



# **Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2008**

**Supplementary note on (a) recorded crimes involving firearms and (b) violent and sexual offences involving the use of knives or sharp instruments**

This supplementary note has been produced to accompany 'Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2008'. It provides the opportunity to focus in more detail on specific aspects of the recorded crime statistics without altering the standard format of the Quarterly Update.

## A. Recorded crimes involving the use of firearms (excluding air weapons)

Provisional statistics are available for recorded crimes involving firearms other than air weapons up to June 2008. Figures in this supplementary note are for the **12 months to June 2008**, as quarterly figures for certain categories such as fatal injuries or rifles are too small to provide a meaningful trend comparison with the previous year. Quarterly figures for total firearm offences are contained in *Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2008*.

Firearms are taken to be involved in an offence if they are fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person, or used in a threat.

In the 12 months to June 2008 there were provisionally 9,306 firearm offences. This was a decrease of 556 offences or six per cent, compared with the 12 months ending June 2007. Just over two thirds of firearm offences involve no physical injury.

**Table A1 Firearm offences (excluding air weapons) by level of injury: England and Wales**

Nature of injury	Year ending June 07	Year ending June 08	% change
Fatal injuries <sup>1</sup>	53	48	-9
Serious injuries	400	374	-7
Slight injuries	2,728	2,296	-16
<b>Total injuries</b>	<b>3,181</b>	<b>2,718</b>	<b>-15</b>
Threats	5,109	5,113	0
No injuries	1,572	1,475	-6
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,862</b>	<b>9,306</b>	<b>-6</b>

<sup>1</sup> Because of the small number of fatal injuries the percentage change should be treated with caution.

The total number of offences involving firearms resulting in injury were down by 15 per cent (463 offences), in the 12 months to June 2008 compared with the previous 12 months. Firearm offences resulting in fatal injury decreased by nine per cent, from 53 in the 12 months to June 2007 to 48 in the 12 months to June 2008. Serious and slight injuries decreased by seven and 16 per cent respectively.

There were 4,137 offences where handguns were used in the 12 months to June 2008, a decrease of two per cent compared with the previous 12 months.

Imitation firearms were used in 2,258 offences, down 13 per cent or 330 offences.

**Table A2 Firearm offences (excluding air weapons) by type of weapon: England and Wales**

Weapon type	Year ending June 07	Year ending June 08	% change
Shotgun	622	612	-2
Handgun	4,223	4,137	-2
Rifle <sup>1</sup>	66	79	+20
Imitation firearm <sup>2</sup>	2,588	2,258	-13
Unidentified firearm	1,271	1,247	-2
Other firearm <sup>3</sup>	1,092	973	-11
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,862</b>	<b>9,306</b>	<b>-6</b>

<sup>1</sup> Because of the small number of offences involving rifles the percentage change should be treated with caution.

<sup>2</sup> Imitation handguns, which are converted to fire bullets like handguns, are counted as handguns.

<sup>3</sup> Other firearms include CS gas, disguised firearms, machine guns, pepper spray, stun guns and other specified weapons (majority are paintball guns).

## B. Violent and sexual offences involving the use of knives and other sharp instruments

Figures for certain type of offences that involve the use of a knife or other sharp instrument have been collected quarterly since April 2007. The offence types in 2007/08 comprised attempted murder, grievous bodily harm (GBH) with and without intent and robbery. The offence coverage was extended from April 2008 to include other violent and sexual offences likely to involve knife use. Quarterly homicide figures are planned to be available soon from the separate Homicide Index collection.

Usage of a knife or other sharp instrument is taken to be an actual stabbing (or cutting/slashing), or a threat/attempt.

Comparisons between April to June 2007 and April to June 2008 can be made for the most serious violent offences of attempted murder, GBH, robbery. They show that the overall trend is broadly flat, with the number of offences rising by less than 0.5 per cent from 5,387 to 5,413. This comparison should however be treated with caution for several reasons.

First, there has been a clarification of the counting rules in April 2008 for GBH with intent (up 29 per cent) which clarified that this offence should be classified according to whether there is a clear intent to commit GBH (to follow legal definitions) not simply on the extent of injury. At least a third of this increase is accounted for by the effects of the clarification in the counting rules (see text box on page 7 of 'Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2008'). GBH without intent fell by 31 per cent, although to some extent this will be influenced by a narrowing of offence definition to exclude some wounding offences that do not constitute GBH (the collection of information on GBH without intent started in April 2007, but according to a wider definition than subsequently used for police recorded crime from April 2008).

Second, the GBH with intent offence coverage has widened slightly, albeit to include certain offences such as poisoning, choking and causing explosions that are unlikely to involve knife use. Bearing this in mind, the GBH figures for April-June 2008 and April-June 2007 are not fully comparable.

Under the extended 2008/09 offence coverage, as listed in Table B1, there were 8,610 violent and sexual offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument in April to June 2008. Six per cent of all recorded offences in these categories involved the use of a knife/sharp instrument, although for more serious violence the proportion was much higher than this, the highest being 41 per cent for attempted murder and 33 per cent for GBH with intent.

**Table B1 Knife and sharp instrument offences, quarterly comparison and proportions of all offences, by offence type: England and Wales**

Offence type	Apr-Jun 2007	Apr-Jun 2008	% change	% of total offences (Apr-Jun 08)
Homicide <sup>1</sup>	..	..	..	..
Attempted Murder	50	64	+28	41
GBH with intent <sup>2</sup>	1,253	1,616	+29	33
GBH without intent <sup>3</sup>	662	455	-31	10
Robbery	3,422	3,278	-4	17
<i>Sub-Total: Serious Violent Offences</i>	<i>5,387</i>	<i>5,413</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>19</i>
Threats to Kill	..	287	..	15
Actual Bodily Harm	..	2,820	..	3
Rape	..	63	..	2
Sexual Assaults	..	27	..	0
<b>Total: Violent &amp; Sexual Offences<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>..</b>	<b>8,610</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>6</b>

<sup>1</sup> Knife homicides excluded from totals at present, due to incomplete data, but it is planned that quarterly figures will be available in future.

<sup>2</sup> Increase partly due to clarification in counting rules.

<sup>3</sup> The percentage change for GBH without intent is to some extent influenced by a narrowing of offence definitions to exclude some wounding offences that do not constitute GBH.

<sup>4</sup> Full offence collection not available before April 2008.

Total offences of 'More serious violence against the person' account for less than 0.5 per cent of total recorded crime.

At least two-thirds of the 26% increase in GBH with intent can be attributed to the clarification in the counting rules referred to earlier. This also influences the overall figure for 'Most serious violence against the person'. More detail surrounding this clarification is given in the text box on page 7 of 'Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2008', Home Office Statistical Bulletin 14/08.

**Table B2 Most serious violence offences, quarterly comparison: England and Wales**

Offence type	Apr-Jun 2007	Apr-Jun 2008	% change
Homicide <sup>1</sup>	202	182	-10
Corporate manslaughter	..	2	..
Attempted Murder	150	159	6
Causing death: driving offences <sup>2</sup>	116	81	-30
GBH with intent <sup>3</sup>	4,038	5,073	26
Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking	6	3	-50
<b>Most serious violence against the person</b>	<b>4,512</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>22</b>

1. Includes murder, manslaughter, infanticide and child destruction.

2. Includes offences of causing death by dangerous driving, causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs, causing death by careless driving or inconsiderate driving, causing death by driving: unlicensed drivers etc.

3. This category also includes a number of other offences that endanger life.