

**Knife Crime Sentencing
Quarterly Brief
October to December 2009
England and Wales**

Ministry of Justice
Statistics Bulletin

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Knife Crime Possession Statistics October to December 2009

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Prime Minister's statement

- On 5 June 2008 the Prime Minister said:

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

Sentencing

- On 21 May 2008, the Court of Appeal issued the judgment in *Povey* that said that, because of prevalence, magistrates should normally sentence those convicted of knife crime possession offences at the top end of the range.
- The Sentencing Guidelines Council issued an update to the magistrates' courts guidelines, with effect from 4 August 2008, which set out the effect of the Court of Appeal judgment and made it clear that, for the time being, the starting point for the lowest level of knife possession should be 12 weeks' custody. This applies to adults (aged 18 and over).
- This applies in cases where a first time offender pleads not guilty to possession of a knife in non-dangerous circumstances. A guilty plea would attract a discount in the normal way, as would any personal mitigation, and could take the sentence below the custody threshold.
- Since September 2008 all probation areas are able to provide intensive delivery of 300 hour Community Payback sentences for unemployed offenders convicted of knife crime offences, who are on the brink of custody. In January 2009 this offer of intensive delivery of a minimum of 18 hours per week over three days was extended to Community Payback sentences of any length imposed for an offence of knife crime, when an offender is unemployed.
- Since October 2009 Knife Crime Prevention programmes have been made available in all 95 Youth Offending Teams in the 16 TKAP areas for any young person aged under 18 who has been convicted of a knife-related offence.

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

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

This publication has been prepared by Justice Statistics Analytical Services.

Key points – Q4 2009 compared to Q1 2008¹ (unless otherwise stated)

Note on comparisons

Comparisons are presented between the latest quarter and the figures for Q1 2008, the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP; this is to give a better representation of changes pre and post the TKAP implementation. Comparisons between the latest quarter and the same quarter of the previous year are also given to provide an indication of changes over the last year.

It is important to note that most of the sizeable changes in the data occurred between Q1 2008 and Q3 2008, therefore changes between Q1 2008 and the latest data for Q4 2009 will mainly reflect the changes between Q1 2008 and Q3 2008.

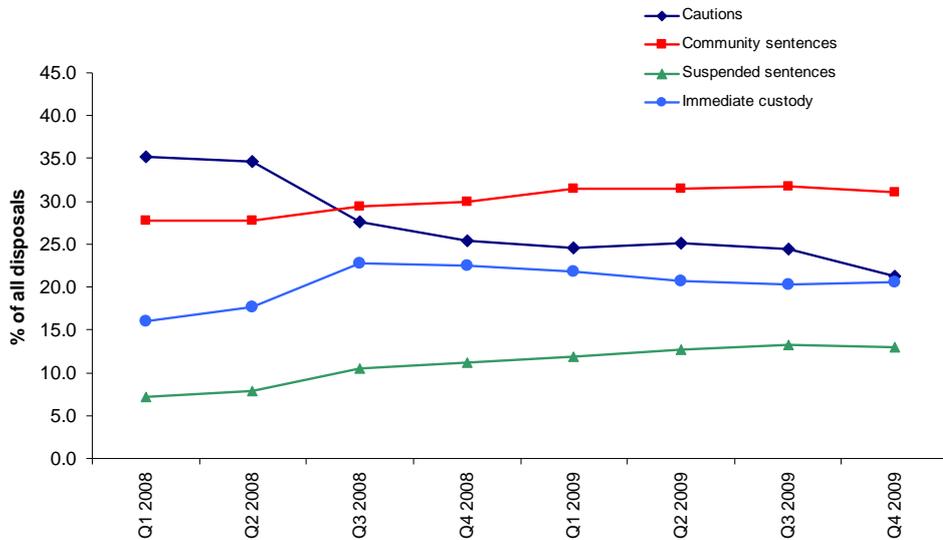
Cautioning and sentencing statistics (Tables 1 to 5)

Q4 2009 compared to Q1 2008

- **The total number of disposals (cautions and sentences) given for knife or offensive weapon possession has decreased by 21% between Q1 2008 and Q4 2009 (7,200 to 5,600).** This drop was more marked for juvenile offenders where the decrease was 38% (1,600 to 1,000), than for adult offenders where the decrease was 16% (5,500 to 4,600).

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

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



- **The proportion of offences receiving cautions² for knife or offensive weapon possession decreased while the proportion of immediate custodial sentences, suspended sentence orders and community sentences rose between Q1 2008 and Q4 2009:**
 - In Q4 2009 21 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in a caution in England and Wales. This compares with 35 per cent (2,500) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 21 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in immediate custody compared to 16 per cent (1,100) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 13 per cent (730) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 7 per cent (510) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 31 per cent (1,700) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 28 per cent (2,000) in Q1 2008.

² Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings.

Q4 2009 compared to Q4 2008

- **Between Q4 2008 and Q4 2009 the total number of disposals given for knife or offensive weapon possession has decreased by 19% from 7,000 to 5,600.** This drop was more marked for juvenile offenders where the decrease was 34% (1,500 to 1,000), than for adult offenders where the decrease was 14% (5,400 to 4,600).
- **The proportion of offences receiving cautions³ for knife or offensive weapon possession decreased slightly while the proportion of immediate custodial sentences, suspended sentence orders and community sentences have remained stable between Q4 2008 and Q4 2009:**
 - In Q4 2009 21 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in a caution in England and Wales. This compares with 25 per cent (1,800) in Q4 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 21 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in immediate custody compared to 22 per cent (1,600) in Q4 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 13 per cent (730) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 11 per cent (780) in Q4 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 31 per cent (1,700) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 30 per cent (2,100) in Q4 2008.

³ Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings.

Further analyses comparing Q4 2009 with Q1 2008

- **Where immediate custodial sentences are given for these offences there has been an increase in the proportion of longer sentences:**
 - In Q4 2009 33 per cent (400) of sentences were recorded as being over six months compared to 15 per cent (170) in Q1 2008.
 - The average length of a custodial sentence was 209 days in Q4 2009. This has increased from 140 days in Q1 2008.
- **For offences committed by juvenile offenders the proportion of offences receiving reprimands and final warnings decreased** from 47 per cent (760) in Q1 2008 to 30 per cent (300) in Q4 2009. This was balanced by an increase in the proportion receiving community sentences (from 42 per cent (690) to 56 per cent (560)).
- **For offences committed by adult offenders the proportion of offences receiving cautions decreased** from 32 per cent (1,800) in Q1 2008 to 19 per cent (900) in Q4 2009. This was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of suspended sentence orders (9 per cent (510) to 16 per cent (730)), community sentences (23 per cent (1,300) to 26 per cent (1,200)) and immediate custodial sentences (19 per cent (1,100) to 24 per cent (1,100)) given.
- **In the 16⁴ TKAP police force areas the extent and direction of change between Q1 2008 and Q4 2009 were similar to non-TKAP police force areas:**
 - In Q4 2009, 19 per cent (720) of all possession offences resulted in a caution in the 16 TKAP areas. This compares with 34 per cent (1,600) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 14 per cent (510) of all possession offences resulted in suspended sentence orders compared to 7 per cent (340) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 32 per cent (1,200) of all possession offences resulted in community sentences compared to 29 per cent (1,400) in Q1 2008.
 - In Q4 2009 20 per cent (740) of all possession offences resulted in immediate custodial sentences compared to 16 per cent (740) in Q1 2008.

⁴ Phase 2 police force areas. See explanatory notes for more information.

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

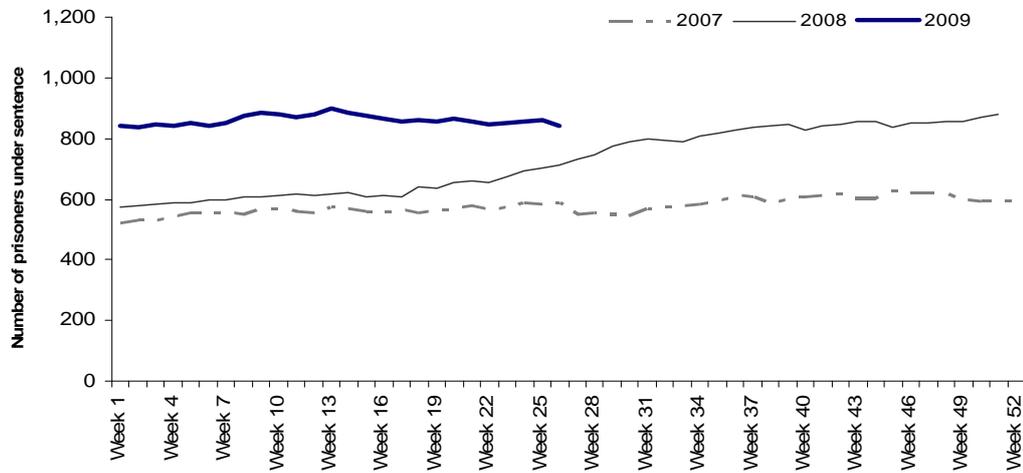
- **In Q4 2009 there were 1,500 court order starts under probation supervision** for possession of an offensive weapon, this represents an increase of 9 per cent from Q1 2008 (1,400). This was driven by the increase in SSOs, which rose from 340 to 540 (58 per cent increase) over the period.
- **There were changes in the proportion of those given unpaid work** as a percentage of all requirements started. For suspended sentence orders 26 per cent were given unpaid work in Q4 2009 compared to 22 per cent in Q1 2008.
- **Where unpaid work requirements were started for these offences, there has been an increase in the proportion of longer requirements:**
 - For community orders, in Q4 2009, 18 per cent of unpaid work requirements were recorded as being 200 hours or longer compared to 8 per cent in Q1 2008. This was mirrored by shorter requirements (0-80 hours) decreasing to 38 per cent in Q4 2009 from 48 per cent in Q1 2008.
 - For suspended sentence orders, in Q4 2009 23 per cent of unpaid work requirements were recorded as being 200 hours or longer compared to 12 per cent in Q1 2008. Over the same period shorter requirements (0-80 hours) decreased to 19 per cent in Q4 2009 from 36 per cent in Q1 2008.

Prison population⁵

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

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

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



⁶ Includes having an article with a blade or a point

Appendix A: Statistical Tables

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

Disposal Category	Q1 2008 ¹	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ²	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ³
number of offences								
England and Wales⁴	7,160	6,944	6,750	6,334	6,442	5,636	-19	-21
Caution ⁵	2,523	1,759	1,660	1,587	1,571	1,199	-32	-52
Absolute/Conditional discharge	463	236	256	233	231	190	-19	-59
Fine	328	295	262	225	215	200	-32	-39
Community sentence	1,987	2,079	2,120	1,994	2,047	1,749	-16	-12
Suspended sentence	511	780	797	803	851	730	-6	43
Immediate custody	1,147	1,562	1,474	1,308	1,303	1,157	-26	1
Other disposal	201	233	181	184	224	411	76	104
percentage of total offences								
Caution ⁵	35	25	25	25	24	21		
Community sentence	28	30	31	31	32	31		
Suspended sentence	7	11	12	13	13	13		
Immediate custody	16	22	22	21	20	21		
number of offences								
Non-TKAP police forces⁶	2,416	2,456	2,333	2,205	2,227	1,967	-20	-19
Caution ⁵	897	696	611	603	556	484	-30	-46
Absolute/Conditional discharge	185	77	89	82	102	78	1	-58
Fine	98	103	93	86	73	71	-31	-28
Community sentence	589	689	693	615	650	564	-18	-4
Suspended sentence	166	269	262	264	292	223	-17	34
Immediate custody	403	533	508	470	490	413	-23	2
Other disposal	78	89	77	85	64	134	51	72
percentage of total offences								
Caution ⁵	37	28	26	27	25	25		
Community sentence	24	28	30	28	29	29		
Suspended sentence	7	11	11	12	13	11		
Immediate custody	17	22	22	21	22	21		

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

2. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

3. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

5. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

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

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

Data Source and Quality

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

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

Disposal Category	Q1 2008 ¹	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ²	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ³
number of offences								
TKAP Phase II - 16 forces⁴	4,744	4,488	4,417	4,129	4,215	3,669	-18	-23
Caution ⁵	1,626	1,063	1,049	984	1,015	715	-33	-56
Absolute/Conditional discharge	278	159	167	151	129	112	-30	-60
Fine	230	192	169	139	142	129	-33	-44
Community sentence	1,398	1,390	1,427	1,379	1,397	1,185	-15	-15
Suspended sentence	345	511	535	539	559	507	-1	47
Immediate custody	744	1,029	966	838	813	744	-28	0
Other disposal	123	144	104	99	160	277	92	125
percentage of total offences								
Caution ⁵	34	24	24	24	24	19		
Community sentence	29	31	32	33	33	32		
Suspended sentence	7	11	12	13	13	14		
Immediate custody	16	23	22	20	19	20		
number of offences								
TKAP Phase I - 10 forces⁶	3,635	3,488	3,409	3,193	3,243	2,831	-19	-22
Caution ⁵	1,210	800	779	735	733	534	-33	-56
Absolute/Conditional discharge	189	124	125	115	107	89	-28	-53
Fine	179	149	123	98	109	100	-33	-44
Community sentence	1,093	1,081	1,097	1,089	1,097	909	-16	-17
Suspended sentence	282	411	422	434	441	394	-4	40
Immediate custody	595	813	789	643	626	589	-28	-1
Other disposal	87	110	74	79	130	216	96	148
percentage of total offences								
Caution ⁵	33	23	23	23	23	19		
Community sentence	30	31	32	34	34	32		
Suspended sentence	8	12	12	14	14	14		
Immediate custody	16	23	23	20	19	21		
number of offences								
TKAP Phase II - 6 forces⁷	1,109	1,000	1,008	936	972	838	-16	-24
Caution ⁵	416	263	270	249	282	181	-31	-56
Absolute/Conditional discharge	89	35	42	36	22	23	*	*
Fine	51	43	46	41	33	29	*	*
Community sentence	305	309	330	290	300	276	-11	-10
Suspended sentence	63	100	113	105	118	113	13	79
Immediate custody	149	216	177	195	187	155	-28	4
Other disposal	36	34	30	20	30	61	*	*
percentage of total offences								
Caution ⁵	38	26	27	27	29	22		
Community sentence	28	31	33	31	31	33		
Suspended sentence	6	10	11	11	12	13		
Immediate custody	13	22	18	21	19	18		

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

2. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

3. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

5. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

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

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

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

Data Source and Quality

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

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

Disposal Category	Q1 2008 ¹	Number of offences and percentages					Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ²	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ³
		Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009		
number of offences								
Aged 10 to 17	1,631	1,525	1,411	1,333	1,234	1,007	-34	-38
Reprimands & final warnings	760	516	520	476	390	303	-41	-60
Absolute/conditional discharge	40	32	22	29	27	22	*	*
Fine	15	12	8	2	4	3	*	*
Community sentence	688	788	716	688	677	561	-29	-18
Immediate custody	95	145	115	106	108	64	-56	-33
Other disposal	33	32	30	32	28	54	*	*
percentage of total offences								
Reprimands & final warnings	47	34	37	36	32	30		
Community sentence	42	52	51	52	55	56		
Immediate custody	6	10	8	8	9	6		
number of offences								
Aged 18 and over	5,529	5,414	5,336	4,996	5,208	4,629	-14	-16
Caution	1,763	1,240	1,139	1,110	1,181	896	-28	-49
Absolute/Conditional discharge	423	204	234	203	204	168	-18	-60
Fine	313	283	254	223	211	197	-30	-37
Community sentence	1,299	1,291	1,404	1,306	1,370	1,188	-8	-9
Suspended sentence	509	774	794	803	849	730	-6	43
Immediate custody	1,052	1,417	1,359	1,199	1,195	1,093	-23	4
Other disposal	170	205	152	152	198	357	74	110
percentage of total offences								
Caution	32	23	21	22	23	19		
Community sentence	23	24	26	26	26	26		
Suspended sentence	9	14	15	16	16	16		
Immediate custody	19	26	25	24	23	24		

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

2. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

3. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

Data Source and Quality

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

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

Disposal Category	Number of offences and percentages						Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ²	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ³
	Q1 2008 ¹	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009		
Possession of an article with a blade or point	number of offences							
	3,405	3,462	3,524	3,152	3,326	2,872	-17	-16
Caution ⁴	937	539	521	482	474	396	-27	-58
Absolute/Conditional discharge	260	152	158	141	137	116	-24	-55
Fine	163	159	139	110	104	93	-42	-43
Community sentence	1,020	1,111	1,251	1,102	1,207	991	-11	-3
Suspended sentence	261	452	491	460	513	412	-9	58
Immediate custody	649	933	861	744	769	642	-31	-1
Other disposal	115	116	103	113	122	222	91	93
	percentage of total offences							
Caution ⁴	28	16	15	15	14	14		
Community sentence	30	32	35	35	36	35		
Suspended sentence	8	13	14	15	15	14		
Immediate custody	19	27	24	24	23	22		
Possession of an offensive weapon	number of offences							
	3,755	3,482	3,226	3,182	3,116	2,764	-21	-26
Caution ⁴	1,586	1,220	1,139	1,105	1,097	803	-34	-49
Absolute/Conditional discharge	203	84	98	92	94	74	-12	-64
Fine	165	136	123	115	111	107	-21	-35
Community sentence	967	968	869	892	840	758	-22	-22
Suspended sentence	250	328	306	343	338	318	-3	27
Immediate custody	498	629	613	564	534	515	-18	3
Other disposal	86	117	78	71	102	189	62	120
	percentage of total offences							
Caution ⁴	42	35	35	35	35	29		
Community sentence	26	28	27	28	27	27		
Suspended sentence	7	9	9	11	11	12		
Immediate custody	13	18	19	18	17	19		

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

2. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

3. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

4. Cautions include juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

Data Source and Quality

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

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

Sentence length	Q1 2008 ¹	Number of offences and percentages						
		Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ²	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ³
number of offences								
England and Wales ^{4,5}	1,147	1,562	1,474	1,308	1,303	1,157	-26	1
Up to and including 3 months	582	669	617	522	524	403	-40	-31
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	387	462	448	394	363	366	-21	-5
Over 6 months	170	424	407	390	413	384	-9	126
percentage of total offences								
Up to and including 3 months	51	43	42	40	40	35		
Over 3 months and up to and including 6 months	34	30	30	30	28	32		
Over 6 months	15	27	28	30	32	33		

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

2. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

3. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

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

Data Source and Quality

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

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

	Q1 2008 ¹	Average sentence length					Average sentence length	
		Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ²	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ³
	Average sentence length (days)							
England and Wales⁴	140	177	182	189	192	209	18	50
TKAP Phase II - 16 forces⁵	144	171	187	180	190	207	21	44
Phase I - 10 forces ⁶	145	173	191	181	196	202	17	39
Phase II - 6 forces ⁷	139	165	169	174	173	229	39	64
Non-TKAP police forces⁸	132	191	172	180	195	213	12	61

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

2. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

3. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

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

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

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

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

Data Source and Quality

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

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

Court Order starts	Q1 2008 ²	Number of starts and percentages						Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ³	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ⁴
		Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009			
number of starts									
Total	1,381	1,562	1,728	1,622	1,611	1,500	-4	9	
Community order	992	1,003	1,132	1,059	1,024	924	-8	-7	
SSO	342	500	551	524	536	540	8	58	
Pre CJA orders	47	59	45	39	51	36	*	*	
percentage of total starts									
Community order	72	64	66	65	64	62			
SSO	25	32	32	32	33	36			
Pre CJA orders	3	4	3	2	3	2			

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

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

3. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

4. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

Data Sources and Quality

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

Table 7: Requirement starts for possession of offensive weapon¹

Number of requirements and percentages								
Q1 2008 ²	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ³	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ⁴	
number of requirements								
Community Order	1,579	1,569	1,836	1,653	1,585	1,474	-6	-7
Unpaid Work	589	549	646	616	560	535	-3	-9
Supervision	531	538	612	570	547	466	-13	-12
Accredited Program	141	144	151	112	119	101	-30	-28
Curfew	125	124	168	154	129	147	19	18
Drug treatment	55	63	67	50	60	52	-17	-5
Specified Activity	73	65	93	70	77	68	5	-7
Alcohol treatment	24	45	47	43	53	54	*	*
Mental Health	19	19	27	17	18	25	*	*
Exclusion	4	6	4	3	2	4	*	*
Residential	5	5	5	8	6	6	*	*
Attendance Centre	7	6	10	5	8	8	*	*
Prohibited Activity	6	5	6	5	6	8	*	*
percentage of all requirements								
Unpaid work	37	35	35	37	35	36		
Supervision	34	34	33	34	35	32		
Other requirements	29	31	31	28	30	32		
number of requirements								
Suspended Sentence Order	635	900	972	934	963	978	9	54
Supervision	255	357	374	348	350	373	4	46
Unpaid Work	142	232	256	259	284	254	9	79
Accredited Program	100	124	125	127	100	97	-22	-3
Curfew	54	72	90	79	96	101	40	87
Drug treatment	28	25	31	27	14	33	*	*
Alcohol treatment	21	26	34	32	38	43	*	*
Specified Activity	17	34	33	29	44	46	*	*
Prohibited Activity	3	12	9	10	4	15	*	*
Exclusion	2	8	6	2	8	3	*	*
Mental Health	2	7	4	10	8	3	*	*
Residential	10	2	6	9	13	7	*	*
Attendance Centre	1	1	4	2	4	3	*	*
percentage of all requirements								
Unpaid work	22	26	26	28	29	26		
Supervision	40	40	38	37	36	38		
Other requirements	16	14	13	14	10	10		

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

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

3. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

4. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

Data Sources and Quality

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

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

Number of requirements and percentages								
	Q1 2008 ²	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Percentage change Q4 2008 to Q4 2009 ³	Percentage change Q1 2008 to Q4 2009 ⁴
number of requirements								
Community Order	622	598	679	663	616	591	-1	-5
0-80 hours	300	219	241	238	216	224	2	-25
81-150 hours	246	239	257	252	258	221	-8	-10
151-199 hours	24	33	47	43	36	42	*	*
200-250 hours	51	96	113	110	92	98	2	92
251-300 hours	1	11	21	20	14	6	*	*
percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	48	37	35	36	35	38		
81-150 hours	40	40	38	38	42	37		
151-199 hours	4	6	7	6	6	7		
200-250 hours	8	16	17	17	15	17		
251-300 hours	0	2	3	3	2	1		
number of requirements								
Suspended sentence order	139	228	254	256	304	260	14	87
0-80 hours	50	62	59	54	75	49	*	*
81-150 hours	61	111	124	129	134	131	18	115
151-199 hours	12	14	17	13	24	20	*	*
200-250 hours	14	40	47	56	65	57	*	*
251-300 hours	2	1	7	4	6	3	*	*
percentage of total requirements								
0-80 hours	36	27	23	21	25	19		
81-150 hours	44	49	49	50	44	50		
151-199 hours	9	6	7	5	8	8		
200-250 hours	10	18	19	22	21	22		
251-300 hours	1	0	3	2	2	1		

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

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

3. Comparing latest quarter with the same quarter a year ago.

4. Comparing latest quarter with the last full quarter before the introduction of TKAP - see explanatory notes for more details.

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

Data Sources and Quality

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

Explanatory notes

Data quality and sources

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

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

Numbers of 100,000 and over are rounded to the nearest 1,000

Numbers from 1,000 – 99,999 are rounded to the nearest 100

Numbers from 10 – 999 are rounded to the nearest 10

Numbers under 10 are unrounded.

Tables 1-5

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

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

Tables 6-8 and figure 3

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

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

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

Quarterly comparisons

To give a good representation of the trends occurring during the life of TKAP, the most recent quarter is compared with a pre-TKAP baseline quarter (January – March 2008), the last full quarter before TKAP was introduced. In addition the latest figures are also compared with the same quarter a year ago.

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

Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Adult – An adult offender is aged 18 and over.

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

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

Reprimand and final warning – available for **juvenile** offenders. Reprimands can be given to first-time offenders for minor offences. Any further offending results in either a final warning or charge. The final warning

triggers immediate referral to a local youth offending team. Reprimands and final warnings for juveniles are the equivalent of cautions for adults. Therefore in the tables reprimands and final warnings are counted under the 'cautions' disposal category.

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

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

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

Contact points for further information

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

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