between 10 and 15 when sentenced. (Sentencing guidelines differ for these age bands as explained on page 4).
- Of the 275 new offences of aggravated knife possession where offenders were aged 16 and over, 166 offences or 60 per cent received an immediate custodial sentence, and 78 per cent received either an immediate custodial sentence or suspended sentence order. Please note however that these figures are provisional and are likely to change, in particular the number of immediate custodial sentences is likely to increase, once all sentences have been finalised.

Offenders commencing probation

- 859 offenders started a court order under probation supervision for possession offences. This is down 7 per cent from Q2 2013 and down 9 per cent from Q2 2012. 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 – 35 per cent of suspended sentence orders (SSOs) and 34 per cent of community orders (COs). The next most common requirement was unpaid work – 25 per cent of SSOs and 26 per cent of COs, respectively.

- Where unpaid work requirements were placed upon those starting a community order for possession offences, 42 per cent were for less than 80 hours and 40 per cent were for 81 to 150 hours. For those starting suspended sentence orders, 21 per cent were for under 80 hours and 56 per cent were for 81 to 150 hours.

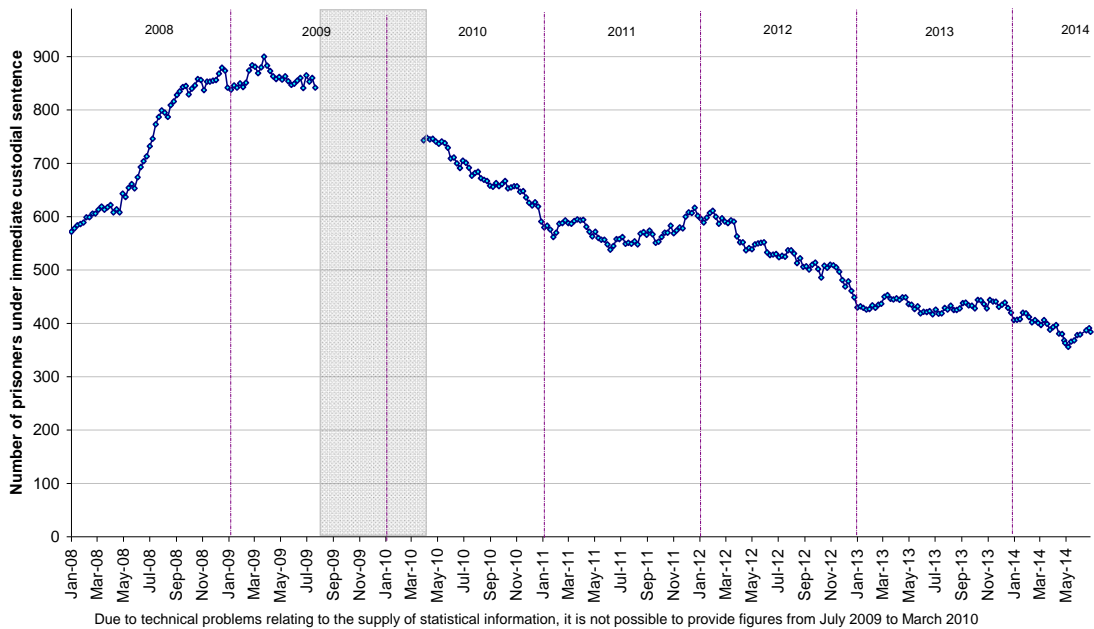
Figure 7: Number of offenders commencing a court order under probation supervision for possession of an offensive weapon, in England and Wales from Q1 2008 to Q2 2014



Offenders in prison for knife possession offences

- 384 offenders were in prison serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon on 30 June 2014, down eight 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 January 2008 and June 2014



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, Q2 2013 to estimated Q2 2014
	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	Q1 2014 ^E	Q2 2014 ^E	
	Number of offences							
England and Wales²	5,148	4,263	4,007	4,305	3,929	3,925	3,842	-4
Caution ³	1,155	912	696	772	587	558	621	-11
Absolute/Conditional discharge	185	135	118	151	128	158	117	-1
Fine	227	189	184	183	192	161	196	7
Community sentence	1,552	1,161	1,114	1,138	1,120	1,138	1,011	-9
Suspended sentence	565	521	624	656	622	600	612	-2
Immediate custody	1,274	1,168	1,093	1,223	1,094	1,136	1,082	-1
Other disposal ⁴	190	177	178	182	186	174	203	14
	Percentage of total offences							
Caution ³	22	21	17	18	15	14	16	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	
Fine	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	
Community sentence	30	27	28	26	29	29	26	
Suspended sentence	11	12	16	15	16	15	16	
Immediate custody	25	27	27	28	28	29	28	
Other disposal ⁴	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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 be dependent 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 Includes 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.

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, Q2 2013 to estimated Q2 2014
	Q2 2011 ³	Q2 2012 ³	Q2 2013	Q3 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	Q1 2014 ^E	Q2 2014 ^E	
Number of offences								
Aged 10 to 17	979	733	644	663	645	653	700	9
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ⁴	291	229	180	193	184	183	221	23
Absolute/conditional discharge	25	9	16	19	24	16	7	*
Fine	3	2	2	1	0	0	2	*
Community sentence	521	378	330	340	323	367	372	13
Immediate custody	113	82	79	70	75	66	59	-25
Other disposal ⁵	26	33	37	40	39	21	39	*
Percentage of total offences								
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ⁴	30	31	28	29	29	28	32	
Absolute/conditional discharge	3	1	2	3	4	2	1	
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Community sentence	53	52	51	51	50	56	53	
Immediate custody	12	11	12	11	12	10	8	
Other disposal ⁵	3	5	6	6	6	3	6	
Number of offences								
Aged 18 and over	4,167	3,529	3,363	3,642	3,284	3,272	3,142	-7
Caution	864	683	516	579	403	375	400	-22
Absolute/Conditional discharge	160	126	102	132	104	142	110	8
Fine	224	187	182	182	192	161	194	7
Community sentence	1,030	782	784	798	797	771	639	-18
Suspended sentence	564	521	624	656	622	600	612	-2
Immediate custody	1,161	1,086	1,014	1,153	1,019	1,070	1,023	1
Other disposal ⁵	164	144	141	142	147	153	164	16
Percentage of total offences								
Caution	21	19	15	16	12	11	13	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	
Fine	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	
Community sentence	25	22	23	22	24	24	20	
Suspended sentence	14	15	19	18	19	18	19	
Immediate custody	28	31	30	32	31	33	33	
Other disposal ⁵	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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 be dependent 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 Includes 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.

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 ²	Number of offences and percentages							% change, Q2 2013 to estimated Q2 2014
	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013 ^E	Q4 2013 ^E	Q1 2014 ^E	Q2 2014 ^E	
Number of offences								
Possession of an article with a blade or point	2,855	2,409	2,412	2,559	2,315	2,336	2,382	-1
Caution ³	482	403	328	349	265	244	320	-2
Absolute/Conditional discharge	117	85	83	99	88	101	78	-6
Fine	141	110	122	106	117	103	113	-7
Community sentence	920	700	685	703	677	710	643	-6
Suspended sentence	335	321	382	409	378	371	409	7
Immediate custody	748	705	698	794	675	712	696	0
Other disposal ⁴	112	85	114	99	115	95	123	8
Percentage of total offences								
Caution ³	17	17	14	14	11	10	13	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	
Fine	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	
Community sentence	32	29	28	27	29	30	27	
Suspended sentence	12	13	16	16	16	16	17	
Immediate custody	26	29	29	31	29	30	29	
Other disposal ⁴	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	
Number of offences								
Possession of an offensive weapon	2,293	1,854	1,595	1,746	1,614	1,589	1,460	-8
Caution ³	673	509	368	423	322	314	301	-18
Absolute/Conditional discharge	68	50	35	52	40	57	39	*
Fine	86	79	62	77	75	58	83	34
Community sentence	632	461	429	435	443	428	368	-14
Suspended sentence	230	200	242	247	244	229	203	-16
Immediate custody	526	463	395	429	419	424	386	-2
Other disposal ⁴	78	92	64	83	71	79	80	25
Percentage of total offences								
Caution ³	29	27	23	24	20	20	21	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3	3	2	3	2	4	3	
Fine	4	4	4	4	5	4	6	
Community sentence	28	25	27	25	27	27	25	
Suspended sentence	10	11	15	14	15	14	14	
Immediate custody	23	25	25	25	26	27	26	
Other disposal ⁴	3	5	4	5	4	5	5	

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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 be dependent on other offences committed at the same time.

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 Includes 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.

Table 4a: 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 immediate custody						
	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014
	Percentage of total offences						
Up to and including 3 months	43	38	39	35	35	38	33
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	28	27	28	27	27	25	29
Over 6 months	29	35	32	37	38	37	38

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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.

Table 4b: Average sentence length of immediate custodial sentences for knife and offensive weapon possession offences in England and Wales

	Average Sentence length							% change, Q2 2013 to Q2 2014
	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	
	Average sentence length (days)							
England and Wales¹	183	227	202	223	219	217	232	15%

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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.

Table 5: Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence for the 12 months ending June of each year, split by police force area in England and Wales

Police Force Area	Number of offences							Number of offences as a rate per 100,000 of the population ¹						
	12 months ending June 2008	12 months ending June 2009	12 months ending June 2010	12 months ending June 2011	12 months ending June 2012	12 months ending June 2013	12 months ending June 2014 ³	12 months ending June 2008	12 months ending June 2009	12 months ending June 2010	12 months ending June 2011	12 months ending June 2012	12 months ending June 2013	12 months ending June 2014
England and Wales²	21,306	27,494	22,885	21,218	19,270	16,233	15,943	44	57	47	43	39	33	32
Avon and Somerset	597	737	575	571	522	455	384	43	43	41	40	37	32	27
Bedfordshire	257	317	287	291	235	223	160	50	50	55	55	44	41	29
Cambridgeshire	244	296	252	235	236	178	179	36	36	36	33	33	25	25
Cheshire	253	383	295	269	270	235	237	28	28	33	30	30	26	26
City of London	18	23	40	26	30	19	18	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cleveland	344	419	368	382	321	254	251	70	70	75	78	65	52	51
Cumbria	164	217	204	165	166	149	137	36	36	45	37	37	33	31
Derbyshire	305	375	308	347	327	227	253	34	34	34	39	36	25	28
Devon & Cornwall	404	611	430	415	372	271	312	27	27	29	28	25	18	21
Dorset	193	252	210	203	174	156	130	30	30	32	30	26	23	19
Durham	272	393	264	311	297	232	239	50	50	48	57	54	42	43
Dyfed-Powys	117	175	138	151	117	132	112	26	26	30	33	25	29	12
Essex	789	1,164	844	722	564	424	455	53	53	56	48	37	28	30
Gloucestershire	150	244	147	142	130	113	113	29	29	28	27	24	21	21
Greater Manchester	1,122	1,422	1,241	1,061	1,015	881	773	49	49	54	46	43	37	33
Gwent	207	321	243	245	233	167	138	41	41	48	48	46	33	27
Hampshire	560	757	654	516	499	391	435	34	34	39	31	30	23	26
Hertfordshire	291	404	359	302	306	247	222	31	31	37	31	31	25	22
Humberside	378	521	514	459	384	282	316	47	47	63	56	47	35	39
Kent	566	726	523	480	450	361	387	39	39	35	32	30	23	25
Lancashire	572	717	679	682	614	544	505	45	45	53	53	48	42	39
Leicestershire	342	334	329	332	277	229	250	39	39	37	37	31	25	28
Lincolnshire	218	291	243	248	204	193	160	35	35	38	39	32	30	25
Merseyside	669	872	714	619	624	503	510	55	55	58	50	51	41	41
Metropolitan Police	3,975	5,136	4,271	4,074	3,554	3,062	3,209	59	59	62	58	50	43	44
Norfolk	253	295	277	275	251	203	182	34	34	36	36	33	26	23
North Wales	247	326	253	196	222	182	194	41	41	41	32	36	30	32
North Yorkshire	192	273	206	209	213	156	169	27	27	29	29	30	22	23
Northamptonshire	200	301	241	248	206	196	184	34	34	40	41	34	32	30
Northumbria	778	975	841	690	697	519	577	62	62	67	55	55	41	45
Nottinghamshire	478	622	525	547	500	432	436	51	51	55	57	52	44	45
South Wales	446	634	572	515	438	442	378	40	40	51	45	38	39	33
South Yorkshire	492	691	583	530	464	406	400	43	43	50	45	39	34	33
Staffordshire	341	367	324	347	318	274	301	36	36	34	36	33	28	31
Suffolk	168	266	208	174	192	166	165	27	27	33	27	30	26	25
Surrey	203	308	212	212	209	157	135	21	21	22	21	21	16	13
Sussex	593	627	539	456	431	387	387	43	43	38	32	30	27	27
ThamesValley	613	819	570	598	559	457	391	32	32	29	30	28	23	19
Warwickshire	113	184	138	129	114	97	92	24	24	29	27	23	20	19
West Mercia	374	414	426	390	349	270	272	35	35	39	36	32	25	25
West Midlands	1,441	1,736	1,378	1,212	1,113	975	856	63	63	59	52	47	41	36
West Yorkshire	712	840	809	741	695	583	593	37	37	42	38	36	30	30
Wiltshire	115	221	193	162	110	129	90	20	20	33	27	18	21	15

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

¹ Population has been based on mid-year population estimates for each age group supplied by the Office for National Statistics. The previous year's estimate has been used for calculating the rate in the subsequent year. For example, the 2007 mid-year estimate has been used for calculating the rate for 2008 and so on.

² England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas.

³ Please note that the figures in this table are based on current figures and do not use the estimation method used in Tables 1 to 3.

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

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 June 2014, in England and Wales⁶

Disposal Category ¹	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
	Number of offenders				
England and Wales²	11,186	2,310	806	675	14,977
Caution ³	2,393	86	15	6	2,500
Absolute/Conditional discharge	419	62	13	14	508
Fine	577	87	14	20	698
Community sentence	3,412	597	173	111	4,293
Suspended sentence	1,698	431	142	102	2,373
Immediate custody	2,138	889	391	378	3,796
Other disposal ⁴	549	158	58	44	809
	Percentage				
Caution ³	21	4	2	1	17
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	3	2	2	3
Fine	5	4	2	3	5
Community sentence	31	26	21	16	29
Suspended sentence	15	19	18	15	16
Immediate custody	19	38	49	56	25
Other disposal ⁴	5	7	7	7	5

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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 be dependent 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. Note that these figures are based on current figures and do not use the estimation method used for Tables 1 to 3.

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 June 2013, in England and Wales

Disposal Category ¹	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
	Number of offenders				
England and Wales²	11,718	2,428	805	616	15,567
Cautions ³	3,068	100	18	8	3,194
Absolute/Conditional discharge	414	85	21	17	537
Fine	549	109	18	17	693
Community sentence	3,376	632	176	87	4,271
Suspended sentence	1,455	387	127	83	2,052
Immediate custody	2,406	1,011	407	376	4,200
Other disposal ⁴	449	104	38	28	619
	Percentage				
Cautions ³	26	4	2	1	21
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	3	3	3
Fine	5	4	2	3	4
Community sentence	29	26	22	14	27
Suspended sentence	12	16	16	13	13
Immediate custody	21	42	51	61	27
Other disposal ⁴	4	4	5	5	4

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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.

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. Note that these figures are based on current figures and do not use the estimation method used for Tables 1 to 3.

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 June 2014, split by age group in England and Wales^{1,6}

Disposal Category ^{2,5}	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				Total
	0	1	2	3 or more	
Number of offenders					
Aged 10 to 17⁷	2,236	246	55	17	2,554
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	750	9	0	0	759
Absolute/Conditional discharge	52	6	0	1	59
Fine	3	0	0	0	3
Community sentence	1,205	153	26	9	1,393
Immediate custody	140	50	18	7	215
Other disposal ⁴	86	28	11	0	125
Percentage					
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	34	4	0	*	30
Absolute/Conditional discharge	2	2	0	*	2
Fine	0	0	0	*	0
Community sentence	54	62	47	*	55
Immediate custody	6	20	33	*	8
Other disposal ⁴	4	11	20	*	5
Number of offenders					
Aged 18 and over⁷	8,948	2,063	751	658	12,420
Cautions	1,642	77	15	6	1,740
Absolute/Conditional discharge	367	56	13	13	449
Fine	574	87	14	20	695
Community sentence	2,206	443	147	102	2,898
Suspended sentence	1,698	431	142	102	2,373
Immediate custody	1,998	839	373	371	3,581
Other disposal ⁴	463	130	47	44	684
Percentage					
Cautions	18	4	2	1	14
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	3	2	2	4
Fine	6	4	2	3	6
Community sentence	25	21	20	16	23
Suspended sentence	19	21	19	16	19
Immediate custody	22	41	50	56	29
Other disposal ⁴	5	6	6	7	6

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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 be dependent 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 Includes 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. Note that these figures are based on current figures and do not use the estimation method used for Tables 1 to 3.

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.

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 June 2013, split by age group in England and Wales^{1,6}

Disposal Category ²	Number of previous convictions/cautions				
	Number of previous convictions / cautions				
	0	1	2	3 or more	Total
	Number of offenders				
Aged 10 to 17⁶	2,231	229	48	16	2,524
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	740	7	0	0	747
Absolute/Conditional discharge	54	9	1	1	65
Fine	5	0	0	0	5
Community sentence	1,133	133	28	3	1,297
Immediate custody	191	63	13	9	276
Other disposal ⁴	108	17	6	3	134
	Percentage				
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	33	3	*	*	30
Absolute/Conditional discharge	2	4	*	*	3
Fine	0	0	*	*	0
Community sentence	51	58	*	*	51
Immediate custody	9	28	*	*	11
Other disposal ⁴	5	7	*	*	5
	Number of offenders				
Aged 18 and over⁶	9,183	2,163	768	622	12,736
Cautions	2,117	83	18	13	2,231
Absolute/Conditional discharge	343	78	19	15	455
Fine	533	114	20	16	683
Community sentence	2,180	484	145	91	2,900
Suspended sentence	1,487	399	130	102	2,118
Immediate custody	2,177	921	403	357	3,858
Other disposal ⁴	345	84	33	28	490
	Percentage				
Cautions	23	4	2	2	18
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	2	2	4
Fine	6	5	3	3	5
Community sentence	24	22	19	15	23
Suspended sentence	16	18	17	16	17
Immediate custody	24	43	52	57	30
Other disposal ⁴	4	4	4	5	4

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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 be dependent 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 Includes cases where an offender may have been convicted, but is awaiting further sentencing.

⁵ 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. Note that these figures are based on current figures and do not use the estimation method used for Tables 1 to 3.

⁶ The difference between the totals in Table 6b 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.

Table 8: Offences involving threatening with a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence in England and Wales, Q2 2013 to Q2 2014

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages					12 months ending June 2014
	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	
	Number of offences					
England and Wales¹	43	59	69	82	104	314
Caution ²	0	1	3	3	2	9
Absolute/Conditional discharge	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	14	11	12	20	20	63
Suspended sentence	6	10	10	19	10	49
Immediate custody	21	35	43	35	56	169
Other disposal ³	2	2	1	5	16	24
	Percentage					
Caution ²	*	2	4	4	2	3
Absolute/Conditional discharge	*	0	0	0	0	0
Fine	*	0	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	*	19	17	24	19	20
Suspended sentence	*	17	14	23	10	16
Immediate custody	*	59	62	43	54	54
Other disposal ³	*	3	1	6	15	8

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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.

⁵ Please note the figures in this table are based on current figures and do not use the estimation methodology used for Tables 1 to 3.

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

Table 9: Offences involving threatening with a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence by age group in England and Wales, 12 months ending June 2014

Disposal Category	Number of offences			Total
	Adults	Juveniles		
		10-15	16-17	
	Number of offences			
England and Wales^{1,4}	245	39	30	314
Caution ²	5	4	0	9
Absolute/Conditional discharge	0	0	0	0
Fine	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	21	29	13	63
Suspended sentence	49	0	0	49
Immediate custody	152	3	14	169
Other disposal ³	18	3	3	24

Source: Police National Computer (PNC)

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->

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.

⁵ Please note the figures in this table are based on current figures and do not use the estimation methodology used for Tables 1 to 3.

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

Number of starts and percentages								
Court order starts	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014 ²	% change, Q2 2013 to Q2 2014
number of starts								
England and Wales	1,168	940	927	972	1,032	1,034	859	-7
Community order	781	563	577	583	621	614	475	-18
Suspended sentence order	385	377	348	388	411	420	384	10
Pre CJA orders	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	*
percentage of total starts								
Community order	67	60	62	60	60	59	55	
Suspended sentence order	33	40	38	40	40	41	45	
Pre CJA orders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

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

² Due to a change in the collection methodology of probation supervisions data in June 2014, the numbers shown for Q2 2014 are slightly lower than we would expect to see for this quarter.

*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								
	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014 ²	% change Q2 2013 to Q2 2014
Number of requirements								
Community order	1,248	911	928	935	1,000	985	804	-13
Unpaid Work	413	274	276	273	270	289	207	-25
Supervision	405	308	314	326	358	327	271	-14
Curfew	117	87	69	69	97	125	109	58
Accredited program	74	61	52	50	59	37	46	*
Specified activity	115	88	119	108	91	95	66	-45
Drug treatment	42	29	33	35	31	37	29	*
Alcohol treatment	39	31	27	45	44	43	34	*
Mental health	17	13	11	13	20	9	11	*
Exclusion	1	7	3	2	5	5	4	*
Residential	4	2	4	2	2	5	5	*
Attendance centre	18	10	17	11	20	11	10	*
Prohibited activity	3	1	3	1	3	2	12	*
Percentage of total requirements								
Unpaid work	33	30	30	29	27	29	26	
Supervision	32	34	34	35	36	33	34	
Curfew	9	10	7	7	10	13	14	
Other requirements	25	27	29	29	28	25	27	
Number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order	682	674	621	623	679	658	590	-5
Unpaid work	187	170	148	151	160	168	147	-1
Supervision	242	237	233	232	250	236	208	-11
Curfew	72	78	64	51	75	78	78	22
Accredited program	51	49	50	53	61	50	47	*
Specified activity	49	64	57	68	65	48	51	-11
Drug treatment	16	21	26	14	23	29	19	*
Alcohol treatment	32	31	18	32	23	27	19	*
Mental health	8	5	7	8	9	2	3	*
Exclusion	7	5	9	3	4	4	3	*
Residential	5	5	5	4	3	2	4	*
Attendance centre	7	5	3	2	3	10	3	*
Prohibited activity	6	4	1	5	3	4	8	*
Percentage of total requirements								
Unpaid work	27	25	24	24	24	26	25	
Supervision	35	35	38	37	37	36	35	
Curfew	11	12	10	8	11	12	13	
Other requirements	27	28	28	30	29	27	27	

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

² Due to a change in the collection methodology of probation supervisions data in June 2014, the numbers shown for Q2 2014 are slightly lower than we would expect to see for this quarter.

*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								
	Q2 2011	Q2 2012	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014 ³	% change Q2 2013 to Q2 2014
Number of requirements								
Community order²	446	300	271	260	269	269	171	-37
0-80 hours	190	124	95	93	117	117	71	-25
81-150 hours	164	116	109	121	105	105	68	-38
151-199 hours	28	17	21	17	15	15	9	*
200-250 hours	62	42	43	27	32	32	23	*
251-300 hours	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	*
Percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	43	41	35	36	43	43	42	
81-150 hours	37	39	40	47	39	39	40	
151-199 hours	6	6	8	7	6	6	5	
200-250 hours	14	14	16	10	12	12	13	
251-300 hours	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	
Number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order²	205	181	148	140	153	162	105	-29
0-80 hours	51	64	25	23	29	44	22	*
81-150 hours	95	83	82	78	83	83	59	-28
151-199 hours	17	14	10	11	13	8	8	*
200-250 hours	40	18	29	28	26	25	16	*
251-300 hours	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	*
Percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	25	35	17	16	19	27	21	
81-150 hours	46	46	55	56	54	51	56	
151-199 hours	8	8	7	8	8	5	8	
200-250 hours	20	10	20	20	17	15	15	
251-300 hours	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	

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

² The total unpaid work requirements in this table will not match those in Table 11, as the data sources used to collect the data are different.

³ Due to a change in the collection methodology of probation supervisions data in June 2014, the numbers shown for Q2 2014 are slightly lower than we would expect to see for this quarter.

*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 assesses the accuracy of the methodology introduced in the October 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 now been over a year since this new methodology of estimating disposal figures was introduced; we continue to 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 Q2 2013.

Table 13: Changes in the number of disposals reported for knife possession offences in Q2 2013 between the non-estimated figures, the estimated figures and the final actual figures

Disposal category	Q2 2013 - non estimated	Q2 2013- estimated	Q2 2013 - actual figures	% change - non estimated to actual figures	% change - estimated to actual figures
Caution	688	696	696	1	0
Absolute/Conditional discharge	112	118	118	5	0
Fine	173	185	184	6	-1
Community sentence	1,152	1126	1,114	-3	-1
Suspended sentence	643	622	624	-3	0
Immediate custody	902	1080	1,093	21	1
Other disposal	316	173	178	-44	3
All disposals	3,986	4,000	4,007	1	0

The table compares the Q2-2013 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 21 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. When comparing the estimated figures for these disposals there is less change between the two, with figures differing by around 0-3 per cent. 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.

In the future we are going to be looking into extending this estimation methodology for the aggravated knife offences.

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 01 August 2014.

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).

Aggravated knife 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:

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

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

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-march-2014/stb-crime-stats.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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Alternative formats are available on request from
statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk