

## Press Release

### Youth Justice Board publishes knife crime insights pack

Date: 05 February 2025



The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is sharing its **Knife Crime Insights Pack** to add context to the YJB's Annual Statistics which include data on knife crime and offensive weapons.

#### The YJB Annual Statistics highlight:

- In the year ending March 2024, there were just over 3,200 knife or offensive weapon offences committed by children resulting in a caution or sentence, which is 6% fewer than the previous year but 20% greater than 10 years ago. This is the sixth consecutive year-on-year decrease.
- In the latest year, the vast majority (99.7%) of knife or offensive weapon offences committed by children were possession offences and the remaining 0.1% were threatening with a knife or offensive weapon offences.
- Out of court disposals are a method of resolving an investigation outside of court. In the year ending March 2024, 61% of disposals given to children for a knife or offensive weapon offence were a community sentence. This proportion is broadly stable over the last 10 years.
- The proportion of children sentenced to immediate custody was 7% in the last year, which is the same level it has been for the last three years.

Included within the pack are a number of evidence-based insights into what works and what doesn't. There are also a number of recommendations informed by these insights, which are:

- **The YJB supports attempts to reduce knife supply.**
- **The YJB supports individualised decisions on outcomes.**
- **The YJB supports local strategies to address the conditions that sustain violence.**
- **The YJB supports local partnerships working together to ensure that adults meet the needs of children.**

**Chief Executive, Stephanie Roberts-Bibby**, said:

*"Any incidence of violence involving knives and weapons is one too many. This type of violence, specifically involving children, should not happen and when it does, it is an emotionally charged time for all involved, not least for the victims, their families and the communities who are so greatly impacted. My heart goes out to those affected."*

*"Our Annual Statistics which we published last week show a worrying number of children still involved in offences involving weapons. While the overall picture is*

*improving, it is important to consider the broader context, which is so often missed when we speak of individual tragedies.*

*“To address knife crime adequately, it is vital that we understand the context in which children live their lives – so publicly and with an increasing use of social media and technology. This is exacerbated by the pandemic which will have affected maturation and development. It is essential that children have access to early intervention and the right support at the critical stages of their lives. Evidence shows this work is crucial in preventing further harm, reducing the number of victims and creating safer communities through steering children away from carrying weapons.*

*“We cannot underestimate the importance of attendance in inclusive education as a protective factor in preventing children offending. Equally important is support from health services when appropriate. We will continue to do all we can to provide evidence-based advice to ministers and all partners responsible for preventing children offending, including local authorities, children’s social care, education, health, probation and police.”*

The YJB Knife Crime Insights Pack is a comprehensive report which informs the basis of cross-sector discussions hosted by the YJB. The pack provides context to the landscape of knife crime by summarising facts, and insights gathered from experts who work with children in the youth justice system. It also provides recommendations based on the evidence. These insights draw attention to the significant role that early intervention, targeted prevention and diversion programs play in reducing knife crime by children.

**Chair of the Youth Justice Board, Keith Fraser**, commented:

*“Understanding the landscape of knife crime is essential to reducing the number of victims affected by it, which is why this insights pack was developed. It is also why senior experts and decision makers are routinely invited to discuss the insights and refine the recommendations.*

*“We hear a lot in the press that “knife crime is an epidemic”. In actual fact, the statistics show that knife crime has been decreasing since 2019 and we want to continue this trend by highlighting what works based on the evidence.*

*“There is very weak evidence to support that ‘scared straight’ initiatives, weapons amnesties, increased stop and search or mandatory sentencing have any sustained impact on knife crime in communities. Initiatives that do work are social skills training, mentoring and tailored support with education, housing and employment.”*

For more information access the [full Knife Crime Insights Pack on the Youth Justice Resource Hub](#)

**ENDS**

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