

Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) Phase I: Overview of key trends from a monitoring programme

Liz Ward and Alana Diamond

The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) aimed to reduce the carrying of knives, related homicides and serious stabbings among teenagers (aged 13-19) in ten police force areas. A range of local police enforcement, education and prevention interventions were implemented.

A monitoring programme collected management information from a range of sources both before and during the 'TKAP period' (July 2008 to March 2009). Given the provisional nature of some of the data, the lack of statistically robust comparison groups, the dominance of the overall trend by the largest forces, and the potential impact of non-TKAP initiatives, a degree of caution needs to be applied when interpreting these trends and attributing change directly to TKAP.

Key findings relating to the TKAP period (compared to the same period in the previous year) are as follows:

- The provisional number of TKAP stop and searches increased across all ten areas following the start of TKAP and there was a (13%) reduction in the number of recorded offensive weapon offences among people aged 19 and under, compared with an increase (8%) among those aged 20 and over.
- There was no change in the number of provisionally recorded sharp-instrument related homicides among victims aged 19 and under in TKAP areas, and a slight increase among victims aged 20 and over.
- TKAP sharp-instrument 'all violence' offences decreased (by 17%) for victims aged 19 and under. A less marked reduction (8%) was also noted for victims aged 20 years and over.
- The number of sharp-instrument robbery offences reduced (by 13%) for victims aged 19 and under, compared with an (11%) increase in victims aged 20 years and over.
- Building on earlier reductions, there was a provisional 32 per cent decrease in admissions to hospitals for assault with a sharp object among victims aged 19 and under in English TKAP areas, compared with an 18 per cent drop in non-TKAP areas. The fall in the target age group in TKAP areas was more marked than among admissions aged 20 and over, where there was a five per cent reduction.
- In line with national sentencing guidance, provisional figures indicate that tougher penalties were being administered for possession of knives or other offensive weapons offences across England and Wales in all age groups. The average custodial sentence length for these offences also increased.

These findings are encouraging, suggesting that fewer young people are becoming victims of knife crime. While caution must be applied when interpreting these trends, TKAP may well have contributed to a decline in some measures and persisting reductions in others.

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Keywords

Knife crime	Young people
Offensive weapons	Young offenders
Weapons	Crime reduction
Serious Violence	Performance monitoring
Fear of crime	

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Background

The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) was a Home Office-led intensive, time limited initiative which aimed to reduce the carrying of knives, related homicides and serious stabbings among teenagers (aged 13-19). It was launched on 5 June 2008 in response to a number of high profile knife-related murders and serious stabbing among young people, and ran until the end of March 2009. The programme was implemented in ten police force areas in England and Wales and was delivered in partnership with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the police and a range of other government departments.

Aims and Method

This report presents the key findings and an overview of trends from a monitoring programme which was established to support and inform the TKAP initiative.

Provisional monthly management information was collected from a range of sources. These include figures on police recorded knife crime, hospital admissions for assault by a sharp object, Criminal Justice System (CJS) disposals for possession of offensive weapon offences and public perceptions survey data. Where possible, data for TKAP and non-TKAP areas were collected both before and during the TKAP period (defined as July 2008 to March 2009). Due, however, to the limited baseline, the provisional nature and quality of some of the data, and the lack of statistically robust comparison areas, caution must be applied when interpreting the figures and attributing change directly to TKAP.

TKAP activities

A range of local police enforcement, education and prevention interventions were implemented and these ran alongside a number of national initiatives, some of which came under the TKAP brand. Consistent with the overall aim of the Programme – to reduce teenage knife violence – the great majority of interventions and resources were specifically targeted at the 19 and under age group. These included anti-knife campaigns and tougher sentences for carrying a knife. TKAP built on and embellished existing initiatives in the local areas, notably the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) Operation Blunt 2. This had the same aims as TKAP and targeted the same population group, and has been ongoing since May 2008, one month prior to the start of TKAP.

Results

TKAP police enforcement activity and CJS disposals for possession of offensive weapon offences

- During the TKAP period, there was an increase in the provisional figures for the number of S1/S60 stop and searches for offensive weapons conducted by the police, compared to the same period in the previous year. There was also a decrease in the proportion of searches that led to the recovery of a weapon in the TKAP areas.
- There was a (13%) reduction in the number of offenders aged 19 and under caught in possession of an offensive weapon, and an (8%) increase among offenders aged 20 and over in the TKAP areas during the intervention period, compared to the same period in the previous year. While the overall trends are driven by MPS data, the majority of TKAP forces also showed reductions in the target group.

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- In line with national sentencing guidance, tougher penalties were administered for possession of knives or other offensive weapon offences. Provisional figures show an increase (across England and Wales for all ages) in the number of disposals for offensive weapon possession offences resulting in an immediate custodial sentence, community penalty, or suspended sentence, and a decrease in the number resulting in cautions.
- When comparing TKAP and non-TKAP areas between the TKAP period and the same period in the previous year, the increase in offences resulting in immediate custody was far more pronounced in TKAP areas (37% vs. 17%), but increases were greater in non-TKAP areas for community penalties (12% vs. 19%) and suspended sentences (44% vs. 99%). There was also an increase across England and Wales among all ages in the average length of immediate custodial sentences for knife and offensive weapon possession offences.

Knife crime: victims aged 19 and under

- The number of provisionally recorded TKAP homicides in the target age group (19 years and under) did not change during the intervention period (23 recorded during the TKAP period and in the same period in the previous year) and there was a slight increase among victims aged 20 and over.
- TKAP 'all violence' offences against victims aged 19 and under decreased (by 17%), compared with a less marked decrease among those aged 20 and over (8%) during the TKAP period compared to the same period in the previous year.
- The total number of TKAP sharp-instrument robbery offences reduced (by 13%) for victims aged 19 and under and increased (by 11%) for victims aged 20 and over, comparing the TKAP period with the same period in the previous year. The trends for the two age groups diverge after the start of TKAP, with sustained reductions evident in the target age group.
- The trends for provisionally recorded homicides, 'all violence', and robbery offences were heavily dominated by the larger forces, particularly the MPS. The reported trends do not therefore reflect the results for all of the individual forces.
- Provisional figures for admissions to hospital as a result of assault with a sharp object among victims aged 19 and under began decreasing early in 2008, prior to TKAP, having previously peaked in 2006. During the TKAP period there was a 32 per cent decrease compared with the previous year, and compared to an 18 per cent drop in non-TKAP areas. The fall was more marked in the target age group than among admissions aged 20 and over, where there was a five per cent reduction.

Public perceptions of knife crime

- Public fears about knife crime increased dramatically around April/May 2008. Since then the proportion of respondents spontaneously citing knife crime as one of the most important crime issues facing Britain has fluctuated considerably. Public fears appear to be driven, understandably, by reports of knife-related homicides; media coverage on the topic of knife crime may also have influenced perceptions.

Conclusions

- The findings indicate an overall decline in recorded knife crime and hospital admissions in the target age group (19 and under). Provisional NHS admissions data suggest that the drop was more marked in the TKAP areas, though the start of this decrease does appear to predate implementation of the initiative. Trends in TKAP areas for hospital admissions and victims of robbery differed for those aged 19 and under and those aged 20 and over. This separation provides some evidence that TKAP activities may have selectively influenced the target age group, perhaps contributing to the sustained reductions in this group.
- There are some important limitations to the data: the lack of statistically robust comparison areas; the provisional nature of most of the data; the heterogeneity of the forces; and the domination of the overall trend by a handful of forces. Notably, the sheer volume of offences in the Metropolitan Police area drives the overall trend and their decrease in teenage knife-related crime may have been influenced by other initiatives, such as Operation Blunt 2.
- A better understanding of the factors which drive knife crime would inform the interpretation of these trends. These findings are, however, encouraging and suggest that fewer young people are becoming victims of knife crime. While caution must be applied when interpreting these trends, TKAP may well have contributed to a decline in some measures and persisting reductions in others.

Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) Phase I: Overview of key trends from a monitoring programme

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I. Introduction

The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP)

The Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) was a Home Office-led intensive, time limited initiative which aimed to reduce the carrying of knives, related homicides and serious stabbings among teenagers (aged 13-19). TKAP was launched on June 5th 2008 and ran until March 2009. It was developed in response to a number of high profile knife related murders and serious stabbing among young people, which generated an increase in public concerns about knife crime, and a series of research publications exploring the issue of knife crime, its prevalence and causes (e.g. Home Affairs Committee, 2009; Silvestri *et al.*, 2009; Aynsley-Green, 2009). The programme was delivered in partnership with other government departments and agencies including the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the police, Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Department of Health (DH) and the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

TKAP was implemented initially in ten police force areas, known as TKAP Tier One, and these were selected for their high rates of stabbings and willingness to take part. The ten areas were Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), West Midlands, Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Nottinghamshire, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, South Wales, Lancashire, Thames Valley and Essex. An additional four areas were selected later in 2008, but these were not included in the TKAP monitoring programme, which was established alongside the original initiative and aimed to assess TKAP progress in relation to the stated aims.

In spring 2009, TKAP Phase II was launched, which has a broader scope in that it aims to tackle serious youth violence among 13 to 24 year olds and will be implemented in 16 police force areas, including the ten areas included in this report.

This report presents an overview of key trends from data on knife crime collected as part of a monitoring exercise which informed and supported the delivery of the TKAP.

TKAP interventions

In most areas, TKAP built upon existing work to tackle knife crime and serious violence among young people and the initiative was established against a back-drop of national activity, some of which were conducted under the TKAP brand and also the Youth Crime Action Programme (YCAP; H.M. Government, 2008),

Within the TKAP areas, £2m was initially invested in enabling the forces to develop and build upon existing activity to tackle knife crime among teenagers. TKAP police forces were provided with 1,150 additional search arches and wands to detect offensive weapons. These were employed alongside the targeting of gangs, after school patrolling, and the intelligence-led patrolling of 'hot spots' where weapon-related violence and robberies were known to occur. All of the forces ran weapons-awareness courses, and many produced DVDs or posters highlighting the dangers of knife crime in local areas. Focus groups, youth crime forums and youth conferences were widely used to engage young people and involve them in the programme. From January to March 2009, an additional £3.4m was invested in TKAP areas to fund additional after-school patrols, and initiatives such as the Safer Schools Partnership and Operation Stay Safe, which returned at-risk, unsupervised children to their homes. Further details of TKAP activities, and their connection to existing measures, were obtained through a series of interviews with TKAP practitioners and stakeholders. The results of this work are summarised in Appendix A.

In addition to the interventions which were implemented specifically under the remit of TKAP, local areas – both TKAP and non-TKAP – increased their efforts to reduce knife crime. The largest of these were Operation Blunt and Blunt 2, launched by the MPS in November 2004 and May 2008 respectively. Operation Blunt 2 ran alongside TKAP

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and its strategic aims – like those of TKAP – were to reduce knife-related homicides and serious violence, and to reduce the carrying of knives among teenagers. TKAP funds were used to embellish Blunt 2, and comprise a small part of Blunt 2 funding; this has financed a range of enforcement based operations involving intelligence-led stop and search activities and weapons sweeps, the enhanced use of police powers to stop and search, and the deployment of screening arches in key locations¹.

Key initiatives to reduce knife-related crime

Key initiatives aimed at reducing knife crime among young people are detailed below. Some were included within the TKAP and/or YCAP brand, and many started before TKAP was launched in June 2008.

- The Home Office launched a £3m three-year national anti-knife campaign in May 2008, including radio, internet and mobile phone advertising.
- The Home Office provided £300k to the organisation 'Be Safe', to train new guides to run weapons-awareness programmes. To date, over 95,850 young people have attended these sessions.
- DCSF, together with ACPO and the YJB, brought the Safer Schools Partnership into mainline policy in 2006.
- Twenty-one major retailers signed up to a Six-Point Commitment to stop the illegal sales of knives to those under 18. Over 1,700 'test-purchase operations' have been carried out to check for the under-age sale of knives; management information from TKAP forces suggests that there has been a reduction in failure rates since June 2008.
- In September 2008, the YJB rolled out the Knife Possession Prevention Programmes (KPPPs) in 12 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) within the TKAP areas. The programmes follow a common framework which focuses on attitudes to knife carrying, the law, and the consequences of knife crime. To date, 270 young people have been through the pilots. A full report is available from the YJB (www.yjb.gov.uk)
- TKAP has worked to improve data sharing between health professionals and local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs); the 2009 NHS Operating Framework now requires that Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) ensure that hospitals work with CDRPs to identify and share with police depersonalised A&E data to support local action on reducing violent crime – especially knife crime in TKAP areas.
- Additional funding was provided for forces to deliver extra positive activities on Friday and Saturday nights in high-risk areas.
- The Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP) ran from October 2007-March 2008 in London, Manchester, West Midlands, and Merseyside and aimed to reduce gang and gun-related serious violence (Dawson, 2008).

A range of tougher penalties on knife crime have been implemented nationally. Again some penalties were specifically aimed at young people and many predate TKAP.

- In July 2008, ACPO issued guidance that anyone aged under 16 caught in possession of a knife should receive a formal warning coupled with a knife education scheme, and people over 16 should expect to be prosecuted for their first offence.
- Revised guidelines were issued by the Sentencing Guidelines Council stating that from August 2008 the starting point for sentencing first-time adult offenders caught in possession of a knife who plead not guilty should be 12 weeks in custody.
- From 1 September 2008, MOJ introduced compulsory 'intensive community payback work' for offenders receiving the maximum sentence of 300 hours for knife possession.

Report outline

The following sections detail the methodology employed in the subsequent chapters.

Results from the TKAP monitoring programme will be presented in three sections:

1) Enforcement activity; 2) Knife crime; and 3) Public perceptions of knife crime.

¹ No published evaluations of Operation Blunt or Operation Blunt II were available at the time of publication.

2. Method

A monitoring programme was established and provisional management information was collected to assess the progress of TKAP and monitor the initiative against its stated aims. This enabled an interrupted time-series analysis, albeit one based on a limited number of data points. To reduce the data burden on police forces (see Home Office, 2008) this information was only obtained from the ten TKAP forces.

Knife crime

As age-related recorded crime information is not included in the Home Office's National Statistics collection on sharp-instrument-related crime, an entirely separate data stream was established with the ten TKAP forces. Each police force submitted monthly provisional age-related data² on a selection of knife and sharp-instrument-related violence against the person, robbery and possession offences, as well as information on searches conducted under sections 1 (S1) and 60 (S60) of the Police and Criminal Justice Act 1984³ during the TKAP operational period.

The special TKAP data collection ran from June 2008 to March 2009 and 'baseline figures' (April 2007 to May 2008) were also obtained for the same offence types from all TKAP forces. Merseyside were unable to provide data for 2007/08 (except for provisionally recorded homicides) and Essex were reviewing their figures for this period at the time of publication.

Figures on knife and other offensive weapon offences, Criminal Justice System (CJS) disposals (extracted from the Police National Computer (PNC)), admissions to hospital resulting from assaults with a sharp object and public perception of knife crime were also collected. Where possible, figures were obtained for both TKAP and non-TKAP areas, both prior to and during the TKAP period.

More details about the nature and scope of all the data sources included in this report can be found in Appendix G (Technical notes).

Interviews

Interviews were held in 2009 with 42 key stakeholders across the ten areas to provide insight into the experiences, perceptions and views of key practitioners and stakeholders about the implementation and delivery of TKAP. The results of this study, conducted by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research at Kings College, University of London are summarised in Appendix A.

Data are also presented within this report from the Ipsos Mori "Crime tracker" quota sample survey (various dates). These include public perceptions of knife crime at a local and national level.

Terminology and definitions

While this report refers to 'knife crime' throughout, it is recognised that most incidents relate to sharp-instruments in general, and are not restricted to knives alone (See Technical notes for details).

Although TKAP was announced on 5 June 2008, some local activities – e.g. enforcement activities in some of the forces – did not commence until late June/early July and for the purpose of this report, 'the TKAP period' is defined as July 2008-March 2009.

² This report presents figures for recorded offences and admissions to hospital where offenders or victims are aged 19 and under, and aged 20 and over.

³ Section 1 stop and searches are for stolen property, going equipped to steal, or offensive weapons; Section 60 stop and searches in anticipation of violence' are for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments.

The recorded crime information which was collected specifically to monitor TKAP will be referred to throughout this report as TKAP recorded crime (e.g. TKAP homicides, TKAP robberies, etc).

Strengths and weaknesses of the monitoring programme

The programme's main asset is the wide range of information it draws upon: recorded crime, CJS disposals, hospital admissions, social surveys. This added an element of triangulation to the assessment of TKAP, giving greater confidence to the findings. It does, however, have a number of limitations and as such it is unable to answer counterfactual questions about what would have happened in the absence of TKAP. Therefore, caution must be applied when interpreting findings and attributing changes directly to the TKAP interventions.

Some important methodological weaknesses are detailed as follows:

- Police forces were first asked to provide the Home Office, via the statutory Annual Data Requirement (ADR), with statistics on selected violent and other offences involving knives in 2007/08; thus, there is limited baseline (i.e. pre-TKAP) data available for knife crime and a full assessment of trends is limited.
- As the police forces with the highest rates of knife crime participated in TKAP, there are strong pre-TKAP differences between TKAP and non-TKAP areas; consequently, there is no recorded crime comparison group for the TKAP forces. Furthermore, a small number of areas account for the majority of knife crime and dominate the overall trends; as a result, any assessment of overall change is likely to be strongly influenced by variation in these areas.
- TKAP built upon and embellished a number of existing local initiatives which were aimed at teenagers, notably the MPS's Operation Blunt 2 which started in May 2009, as well as number of national level interventions. The interconnected nature of these initiatives and their varying operational periods makes it difficult to isolate an individual intervention which in turn makes it difficult to interpret trends.
- It should also be noted that data for recorded crime, especially less serious violence, can be affected by changes in police enforcement activity and public reporting. Furthermore, both recorded offences and NHS hospital admissions can be affected by changes in recording practices at both a national and local level.

3. Results

1. Enforcement activity

Key findings:

- The number of TKAP stop and searches increased across all ten areas (compared with published figures for 2007/08) following the start of TKAP, providing evidence that the enforcement element of the programme was implemented.
- There was a decrease in the proportion of these searches that led to arrest/weapon recovery in TKAP areas, which, without further evidence of what the underlying causes might be, could be interpreted in a variety of ways.
- There was a (13%) reduction in the number of offenders aged 19 and under caught in possession of an offensive weapon, and an (8%) increase among offenders aged 20 and over in the TKAP areas during the TKAP period, compared to the same period in the previous year. The overall trend is heavily dominated by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).

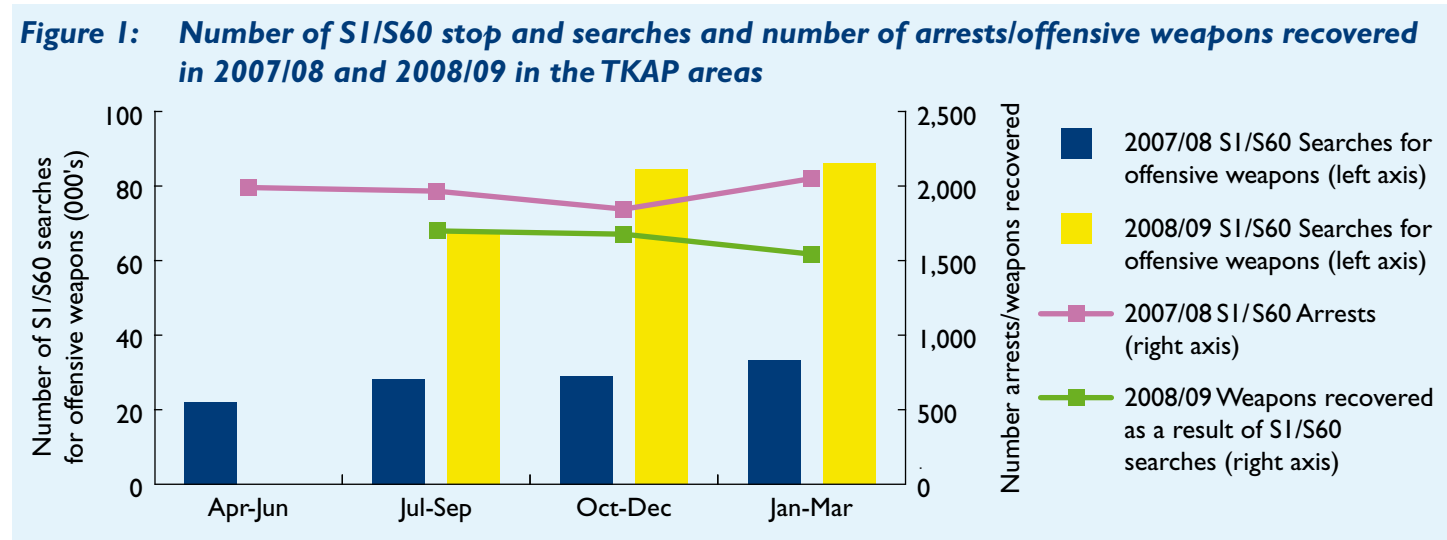
- In line with national sentencing guidelines, tougher penalties were administered for possession of knives or other offensive weapon offences. Provisional figures show an increase (across England and Wales for all ages) in the number of disposals for offensive weapon possession offences resulting in an immediate custodial sentence, community penalty, or suspended sentence, and a decrease in the number resulting in cautions.
- When comparing TKAP and non-TKAP areas between the TKAP period and the same period in the previous year, the increase in offences resulting in immediate custody was far more pronounced in TKAP areas (37% vs. 17%), but increases were greater in non-TKAP areas for community penalties (12% vs. 19%) and suspended sentences (44% vs. 99%). There was also an increase, across England and Wales among all ages, in the average length of immediate custodial sentences for knife and offensive weapon possession offences.

Each TKAP police force provided the Home Office with provisional monthly management figures on S1/S60⁴ stop and search activities for offensive weapons (excluding firearms), and weapons recovered as a result of searches (See Appendix B for details).

Police stop and search activities

Figure 1 presents quarterly figures across all TKAP areas in 2007/08 (Povey *et al.*, 2009b) and quarterly provisional TKAP stop and searches data, collected as part of the TKAP monitoring exercise from each TKAP force from June 2008 to March 2009. The figure shows that more searches were conducted during the TKAP operational period compared to the same period the previous year⁵. Note also that the MPS accounted for 71 per cent of TKAP stop and searches and 64 per cent of weapons recovered between June 2008 and March 2009, and therefore some of this increase is likely to be the result of Operation Blunt 2 activities.

Previously published statistics for the TKAP areas in 2007/08 indicate that seven per cent of offensive weapon searches resulted in arrest (Povey *et al.*, 2009b). In June 2008, four per cent of TKAP stop and searches resulted in the recovery of an offensive weapon and this figure dropped to three per cent between July and August 2008, and two per cent thereafter. This reduction is consistent with Figure 1: as the number of TKAP searches increases, there is a decrease in the number of weapons found.



Notes: To reduce the data burden on forces, TKAP stop and search data were only collected for management information from June 2008 onwards; figure includes searches for knives and other offensive weapons (excluding firearms); West Midlands did not provide provisional TKAP stop and search data for June, July or August 2008.

Source: 2007/08 stop and searches and related arrests (Povey *et al.*, 2009a); 2008/09 stop and searches and weapons recovered - TKAP monitoring programme.

4 Section 1 stop and searches are for stolen property, going equipped to steal, or offensive weapons; Section 60 'stop and searches in anticipation of violence' are for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments.

5 These datasets are from different sources and provide slightly different information: both sets of figures provide information on stops and searches: whereas Povey *et al.* only provide figures on arrests, the TKAP data provides information on weapons recovered; published figures for 2008/09 were not available at the time of publication.

TKAP recorded possession offences

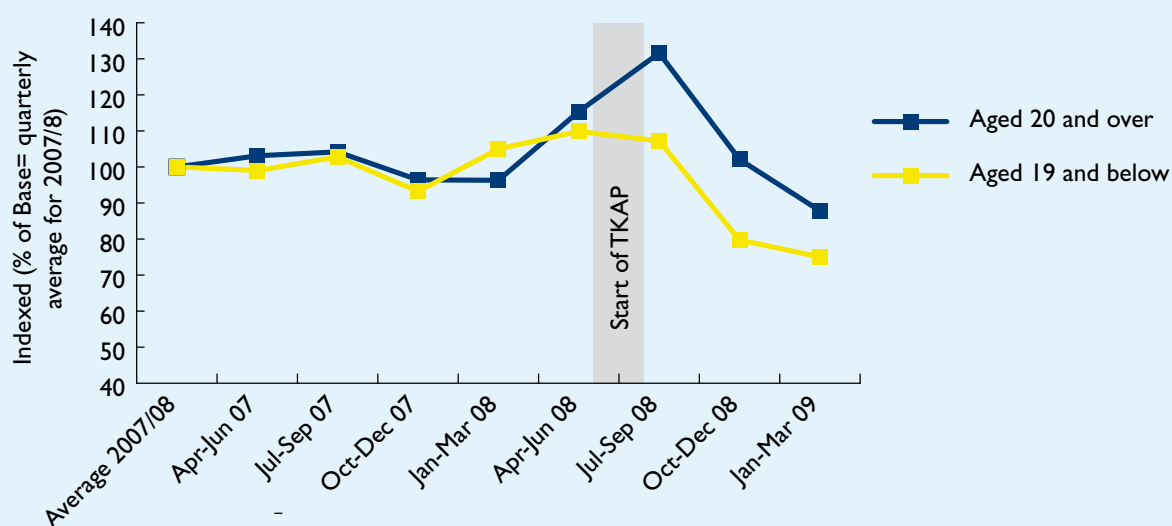
When compared with the same period in the previous year, the number of TKAP possession offences recorded by the police during the TKAP period (July 2008 to March 2009) where the offender was aged 19 and under decreased by 13 per cent (from 2,855 to 2,485), and those where the offender was aged 20 and over increased by eight per cent (4,668 to 5,055).

Figure 2 presents TKAP recorded offences for possession of a knife or other offensive weapons (excluding firearms) in nine of the TKAP areas (excluding Merseyside; indexed to the quarterly average for 2007/08). TKAP possession offences were relatively stable across 2007/08 for both age groups, and there were increases in both groups around the start of TKAP, followed by decreases throughout the TKAP period. By the end of the TKAP period, the figures for both age groups fell below the average figure for 2007/08.

The vast majority of TKAP stop and searches and 33 per cent of TKAP possession offences among all ages were accounted for by the MPS, and a large proportion of these are likely to be related to Operation Blunt 2 (and to some extent TKAP) which involved extensive stop and search activities. Moreover, while the overall trend is dominated by the MPS, the majority of forces also reported a decrease in the target group (see Appendix D for individual force breakdown).

For stop and search data and possession offences, it is difficult to interpret findings in part because it is hard to define success for these types of police activity data: an increase in possession offences or arrests may mean that more offenders are successfully being caught, or that more people are carrying knives; a reduction may suggest that fewer people are carrying knives - perhaps as a result of educational or preventative measures - or that those individuals who continue to carry knives have become more skilled at identifying and avoiding police search points.

Figure 2: Indexed graph (base=quarterly average for 2007/08) of TKAP recorded offences for possession of knives and other offensive weapons where the offenders were aged 19 and under, or 20 and over, in the nine TKAP areas from April 2007 to March 2009



Criminal Justice System (CJS) disposals for possession of knives and other offensive weapon offences

New tougher sentencing guidelines were published in June 2008 and came into effect in August 2008, and ACPO guidance was issued in July 2008 which emphasised that people over 16 years of age could expect to be prosecuted on their first offensive weapon possession offence. Consistent with these changes, provisional figures for England and Wales for all ages suggest that the number of cautions given for knife or offensive weapon possession offences have decreased

and the number of offences resulting in immediate custody, suspended sentences, or community penalties have increased (Ministry of Justice, 2009).

When comparing TKAP and non-TKAP areas between the TKAP period and the same period in the previous year, the increase in offences resulting in immediate custody was far more pronounced in TKAP areas (37% vs. 17%), but increases were greater in non-TKAP areas for community penalties (12% vs. 19%) and suspended sentences (44% vs. 99%) (Table 1; Ministry of Justice, 2009).

Table 1: Number of provisional CJS disposals for offences involving the possession of a knife or other offensive weapon (excluding firearms): all ages

	TKAP areas			Non-TKAP areas		
	Jul 07-Mar 08	Jul 08-Mar 09	% change	Jul 07 -Mar 08	Jul 08 -Mar 09	% change
Caution ^a	3,930	2,581	-34.3%	3,711	2,705	-27.1%
Absolute/Conditional discharge	529	373	-29.5%	795	335	-57.9%
Fine	502	391	-22.1%	442	377	-14.7%
Community penalties	3,062	3,437	+12.2%	2,557	3,046	+19.1%
Suspended sentence	835	1,204	+44.2%	523	1,041	+99.0%
Immediate custody	1,760	2,409	+36.9%	1,701	1,990	+17.0%
Other disposal	246	228	-7.3%	319	292	-8.5%
Total	10,864	10,623	-2.2%	10,048	9,786	-2.6%

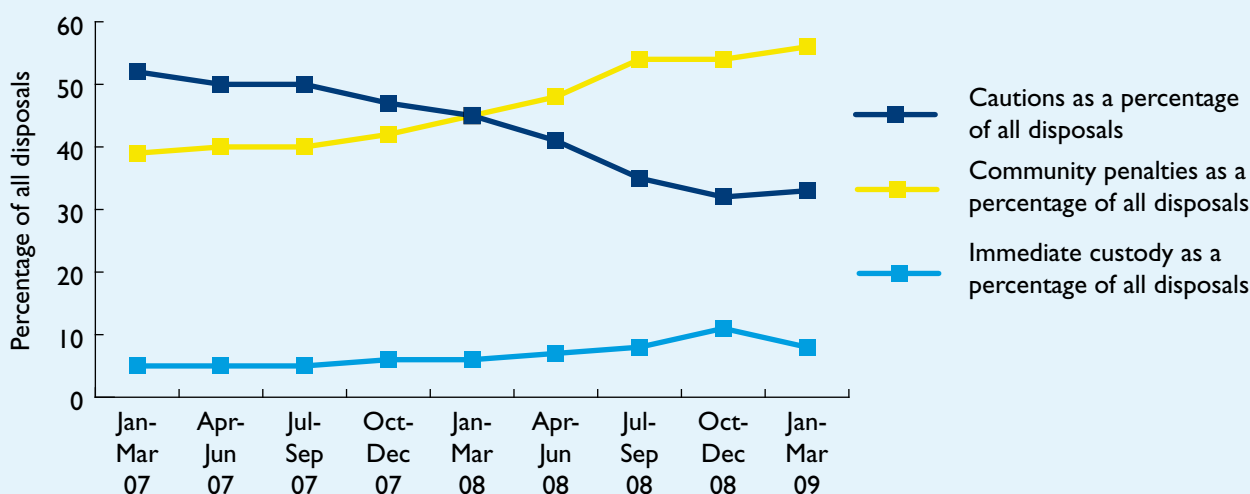
a Cautions includes juveniles receiving reprimands and final warnings

Source: Provisional figures, Ministry of Justice (2009)

CJS disposals for possession of knives and other offensive weapons offences among those aged 10-17 in TKAP and non-TKAP areas

Figure 3 presents provisional figures for CJS disposals for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon (excluding firearms) offences among 10 to 17 year olds in the ten TKAP areas.

Figure 3: Proportion of provisional CJS disposals for knife and offensive weapon possession offences resulting in cautions, community penalties, or immediate custody – 10 to 17 year-olds in TKAP areas (quarterly figures between Jan-Mar 2007 and Jan-Mar 2009)



Source: Provisional figures, Ministry of Justice (2009)

The pattern is broadly the same as that indicated in Table 1, with a decline in the proportion of offences resulting in cautions (reprimands and final warnings), and an increase in the proportion resulting in immediate custody and community penalties. The decline in cautions appears to begin in 2007; the trends are, however, steeper in the months between April to June and October to December 2008, which may suggest that the tougher penalties for knife possession introduced nationwide did lead to changes in CJS disposals in this target group.

In non-TKAP areas there was an increase in the proportion of disposals resulting in community penalties and cautions (reprimands and final warnings) but no clear increases in the proportion resulting in immediate custody (See Fig. C2, Appendix C; Ministry of Justice, 2009).

CJS disposals for possession of knives and other offensive weapons offences among those aged 18 and over in TKAP and non-TKAP areas

The decreased use of cautions for possession of offensive weapon offences was also seen among those aged 18 years and over - see Figures C1 and C3, Appendix C.

Sentencing length

There was an overall increase in the provisional figures for the average length of immediate custodial sentences for knife and offensive weapon possession offences. Comparing the TKAP period (July 2008 to March 2009) with the same period in the previous year, the average length of an immediate custodial sentence for adults in England and Wales increased from 134 to 177 days (a 33% increase), and for juveniles increased from 170 to 203 days (a 20% increase). In TKAP areas, there was a 24 per cent increase in the average sentence length for offenders of all ages (141 to 174 days), and in non-TKAP areas there was a 41 per cent increase (132 to 185 days) across the same periods.

These increases have been reflected in the ongoing rises in the prison population sentenced for possession of offensive weapons offences: according to recent figures published by the MOJ, 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 January and March 2009 compared with the same period in 2008 (Ministry of Justice, 2009).

II. Knife crime

Key findings:

- There were 23 provisionally recorded TKAP homicides of victims aged 19 and under during the TKAP period; the same number as during the equivalent period in the previous year. Time-series analysis showed that homicides among victims aged 19 and under peaked shortly after the start of TKAP but dropped sharply and subsequently declined throughout the TKAP period. A similar pattern was shown for victims aged 20 and over.
- TKAP 'all violence' offences involving knives or sharp-instruments against victims aged 19 and under decreased during the TKAP period (by 17%) compared with the same period in the previous year. There was an overall downward trend for victims aged 19 and under, which was more pronounced than for victims aged 20 and over, and which continued throughout the TKAP period.
- TKAP robbery offences involving knives or sharp-instruments reduced for victims aged 19 and under (a 13% drop comparing July 08-March 09 with the same period in the previous year), and increased (by 11%) for victims aged 20 and over. The number of offences for victims in both age groups dropped just before the start of TKAP; the number of victims in the target age group remained stable while the number of older victims increased dramatically; this divergence may be evidence for the effect of TKAP activities.
- Overall trends for provisionally recorded TKAP homicides, 'all violence' offences, and robbery offences were all heavily dominated by offences recorded by the MPS and a few of the other larger forces, and the sustained reduction in TKAP robberies in the target group is nearly entirely accounted for by MPS figures. Thus, these trends are not representative of some of the individual TKAP force areas.

- The number of provisional admissions to English NHS hospitals of those aged 19 and under following assault with a sharp object began to decrease early in 2008, prior to the start of TKAP. This trend continued and there was a 30 per cent decrease in the number of hospital admissions in TKAP areas during the TKAP period, compared with the previous year, and compared with a 19 per cent drop in non-TKAP areas. For victims aged 20 and over there was a nine per cent drop in TKAP areas, and a five per cent increase in non-TKAP areas. The proportional decrease in sharp object assault admissions of victims ages 19 and under in TKAP areas was greater than that for all assaults, suggesting a particular decline for sharp object assaults in this group.

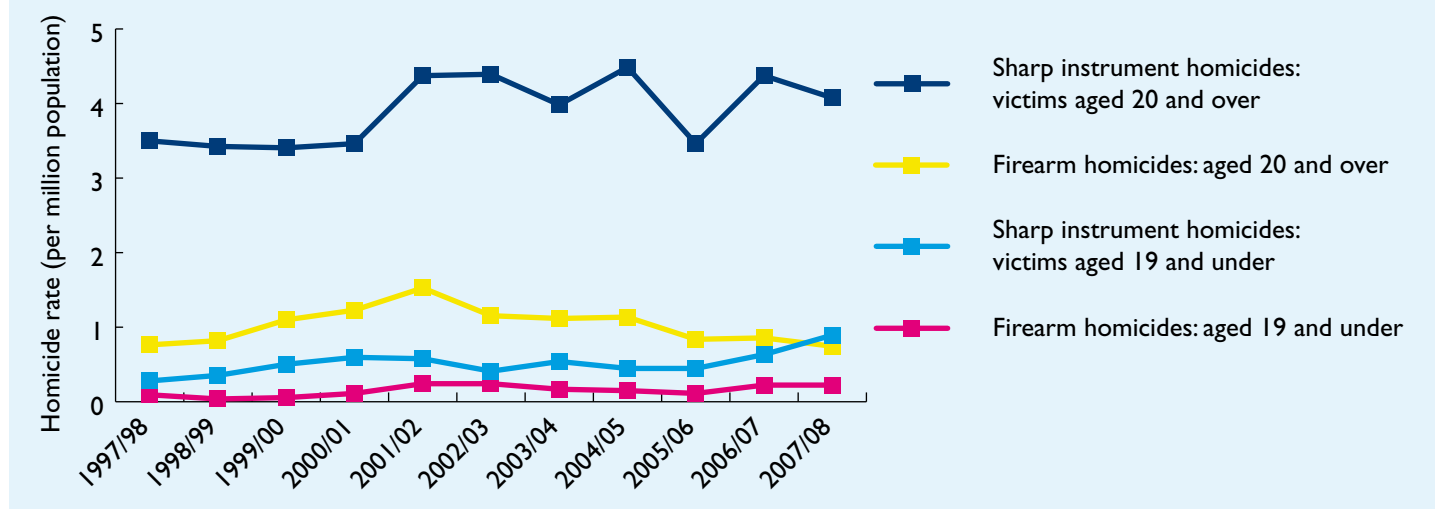
General pre-TKAP trends

To contextualise TKAP findings, it is useful to examine general knife crime trends.

Homicide

Figure 4 presents sharp-instrument homicide rates (per million population) across England and Wales where the victim was aged 19 and under or 20 and over, and also includes, for comparison, firearm homicide rates for the two age groups. While the rate of firearm homicide victims for both those aged 19 and under and those aged 20 and over has remained generally stable since 2001/02, the rate of sharp-instrument homicide victims aged 20 and over, since 2001/02, has been erratic. Most importantly, there were year-on-year increases in the number of victims aged 19 years and under between 2005/06 and 2007/08 (Povey *et al.*, 2009a).

Figure 4: Rate (per population million) of sharp-instrument and firearm homicides (victims aged 19 and under/20 and over) in England and Wales between 1997/98 and 2007/08



Sources: Recorded crime: Povey *et al.*, (2009a); Population estimates 2007/08: Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Violent crime

The number of violent offences reported to the British Crime Survey (BCS) peaked in 1995 (at over four million) among people aged 16 and over and has gradually decreased since; there was a 12 per cent drop in violent incidents between 2006/07 and 2007/08 (2.5 to 2.2 million; Walker *et al.*, 2009). Weapons were used in 24 per cent of violent incidents that were reported to the BCS during 2007/08; knives specifically were used in six per cent and this proportion has remained at or below eight per cent since 1995 (Walker *et al.*, 2009). Police forces began providing the Home Office with National Statistics on selected serious offences involving knives in 2007/08; therefore, historical national trends for police recorded knife crime are not available. In 2007/08, 25,013 (21%) of serious violent offences involved knives or 'sharp-instruments'; they were used in 40 per cent of attempted murders, 38 per cent of wounding offences with intent to do Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), a fifth of all robberies (Walker *et al.*, 2009).

Table 2 presents recorded knife crime figures for 2007/08, prior to TKAP implementation, as rates per population, for each of the ten TKAP police force area and across non-TKAP areas. For all offence types, sharp-instrument rates for selected crimes across TKAP areas in 2007/08 were around double that reported in non-TKAP areas. South Wales reported the highest rate of knife/sharp-instrument wounding, whereas the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) recorded the highest knife/sharp-instrument robbery rates. It is clear that the extent and nature of knife crime prior to TKAP differed between TKAP and non-TKAP areas, and between the ten areas.

Table 2: 2007/08 Sharp-instrument violent offence rates (TKAP and non-TKAP forces per million population)

	2007/08 Rates per population (millions)				
	Homicides	Attempted murder	Wounding	GBH without intent	All robbery
Essex	1.8	3.6	53.3	6.0	110.2
Greater Manchester	5.9	7.4	182.9	50.1	626.5
Lancashire	9.0	5.5	95.2	31.7	116.6
Metropolitan	10.4	8.5	133.5	125.7	1056.4
Merseyside	6.6	2.2	230.5	38.4	288.1
Nottinghamshire	2.8	4.7	115.6	25.6	373.3
South Wales	4.1	0.0	271.4	37.5	167.9
Thames Valley	2.8	7.4	40.7	27.8	217.1
West Midlands	5.8	5.4	215.8	142.3	655.0
West Yorkshire	5.6	4.6	141.6	34.7	242.5
All TKAP areas	6.7	6.1	144.0	74.0	571.6
Non-TKAP areas	3.6	3.3	61.7	31.6	116.4
Total (England & Wales)	5.0	4.5	98.1	50.4	317.5

Sources: Homicide data from Povey *et al.*, 2009a; other recorded crime figures from Walker *et al.*, 2009. Population estimates, 2007/08: Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Provisionally recorded homicides during the TKAP period

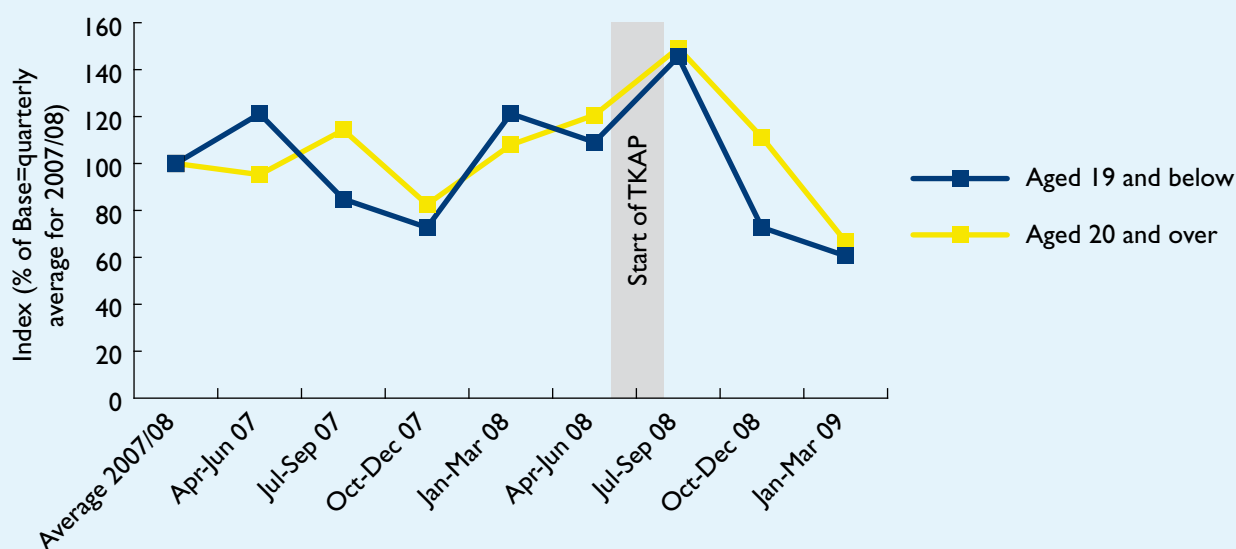
During the TKAP period (July 2008 to March 2009), there were 23 provisionally recorded sharp-instrument homicides in the 19-and-under age group - exactly the same number as recorded in the same period in the previous year - and 103 provisionally recorded TKAP sharp-instrument homicide victims aged 20 and over (up 7.3% from 96 between July 07 and March 08).

While the overall number of homicides victims aged 19 and under was unchanged, Figure 5 shows that, over time, the number of provisional TKAP sharp-instrument homicides of victims aged 19 and under peaked just after the start of TKAP and has declined since. Given that the published figures for the TKAP areas previously quoted (see Figure 4) suggest an increase between 2005/06 and 2007/08 in sharp-instrument homicides among younger people, these findings are encouraging.

A very similar trend was observed for the number of homicide victims aged 20 and over (see Figure 5).

It should be noted that these numbers are small, and the figures provisional; therefore, caution must be taken in interpreting these statistics.

Figure 5: Indexed graph (base = average quarterly figure for 2007/08) of TKAP provisionally recorded knife/sharp-instrument homicides where the victims were aged 19 and under, or 20 and over, in the ten TKAP areas from April 2007 to March 2009



Homicides across the TKAP areas

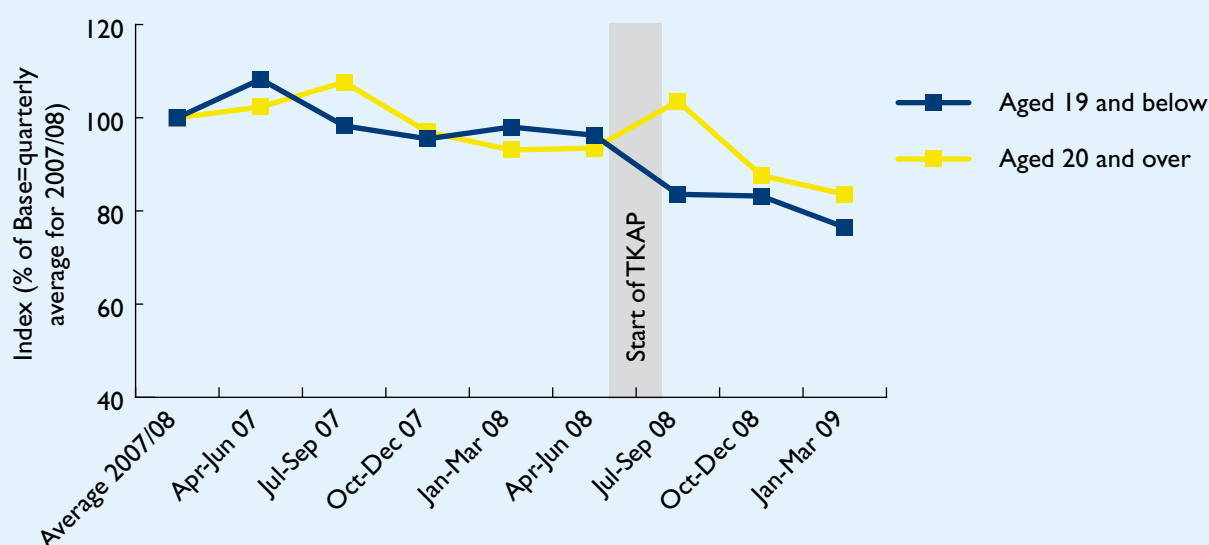
For most of the TKAP forces, the numbers of homicides are far too small to analyse; indeed, only Greater Manchester Police (GMP), West Yorkshire and the MPS recorded five or more homicide in TKAP’s target age group across the two-year period. The MPS accounted for 41 of the 65 provisionally recorded homicides of victims aged 19 and under and GMP accounted for eight. West Yorkshire provisionally recorded seven homicide victims aged 19 and under between July 2007 and March 2008, but recorded no homicides of victims in this age group during the TKAP period; given the small numbers of homicides recorded overall, the reduction in West Yorkshire heavily influences the overall trend (see Appendix D for individual force breakdown).

Violent crime during the TKAP period

There was a 17 per cent decrease in TKAP ‘all violence’⁶ offences in the target age group (from 2,304 to 1,921 offences) in the nine TKAP areas (excluding Merseyside) during the TKAP period (July 2008 to March 2009) compared to the same period in the previous year, and compared to an eight per cent decrease in victims aged 20 and over (from 7,486 to 6,909) across the equivalent period.

⁶ Due to clarifications in the Home Office Counting Rules (see Appendix G: Technical notes for details) it is not possible to directly compare the five violent offences included in Table 2 between 2007/08 and 2008/09. As a result, a measure of ‘all violence’ is used in this report, which includes provisionally recorded sharp-instrument related homicides, attempted murder, threats to kill, wounding or carrying out an act endangering life, inflicting grievous bodily harm without intent, and actual bodily harm and other injuries.

Figure 6: Indexed graph (base = average quarterly figure for 2007/08) of recorded TKAP ‘all violence’ offences involving knives/sharp-instruments (victims aged 19 and under/20 and over) in nine of the ten TKAP areas (April 2007 – March 2009)



These figures show an improvement in TKAP ‘all violence’ crime rates among victims aged 19 years and under in TKAP areas. This is consistent with the indexed trends in Figure 6, which show an overall downward trend among those aged 19 and under. The decrease appears to start around the start of TKAP but continues during the operational period. The number of victims aged 20 and over peaked in both years in July-September and also show a slight overall downwards trend. The drop is more persuasive in the younger age group and the downward shift down appears to be most pronounced during the TKAP period.

While the figures are encouraging, given the very limited baseline data available to analyse historical trends, and the absence of any comparison group, they should be interpreted with caution.

‘All violence’ offences across TKAP areas

Appendix D presents a force-level break-down of TKAP ‘all violence’ recorded offences.

The MPS accounted for 46 per cent of ‘all violence’ offences recorded across the two-year period and heavily dominates the trend shown in Figure 6. Comparing the TKAP period with the same months (July to March) in the previous year, MPS recorded 21 per cent fewer offences for victims aged 19 and under (1,205 to 953).

The trends over time for the other nine forces (excluding Merseyside) share few similarities, with peaks occurring at different times, both before and after the start of TKAP.

Five forces show overall decreases in victims of ‘all violence’ offences aged 19 and under comparing the TKAP period with the equivalent period in the previous year: Essex (107 to 55)⁷, Lancashire (103 to 84), South Wales (57 to 37), West Midlands (341 to 274), and West Yorkshire (225 to 194) whilst the remaining three forces show increases over the equivalent time period: Thames Valley (75 to 107), Nottinghamshire (54 to 74) and Greater Manchester Police (137 to 143).

The differences found between TKAP forces emphasises the need to apply caution when interpreting the overall figures discussed above. The overall trend is clearly very heavily influenced by a few of the larger forces – i.e. the MPS and West Midlands – which have masked changes taking place within the smaller areas.

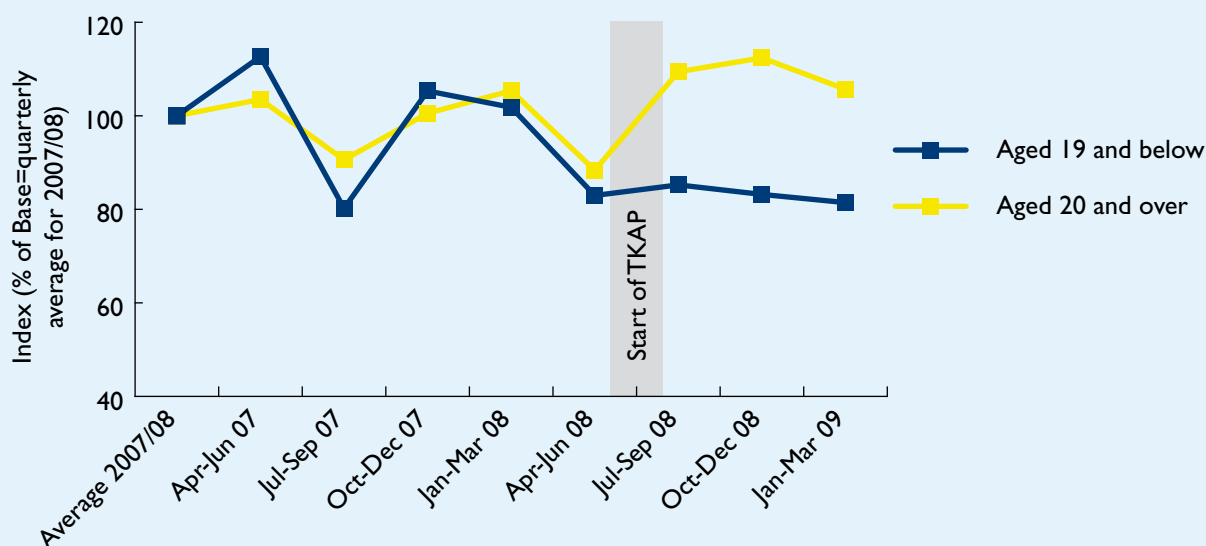
⁷ Essex are currently reviewing their figures for the 2007/08 period.

Robbery offences during the TKAP period

Comparing the TKAP period to the same period in the previous year, there was a 13 per cent reduction (3,948 to 3,433) in the number of sharp-instrument-related recorded robbery offences among victims aged 19 and under, compared with an 11 per cent increase in the number involving victims aged 20 and over (5,308 to 5,863).

Consistent with these statistics, Figure 7 shows a reduction in the number of recorded robbery offences involving knives or sharp-instruments where the victim is aged 19 and below and an increase in offences where the victim is aged 20 and over. Both trends decline immediately before the start of TKAP but subsequently diverge, with the number of victims aged 20 and over increasing sharply. This divergence is particularly noticeable given that these trends are closely matched throughout 2007/08; TKAP activities may have contributed the sustained reductions in the target age group across the TKAP period.

Figure 7: Indexed graph (base = average quarterly figure for 2007/08) of recorded robbery offences involving knives/sharp-instruments (victims aged 19 and under/20 and over) in nine of the ten TKAP areas (April 2007 – March 2009)



'Robbery' offences across TKAP areas

As with other offences, MPS accounts for the vast majority of TKAP robbery offences involving victims aged 19 and under (67% prior to TKAP: between July 2007 and March 2008), and the 26 per cent reduction recorded by the MPS (from 2,664 to 1,966) accounts for almost all of the total reduction in robbery in the target age group (see Appendix D for force-level breakdown of robbery data).

As shown in Table D4 (Appendix D), seven of the nine TKAP forces (excluding Merseyside) reported increases in the number of robbery victims aged 19 and under, and eight of the forces (all except GMP) reported increases in offences involving victims aged 20 and over⁸. Thus, of the larger forces, the MPS is almost entirely accountable for the divergence between trends shown in Figure 7.

Robbery as a proportion of all crime

Figure D2 (Appendix D) shows that the proportion of violent crime (but not all crime) accounted for by sharp-instrument robbery offences for victims aged 19 and under and 20 and over showed a very similar trend to that shown in Figure 7. This provides some evidence that the sustained reductions in robberies involving younger victims do not simply reflect an overall drop in violent crime.

⁸ Essex are currently reviewing their figures for the 2007/08 period.

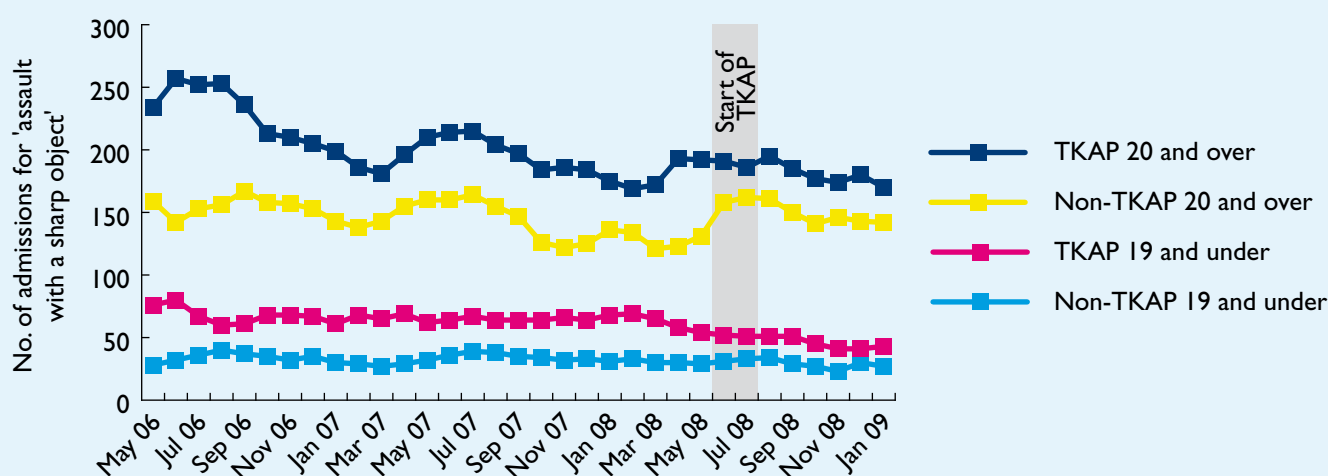
The 'hump' in the proportion of violent crimes accounted for by robbery offences in both age groups immediately prior to TKAP may indicate that subsequent reductions actually reflect a 'regression to the mean' effect⁹, especially as the proportion of violent crime accounted for by younger robbery victims does not drop below the proportion recorded between July and September 2007. In absence of further baseline data, or a comparison group, it is difficult to interpret this trend or its cause.

Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object: general trend prior to TKAP

The number of hospital admissions, in England, for wounds suffered as the result of assault with a sharp object arguably represents the clearest measure of serious stabbings, as it is not subject to the same issues of reporting and recording as crime data; though it should be noted these figures do not include those people who attended an Accident and Emergency department, but were not subsequently admitted to hospital.

Among victims of all ages, the number of hospital admissions appears to have decreased in all areas and across all age groups since 2006 (See Figure 8); prior to this, since 2002/03 there were year-on-year increases in the total number of admissions. The decrease was greater among those aged 19 years and under than those aged 20 years and over and the drop was especially marked among younger people in the TKAP areas (See Figures 8 and 9). A degree of caution should be applied when interpreting these trends as figures from April 2008 are provisional.

Figure 8: Three-monthly moving average of NHS hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object in the nine TKAP and non-TKAP areas in England



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics; NHS Information Centre

Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation. Figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object during TKAP: 19 years and under

When the TKAP period (July 2008 to February 2009¹⁰) is compared to the same period in the previous year, provisional figures show a decrease of 32 per cent (533 to 365) in admissions to hospital for assault with a sharp object in TKAP English areas, compared with a drop of 18 per cent (277 to 228) in non-TKAP areas.

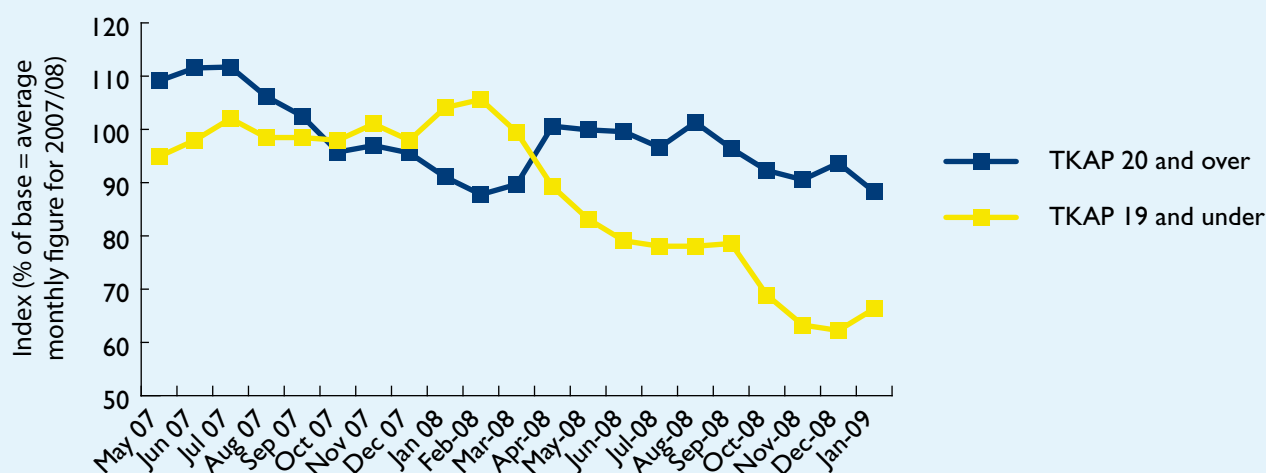
⁹ I.e. The tendency of extremes in fluctuating patterns to move back towards the average – these can easily be mistaken for a real effect. Mean regression should be considered here to avoid over-estimating any real effect. For a discussion about mean regression, see Morton and Torgenson (2003)

¹⁰ NHS hospital admissions data for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Figure 9, which presents the number of quarterly hospital admissions indexed to the average figure for 2007/08, shows that the steepest drop in provisional admissions in this group occurred prior to TKAP, between February and May 2008. Although the decrease cannot be directly attributed to TKAP, the initiative may have contributed to the stability of hospital admissions between June and September (when numbers in non-TKAP areas were increasing) and to the subsequent decline in the later months of 2008.

In non-TKAP areas, among those aged 19 years and under, the number of hospital admissions showed an overall decrease across the TKAP period, which was less steep than that observed for the equivalent group in TKAP areas. (See Figure E1, Appendix E).

Figure 9: Indexed three-month moving averages (base = average figure for 2007/08) of NHS hospital admissions for 'assault with a sharp object' (victims aged 19 and under/20 and over) in the nine English TKAP areas from April 2007 to Feb 2009



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics; NHS Information Centre

Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation. Figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object during TKAP: 20 years and over

When the TKAP period (July 08 to February 09) is compared to the same period the previous year, there was a provisional drop of five per cent in TKAP areas among admissions aged 20 and over (1,502 to 1,427) but an overall increase of seven per cent in non-TKAP areas (1,110 to 1,185).

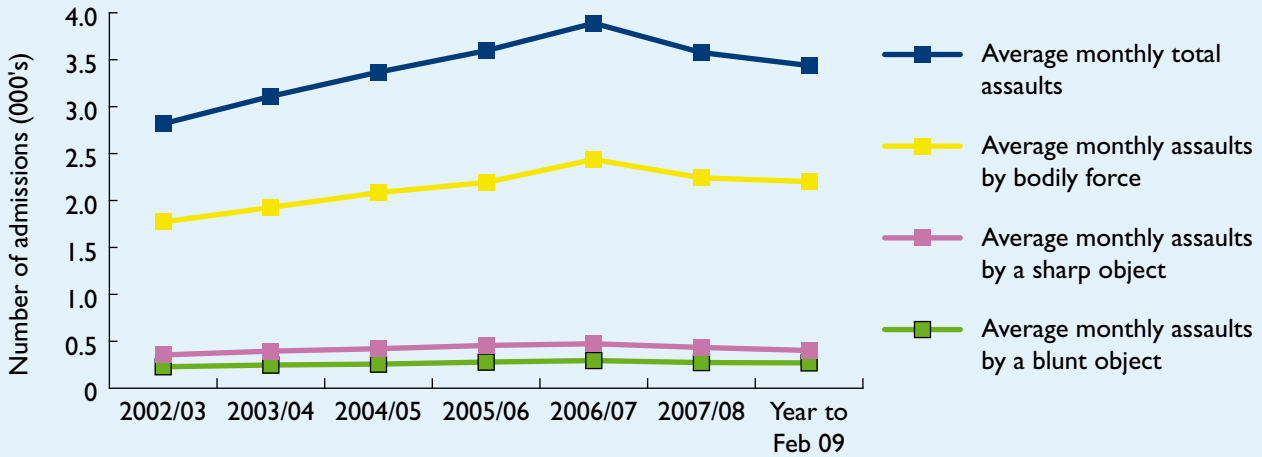
When compared over time (see Figure 9 and Figure E1, Appendix E), provisional hospital admissions among victims aged 20 and over in TKAP and non-TKAP areas have declined slightly, and Figure 8 suggests that this broadly reflects an ongoing decreasing trend.

NHS hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object as a proportion of hospital admissions for all assault

In 2007/08, hospital admissions of those aged 19 and under in the nine English TKAP areas accounted for 15 per cent of all NHS hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object in England; hospital admissions of those aged 20 and over accounted for 44 per cent (60% across all ages).

Figure 10 presents the average number of monthly hospital admissions for various types of assault (see Appendix G). Interestingly, these data suggest that there was a peak in all assault types in 2006/07, including ‘assaults by bodily force’, followed by a subsequent decline. These declines in these data may reflect a ‘regression to the mean’ effect, in which case the current decline in assault figures might continue for several years to come; the absence of a longer baseline makes it difficult to explore longer-term trends in these data.

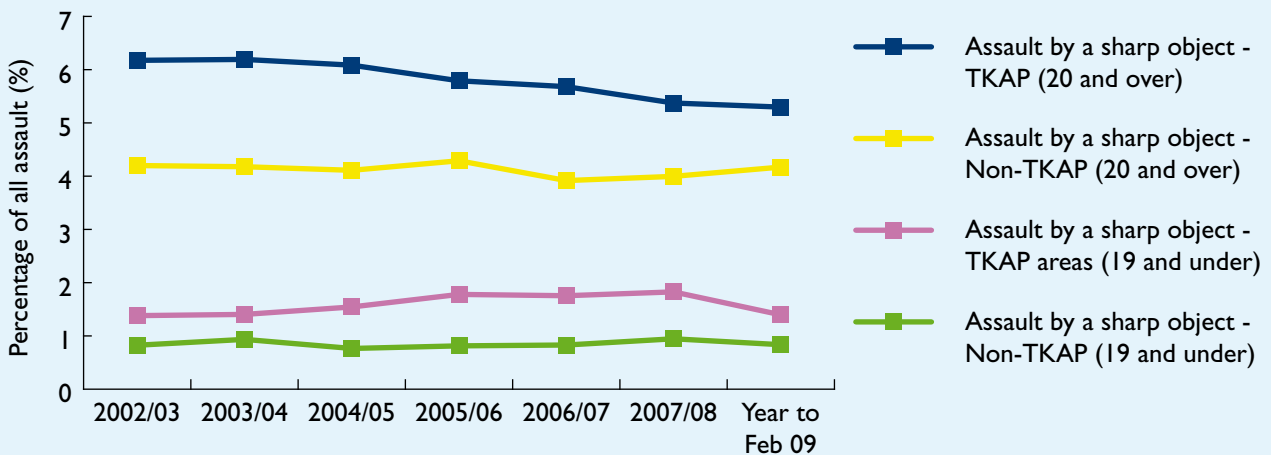
Figure 10: Average number of assaults by a sharp object, by a blunt object, by bodily force, and total assaults admissions per month to English NHS hospitals (for victims of all ages)



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics; NHS Information Centre

Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation. Figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Figure 11: Number of ‘assault by a sharp object’ NHS hospital admissions in TKAP and non-TKAP areas (for victims aged 19 and under and 20 and over) as a percentage of the total number of hospital admissions for assault in England



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics; NHS Information Centre

Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation. Figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

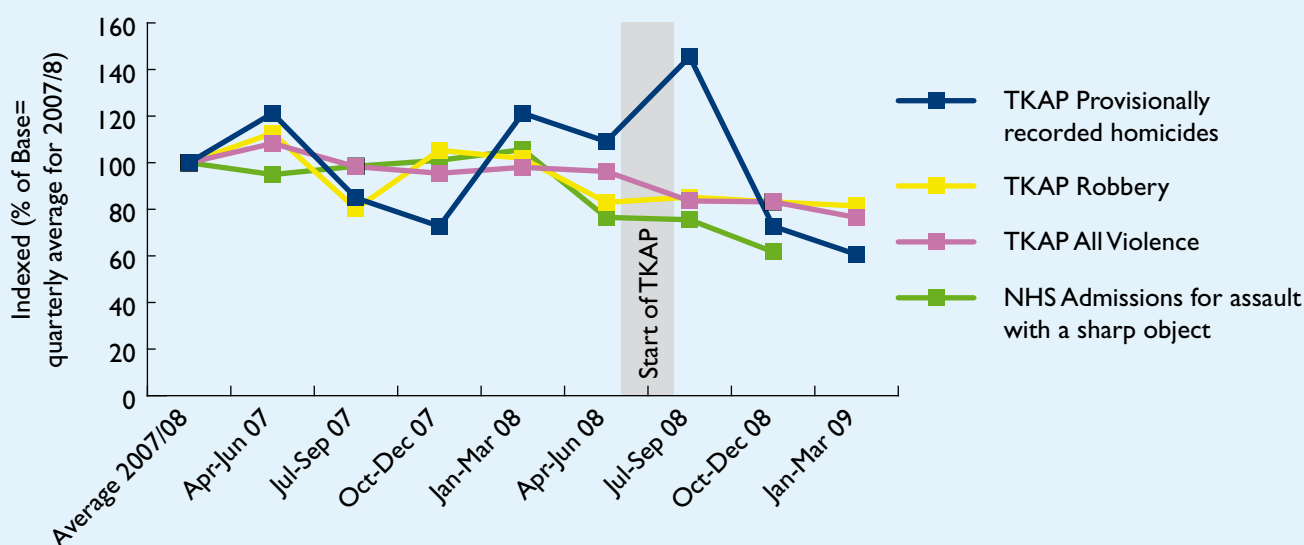
Figure 11 presents the number of NHS hospital admissions for ‘assault by a sharp object’ in TKAP and non-TKAP areas for victims aged 19 and under and 20 and over, as a proportion of the number of ‘all assault’ admissions recorded across England. The proportion accounted for by victims aged 19 and under in TKAP areas began increasing in 2003/04, peaked in 2007/08 and has been decreasing since. As ‘all assaults’ also peaked in 2006/07, the subsequent decrease in this group is greater than the drop in ‘all assaults’ shown in Figure 10. Since data for 2008/09 are incomplete and provisional, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from this; whilst this is not conclusive evidence that TKAP led to these changes, the initiative could have played a role in maintaining the declines.

Combined analysis of knife crime

A variety of different measures of knife crime have been presented in this report. This section briefly considers a selection of these in parallel, to examine whether the different measures show consistent patterns over the time periods considered in this report.

Figure 12 presents a graph of indexed data (base is the average quarterly figure for 2007/08) for TKAP provisionally recorded homicides, TKAP ‘all violence’, and TKAP robberies for victims aged 19 and under, and NHS provisional number of hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object for the equivalent age group.

Figure 12: Indexed graph (base=average quarterly figure for 2007/08) of recorded TKAP provisionally recorded homicide, TKAP ‘all violence’ offences, TKAP robbery offences and NHS hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object (victims aged 19 and under) in the TKAP areas (Apr. 2007 – Mar. 2009)



Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation. Figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Provisionally recorded homicides clearly fluctuate more widely than the other measures, which is probably attributable to the small numbers involved. TKAP ‘all violence’, TKAP robberies, and provisional NHS hospital admissions for assault follow a relatively close pattern, with all three showing declines that begin around the start of TKAP, and which are sustained across the subsequent quarters. Provisional homicides and NHS admissions drop to around 60 per cent of the average rate for 2007/08; the declines in ‘all violence’ and robberies are less pronounced. The relative consistency between the three trends for TKAP ‘all violence’, TKAP robbery, and NHS admissions, provides strong evidence for the robustness of the overall reduction in violent crimes shown in this age group in the TKAP areas.

For victims aged 20 and over, provisionally recorded TKAP homicides and TKAP robberies show a marked increase across the period, while TKAP 'all violence' and provisional NHS hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object remained relatively stable across the period, showing remarkable similarity in trends. The corresponding measures for those aged 19 and under showed more of a decrease. The consistency between these measures provides some assurance that these measures are tapping overlapping aspects of knife crime (Appendix F, Figure F1).

III. Public reassurance: perceptions of knife crime

Key findings:

- Public fears about knife crime increased dramatically around April/May 2008, after which the proportion of respondents who spontaneously cited knife crime as one of the most important crime issues facing Britain has fluctuated considerably.
- Examining these data alongside the number of 'stabbing homicides' recorded by the BBC suggests that public fears appear to be driven, understandably, by reports of knife-related homicides. There is some indication that wider media coverage on the topic of knife crime may also have influenced perceptions.

One aim of TKAP was to reassure the public over concerns about knife-crime. This section will present findings from the Ipsos MORI "Crime tracker" quota sample survey concerning public perceptions of crime^{11,12}.

Knife crime is one of the most important crime issues facing Britain

Respondents were asked to cite the three most important crime issues that they felt were facing Britain. The proportion of respondents that spontaneously included "too much knife crime" or "too much gun crime" in their answer is presented in Figure 13.

Prior to May 2008, knife crime was cited by less than one per cent of respondents as an important issue. While the proportion of respondents including gun crime, gang crime and violent crime as important issues remained relatively stable across the period shown, the percentage including knife crime increased considerably between May and August 2008 and been highly unstable since. More recent data (not shown) show a statistically significant drop between March and April 2009 (from 32% to 23%) in the proportion of people citing knife crime as one of the most important crime issues; this figure remained stable (at 23%) between April and May, but there was a statistically significant increase (back to 32%) between May and June. These figures demonstrate wide fluctuations in public concerns about knife crime.

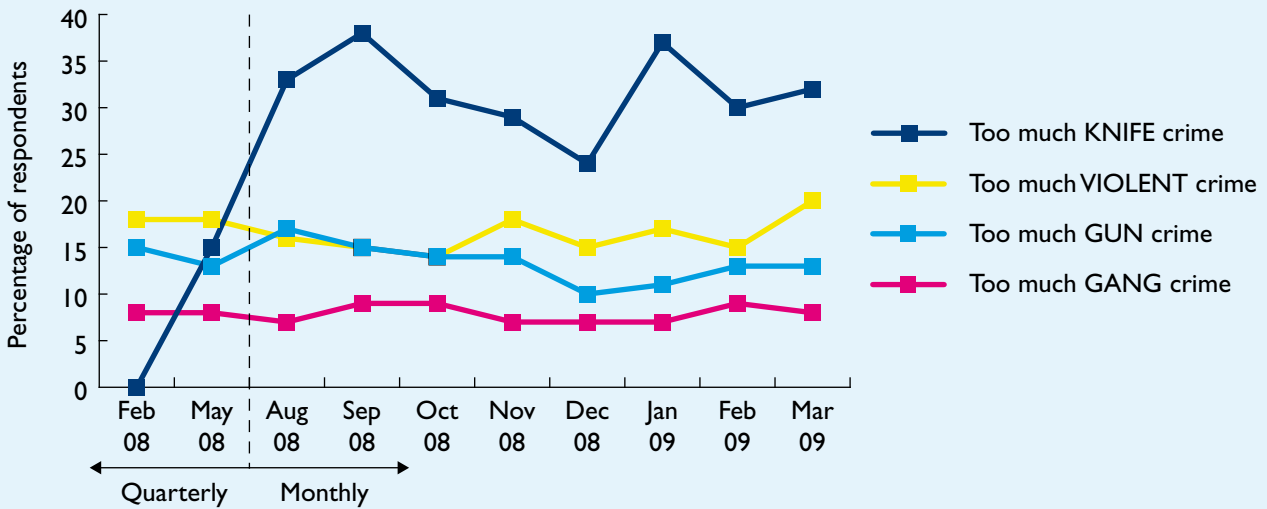
When respondents were asked the same question, but were asked how it applied to their local area, the findings suggest that issues that have a high level of importance at a national level are not considered to be as important locally. For example, in May 2009, just five per cent of all respondents spontaneously cited knife crime as one of the key crime issues; in March 2009 this figure was eight per cent, a rise from five per cent in February 2009.

To further explore possible influences on public perceptions of knife crime, Figure 14 presents, alongside the proportion of respondents citing knife crime as an important crime issue facing Britain, the number of monthly teenage stabbing homicides included in the BBC news website's "Mapping UK's teen murder toll" (accessed 16 June 09) which claims to show "every known victim of murder or manslaughter aged 10 to 19 in the UK since 1 Jan 2008" (National Statistics on homicide for this period will not be available until January 2010).

11 These data were collected across England and Wales and the sample size was too small to examine trends within TKAP areas; thus, it is not clear how these figures relate to TKAP activities in TKAP areas.

12 The Crime Tracker is usually included within the Ipsos MORI Crime Tracker survey, a nationally representative monthly omnibus designed specifically to track social issues. In March 2009 and June 2009 (in the absence of the Crime Tracker survey) the questions were asked on Ipsos MORI's Capibus, an alternative weekly omnibus that uses different interviewing points in its nationally representative sample. Initial tests using weighting analyses indicate that differences in results over these periods cannot be fully explained by changes in the sampling points.

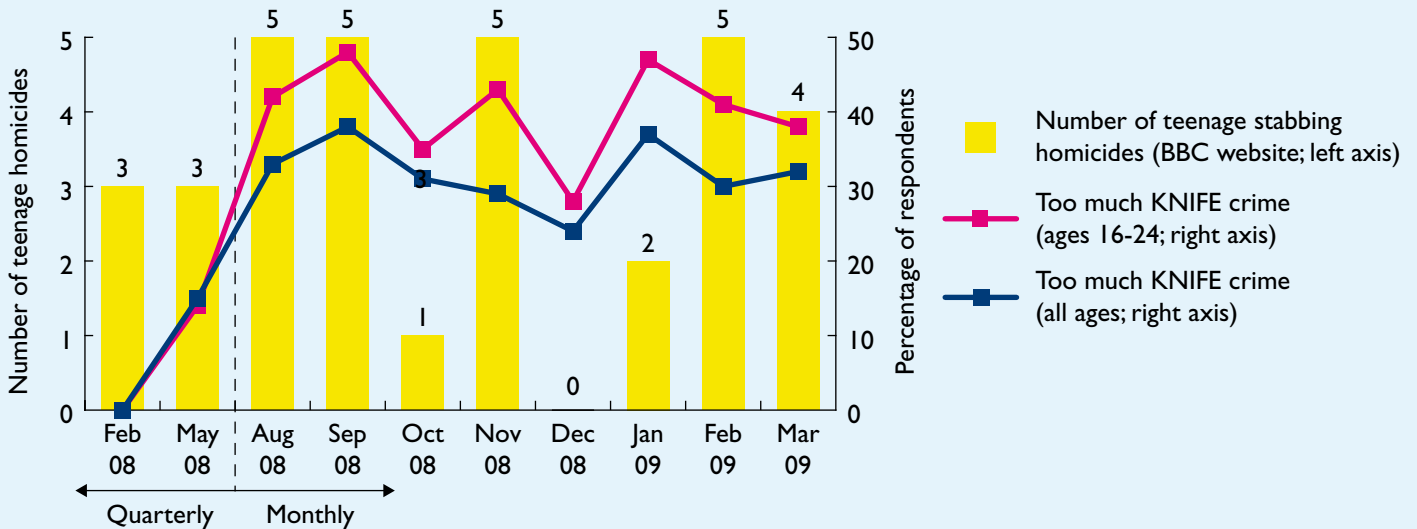
Figure 13: Percentage of respondents citing “too much knife/gun/gang/violent crime”, as one of three most important issues facing Britain (spontaneous response)



Notes: For ‘too much knife crime’, changes between Feb08-May08, May08-Aug08, and Dec08-Jan09 are statistically significant (see Technical notes for details); no other changes are statistically significant.

Figure 14 shows some association between the numbers of homicides reported monthly and the proportion of younger respondents – and, to a lesser extent, older respondents – that included knife crime in their response. January 2009 is one of the few months where there is a clear separation between the figures: there was a lower than average number of teenage stabbings but a high proportion of respondents included knife crime as a key concern. It is possible that the reported public views on knife crime were influenced by prominent coverage of knife crime in the media around the time of the fieldwork period¹³.

Figure 14: Percentage of respondents including “too much knife crime” (right axis) as one of three most important issues facing Britain, and number of stabbing homicides (BBC news website; left axis)

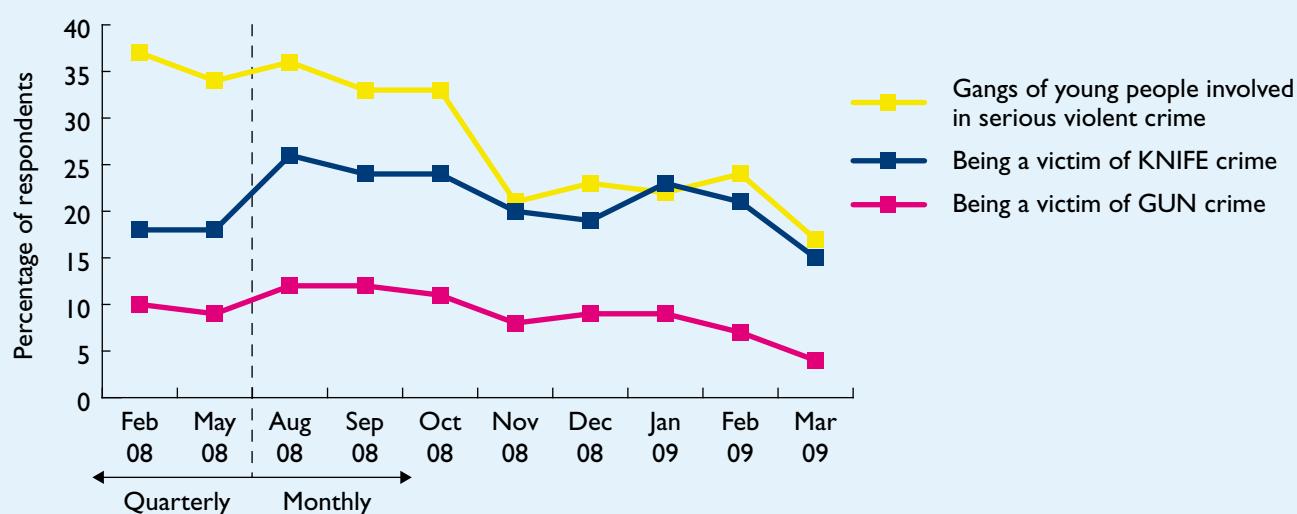


¹³ The MORI interviews for this month took place between the 22 and 28 January. This coincided with the broadcasting of a documentary entitled ‘Stabbed: The truth about knife crime’ (BBC, 2009) during prime-time (9-10pm) on January 20 2009 and the Home Office publication on quarterly crime statistics on January 22, which showed an 18 per cent increase in knife-related robberies. Furthermore, a series of TV shows entitled ‘Knife and Gun Crime Season’ (Channel 4, 2008) began on June 30 2008, coinciding with a noticeable increase in the proportion of respondents that identify knife crime as a key concern. While these examples by no means provide proof of a causal link between media exposure on knife crime and public perceptions of knife crime, it is plausible that perceptions were influenced by media coverage on this subject.

Which crimes have you worried about?

Respondents were also asked if they had worried about “being a victim of crime” in the previous month. Participants who reported being worried at least monthly (in April, sub-sample=619) were then asked to select the crimes about which they were concerned from a list of 13. The percentage of these participants that selected knife/other violent crimes is presented in Figure 15. It should be noted that this graph shows data from a much smaller sample of responses than Figures 13 and 14. Figure 15 shows a peak for knife crime around August 2008 and January 2009. Some reasons for this pattern have already been noted.

Figure 15: Percentage of those who report worrying about crime in the past month who have worried about being a victim of knife crime



4. Conclusions

The findings in this report indicate an overall decline in recorded knife crime and hospital admissions in the target age group (aged 19 and under) during the TKAP period. The departure of trends in TKAP areas for hospital admission and victims of robbery aged 19 and under, and those aged 20 and over provides some evidence that TKAP activities may have selectively influenced the target age group, perhaps contributing to the sustained reductions among young people. While, due to methodological caveats (detailed below), it is not possible to directly attribute any causal link between TKAP and the drop in knife crime, TKAP may well have contributed to the continued decline in some measures and the persisting reductions in others. However the specific role of TKAP is interpreted, the decline is encouraging, indicating that fewer young people are becoming victims of knife crime.

There are, however, a variety of caveats surrounding these data, including the provisional nature of many data sources and the lack of statistically robust comparison areas. Most important is the heterogeneity between TKAP forces. Overall trends described in this report are heavily influenced by data from larger forces and do not represent trajectories for all individual forces. The trend for police recorded violent crime and possession offences differed considerably between the TKAP forces, some of which show increases in knife crime in the target age group. Notably, MPS dominates the overall trend for robbery offences and are almost entirely responsible for the divergence between age groups noted above. Since their teenage knife-related crime may have been influenced by other initiatives such as Operation Blunt 2, this further complicates attempts to assess the specific role of TKAP.

The variation in trends across the different forces and violent crime types indicates that there are qualitative differences in the nature and context of knife-related violence between TKAP areas. Given these differences, the findings in this report emphasise the importance of taking a force-specific approach to assessing the effect of police enforcement activities, and in developing strategies to tackle knife crime.

There are some issues on which further knowledge and research is required. There have been large increases in some measures of knife crime (e.g. NHS hospital admissions figures) which – as noted – peaked prior to TKAP. While the focus of this report has been on the TKAP intervention period, the underlying causes of the increase that triggered TKAPs implementation are not yet understood. Given the possibility that ‘regression to the mean’ may underlie some trends reported here, a better understanding of the factors driving the initial increase in these measures would be useful to inform our understanding of these trends. Without a better understanding of the drivers that led to this increase, it is difficult to explain the subsequent declines.

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Appendix A: Stakeholder Interviews

Researchers at the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (Kings College, University of London) undertook a social research study entitled “Staff experiences of the Tackling Knives Action Programme: Summary”.

Methodology

Each of the TKAP forces was asked to provide a list of possible interviewees. The aim was to achieve a cross-section of those involved in the delivery of TKAP activities. A total of 42 interviews were conducted: 26 police officers (of different ranks and roles); five youth workers; two trading standards officers; three community safety staff; one member of the police authority, one member of staff from a local transport executive; one member of staff from a Government Office; and three representatives from community groups.

Interviewees were asked to describe TKAP activities in their areas and to discuss their experiences, perceptions and views about the implementation and delivery of TKAP.

All forces conducted intelligence-led stop and search operations which are detailed in the main report and in Appendix B. The below list comprises education and prevention activities funded under TKAP that were specific to each of the TKAP forces.

Essex police force produced a DVD on knife crime in conjunction with Southend Youth Council, and developed the ‘Say No to Knives Campaign’ through www.2smart.co.uk/knives. They are establishing 14 youth crime forums – one for each district – which have run ‘2 smart 4 knives’ events at youth clubs and leisure centres; these were attended by 90 per cent of year seven students across the county. Essex will train police officers to deliver knife education workshops to every secondary school in the county.

Greater Manchester police produced DVDs to highlight the dangers of knife crime in Bolton and Oldham areas. They also formed youth panels in Tameside to encourage youth engagement. Two youth conferences were held in November 2008 and the force is developing a community engagement programme to include resident surveys, a Strategic Youth Independent Advisory Group, mentoring, DVDs, and local based seminars.

Lancashire police and North West Ambulance Service delivered ‘Be Sharp, Think Sharp’ to at least 29,000 pupils in secondary schools. In March 2009, drama students performed a series of anti-knife crime street theatre productions in Preston city centre. A media campaign has focused on third-party reporting of knife-related incidents.

Merseyside police and the Community Foundation formed Merseyside Young Transformers (MYT) - focus groups where young people can voice their concerns. Miss Dorothy.Com is a school-based resource used in specific schools in Liverpool North and Knowsley. An online school system is used whereby the police can communicate messages on knife crime and safety to pupils, who can anonymously report people carrying knives or committing offences. 'Total Team' is a partnership with sporting institutions including Everton and Liverpool football clubs.

Nottinghamshire police force has arranged conferences targeted at young people involved in crime and the victims of knife crime. They have also set up football club-based workshops to emphasise the anti-knife crime message.

South Wales police conducted a knife 'hand in' from mid-November to mid-December and ran local media campaigns (radio broadcasts etc). They commissioned the Valleys Race Equality Council to conduct youth surveys and outreach work and developed a DVD about knife-crime and the associated educational programme 'At Life Point'.

Thames Valley police commissioned an educational charity to deliver presentations and mentoring sessions at schools from October 2008 to March 2009; these were attended by 12,000 pupils aged 13 to 18 years. Knife crime conferences were held and, together with partners and local colleges, DVDs and lesson notes were produced for use in schools. Thames Valley police delivered knife crime 'Safety Centre' scenarios to year six primary school pupils in Milton Keynes, which will be expanded across the police force.

West Midlands police force ran educational activities in schools, including theatre workshops; over 40 schools were represented at their 'URA Star' event – a music concert tackling teen issues including knife crime. West Midlands police are also writing to the parents of the peer group of a young person arrested for knife crime, asking them to look for warning signs with their own children.

West Yorkshire police force's weapon awareness programme has been attended by 30,000 pupils. Pupil surveys were carried out with over 5,000 young people by young citizen's panels, which have been actively involved in tackling knife crime. Joint educational work has been carried out with CDRPs, Royal Armouries, and the Youth Offending Service: 30,000 school children have received educational input and information leaflets have been sent to parents.

The **Metropolitan Police Service** launched Operation Blunt in November 2004, a knife crime initiative that was initially implemented in 12 boroughs and which was subsequently expanding to include all London boroughs. Operation Blunt 2 was started across London in May 2008: this is a cross-business initiative involving engagement with communities and CDRPs, and its strategic aims – like those of TKAP – were to reduce youth homicides and serious violence involving knives, and to reduce the carrying of knives by young people. The MPS assigned 100 police officers to Operation Blunt 2 and specific operations (e.g. Razorback in August 2008) have targeted specific areas, gang members and known weapons users. In November 2008 specific structured operations commenced to disrupt street-level gangs, and in January 2009 enhanced post-school patrols were implemented across 32 boroughs. The primary operations of Blunt 2 have been enforcement based, involving intelligence-led stop and search and weapons sweeps, the enhanced use of police powers to stop and search, and the deployment of screening arches in key locations. TKAP funding in the London area has contributed to Operation Blunt 2, and additionally has supported local campaign groups in the provision of education and prevention-based programmes.

Resources and implementation

- TKAP enabled the areas to focus for an intensive period of time on issues related to knives and provided the opportunity to increase awareness locally. Many areas had previously done work on this issue (or on serious violence) and welcomed the opportunity to revitalise their activities. On the whole, most were keen to stress that TKAP had strengthened partnership work in their area which they believed was likely to have a positive impact beyond the issue of knife-related crime.
- There were a number of concerns expressed about TKAP funding arrangements. Firstly the timing of the allocations caused difficulties for many, in particular the requirement to spend relatively large amounts over a short period of time. Secondly this type of funding makes it difficult to provide sustainable action and is likely to only deliver short-term impacts. Finally, funding was allocated to police forces to manage. Several respondents (from

both police and partnership agencies) commented that if funding had of been routed via Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), a higher degree of integration with existing initiatives and partnerships would have been achieved. There was a degree of frustration voiced amongst non-police partners about the high level of resource allocated to policing activity compared to the work they were involved in or could have developed.

- There was general agreement that the management structure and reporting requirements (both local and national), although demanding, had been effective. They provided a clear focus on delivering TKAP.

The nature of knife crime

- Interviewees in the majority of TKAP areas reported that knife-related offending by teenagers was not a significant problem for them and were therefore surprised that they were chosen to be involved in this programme¹⁴. They reported that knife-related crime was primarily related to domestic incidents, the night-time economy primarily and robbery involving those aged between 18 and 30 years old. Some suggested that the knife crime related work therefore would be better incorporated into a more general work on tackling violent crime or grouped together with gun and gang crime or youth crime¹⁵.

Specific TKAP activities

- Knife arches and wands were used extensively in all sites primarily at licensed premises and transport hubs, with some deployment at schools and colleges. Many felt that high visibility afforded by this approach could have both positive and negative impacts: dissuading people from carrying knives and increasing public confidence on the one hand or raising awareness of a potential problem (rather than actual) and increasing feelings of insecurity on the other.
- Test purchase operations were also reported as having some value but concerns were expressed as to their impact given knives are readily available from other sources. In some areas there were very good working relationships between the police and trading standards departments, in others this was not the case.
- After-school patrols by neighbourhood police and community support officers were on the whole viewed negatively by interviewees¹⁶. Although most TKAP sites targeted these patrols on areas where problems had the potential to occur (shopping precincts for example) many interviewees felt that considerable resources used were likely to result in little gain. The fact that the patrols were for a specific period (three months) was also seen as limiting the potential impact of this type of work and could undermine community support for such work in the future.
- Most sites had a general educational programme with specific activities targeted at different groups of young people, including those from particular areas and vulnerable or at risk youth. At a local level there appeared to be a lack of a strategic approach to this work with a number of initiatives overlapping and, to a degree, in competition with each other. In some sites schools were reluctant to participate in TKAP initiatives, particularly those involving the use of knife arches and wands. It was reported that this reluctance was related to the schools concerns about being labelled as 'having a problem' with knives. One site tackled this issue by persuading higher performing schools to be early adopters of TKAP interventions and therefore aiming to reduce the fear amongst other schools of the potential impact of being labelled.
- TKAP funding was used to develop and build on work with 'at risk' groups of young people. This type of approach was generally praised by those involved because it was targeted at those most likely to be involved in incidents involving knives and they were provided by multi-disciplinary teams using a range of techniques and approaches to tackle a complex problem.

14 See Table 2 for force-level breakdown of police recorded knife crime.

15 Note that TKAP Phase II aims to tackle serious youth violence among 13-24 year olds.

16 Force-differences were noted in the type of approach used to conduct after-school patrols. Notably, the MPS favoured this approach and anecdotal reports from one site suggest that a friendly and open approach taken by officers involved in conducting after-school patrols resulted in more positive responses from the local community.

Appendix B: Police stop and search

Searches of persons or vehicles under section 1 (S1) of the police and Criminal Justice Act 1984 are used for the following reasons: stolen property; going equipped to steal; and offensive weapons, including bladed or sharply pointed articles; other items, including prohibited possession of fireworks; and criminal damage (articles made, adapted or intended for use by destroying or damaging property).

Searches of persons and vehicles under section 60 (S60) of the Police and Criminal Justice Act 1984 are used to find offensive weapons or dangerous instruments to prevent incidents of serious violence or to deal with the carrying of such items.

The tables below include only those S1 and S60 searches of individual persons to specifically locate offensive weapons. It should be noted that these include, but are not limited to, knives and sharp-instruments. The figures presented are provisional and may be subject to revision.

Table B1: Provisional monthly TKAP S1/S60 searches in the ten TKAP forces

	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Total	Rate per 1,000 population
Essex	103	62	35	50	156	84	255	84	126	175	1,130	0.68
Gr. Manchester	98	110	124	1878	1342	1996	2246	1881	2506	1457	13,638	5.34
Lancashire	207	250	202	195	243	279	88	207	291	508	2,470	1.70
Merseyside	354	325	293	355	311	343	317	433	391	348	3,470	2.56
Notts	212	217	169	148	224	187	279	227	241	187	2,091	1.98
South Wales	61	68	53	56	87	111	76	115	182	212	1,021	0.83
Thames Valley	123	181	112	403	615	2,632	2,501	5,671	1,682	3,824	17,744	8.21
West Midlands	247	222	200	2,492	5,889	4,399	2,576	1,226	7,394	1,449	26,094	10.04
West Yorkshire	127	145	151	137	156	110	79	132	65	5,771 ^a	6,873	3.18
Metro-politan	14,215	21,640	19,099	18,343	23,639	20,765	12,427	16,277	16,268	16,769	179,442	23.91
Total	15,747	23,220	20,438	24,057	32,662	30,906	20,844	26,253	29,146	30,700	253,973	10.70

a 5771 S60 searches were conducted in West Yorkshire in March 2009 as part of Operation Sabre.

Table B2: Provisional monthly TKAP figures for the number of offensive weapons recovered as a result of S1/S60 searches in the 10 TKAP forces

	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Total
Essex	23	28	37	9	18	1	0	11	27	13	167
Gr. Manchester	4	6	15	21	38	55	54	44	38	19	294
Lancashire	9	11	8	6	6	6	1	0	0	0	47
Merseyside	55	53	36	41	48	51	41	93	47	54	514
Nottinghamshire	0	4	6	20	39	33	28	27	16	8	181
South Wales	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	3	0	15
Thames Valley	5	8	7	1	1	6	9	8	41	18	104
West Midlands ^a	-	-	-	71	98	103	100	85	123	32	612
West Yorkshire	0	1	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	9
Metropolitan	465	505	406	377	341	321	270	280	253	303	3,521
Total	562	618	518	551	595	578	504	548	548	447	5,469
Percentage of searches resulting in weapons recovered	3.6%	2.7%	2.5%	2.3%	1.8%	1.9%	2.4%	2.1%	1.9%	1.5%	2.2%

Appendix C: Provisional CJS disposals for the possession of knives and other offensive weapons: TKAP and non-TKAP areas

The graphs below present provisional CJS disposals for the possession of a knife or offensive weapon (excluding firearms) offences among offenders aged 17 and under or 18 and over in TKAP and non-TKAP areas.

Figure C1: Proportion of provisional CJS disposals for knife and offensive weapon possession offences resulting in cautions, community penalties, suspended sentences, or immediate custody in 18 and over in TKAP areas (Quarterly figures from Jan-Mar 07 to Jan-Mar 09)(from MOJ Statistical bulletin, 2009)

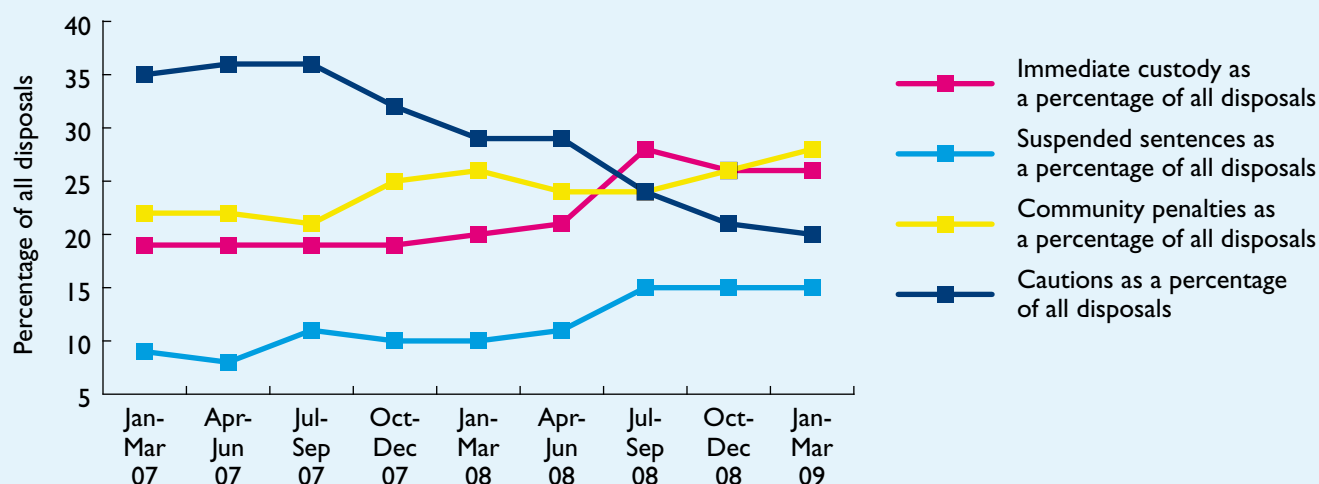


Figure C2: Proportion of provisional CJS disposals for knife and offensive weapon possession offences resulting in cautions, community penalties, suspended sentences, or immediate custody in 17 and under in non-TKAP areas (Quarterly figures from Jan-Mar 07 to Jan-Mar 09)(from MOJ Statistical bulletin, 2009)

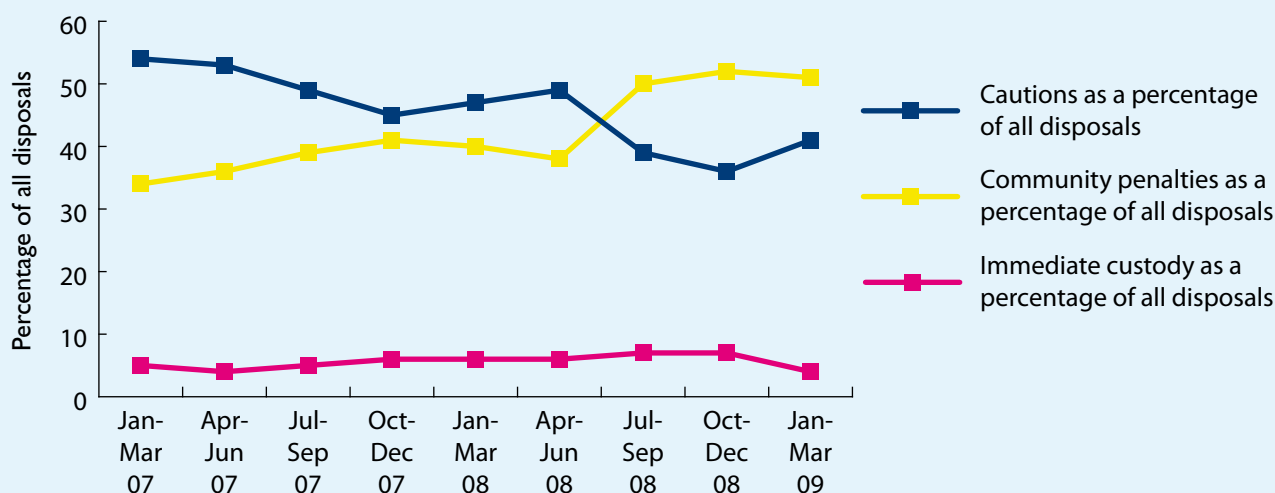
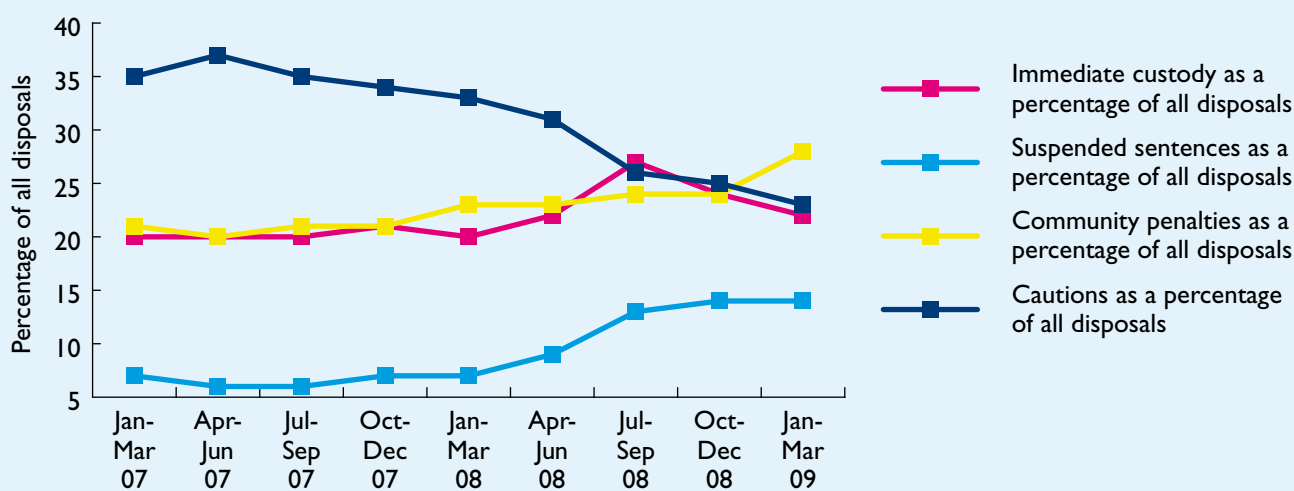


Figure C3: Proportion of provisional CJS disposals for knife and offensive weapon possession offences resulting in cautions, community penalties, suspended sentences, or immediate custody in 18 and over in non-TKAP areas (Quarterly figures from Jan-Mar 07 to Jan-Mar 09)(from MOJ Statistical bulletin, 2009)



Appendix D: TKAP recorded knife crime

The graphs and tables in this appendix summarise data collected from TKAP forces as part of the TKAP monitoring exercise.

TKAP offences for possession of a knife or other offensive weapon**Table D1: Number of recorded TKAP offences for possession of a knife or other offensive weapon (excluding firearms) for offenders aged 19 and under and 20 and over**

	2007/08			2008/09					% change (Jul08-Mar09 vs. Jul07-Mar08)
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Aged 19 and under									
Essex	42	54	40	41	57	68	57	64	+40.0%
Greater Manchester	97	102	95	81	95	98	59	57	-23.0%
Lancashire	94	90	68	69	93	72	63	57	-15.4%
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	103	87	82	77	-
Nottinghamshire	40	41	37	42	44	44	40	32	-3.3%
South Wales	16	21	13	14	11	28	20	19	+39.6%
Thames Valley	42	49	51	46	46	55	24	33	-23.3%
West Midlands	200	163	191	213	159	170	152	144	-17.8%
West Yorkshire	77	80	71	111	87	76	64	53	-26.3%
Metropolitan	331	375	318	379	450	406	277	253	-12.7%
Total (all areas)	939	975	884	996	1,042	1,017	756	712	-13.1%
Aged 20 and over									
Essex	95	95	68	80	159	175	140	144	+88.9%
Greater Manchester	163	168	158	131	172	192	140	102	-5.0%
Lancashire	134	142	123	120	127	137	97	97	-14.0%
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	175	183	159	137	-
Nottinghamshire	57	45	66	50	50	89	81	57	+41.0%
South Wales	56	39	45	50	38	68	72	83	+66.4%
Thames Valley	91	82	97	102	109	124	82	76	+0.4%
West Midlands	241	271	258	278	263	282	220	237	-8.4%
West Yorkshire	162	156	143	157	152	197	136	122	-0.2%
Metropolitan	622	640	558	546	744	805	637	463	+9.2%
Total (all areas)	1,621	1,638	1,516	1,514	1,814	2,069	1,605	1,381	+8.1%
Age of offender unknown									
Essex	6	10	7	6	6	13	14	31	-
Greater Manchester	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	-
Lancashire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	1	0	0	1	-
Nottinghamshire ^a	4	4	6	5	16	5	16	21	-
South Wales	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-
Thames Valley	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	-
West Midlands	67	45	47	50	36	33	21	37	-
West Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	22	-
Metropolitan	32	31	20	25	10	11	5	9	-
Total (all areas)	109	92	80	87	69	67	60	121	-
Offender of unknown age as a percentage of overall total	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	5%	-
Overall total (excl. Merseyside)	2,669	2,705	2,804	2,597	2,925	3,153	2,421	2,214	+0.1%

Note: Essex 2007/08 data were under review at the time of publication and may be subject to revision.

a The slightly higher number of offenders of unknown age in 2008/09 than 2007/08 is likely due to recent 2008/09 offences having detections outstanding; these were retained but offender details (i.e. age) were removed.

TKAP provisionally recorded homicide

Table D2: Number of TKAP provisionally recorded knife/sharp-instrument homicides (including infanticide and manslaughter) for victims aged 19 and under, 20 and over, and unknown

Aged 19 and under	2007/08			2008/09				Difference (Jul08-Mar09 vs. Jul07-Mar08)	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec		Jan-Mar
Essex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greater Manchester	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	+4
Lancashire	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	+3
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Wales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thames Valley	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	+1
West Midlands	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
West Yorkshire	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	-7
Metropolitan	7	3	3	8	7	8	1	4	-1
Total (all areas)	10	7	6	10	9	12	6	5	0
Aged 20 and over									
Essex	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	+3
Greater Manchester	1	3	5	5	1	3	6	1	-3
Lancashire	3	4	1	3	3	1	4	0	-3
Merseyside	3	2	1	3	3	3	0	2	-1
Nottinghamshire	0	0	2	0	0	3	3	0	+4
South Wales	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	0
Thames Valley	1	4	0	1	1	4	0	0	-1
West Midlands	2	2	5	3	4	10	5	3	+8
West Yorkshire	0	1	4	1	6	4	4	0	+2
Metropolitan	19	20	6	16	17	17	10	13	-2
Total (all areas)	30	36	26	34	38	47	35	21	+7
Age of victim unknown									
Essex	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-
Greater Manchester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Lancashire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Merseyside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
South Wales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Thames Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
West Midlands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
West Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Metropolitan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Total (all areas)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-
Overall Total	40	43	33	44	47	59	41	26	+6

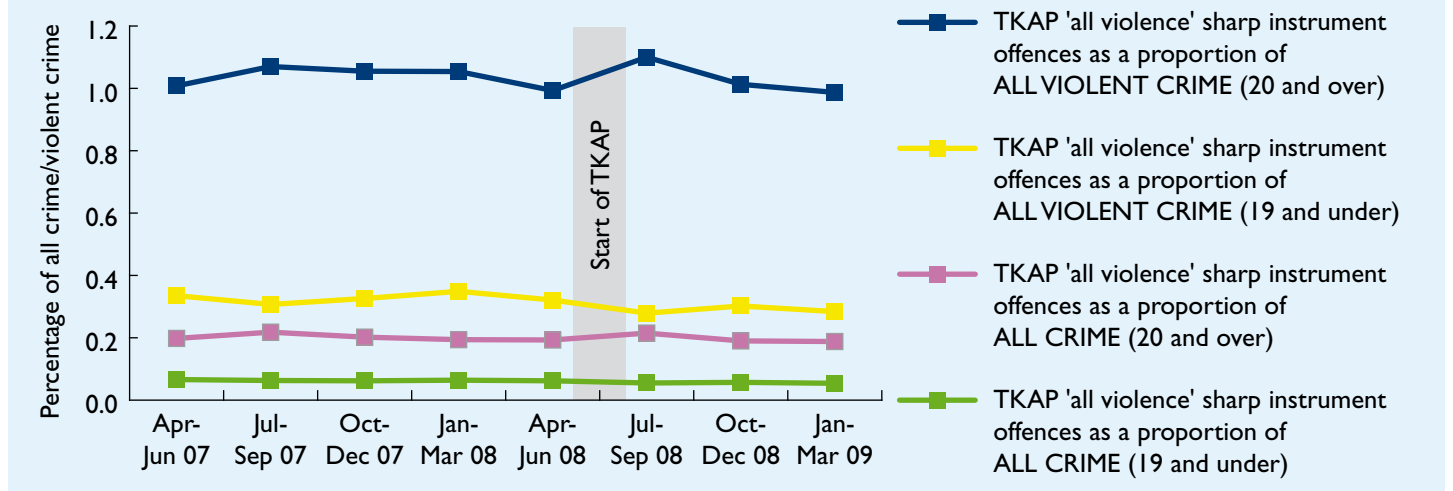
TKAP 'all violence' offences**Table D3: Number of TKAP 'all violence' offences involving knives/sharp instruments for victims aged 19 and under, 20 and over, and unknown**

Aged 19 and under	2007/08			2008/09				% change (Jul08-Mar09 vs. Jul07-Mar08)	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec		Jan-Mar
Essex	55	39	34	34	16	25	18	12	-48.6%
Greater Manchester	49	39	57	41	45	45	60	38	+4.4%
Lancashire	24	43	27	33	43	28	29	27	-18.4%
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	19	24	14	22	-
Nottinghamshire	13	19	16	19	26	23	35	16	+37.0%
South Wales	14	13	24	20	11	9	16	12	-35.1%
Thames Valley	26	31	26	18	38	35	34	38	+42.7%
West Midlands	132	121	112	108	132	100	75	99	-19.6%
West Yorkshire	96	78	77	70	51	54	78	62	-13.8%
Metropolitan	446	393	381	431	398	341	312	300	-20.9%
Total (excl. Merseyside)	855	776	754	774	760	660	657	604	-16.6%
Aged 20 and over									
Essex	95	141	107	106	89	79	74	76	-35.3%
Greater Manchester	224	271	216	217	232	273	264	221	+7.7%
Lancashire	92	103	115	78	123	118	104	103	+9.8%
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	94	99	89	94	-
Nottinghamshire	84	60	66	56	79	107	64	74	+34.6%
South Wales	67	76	53	61	58	55	64	58	-6.8%
Thames Valley	125	130	97	108	133	139	136	114	+16.1%
West Midlands	431	428	382	352	337	384	329	356	-8.0%
West Yorkshire	264	288	286	277	206	250	248	230	-14.5%
Metropolitan	1,191	1,210	1,116	1,086	1,094	1,199	920	870	-12.4%
Total (excl. Merseyside)	2,573	2,707	2,438	2,341	2,351	2,604	2,203	2,102	-7.7%
Age of victim unknown									
Essex	10	5	7	1	3	0	2	7	-
Greater Manchester	22	19	9	13	21	10	15	17	-
Lancashire	0	1	0	4	5	14	5	3	-
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	1	1	6	4	-
Nottinghamshire	3	7	3	3	5	6	5	1	-
South Wales	2	1	4	2	1	0	0	0	-
Thames Valley	11	5	6	5	2	1	5	3	-
West Midlands	1	0	0	0	4	1	4	3	-
West Yorkshire	7	28	13	8	49	6	4	4	-
Metropolitan	13	6	3	5	7	7	4	4	-
Total (excl. Merseyside)	69	72	45	41	97	45	44	42	-
Victims of unknown age as a percentage of overall total	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%	-
Overall Total (excl. Merseyside)	3,497	3,555	3,237	3,156	3,208	3,309	2,904	2,748	-9.9%

Notes: Essex 2007/08 data were under review at the time of publication and may be subject to revision. 'All violence' includes sharp-instrument-related homicide, attempted homicide, threats to kill, wounding or carrying out an act endangering life, GBH without intent, and ABH and other injury.

'All violence' as a proportion of all crime

Figure D1: Proportion of TKAP 'all violence' in nine TKAP areas as a proportion of all police-recorded violent crime and all crime in England and Wales from April 2007 to December 2008 (from Crime in England and Wales, Quarterly updates to June 2008, September 2008, and December, 2008)



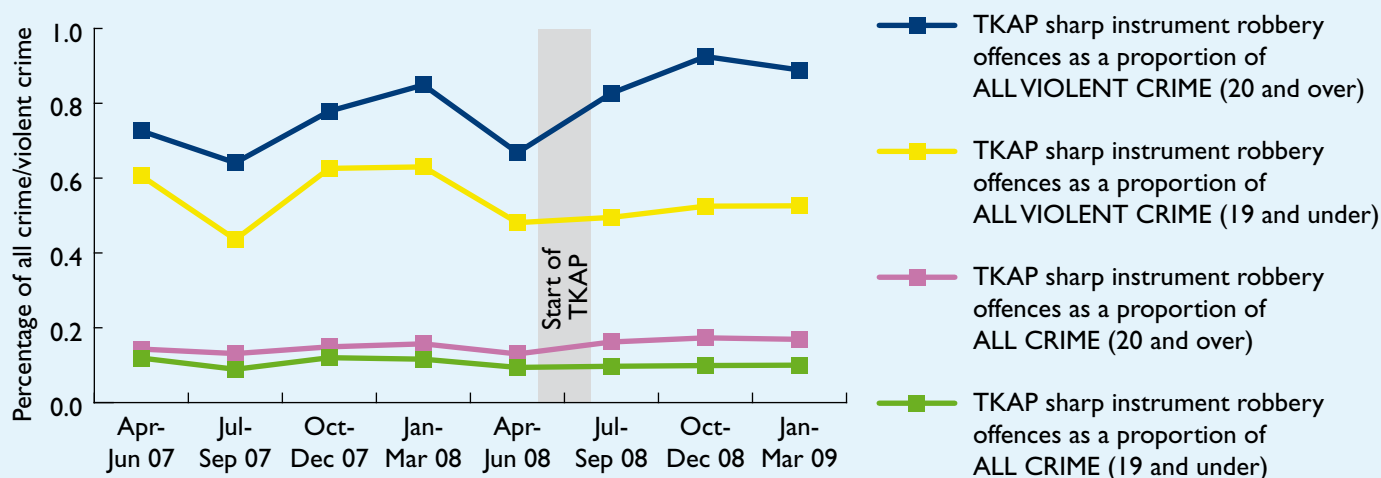
TKAP robbery offences

Table D4: Number of TKAP recorded Robbery offences involving knives/sharp-instruments (personal and property) for victims aged 19 and under, 20 and over, and unknown

Aged 19 and under	2007/08			2008/09				% change (Jul08-Mar09 vs. Jul07-Mar08)	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec		Jan-Mar
Essex	13	16	25	15	17	27	27	29	+48.2%
Greater Manchester	81	83	94	86	64	66	80	133	+6.1%
Lancashire	15	15	16	9	17	13	14	22	+22.5%
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	17	26	15	16	-
Nottinghamshire	32	28	44	36	30	47	43	42	+22.2%
South Wales	8	10	7	3	7	11	11	16	+90.0%
Thames Valley	36	27	29	30	39	55	35	31	+40.7%
West Midlands	220	164	197	222	181	231	205	225	+13.4%
West Yorkshire	34	39	37	52	24	37	40	27	-18.8%
Metropolitan	1,109	720	998	946	761	684	688	594	-26.2%
Total (excl. Merseyside)	1,548	1,102	1,447	1,399	1,140	1,171	1,143	1,119	-13.0%
Aged 20 and over									
Essex	28	19	33	40	48	50	65	55	+84.8%
Greater Manchester	177	190	229	240	172	196	232	224	-1.1%
Lancashire	29	30	30	31	33	39	48	33	+31.9%
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	50	54	78	63	-
Nottinghamshire	51	45	38	57	56	86	66	73	+60.7%
South Wales	17	15	19	20	22	22	29	38	+64.8%
Thames Valley	74	65	67	90	69	82	82	81	+10.4%
West Midlands	217	193	202	203	224	203	230	218	+8.9%
West Yorkshire	85	90	123	107	61	105	128	94	+2.2%
Metropolitan	1,175	975	1,059	1,098	897	1,176	1,132	1,076	+8.0%
Total (excl. Merseyside)	1,853	1,622	1,800	1,886	1,582	1,959	2,012	1,892	+10.5%
Age of victim unknown									
Essex	3	4	4	5	7	2	1	5	-
Greater Manchester	84	85	113	147	64	69	111	147	-
Lancashire	7	4	9	4	9	4	6	5	-
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	18	27	45	29	-
Nottinghamshire	16	21	15	13	15	18	13	10	-
South Wales	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	-
Thames Valley	8	4	1	10	7	5	4	9	-
West Midlands	23	6	24	23	24	31	57	25	-
West Yorkshire	1	4	6	0	36	7	13	16	-
Metropolitan	79	70	102	123	103	112	106	120	-
Total (excl. Merseyside)	221	198	274	326	265	248	311	337	-
Victims of unknown age as a percentage of overall total	6%	7%	8%	9%	9%	7%	9%	10%	-
Overall Total (excl. Merseyside)	3,622	2,922	3,521	3,611	2,987	3,378	3,466	3,348	+1.4%

Note: Essex 2007/08 data were under review at the time of publication and may be subject to revision.

Figure D2: TKAP Robbery offences in nine TKAP (for victims aged 19 and under and 20 and over) as a proportion of all violent crime and all police recorded crime in England and Wales from Apr07-Dec08 (Crime in England and Wales, Quarterly updates to Jun. 08, Sep.08, and Dec, 08)

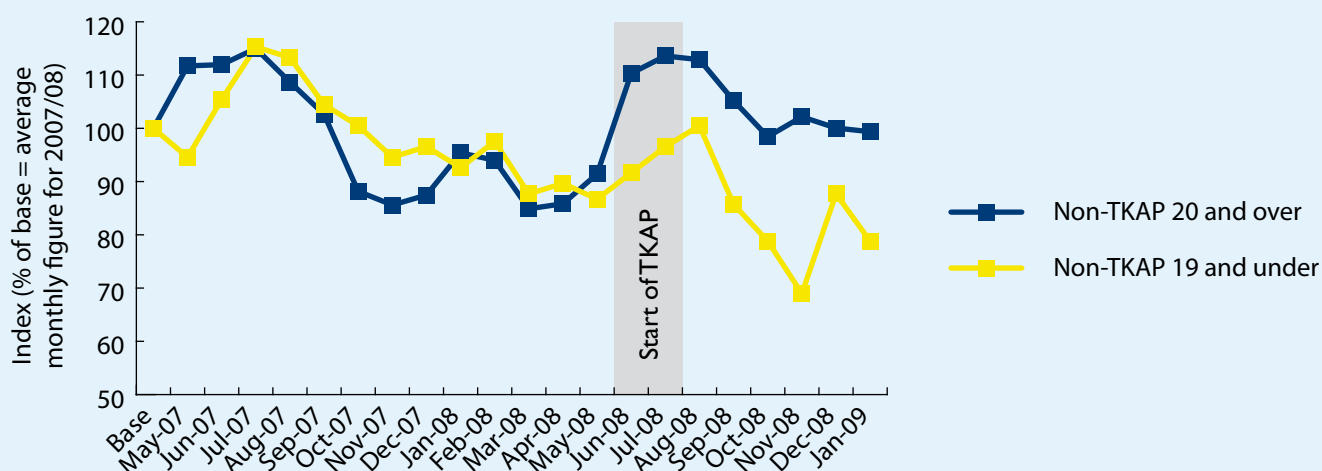


Appendix E: NHS hospital admissions

NHS hospital admissions in non-TKAP areas

The graphs below present the number of NHS hospital admissions for ‘assault by a sharp object’ in non-TKAP areas for victims aged 19 and under and 20 and over.

Figure E1: Indexed three-month moving averages (base = average figure for 2007/08) of NHS hospital admissions for ‘assault with a sharp object’ (victims aged 19 and under/20 and over) in non-TKAP areas from April 2007 to Feb 2009

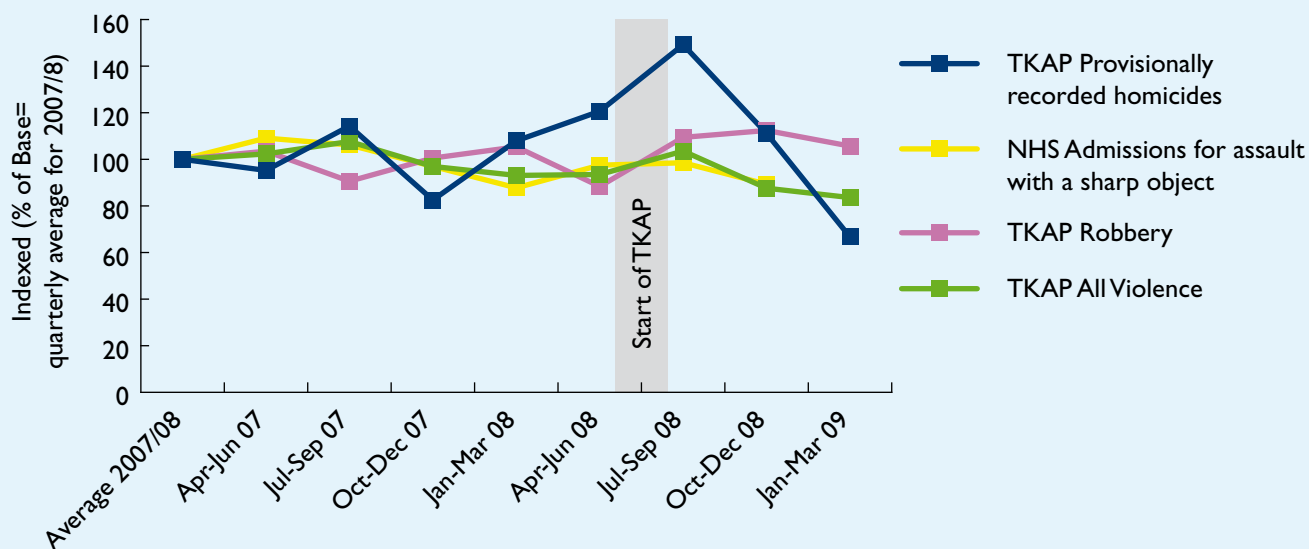


Source: Hospital Episode Statistics; NHS Information Centre.

Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation. Figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Appendix F: Combined analysis of knife crime

Figure F1: Indexed graph (base = average quarterly figure for 2007/08) of recorded TKAP provisionally recorded homicide, TKAP 'all violence' offences, TKAP robbery offences and NHS hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object (victims aged 20 & over) in the TKAP areas (Apr. 2007 – Mar. 2009)



Sources: Hospital Episode Statistics; NHS Information Centre and TKAP monitoring programme.

Notes: NHS figures exclude South Wales and are based on local authorities. TKAP areas are not coterminous with local authorities but provide a good approximation; figures from April 2008 onwards are provisional and may be subject to revision; the last month is particularly likely to change as due to the short timeline to submit these figures, they may represent a partial return. NHS figures for March 2009 were not available at the time of publication.

Appendix G: Technical notes

Knife crime terminology

The term 'knife crime' is primarily used as a general term to refer to stabbings, homicides, and knife carrying, particularly among younger adults. Within this report, the term 'knife crime' is used to refer specifically to offences (see below) that cause or threaten harm using a knife or other sharp-instrument.

Victims/Offenders of unknown age

For TKAP recorded knife crime and NHS hospital admissions data, figures are included in this report for victims/offenders aged 19 and under and 20 and over. For a small proportion of data for these measures, the age is recorded as unknown; for TKAP recorded knife crime, these data are presented in the relevant appendices. It should be noted, therefore, that the findings in this report for the age groups 19 and under and 20 and over do not include these cases.

TKAP police recorded crime

TKAP recorded crime and National Statistics

The sharp-instrument recorded offences figures collected as part of the TKAP monitoring exercise are separate to the National Statistics statutory data collection on knives/sharp-instruments, which is collected via the Home Office's Annual Data Return (ADR). Since the ADR does not request information on the age of the victim or the offender a separate collection had to be established. Age related offence data were collected each month for the sub-set of offences, detailed in Table T1, directly from the ten TKAP Tier One forces. As the figures were collected with a different time frame to the ADR, there may be some differences. This is to be expected as cases are revised on the individual force crime recording systems as further information about the case and the age of the victim or accused become available. Specifically for possession offences, the age-related data in this report are based upon the number of *offenders* and as such are different from the numbers of *offences* presented in the National Statistics.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) use an incident-based crime recording system. Consequently, when TKAP data were extracted to calculate the age of victims, where multiple offences and victims were involved in a single crime incident, it was not possible to determine which offence related to which victim. Thus, for TKAP data, all victims involved in any incident for which the main crime classification included a knife or sharp-instrument were counted; as a result, the number of victims will not necessarily correspond to the number of offences, and TKAP figures are higher than those reported in the National Statistics.

The TKAP recorded sharp-instrument offences presented in this report were confirmed as correct with each of the ten TKAP forces on the following dates: Essex (15 July 2009), Greater Manchester Police (3 July 2009), Lancashire (3 July 2009); Merseyside (4 July 2009); Nottinghamshire (3 July 2009); South Wales (7 July 2009); Thames Valley (2 July 2009); West Midlands (7 July 2009); West Yorkshire (2 July 2009); MPS (3 July 2009).

Clarification of Home Office counting rules

Since April 2008, a clarification in the Home Office Counting Rules for grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent was issued as part of the annual update of Counting Rules; the aim was to ensure that offences of GBH with intent were recorded on the basis of evidence of clear intent to commit serious injury, irrespective of the degree of injury sustained. Specifically, the 2007/08 offence category 'other wounding' was replaced by separate offence codes for 'inflicting GBH without intent' and 'ABH and other injuries'. Due to these changes, it is not possible to make a direct comparison of these offences across 2008/09 and 2007/08, hence we have taken a measure of "all violence" when looking at baseline data. In the present report, 'all violence' includes these 2007/08 offences: homicide, attempted murder, threats to kill, wounding or carrying out an act endangering life, and other wounding; this equates to the following 2008/09 offences: homicide, attempted murder, threats to kill, wounding or carrying out an act endangering life, GBH without intent, and ABH and other injury.

Changes were also made in April 2008 to the Counting Rules with respect to possession of offensive weapons. After April 2008, a separate offence code was introduced specifically to identify offenders in possession of an article with a blade or point. Thus, direct comparisons are made between 2007/08 and 2008/09 across all possession offences, or "possession of other weapons" which includes bladed and other instruments, but not firearms.

Defining TKAP knife/sharp-instrument offences

As per the 2008/09 Home Office Counting Rules, TKAP sharp-instrument offences include:

- Homicide (including manslaughter and infanticide);
- Attempted murder;
- Threats to kill;
- Wounding or carrying out an act endangering life (including with intent to do grievous bodily harm [GBH])¹⁷;
- Inflicting GBH without intent¹⁷;
- Actual bodily harm (ABH) and other injury¹⁷;
- Possession of an article with a blade or point;
- Possession of other weapons (excluding firearms);
- Robbery of business property;
- Robbery of personal property.

¹⁷ includes racially and religiously aggravated offences.

The TKAP police forces were instructed, as per the Home Office Counting Rules, to include any instrument that is capable of piercing the skin as a 'knife/sharp-instrument'. This may include any of the following: axe, bayonet, bottle, bow and arrow, chopper, crossbow/arrow, dagger, dart, flick-knife, glass, kitchen knife, machete, pen knife, pin, razorblade, saw, scalpel, scissors, Stanley knife, syringe needle, sword. Figures were requested for the number of recorded offences involving the 'use' of a knife/sharp-instrument, meaning that a victim is stabbed and the skin is pierced. Threats are only included if the potential victim is convinced that they were going to be stabbed and there is evidence of the suspect's intent to create this impression.

As part of the TKAP monitoring exercise, all forces provided data on the number of sharp-instrument offences recorded monthly from June 2008 to March 2009. 'Baseline figures' (April 2007 to May 2008) were also obtained for the same offence types; however, Merseyside Police were only able to provide baseline data on homicide offences. Essex Police were reviewing their knife-related data for 2007/08 at the time of publication of this report; as such, the figures used in this report may be subject to revision. Baseline data for all other offences are provided for all forces excluding Merseyside.

NHS Hospital admissions

Hospital episodes statistics (HES) data are published on the HES website (www.hesonline.nhs.uk). Annual figures for all external causes are available from 2002/03 until 2007/08; monthly figures for 2008/09 are published, but until the annual data are published in October 2009, these data remain provisional and may be subject to change; the last month of data (i.e. February 2009) should be treated with particular caution as these are likely to represent a partial return.

The figures in this report are based on admission episodes with an ICD-10 external cause code of "X99 Assault by Sharp Object" for local authorities in TKAP and non-TKAP areas in England. Geographical information is based on the home address of the victim, and must be treated with a degree of caution as a signifier of where the injury was inflicted. These data can be affected by changes in recording practices.

The following ICD-10 external cause codes comprise 'all assault' in this report:

- X85 Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances
- X86 Assault by corrosive substance
- X87 Assault by pesticides
- X88 Assault by gases and vapours
- X89 Assault by other specified chemicals and noxious substances
- X90 Assault by unspecified chemical or noxious substance
- X91 Assault by hanging, strangulation and suffocation
- X92 Assault by drowning and submersion
- X93 Assault by handgun discharge
- X94 Assault by rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge
- X95 Assault by other and unspecified firearm discharge
- X96 Assault by explosive material
- X97 Assault by smoke, fire and flames
- X98 Assault by steam hot vapours and hot objects
- X99 Assault by sharp object
- Y00 Assault by blunt object
- Y01 Assault by pushing from high place
- Y02 Assault by pushing or placing victim before moving object
- Y03 Assault by crashing of motor vehicle
- Y04 Assault by bodily force
- Y05 Sexual assault by bodily force
- Y06 Neglect and abandonment
- Y07 Other maltreatment syndromes

- Y08 Assault by other specified means
- Y09 Assault by unspecified means

MORI Crime Tracker Survey

The survey organisation Ipsos MORI researched public perceptions of knife crime. They conducted around 2000 face-to-face in-home interviews each month as part of a quota sample 'Crime Tracker' survey. Participants are aged 16 and over in England and Wales. The survey used a random selection of output area sampling points with a controlled sample selected at random PAF addresses. Interviews were conducted in-home between: 21-27 February 2008, 15-20 May 2008, 14-21 August 2008, 18-24 September 2008, 16-22 October 2008, 13-19 November 2008, 11-17 December 2008, 22-28 January 2009, 19-24 February 2009, 27 March-2 April 2009, 23-28 April 2009, 21-27 May 2009, 26 June-2 July 2009¹⁸.

Data have been weighted to the Census profile of the population. The following table presents the unweighted base sizes for each age category. Figures are based on April 2009 but are broadly reflective of base sizes in each wave:

All respondents	16-24 years	25-39 years	40-64 years	65+ years
1,852	223	445	753	429

The four questions for which data are presented in this report are:

- Q1. What would you say are the three most important issues facing Britain today when it comes to crime? [Spontaneous response from the participant]
- Q2. What would you say are the three most important issues facing your local area today when it comes to crime? [Spontaneous response from the participant]
- Q3. In the last month, how many times, if at all, have you worried about becoming a victim of crime? [Participant selects from five pre-coded answer categories]
- Q4. Which crimes have you worried about? [Respondent selects from a list of 13]

For Q1, only issues with a response rate greater than one per cent were included. Q3 was only asked of those respondents who reported worrying about crime at least once in the last month. These comprised roughly one-third of the total sample (n=619 in April, 466 in March).

Statistical significance

Tests of statistical significance were used to identify which differences were unlikely to have occurred by chance. In this publication tests at the five per cent significance level have been applied (the level at which there is a one in 20 chance of an observed difference being solely due to chance).

Graphs and analyses

Where three-monthly moving averages are used, the first and last data-point for the period in question are not included in the chart. As noted, for the purpose of analyses in this report, the 'TKAP period' is defined as July 2008 – March 2009. However, to reflect the likelihood that some TKAP activities began in June 2008 (when the Programme was announced) charts in this report use shaded grey band that includes data from both June and July 2008 to indicate the 'start of TKAP'.

¹⁸ The Crime Tracker is usually included within the Ipsos MORI Crime Tracker survey, a nationally representative monthly omnibus designed specifically to track social issues. In March 2009 and June 2009 (in the absence of the Crime Tracker survey) the questions were asked on Ipsos MORI's Capibus, an alternative weekly omnibus that uses different interviewing points in its nationally representative sample. Initial tests using weighting analyses indicate that differences in results over these periods cannot be fully explained by changes in the sampling points.