



Ministry
of Justice

Knife Possession Sentencing Quarterly Brief July to September 2014 England and Wales

Ministry of Justice
Statistics Bulletin

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Introduction

This bulletin presents key statistics describing the trends in cautioning and sentencing, probation supervision and the prison population for possession of a knife or offensive weapon in England and Wales. This bulletin does not cover all knife crimes (offences involving a knife) as published by the Office for National Statistics¹. Details of other official statistics publications regarding knife related statistics can be found on page 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 tables 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

- **Table 5 showing knife possession statistics at police force area**

First introduced in our Q2 2014 publication, we continue to present 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

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

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

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

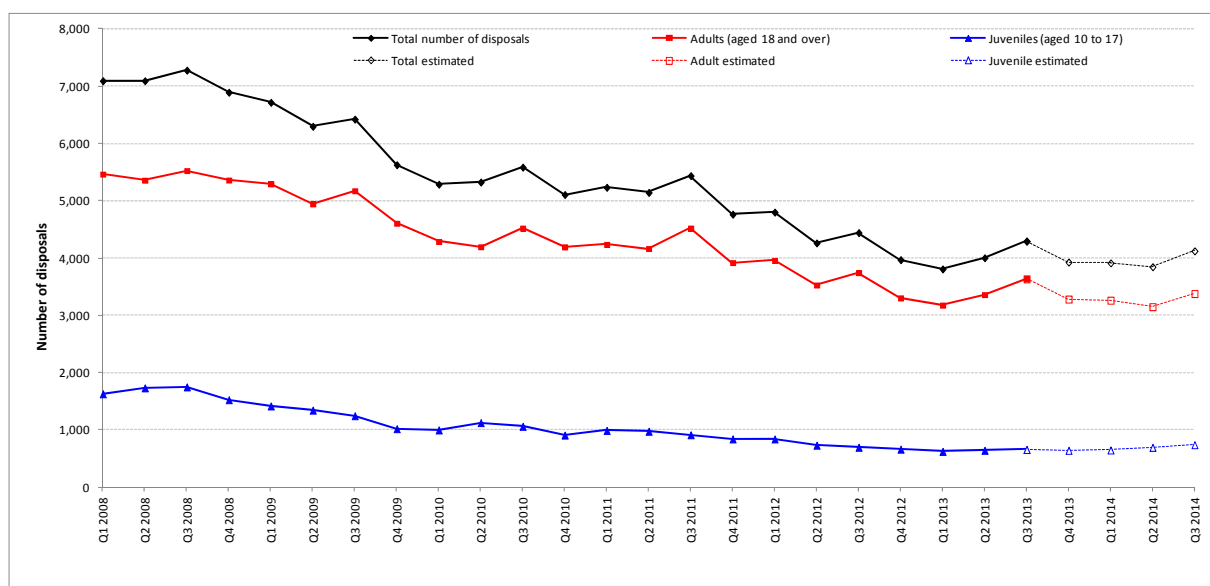
Estimates indicate that for the period July to September 2014 (Q3 2014) final figures will show that:

- 4,126 crimes were formally dealt with by the criminal justice system (CJS) for possession of a knife or offensive weapon offences, 7% more than the previous quarter and 4% lower than in Q3 2013. Over the longer term, there has been a downward trend in the number of offences. The number of offences is now 43% less than the peak seen in Q3 2008 (7,281).

Of those crimes;

- 3,382 (82%) were adult offenders of which just over a third (34%) were given an immediate custodial sentence, an increase from 31% in the same period a year ago and up over the longer term. The proportion of adult offenders given cautions has fallen over time where the latest proportion (12%) is three percentage points lower than in the same quarter a year ago, and has halved since the same period 6 years ago where it was 24%.
- 744 (18%) were juvenile offenders of which 11% were given an immediate custody up one percentage point from a year ago and 28% were given a caution down one percentage point from a year ago.
- Juveniles offenders are now more likely to receive a custodial sentence committing these types of offence, 11% of juveniles were given an immediate custodial sentence up one percentage point from a year ago and three percentage points from the previous quarter. There has been an increase (from 52 to 53%) in the proportion of juveniles given a community sentence between Q3 2013 and Q3 2014. The proportion of juveniles given a youth caution has decreased by two percentage points from the same period a year ago and is now 28%, the proportion is significantly lower than in the same quarter in 2008 where 37% of juvenile offenders received cautions.
- One in five adult offenders now receive a suspended sentence for these offences an increase of 2 percentage points on the same period a year ago. The use of suspended sentences for adults are now at the highest level since their introduction in April 2005 as a result of the Criminal Justice Act 2003

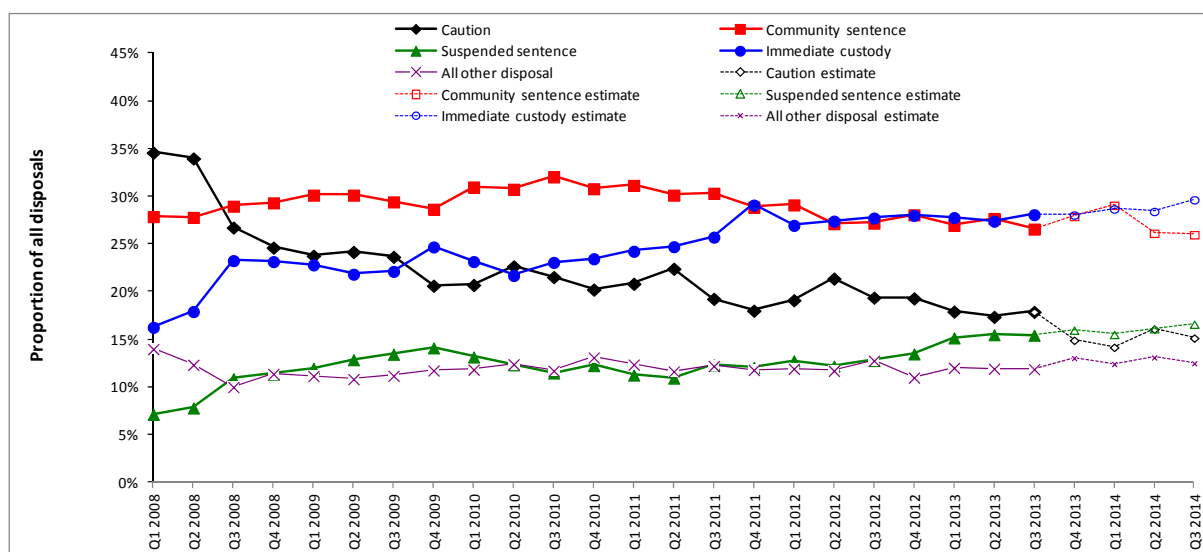
Figure 1: Number of disposals given for knife and offensive weapon possession offences by age, in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q3 2014



1: Knife Possession offences by disposal type

- The most common disposals for possession of a knife or an offensive weapon offence continues to be an immediate custodial sentence (30%) followed by a community sentence (26%). Just under three quarters (72%) of all disposals were for either immediate custody, suspended sentence order or community sentences.
- The proportion of offenders receiving cautions continues to decrease and is now 15%, three percentage points lower than a year ago and one percentage point lower than the previous quarter. The proportion of offenders getting a caution has fallen significantly over time by 74% from Q4 2007 where 37% of offenders received a caution. It should be noted 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% in Q1 2008 to 30% in Q3 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 19 percentage points since Q1 2008.

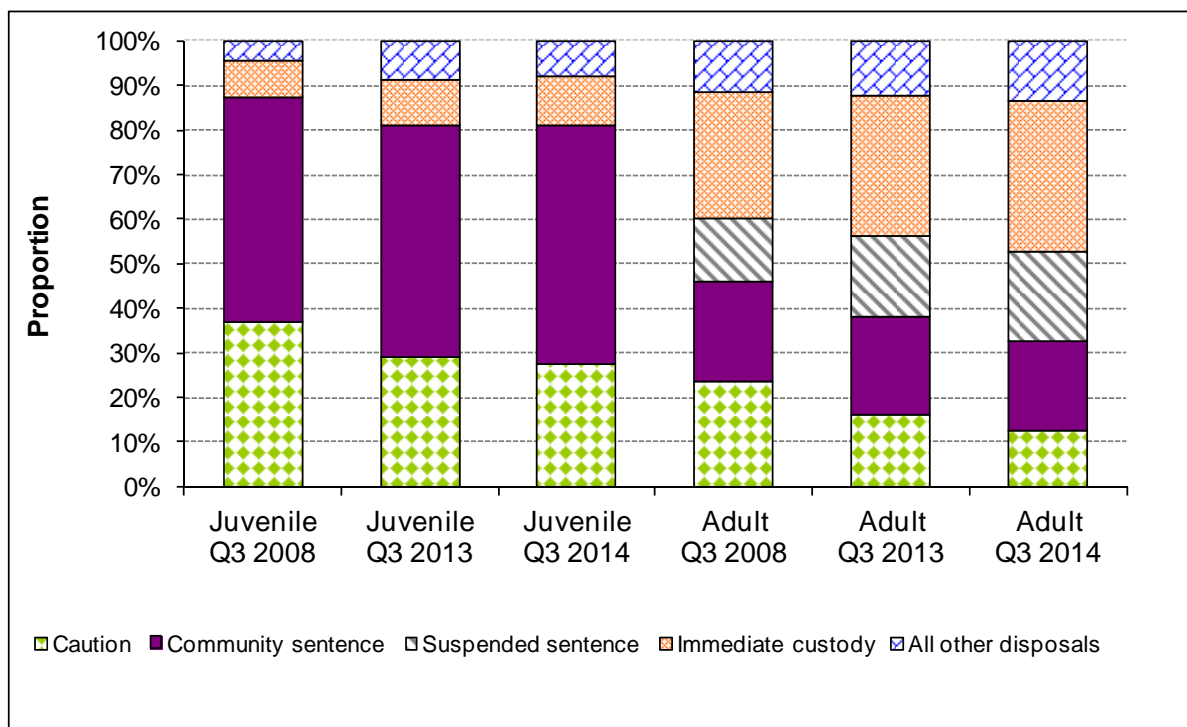
Figure 2: Proportion of type of disposal given for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q3 2014



- Over half of all juveniles (53%) receiving disposals for possession offences were given a community sentence, while 28% were given a youth caution⁴. 11% of juveniles were given an immediate custodial sentence, up one percentage point on the same period one year ago and three percentage points on the previous quarter. The proportion of juveniles given a youth caution has decreased slightly by two percentage points from the same period a year ago and is now 28%, the proportion is significantly lower than in the same quarter in 2008 where 37% of juvenile offenders received cautions.
- Around a third (34%) of adult offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, an increase of two percentage points compared to a year ago and is up 15 percentage points over the longer term (Q4 2007). The proportion of adult offenders given cautions has fallen significantly over time where the latest proportion (12%) is three percentage points lower than in the same quarter a year ago, and has halved since the same period 6 years ago where it was 24%.
- The proportion of adult offenders receiving suspended sentences has increased over time. One in five (20%) adult offenders now received a suspended sentence compared to one in ten (9%) in Q1 2008.

⁴ 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, Q3 2008, Q3 2013 and Q3 2014

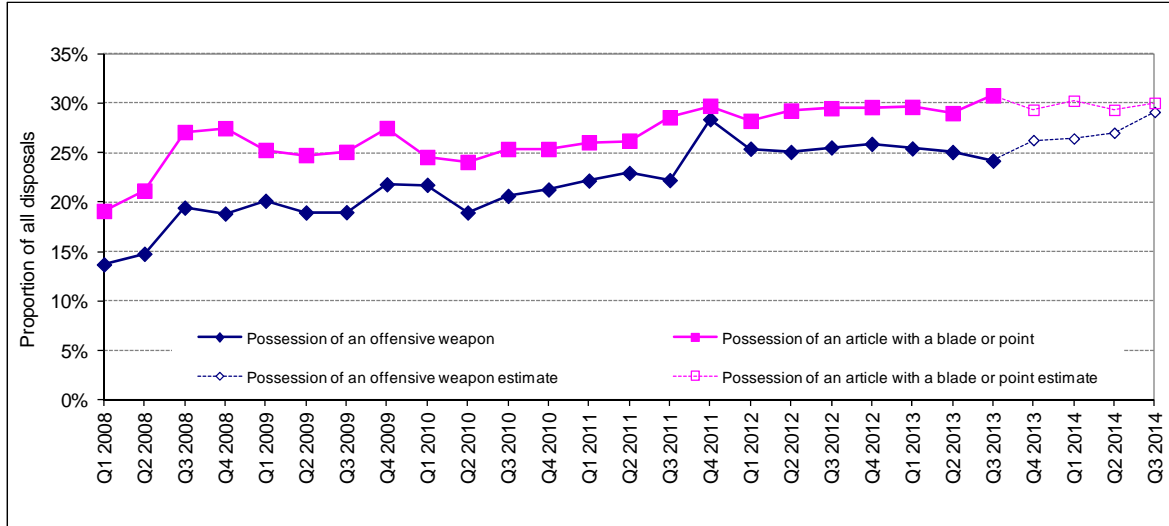


2: Knife possession offences by type of offence

- In Q3 2014, 61% of knife possession offences resulting in a caution or sentence involved the possession of an article with a blade or point, and 39% involved the possession of an offensive weapon. The number of possession offences involving an article with a blade or point has decreased slightly by 2% compared to Q3 2013, while possession offences for an offensive weapon fell by 7% over the same period. 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.
- The proportion of offenders receiving a suspended sentence for offences involving the possession of an article with a blade or point has increased by one percentage point since the same quarter a year ago and is now at its highest level of 18% since their introduction. This proportion has more than doubled since Q2 2008 where it was 8%.
- The proportion of offences involving an offensive weapon has remained stable over the last year, however has also more than doubled to 15% since Q2 2008 where it was 7%.
- Historically, offenders convicted or cautioned of offences involving the possession of an article with a blade or point were more likely to be given an immediate custodial sentence than offenders convicted of offences involving an offensive weapon, however in the latest quarter there was little difference between the two

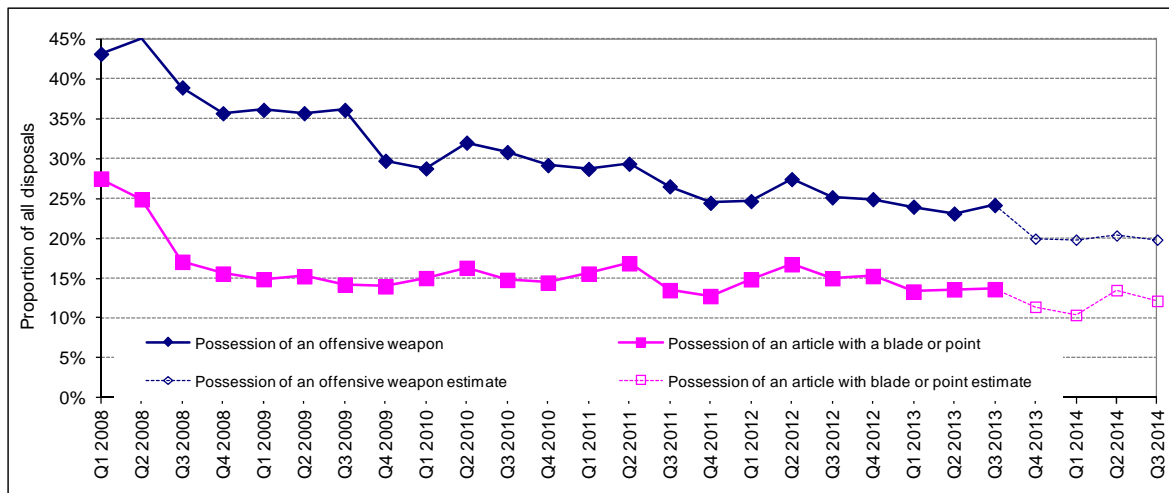
(30% and 29% respectively) compared to a year ago where proportions were 31% compared to 24%.

Figure 4: Proportion of offences resulting in custodial sentences given for knife and offensive weapon possession in England and Wales, between Q1 2008 and Q3 2014



- Offenders convicted of offences involving an offensive weapon are more likely to be given a caution (20%) than offenders convicted of offences involving the possession of an article with a blade or point (where 12% 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 Q3 2014



3: Knife possession offences by length of immediate custodial sentence

- The average immediate custodial sentence length given for possession offences in the latest quarter was 249 days, or 8.3 months - around one month longer than in Q3 2013 (221 days) and 30% longer than the 192 days three years ago. The latest quarter represents an increase of 89% or 3.9 months, compared to the end of 2007.
- Over time there has been an increase in the sentence length for offenders given immediate custodial sentences for possession offences. In the latest quarter, a third of offenders who were given immediate custody received a sentence up to and including three months compared to over half (54%) of offenders who were given the same sentence length at the end of 2007. 28% of offenders were sentenced for 3 – 6 months in the latest quarter compared to 33% of offenders given the same sentence length at the end of 2007. Whereas 40% of offenders were sentenced for over 6 months in the latest quarter, compared to only 13% of offenders at the end of 2007.

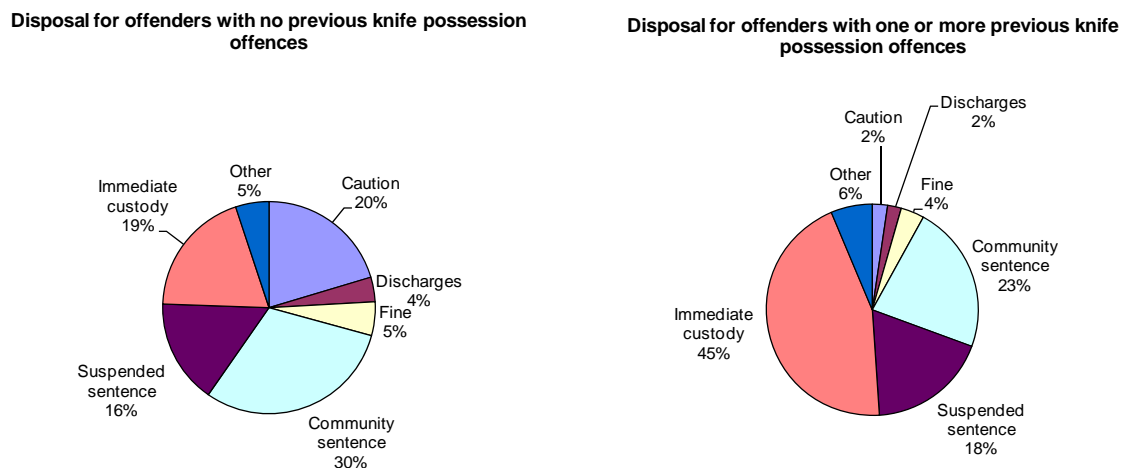
4: Knife possession offences by Police Force Area

- In the 12 months ending September 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 September 2008.

5: 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, 20% received a caution in the 12 months ending September 2014 with 30% receiving a community sentence and 19% given immediate custody. However, for offenders with at least one previous possession offence on their record, 45% were sentenced to immediate custody in the 12 months ending September 2014, while only two percent received a caution.
- Juvenile offenders are more likely to receive a community sentence whether or not they have a previous knife possession offence. Juvenile offenders having one or more previous knife possession offences are more likely to receive a community sentence (60%) than those with no previous knife possession offences (55%). Only 2% of juvenile offenders receive a caution after having a previous possession offence which compares to 33% of offenders with one or more previous possession offences.
- The custody rate of adult offenders rises in relation with their number of previous possession offences, 23% of adult offenders with no previous conviction received an immediate custodial sentence compared to 57% for those with three or more previous offences.

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 September 2014, in England and Wales



6: Aggravated knife or offensive weapon possession offences

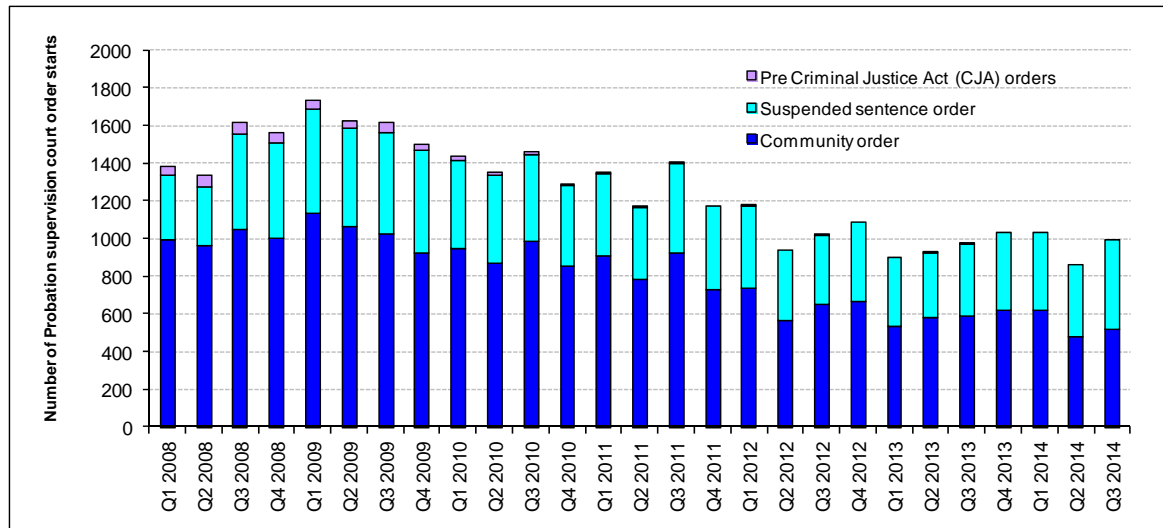
- On 3 December 2012, a new offence of aggravated knife possession came into effect and in the 12 months ending September 2014 a total of 370 offences (288 by adults, 82 by juveniles) have been formerly dealt;
- Of the 82 offences committed by juveniles, 51 offences were committed by offenders aged between 10 and 15 when sentenced. (Sentencing guidelines differ for these age bands as explained on page 4).
- Of the 319 new offences of aggravated knife possession where offenders were aged 16 and over, 202 offences or 63% received an immediate custodial sentence, and 82% received either an immediate custodial sentence or suspended sentence order. Please note 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.

7: Offenders commencing probation

- 988 offenders started a court order under probation supervision for possession offences. This is up 2% from Q3 2013 but down 3% from Q3 2012.
- The most common requirement placed on offenders starting court orders for possession offences was supervision – 36% of suspended sentence orders (SSOs) and 35% of community orders (COs). The next most common requirement was unpaid work – 26% of SSOs and 30% of COs, respectively.
- Where unpaid work requirements were placed upon those starting a community order for possession offences, 28% were for less than 80 hours and 56% were for

81 to 150 hours. For those starting suspended sentence orders, 21% were for under 80 hours and 55% were for 81 to 150 hours.

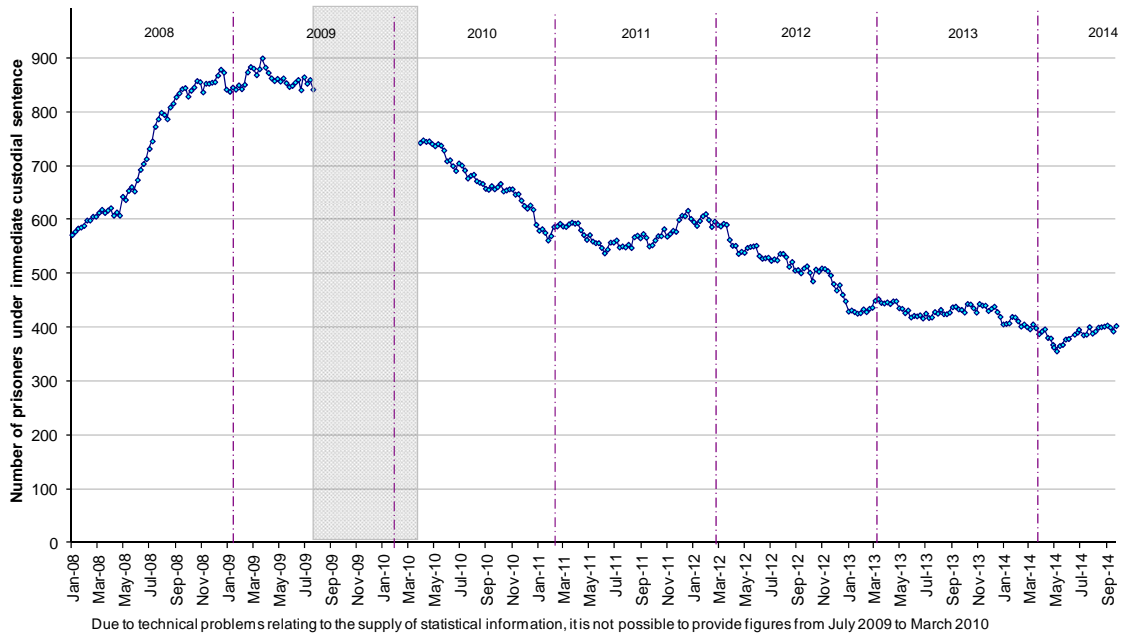
Figure 7: Number of offenders commencing a court order under probation supervision for possession of an offensive weapon, in England and Wales from Q1 2008 to Q3 2014



8: Offenders in prison for knife possession offences

- 403 offenders were in prison serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon on 30 September 2014, down 7% 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 weapon⁵ (excludes recalls) in England and Wales, between January 2008 and September 2014



⁵ Includes having an article with a blade or a point.

Annex 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, Q3 2013 to estimated Q3 2014
	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013 ^E	Q1 2014 ^E	Q2 2014 ^E	Q3 2014 ^E	
Number of offences								
England and Wales^{2,5}	5,440	4,446	4,298	3,930	3,916	3,850	4,126	-4
Caution ³	1,049	863	770	587	556	620	626	-19
Absolute/Conditional discharge	213	174	151	127	157	124	135	-11
Fine	245	190	184	197	164	199	185	1
Community sentence	1,651	1,210	1,143	1,097	1,139	1,007	1,073	-6
Suspended sentence	673	570	665	629	609	622	686	3
Immediate custody	1,401	1,234	1,208	1,103	1,124	1,095	1,224	1
Other disposal ⁴	208	204	177	190	167	183	197	11
Percentage of total offences								
Caution ³	19	19	18	15	14	16	15	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	
Fine	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	
Community sentence	30	27	27	28	29	26	26	
Suspended sentence	12	13	15	16	16	16	17	
Immediate custody	26	28	28	28	29	28	30	
Other disposal ⁴	4	5	4	5	4	5	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->

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

⁵ Total figures include unknown disposal category.

^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, Q3 2013 to estimated Q3 2014
	Q3 2011 ³	Q3 2012 ³	Q3 2013 ³	Q4 2013 ^E	Q1 2014 ^E	Q2 2014 ^E	Q3 2014 ^E	
Number of offences								
Aged 10 to 17	916	698	660	645	651	697	744	13
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ⁴	233	196	192	184	181	223	205	7
Absolute/conditional discharge	24	14	18	22	15	10	13	*
Fine	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	*
Community sentence	501	374	341	320	365	372	397	16
Suspended sentence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*
Immediate custody	115	81	68	81	66	60	83	22
Other disposal ⁵	42	33	40	38	24	30	45	*
Percentage of total offences								
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ⁴	25	28	29	29	28	32	28	
Absolute/conditional discharge	3	2	3	3	2	1	2	
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Community sentence	55	54	52	50	56	53	53	
Suspended sentence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Immediate custody	13	12	10	13	10	9	11	
Other disposal ⁵	5	5	6	6	4	4	6	
Number of offences								
Aged 18 and over⁶	4,523	3,747	3,638	3,285	3,265	3,153	3,382	-7
Caution	816	667	578	403	375	397	421	-27
Absolute/Conditional discharge	189	160	133	105	142	114	122	-8
Fine	244	190	183	197	164	197	184	1
Community sentence	1,150	836	802	777	774	635	676	-16
Suspended sentence	673	570	665	629	609	622	686	3
Immediate custody	1,285	1,152	1,140	1,022	1,058	1,035	1,141	0
Other disposal ⁵	166	171	137	152	143	153	152	11
Percentage of total offences								
Caution	18	18	16	12	11	13	12	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	
Fine	5	5	5	6	5	6	5	
Community sentence	25	22	22	24	24	20	20	
Suspended sentence	15	15	18	19	19	20	20	
Immediate custody	28	31	31	31	32	33	34	
Other disposal ⁵	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	

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

⁶ Total figures include unknown disposal category.

^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, Q3 2013 to estimated Q3 2014
	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013 ^E	Q1 2014 ^E	Q2 2014 ^E	Q3 2014 ^E	
Number of offences								
Possession of an article with a blade or point	3,028	2,513	2,553	2,312	2,338	2,391	2,508	-2
Caution ³	409	377	348	264	243	323	305	-12
Absolute/Conditional discharge	134	94	100	87	100	83	92	-8
Fine	134	123	108	121	104	115	105	-3
Community sentence	976	737	704	662	713	640	698	-1
Suspended sentence	390	331	413	386	379	413	441	7
Immediate custody	865	741	786	678	707	701	753	-4
Other disposal ⁴	120	110	94	114	92	116	114	21
Percentage of total offences								
Caution ³	14	15	14	11	10	14	12	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	
Fine	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	
Community sentence	32	29	28	29	30	27	28	
Suspended sentence	13	13	16	17	16	17	18	
Immediate custody	29	29	31	29	30	29	30	
Other disposal ⁴	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	
Number of offences								
Possession of an offensive weapon⁵	2,412	1,933	1,745	1,618	1,578	1,459	1,618	-7
Caution ³	640	486	422	323	313	297	321	-24
Absolute/Conditional discharge	79	80	51	40	57	41	43	*
Fine	111	67	76	76	60	84	80	5
Community sentence	675	473	439	435	426	367	375	-15
Suspended sentence	283	239	252	243	230	209	245	-3
Immediate custody	536	493	422	425	417	394	471	12
Other disposal ⁴	88	94	83	76	75	67	83	0
Percentage of total offences								
Caution ¹	27	25	24	20	20	20	20	
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3	4	3	2	4	3	3	
Fine	5	3	4	5	4	6	5	
Community sentence	28	24	25	27	27	25	23	
Suspended sentence	12	12	14	15	15	14	15	
Immediate custody	22	26	24	26	26	27	29	
Other disposal ⁴	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	

Source: Police National Computer

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>

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

⁵ Total figures include unknown disposal category.

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

Sentence length ³	Offences resulting in immediate custody						
	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2013	Q2 2014	Q3 2014
	Percentage of total offences						
Up to and including 3 months	43	40	36	34	38	35	33
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	26	26	26	30	27	28	28
Over 6 months	31	34	38	37	35	37	40

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.

³ Excludes life sentences.

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

	Average Sentence length ³							% change, Q3 2013 to Q3 2014
	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	
	Average sentence length (days)							
England and Wales ^{1,2}	192	226	221	217	215	225	249	13

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.

³ Excludes life sentences.

Table 5: Offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in a caution or sentence for the 12 months ending September 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 September							12 months ending September						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ³	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ³
England and Wales²	28,437	26,341	21,835	20,982	18,280	16,088	15,765	60	55	45	43	37	32	32
Avon and Somerset	789	713	550	553	534	443	343	57	51	39	39	38	31	24
Bedfordshire	333	327	285	264	240	196	183	65	63	55	50	45	36	33
Cambridgeshire	317	291	243	248	207	179	183	47	42	35	35	29	25	25
Cheshire	340	386	269	264	275	238	232	38	43	30	29	30	26	25
City of London	26	24	36	29	28	18	16	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cleveland	450	412	364	389	296	257	251	92	84	74	79	60	52	51
Cumbria	218	225	186	164	166	139	131	48	50	41	36	37	31	29
Derbyshire	414	351	313	332	310	226	258	47	39	35	37	34	25	28
Devon & Cornwall	554	589	401	419	332	296	318	37	40	27	28	22	20	21
Dorset	264	229	216	201	168	150	140	40	35	33	30	25	22	21
Durham	363	372	271	310	288	246	222	67	68	50	56	52	45	40
Dyfed-Powys	166	165	143	135	120	137	107	36	36	31	29	26	30	23
Essex	865	813	631	639	482	427	471	58	54	42	42	32	28	31
Gloucestershire	223	219	134	143	110	119	112	43	42	25	27	21	22	21
Greater Manchester	1,518	1,371	1,174	1,069	979	864	733	67	60	51	46	42	37	31
Gwent	316	282	229	259	213	162	129	63	56	45	51	42	32	25
Hampshire	743	766	611	510	455	415	397	45	46	37	30	27	24	23
Hertfordshire	400	389	349	304	302	225	226	43	41	36	31	31	23	23
Humberside	520	547	457	473	341	292	279	64	67	56	58	42	36	34
Kent	763	695	476	506	413	344	390	52	47	32	33	27	22	25
Lancashire	778	695	690	641	619	538	488	61	54	54	50	48	42	38
Leicestershire	430	318	377	290	274	220	238	50	36	43	33	31	24	26
Lincolnshire	290	280	250	246	193	184	182	47	44	39	38	30	29	28
Merseyside	891	867	675	629	571	482	517	73	71	55	51	46	39	42
Metropolitan Police	5,451	4,886	4,082	4,082	3,309	3,044	3,276	81	72	59	58	46	42	45
Norfolk	341	274	286	270	241	192	193	45	36	38	35	31	25	25
North Wales	351	293	241	204	208	176	204	58	48	39	33	34	29	33
North Yorkshire	257	272	203	208	200	152	179	37	39	29	29	28	21	25
Northamptonshire	261	304	240	238	200	191	190	44	51	40	40	33	31	31
Northumbria	1,017	989	774	694	660	521	543	81	79	61	55	52	41	43
Nottinghamshire	629	602	535	549	464	449	425	67	63	56	57	48	46	43
South Wales	627	597	580	485	436	439	354	56	53	51	43	38	38	31
South Yorkshire	663	655	574	533	445	382	443	57	56	49	45	38	32	37
Staffordshire	437	356	333	322	332	266	301	46	37	34	33	34	27	31
Suffolk	231	272	197	160	192	184	151	37	43	31	25	30	28	23
Surrey	287	293	193	230	188	155	126	30	30	20	23	19	15	13
Sussex	752	626	517	447	420	370	382	54	45	37	31	29	26	26
ThamesValley	845	730	587	590	526	449	390	44	38	30	30	27	23	19
Warwickshire	157	181	133	121	119	92	86	33	38	28	25	24	19	18
West Mercia	486	419	405	385	344	257	273	45	39	37	35	32	23	25
West Midlands	1,900	1,691	1,270	1,215	1,067	974	810	83	73	54	52	45	41	34
West Yorkshire	924	847	780	752	656	577	575	49	44	41	39	34	30	29
Wiltshire	183	214	183	143	103	136	83	32	36	31	24	17	22	14

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 and the British Transport Police.

³ 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 September 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	11,171	2,242	791	628	14,832
Caution ³	2,275	64	13	8	2,360
Absolute/Conditional discharge	420	55	11	11	497
Fine	574	93	17	21	705
Community sentence	3,399	568	160	100	4,227
Suspended sentence	1,772	442	132	96	2,442
Immediate custody	2,163	877	405	357	3,802
Other disposal ⁴	568	143	53	35	799
	Percentage				
Caution ³	20	3	2	1	16
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	2	1	2	3
Fine	5	4	2	3	5
Community sentence	30	25	20	16	28
Suspended sentence	16	20	17	15	16
Immediate custody	19	39	51	57	26
Other disposal ⁴	5	6	7	6	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 September 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	11,281	2,397	791	651	15,120
Caution ³	2,763	98	16	10	2,887
Absolute/Conditional discharge	389	77	19	17	502
Fine	544	113	17	14	688
Community sentence	3,268	613	159	97	4,137
Suspended sentence	1,532	423	133	104	2,192
Immediate custody	2,350	978	409	376	4,113
Other disposal ⁴	435	95	38	33	601
	Percentage				
Caution ³	24	4	2	2	19
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3	3	2	3	3
Fine	5	5	2	2	5
Community sentence	29	26	20	15	27
Suspended sentence	14	18	17	16	14
Immediate custody	21	41	52	58	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 September 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	2,309	249	53	18	2,629
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	764	7	0	0	771
Absolute/Conditional discharge	50	4	0	0	54
Fine	2	1	0	0	3
Community sentence	1,260	159	25	7	1,451
Immediate custody	145	50	22	11	228
Other disposal ⁴	88	28	6	0	122
	Percentage				
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	33	3	0	*	29
Absolute/Conditional discharge	2	2	0	*	2
Fine	0	0	0	*	0
Community sentence	55	64	47	*	55
Immediate custody	6	20	42	*	9
Other disposal ⁴	4	11	11	*	5
	Number of offenders				
Aged 18 and over⁷	8,860	1,992	738	610	12,200
Cautions	1,510	57	13	8	1,588
Absolute/Conditional discharge	370	51	11	11	443
Fine	572	92	17	21	702
Community sentence	2,138	408	135	93	2,774
Suspended sentence	1,772	442	132	96	2,442
Immediate custody	2,018	827	383	346	3,574
Other disposal ⁴	480	115	47	35	677
	Percentage				
Cautions	17	3	2	1	13
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	3	1	2	4
Fine	6	5	2	3	6
Community sentence	24	20	18	15	23
Suspended sentence	20	22	18	16	20
Immediate custody	23	42	52	57	29
Other disposal ⁴	5	6	6	6	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 September 2013, split by age group in England and Wales^{1,6}

Disposal Category ²	Number of previous convictions/cautions				Total
	0	1	2	3 or more	
Number of offenders					
Aged 10 to 17⁶	2,200	243	42	15	2,500
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	733	9	0	0	742
Absolute/Conditional discharge	55	11	1	2	69
Fine	6	0	0	0	6
Community sentence	1,121	138	17	1	1,277
Immediate custody	173	65	17	9	264
Other disposal ⁴	112	20	7	3	142
Percentage					
Reprimands & warnings/Youth cautions ³	33	4	*	*	30
Absolute/Conditional discharge	3	5	*	*	3
Fine	0	0	*	*	0
Community sentence	51	57	*	*	51
Immediate custody	8	27	*	*	11
Other disposal ⁴	5	8	*	*	6
Number of offenders					
Aged 18 and over⁶	9,078	2,154	749	636	12,617
Caution	2,030	89	16	10	2,145
Absolute/Conditional discharge	334	66	18	15	433
Fine	538	113	17	14	682
Community sentence	2,145	475	142	96	2,858
Suspended sentence	1,532	423	133	104	2,192
Immediate custody	2,176	913	392	367	3,848
Other disposal ⁴	323	75	31	30	459
Percentage					
Caution	22	4	2	2	17
Absolute/Conditional discharge	4	3	2	2	3
Fine	6	5	2	2	5
Community sentence	24	22	19	15	23
Suspended sentence	17	20	18	16	17
Immediate custody	24	42	52	58	30
Other disposal ⁴	4	3	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, Q3 2013 to Q3 2014

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages ⁵					12 months ending September 2014
	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	
	Number of offences²					
England and Wales¹	59	68	83	105	114	370
Caution ²	1	2	3	2	3	10
Absolute/Conditional discharge	0	0	0	0	2	2
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	10	12	17	23	17	69
Suspended sentence	10	10	20	11	19	60
Immediate custody	35	43	38	61	63	205
Other disposal ³	3	1	5	8	10	24
	Percentage					
Caution ²	2	3	4	2	3	3
Absolute/Conditional discharge	0	0	0	0	2	1
Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	17	18	20	22	15	19
Suspended sentence	17	15	24	10	17	16
Immediate custody	59	63	46	58	55	55
Other disposal ³	5	1	6	8	9	6

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.

⁵ 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 September 2014

Disposal Category	Number of offences			Total
	Adults	Juveniles		
		10-15	16-17	
Number of offences				
England and Wales^{1,4}	288	51	31	370
Caution ²	3	7	0	10
Absolute/Conditional discharge	2	0	0	2
Fine	0	0	0	0
Community sentence	23	35	11	69
Suspended sentence	60	0	0	60
Immediate custody	185	3	17	205
Other disposal ³	15	6	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-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.

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

Table 10: Offenders commencing a court order under probation supervision for possession of an offensive weapon¹, in England and Wales

Number of starts and percentages								
Court order starts	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014 ²	Q3 2014	% change, Q3 2013 to Q3 2014
number of starts								
England and Wales	1,401	1,018	972	1,032	1,034	859	988	2
Community order	924	648	583	621	614	475	517	-11
Suspended sentence order	475	368	388	411	420	384	471	21
Pre CJA orders	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	*
percentage of total starts								
Community order	66	64	60	60	59	55	52	
Suspended sentence order	34	36	40	40	41	45	48	
Pre CJA orders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

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

² The number of starts in the quarter April to June 2014 are slightly under-counted due to a change in the data collection methodology and the transition from probation trusts to NPS Divisions/CRCs

*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

	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014 ²	Q3 2014	% change Q3 2013 to Q3 2014
Number of requirements								
Community order	1,515	1,065	935	1,000	985	804	843	-10
Unpaid Work	474	312	273	270	289	207	249	-9
Supervision	509	381	326	358	327	271	292	-10
Curfew	129	71	69	97	125	109	99	43
Accredited program	80	66	50	59	37	46	40	*
Specified activity	151	114	108	91	95	66	88	-19
Drug treatment	46	39	35	31	37	29	32	*
Alcohol treatment	57	44	45	44	43	34	20	*
Mental health	28	9	13	20	9	11	11	*
Exclusion	6	2	2	5	5	4	0	*
Residential	6	8	2	2	5	5	2	*
Attendance centre	22	13	11	20	11	10	7	*
Prohibited activity	7	6	1	3	2	12	3	*
Percentage of total requirements								
Unpaid work	31	29	29	27	29	26	30	
Supervision	34	36	35	36	33	34	35	
Curfew	9	7	7	10	13	14	12	
Other requirements	27	28	29	28	25	27	24	
Number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order	898	658	623	679	658	590	876	41
Unpaid work	220	157	151	160	168	147	225	49
Supervision	315	246	232	250	236	208	314	35
Curfew	99	61	51	75	78	78	90	76
Accredited program	86	64	53	61	50	47	84	*
Specified activity	88	67	68	65	48	51	76	12
Drug treatment	27	20	14	23	29	19	16	*
Alcohol treatment	38	33	32	23	27	19	45	*
Mental health	3	3	8	9	2	3	3	*
Exclusion	5	1	3	4	4	3	8	*
Residential	6	2	4	3	2	4	4	*
Attendance centre	5	2	2	3	10	3	7	*
Prohibited activity	6	2	5	3	4	8	4	*
Percentage of total requirements								
Unpaid work	24	24	24	24	26	25	26	
Supervision	35	37	37	37	36	35	36	
Curfew	11	9	8	11	12	13	10	
Other requirements	29	29	30	29	27	27	28	

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

² The number of starts in the quarter April to June 2014 are slightly under-counted due to a change in the data collection methodology and the transition from probation trusts to NPS Divisions/CRCs

*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								
	Q3 2011	Q3 2012	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014 ³	Q3 2014 ³	% change Q3 2013 to Q3 2014
Number of requirements								
Community order²	512	323	260	269	269	171	172	-34
0-80 hours	204	139	93	117	117	71	48	-48
81-150 hours	213	128	121	105	105	68	97	-20
151-199 hours	30	21	17	15	15	9	8	*
200-250 hours	63	34	27	32	32	23	19	*
251-300 hours	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	*
Percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	40	43	36	43	43	42	28	
81-150 hours	42	40	47	39	39	40	56	
151-199 hours	6	7	7	6	6	5	5	
200-250 hours	12	11	10	12	12	13	11	
251-300 hours	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order²	219	167	140	153	162	105	169	21
0-80 hours	42	36	23	29	44	22	35	*
81-150 hours	117	93	78	83	83	59	93	19
151-199 hours	17	10	11	13	8	8	12	*
200-250 hours	41	26	28	26	25	16	25	*
251-300 hours	2	2	0	2	2	0	4	*
Percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	19	22	16	19	27	21	21	
81-150 hours	53	56	56	54	51	56	55	
151-199 hours	8	6	8	8	5	8	7	
200-250 hours	19	16	20	17	15	15	15	
251-300 hours	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	

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 The number of starts in these quarters are slightly under-counted due to a change in the data collection methodology and the transition from probation trusts to NPS Divisions/CRCs. It is hoped that numbers will return to expected levels in future quarters

*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.

Annex 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 nearly two years 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 Q3 2013.

Table 13: Changes in the number of disposals reported for knife possession offences in Q3 2013 between the non-estimated figures, the estimated figures and the final actual figures

Disposal category	Q3 2013 - non estimated	Q3 2013- estimated	Q3 2013 - actual figures	% change - non estimated to actual figures	% change - estimated to actual figures
Caution	756	764	770	2	1
Absolute/Conditional discharge	150	159	151	1	-5
Fine	176	188	184	5	-2
Community sentence	1,189	1163	1,143	-4	-2
Suspended sentence	660	641	665	1	4
Immediate custody	1,000	1196	1,208	21	1
Other disposal	356	194	177	-50	-9
All disposals	4,287	4,305	4,298	0	0

The table compares the Q3-2013 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% and 50% respectively. When comparing the estimated figures for these disposals there is less change between the two, with figures differing by around 1-9%. 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.

Annex C: 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 07 November 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) and
- Ministry of Defence (MOD)

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 **adults** 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:

Craig Medhurst
Ministry of Justice
Justice Statistics Analytical Services
7th floor
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

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-june-2014/stb-crime-stats--year-ending-june-2014.html#tab-Offences-involving-knives-and-sharp-instruments

Additional (Table 9 and 10) information on recorded crime for selected violent and sexual offences involving a knife or sharp instrument and offences involving firearms:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-353718>

- 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