



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2018-0124, 21 May 2018

Serious Violence Strategy

Commons Chamber, Tuesday 22 May 2018

A general debate on the Serious Violence Strategy is scheduled for Tuesday 22 May 2018.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Compilers: Sarah Pepin,
Alison Pratt
Subject specialist: Sally
Lipscombe (Crimes of
violence), Grahame Allen
(Statistician)

Contents

1.	Background	2
1.1	Definitions	2
1.2	The Serious Violence Strategy	2
	The Strategy: an overview	2
	Reaction to the Strategy	4
	Debate on police numbers	6
2.	Statistics	8
2.1	Homicide	8
	Scotland and Northern Ireland	10
2.2	Offensive weapons offences	10
	Possession of offensive weapons offences	10
	Knife Crime	12
	Gun crime	13
2.3	Robbery	13
2.4	Police workforce	15
3.	News and blogs	17
3.1	Press	19
4.	Parliamentary Business	22
4.1	Debates	22
4.2	Parliamentary Questions	22
5.	Organisations and further reading	31

1. Background

1.1 Definitions

There is no formal definition of “serious violent crime”, as the Home Office acknowledged in response to a recent PQ asking what its definition of “serious violent crime” is and which offence types it covers:

...the scope of the Serious Violence Strategy is concerned with specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.

Serious violence also extends to other forms of serious assault. We know that a significant proportion of violence is linked to either domestic abuse or alcohol, but these two important elements are not driving the increases we are seeing in violent crime. The strategy also does not address specifically sexual abuse, modern slavery or violence against women and girls. They may all involve forms of serious violence but there are already specific strategies addressing those important issues, and so they are not included within the scope of the Serious Violence Strategy.¹

1.2 The Serious Violence Strategy

The Strategy: an overview

The [Serious Violence Strategy](#) referred to above was published by the Home Office on 9 April 2018.

The Home Office gave the [following overview](#) of the Strategy:

Law enforcement is a very important part of the Serious Violence Strategy, but it also looks at the root causes of the problem and how to support young people to lead productive lives away from violence.

Action in the strategy is centred on 4 main themes:

- tackling [county lines](#) and misuse of drugs
- early intervention and prevention
- supporting communities and local partnerships
- law enforcement and the criminal justice response

The strategy describes a range of initiatives including:

- a new £11 million Early Intervention Youth Fund to support communities for early intervention and prevention with young people for 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020
- the development of a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to tackle violent and exploitative criminal activity associated with county lines
- funding to help deliver a new round of heroin and crack action areas

¹ [PO 140165 \[on Crimes of Violence\]](#), 8 May 2018

- more rounds of the anti-knife crime Community Fund of up to £1 million for 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020
- more funding for young people’s advocates working with gang-affected young women and girls

The strategy focuses on early intervention and prevention which can help catch young people before they go down the wrong path, encouraging them to make positive choices.

The Executive Summary provides further details of the Strategy’s four key themes. On county lines and the misuse of drugs, it says:

Given the strong link between drugs and serious violence and the related harm and exploitation from county lines, we have set out the action we will take to tackle this violent and exploitative criminal activity. The Home Office is supporting the development of a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre. We will continue to raise awareness of county lines and the related exploitation, and we will provide funding to support delivery of a new round of Heroin and Crack Action Areas.²

On early intervention, it says:

Our work on early intervention and prevention is focused on steering young people away from crime and putting in place measures to tackle the root causes. The Home Office has committed £11 million over the next two years through a new Early Intervention Youth Fund to provide support to communities for early intervention and prevention with young people. We will support Redthread to expand and pilot its Youth Violence Intervention Programme outside London, starting with Nottingham and Birmingham, and to develop its service in major London hospitals. We will also continue to fund Young People’s Advocates working with gang-affected young women and girls, and exploring whether the model should be expanded. The Home Office will work with the Department for Education and Ofsted to explore what more can be done to support schools in England to respond to potential crime risks and to provide additional support to excluded children.³

On supporting communities and local partnerships, it says:

We need an approach that involves partners across different sectors, including police, local authorities and the private and voluntary sector. Communities and local partnerships will be at the heart of our response. This issue must be understood and owned locally so that all the relevant partners can play their part. We will support local partnerships, working with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), to galvanise the local response to tackling serious violence and ensure that they are reflecting local challenges within their plans. We have launched a new media campaign raising awareness about the risks of carrying knives. To help communities tackle knife crime, the Home Office is providing up to £1 million for the Community Fund in both 2018/19 and 2019/20, in addition to continuing the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) Fund and EGVE review programme.⁴

On law enforcement, it says:

² HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, p9

³ Ibid, pp9-10

⁴ Ibid, p10

We are clear that tackling serious violence is not a law enforcement issue alone and requires partnerships across a range of agencies; however we want to ensure that we are providing the tools to support the law enforcement and criminal justice response. We are planning new legislation to strengthen our controls on knives, corrosive substances and firearms. The Home Office will also work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) to ensure their PEEL inspections focus on serious violence and support a HMICFRS thematic inspection of county lines in 2018/19. The Home Office has commissioned the Centre for Applied Science and Technology to ensure that the police have the capability to undertake street testing for corrosives.⁵

The planned new legislation referred to in the above extract will be an Offensive Weapons Bill, which the Government said (in April 2018) would be brought forward "within weeks": see Home Office press release, [Home Office announces plans for Offensive Weapons Bill to tackle serious violence](#), 8 April 2018. The planned legislation follows a Home Office consultation on offensive weapons that ran from October to December 2017: see [Consultation on new legislation on offensive and dangerous weapons](#). The Government has not yet published a full formal response to the consultation.

The Strategy also set out the Government's plans to establish "a new cross sector Serious Violence Taskforce with key representatives from a range of national, local and delivery partner agencies" to oversee delivery of the Strategy. Membership of the Taskforce was announced later in April: see Home Office press release, [New taskforce to take action against violent crime](#), 25 April 2018.

Reaction to the Strategy

Initial reaction to the Strategy was generally positive, with praise for the emphasis on the importance of early intervention. However, the need for ongoing funding to facilitate this was also highlighted.

For example, the Chair of the Local Government Association's Safer and Stronger Communities Board said:

One of the key successes in tackling and preventing crime in recent years has been effective partnership working at a local level between councils, the police and health service. It is good that today's Strategy commits to providing funding to support this multi-agency work and we are pleased it places significant emphasis on the early intervention support which is vital to prevent young people becoming involved in crime in the first place.⁶

However, he went on to highlight the fact that councils were still waiting to receive their youth justice grant allocations for 2018/19:

This is vital funding used to support young people and help keep them away from criminality in the first place. This follows government funding for YOTs already being halved from £145 million in 2010/11 to just £72 million in 2017/18.

⁵ Ibid, p10

⁶ Local Government Association, [LGA responds to Serious Violence Strategy](#), 9 April 2018

Councils also face significant rises in demand for urgent child protection work and with a children's services funding gap that will reach almost £2 billion by 2020, councils are increasingly having to divert funding away from preventative work into services to protect children who are at immediate risk of harm.

Only with the right funding and powers can councils continue to make a difference to people's lives by supporting families and young people and help tackle serious violent crime in our local communities.⁷

The [Association of Directors of Children's Services](#) issued a similar response, praising the focus on prevention and early intervention but emphasising the need to maximise the impact of available funding:

Prevention and early action is key, this must involve co-ordination of a wide range of services, including those to support families and young people, but also stimulating housing, employment opportunities and community facilities. The strategy emphasises the importance of local communities and partnerships yet provides little for local authorities to develop local responses.⁸

The [Early Intervention Foundation](#) said it was "delighted" that early intervention had been placed at the heart of the Strategy, describing it as a "critical part of the solution". However, it said the Government's stated commitment to early intervention was not matched by what was set out in the Strategy, and it called on the Home Office to be "more ambitious" about early intervention:

The real opportunities here lie not in the creation of another short-term funding stream, but – to give just a few examples – in the structural changes proposed in the mental health green paper, in the consultation on the future of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), in allowing schools to focus on children's social and emotional development as well as on their academic attainment (and recognising the link between the two), in the future arrangements for Troubled Families programme funding, and in the work DWP is leading to reduce parental conflict.⁹

The charity [Redthread](#), which runs a variety of programmes aimed at tackling youth violence, welcomed the support for prevention through the Early Intervention Youth Fund. However, it called on the Home Office to place greater emphasis on a "public health" approach to serious violence, and for the Department of Health and Department for Education to join the Home Office in tackling serious youth violence.¹⁰

The [St Giles Trust](#), which works with young people affected by gang violence, welcomed the focus on early intervention and on tackling county lines. It hoped that the Strategy would "help bring people round the table and help us tackle this issue in the holistic, joined-up way it needs".¹¹

⁷ Ibid

⁸ ADCS, [Response to the government's Serious Violence Strategy](#), 9 April 2018

⁹ Early Intervention Foundation, [Serious Violence Strategy: Government needs to start engaging with the evidence base](#), 10 April 2018

¹⁰ Redthread, [Redthread's response to the Serious Violence Strategy](#), 10 April 2018

¹¹ St Giles Trust, [Home Office Serious Violence Strategy – St Giles Trust's Response](#), undated

Debate on police numbers

When the Strategy was published there was some controversy that it did not include any direct reference to the relationship between police numbers and violent crime rates.

Writing in the Sunday Telegraph ahead of the Strategy's publication, the then Home Secretary Amber Rudd had said that any contention that there were "not enough officers on the streets" to tackle the threat of serious violence needed to be "put to rest":

The evidence does not support this. In the early Noughties, when serious violent crimes were at their highest, police numbers were rising. In 2008, when knife crime was far greater than the lows we saw in 2013/14, police numbers were close to the highest we'd seen in decades.

So while I understand that police are facing emerging threats and new pressures – leading us to increase total investment in policing – the evidence does not bear out claims that resources are to blame for rising violence.¹²

However, press reports said that a leaked Home Office memorandum suggested that increased demands on police at a time of falling officer numbers might be an "underlying driver" of serious violence. The Guardian – one of the media outlets to have seen the memorandum – provided the following summary:

The document is entitled Serious violence; latest evidence on the drivers. A section on police resources says: "Since 2012/3, weighted crime demand on the police has risen, largely due to growth in recorded sex offences. At the same time officers' numbers have fallen by 5% since 2014.

"So resources dedicated to serious violence have come under pressure and charge rates have dropped. This may have encouraged offenders. "[It is] unlikely to be the factor that triggered the shift in serious violence, but may be an underlying driver that has allowed the rise to continue." A highlighted box emphasises that point: "Not the main driver but has likely contributed."¹³

The Strategy did not ultimately include any direct reference to the impact of police numbers, although it did include the following observations on arrest and charge trends:

We also know that the certainty of punishment is likely to have a greater impact than its severity. The recent downward trend in arrests and charges for some crimes lessens the certainty of punishment.¹⁴

It gave the example of robbery, where the number of offences has risen but the number of charges has remained "broadly flat, meaning the percentage of offences resulting in a charge has fallen".¹⁵

¹² "[Amber Rudd: We are determined to tackle violent crime, and there are enough officers on the streets to do so](#)", Sunday Telegraph, 7 April 2018 [subscription]

¹³ "[Police cuts 'likely contributed' to rise in violent crime, leaked report reveals](#)", Guardian, 9 April 2018

¹⁴ HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, p24

¹⁵ Ibid, p24 – see also figure 6 on p25

Speaking to the Today Programme, Amber Rudd said it was “a “mistake” and a “disservice” to communities and families to blame police numbers alone”.¹⁶ She added that she had not seen the Home Office memorandum that had been leaked to the press.¹⁷

The Times reported that, speaking on LBC Radio, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick had commented that there were “lots of reasons” for an increase in violent crime, including the drugs markets, changes in people’s financial and economic circumstances, the glamorisation of violence, and the role of social media in encouraging gang violence. She added:

“There’s a whole load of things, but of course I would be naive to say that the reduction in police finances over the last few years, not just in London but beyond, hasn’t had an impact.

“I’m sure it’s had an impact. It’s part of the issue, and that’s why I’m very grateful for the new money that we’ve got, which we are getting on and investing on recruiting new people and I think it will help.”¹⁸

The Home Office media blog published two posts on police budgets and numbers in the days following the Strategy’s publication:

- [Serious Violence Strategy and police resources](#), 9 April 2018 (in which the Home Office summarised recent police funding settlements)
- [Serious Violence Strategy funding](#), 10 April 2018 (in which the Home Office clarified that the £40 million of funding underpinning the Strategy was “not being funded from the central Government core police grant that is ring-fenced nor is it being taken away or reallocated from policing projects”.)

For Library statistics on the police workforce, please see section 2.4 of this Debate Pack.

¹⁶ [“Amber Rudd: Target child drug runners to tackle violence”](#), BBC News, 9 April 2018

¹⁷ [“Amber Rudd denies seeing leaked Home Office violent crime report”](#), Guardian, 9 April 2018

¹⁸ [“Cuts led to rise in violent crime, says Cressida Dick”](#), Times, 18 May 2018 [subscription]

2. Statistics

2.1 Homicide

The table below shows the number of homicides recorded in each Police Force Area since 2013:

POLICE RECORDED HOMICIDE OFFENCES BY POLICE FORCE AREA					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Avon and Somerset	10	9	9	9	13
Bedfordshire	10	4	5	8	2
British Transport Police	3	1	2	9	5
Cambridgeshire	7	7	6	7	10
Cheshire	7	4	2	7	3
City of London	0	0	3	1	2
Cleveland	5	9	3	9	3
Cumbria	5	6	5	4	3
Derbyshire	6	6	11	13	12
Devon and Cornwall	20	10	18	9	19
Dorset	5	4	6	11	4
Durham	3	2	1	4	2
Dyfed-Powys	4	3	6	4	2
Essex	11	14	26	17	29
Gloucestershire	5	9	9	4	4
Greater Manchester	30	35	36	54	79
Gwent	4	5	4	3	8
Hampshire	18	11	12	13	18
Hertfordshire	10	11	5	8	8
Humberside	7	11	7	10	9
Kent	16	9	16	15	17
Lancashire	11	15	12	10	17
Leicestershire	11	6	12	11	19
Lincolnshire	8	9	9	11	7
Merseyside	16	21	17	16	23
Metropolitan Police	107	91	123	109	129
Norfolk	4	5	9	4	9
North Wales	5	5	3	7	13
North Yorkshire	7	8	5	6	6
Northamptonshire	7	4	12	6	5
Northumbria	17	21	14	13	18
Nottinghamshire	14	8	11	13	7
South Wales	9	8	16	19	12
South Yorkshire	23	17	12	111	13
Staffordshire	4	14	12	7	7
Suffolk	10	3	4	7	5
Surrey	5	11	12	6	7
Sussex	9	7	10	15	16
Thames Valley	21	9	17	11	25
Warwickshire	3	6	6	8	15
West Mercia	14	16	11	12	16
West Midlands	34	26	32	34	38
West Yorkshire	22	28	21	38	24
Wiltshire	5	4	5	2	5
Total	552	512	577	695	688

Source: Home Office, *Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017: Recorded Crime Data at Police Force Area Level (including pivot table)*, accessed 18 May 2018

For the year ending 30th December 2017 there were 688 recorded homicides in England and Wales – a rate of 1.18 per 100,000 of

population. Excluding the City of London, Greater Manchester has the highest recorded homicide rate at 2.84 per 100,000 of population (includes 22 homicide victims of the Manchester Arena bombing). The Police Force with the lowest recorded homicide rate is Cheshire which has 0.29 recorded per 100,000 of population.

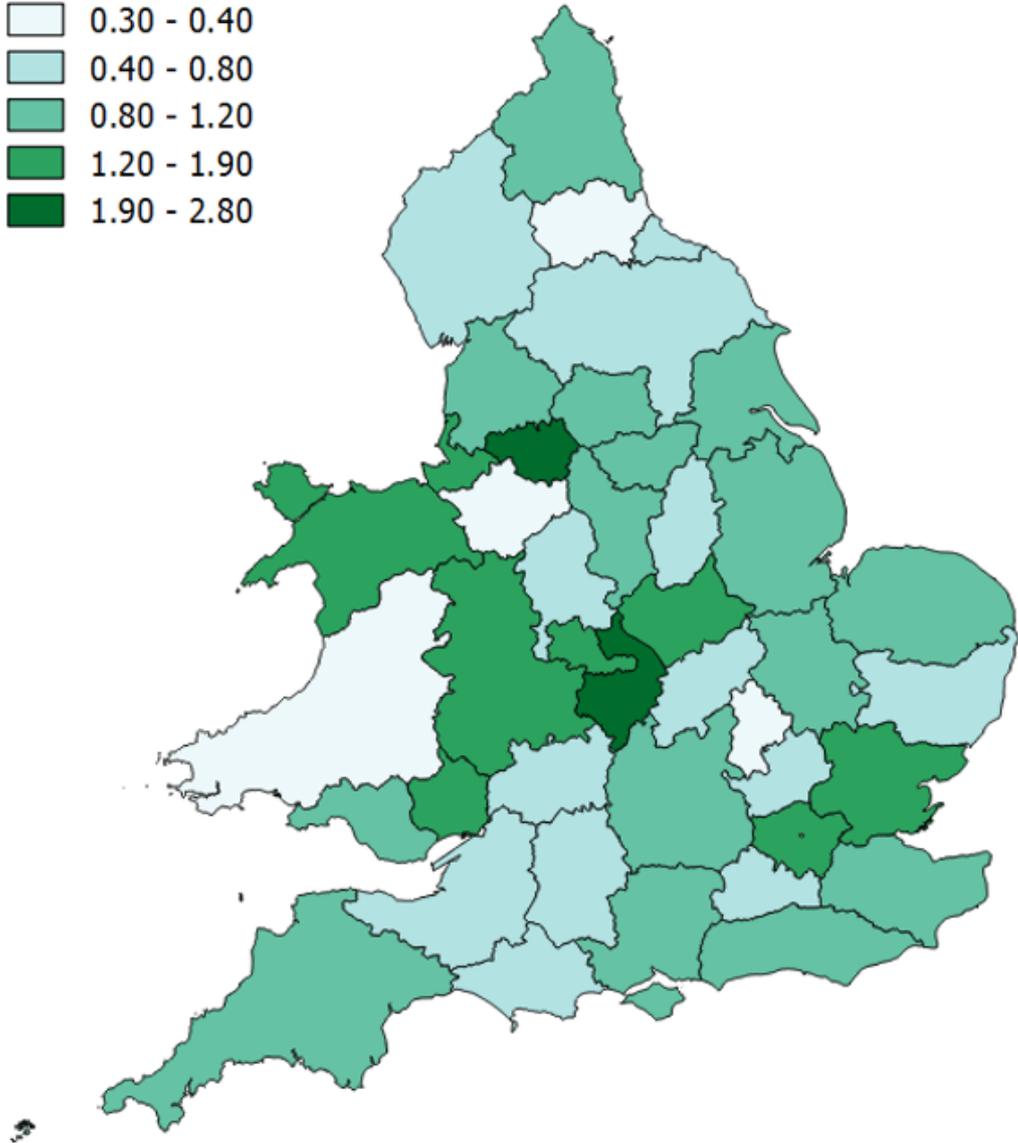
The map below shows homicide rates (per 100,000 head of population) by Police Force Area in 2017:

HOMICIDE OFFENCES RECORDED BY THE POLICE
England and Wales, Year ending December 2017

Legend

Offences per 100,000 population

- 0.30 - 0.40
- 0.40 - 0.80
- 0.80 - 1.20
- 1.20 - 1.90
- 1.90 - 2.80



Source: ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area Data Tables](#), 26 April 2018

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Scotland and Northern Ireland record homicides separately to England and Wales. The [Scottish Government](#) publishes Scottish homicide data, and the [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) publishes Northern Irish homicide data.

In 2016/17, 61 cases (and 64 victims) of homicide were recorded in Scotland, an increase on the 58 cases recorded in 2015/16.¹⁹

In 2017/18 there were 27 recorded homicides in Northern Ireland - a rise of 10 homicides from 2016/17 (17) which had been the lowest level of recorded homicides in Northern Ireland since before 1970.²⁰

2.2 Offensive weapons offences

The latest figures for Offences involving weapons can be found in the ONS publication: [Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2017](#) (published 26 April 2018) which suggests that in the year to December 2017 (Chapter 7):

- Offences involving weapons recorded by the police continue to rise
- Highest number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments since 2011
- Offences involving firearms have increased following long-term declines

Possession of offensive weapons offences

For the year ending 30th December 2017 there were 36,666 Possession of offensive weapons offences recorded in England and Wales – a rate of 62.8 per 100,000 of population. Excluding the City of London, Essex has the highest recorded Possession of offensive weapons offences rate at 101.1 per 100,000 of population. The Police Force with the lowest recorded Possession of offensive weapons offences rate is North Yorkshire which has 28.5 recorded per 100,000 of population.

The table below shows the number of Possession of offensive weapons offences recorded in each Police Force in England and Wales since 2013:

¹⁹ Scottish Government, [Recorded Crime in Scotland 2016/17](#), 26 September 2017

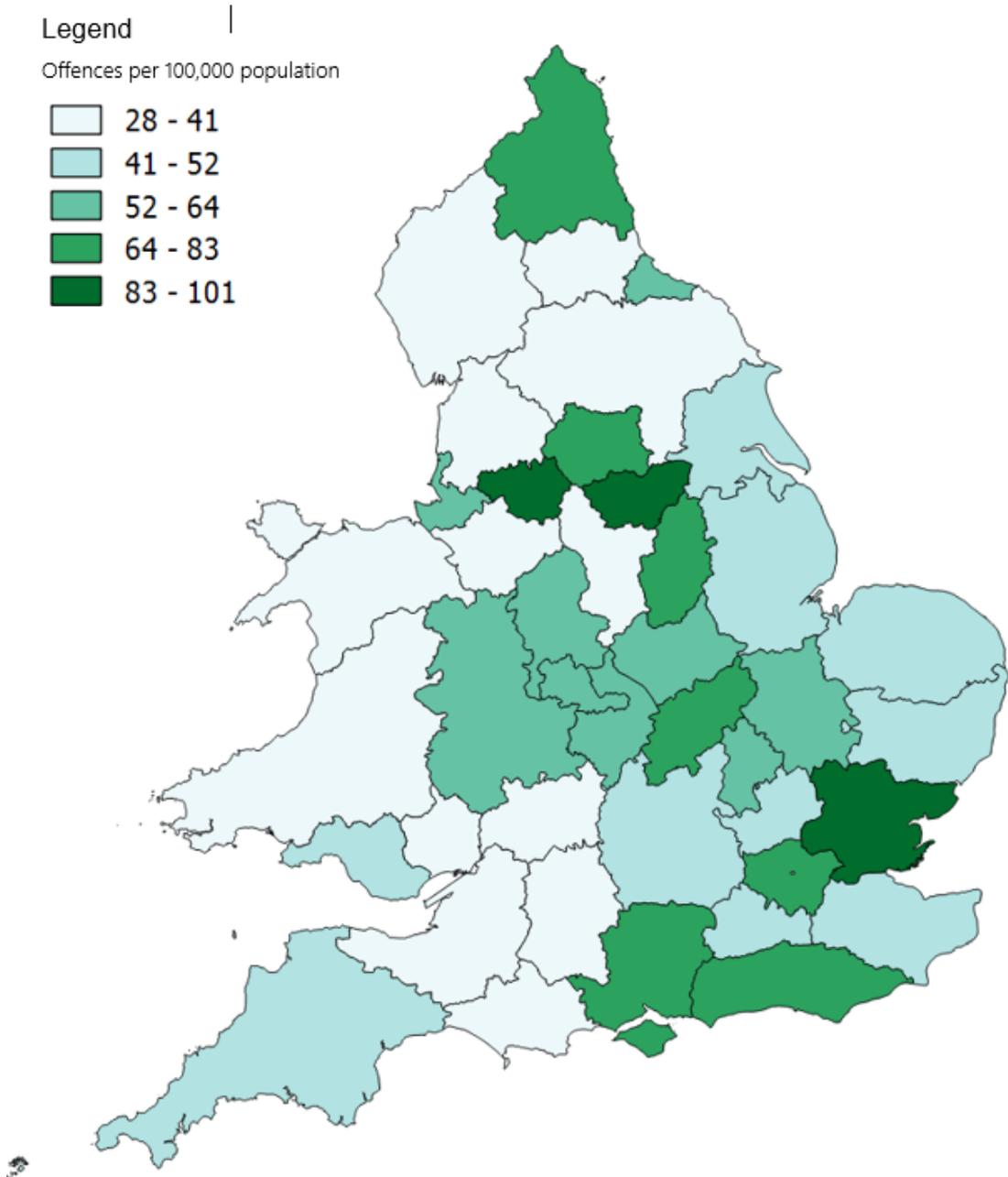
²⁰ PSNI, [Latest police recorded Crime Statistics](#), accessed 18 May 2018

POLICE RECORDED POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES BY POLICE FORCE AREA					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Avon and Somerset	528	379	445	557	667
Bedfordshire	238	271	321	272	379
British Transport Po	368	369	381	371	510
Cambridgeshire	205	236	294	389	486
Cheshire	257	284	301	336	412
City of London	24	24	31	42	49
Cleveland	246	236	271	275	315
Cumbria	156	154	170	145	197
Derbyshire	282	339	428	445	430
Devon and Cornwall	485	475	530	599	807
Dorset	153	166	222	282	274
Durham	239	232	216	183	246
Dyfed-Powys	150	130	126	162	149
Essex	894	883	935	1,217	1,826
Gloucestershire	138	124	154	151	223
Greater Manchester	1,080	1,236	1,461	1,605	2,585
Gwent	169	155	148	166	190
Hampshire	524	641	856	1,089	1,384
Hertfordshire	271	313	348	497	585
Humberside	325	318	347	364	445
Kent	455	479	478	623	917
Lancashire	516	447	421	361	507
Leicestershire	324	343	365	477	684
Lincolnshire	235	274	301	342	380
Merseyside	678	694	694	675	824
Metropolitan Police	3,953	4,215	4,579	5,715	7,240
Norfolk	218	255	270	347	389
North Wales	151	213	220	228	225
North Yorkshire	171	229	178	206	233
Northamptonshire	239	306	330	458	494
Northumbria	667	655	698	928	1,018
Nottinghamshire	561	559	725	739	889
South Wales	423	398	441	459	578
South Yorkshire	570	657	663	970	1,224
Staffordshire	357	402	529	525	609
Suffolk	264	248	290	317	378
Surrey	257	272	301	370	516
Sussex	533	639	808	1,162	1,338
Thames Valley	736	713	954	1,043	1,233
Warwickshire	141	129	179	286	348
West Mercia	299	345	473	633	684
West Midlands	1,235	1,123	1,337	1,571	1,779
West Yorkshire	675	697	1,007	1,412	1,747
Wiltshire	129	132	236	291	273
Total	20,519	21,389	24,462	29,285	36,666

Source: Home Office, *Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017: Recorded Crime Data at Police Force Area Level (including pivot table)*. accessed 18 May 2018

The map below shows the number of recorded Possession of weapons offences (per 100,000 head of population) by Police Force Area in 2017:

**POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES RECORDED BY THE POLICE
England and Wales, Year ending December 2017**



Source: ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area Data Tables](#), 26 April 2018

Knife Crime

Wider statistics on 'knife crime' in England and Wales, which include offences other than possession where a blade or sharp instrument was involved, can be found in the Library Briefing Paper and associated tables: [Knife crime statistics](#).

Scotland

Statistics on 'knife crime' are not reported for Scotland in the same way as for England and Wales and are not strictly comparable as the number of knives or offensive weapons used to commit other crimes (other than handling offences) are not currently recorded.

The published statistics for handling offensive weapons also include firearms etc and are available from 2007/08 in Table A4 of the Scottish Government publication: [Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2016-17](#)

Gun crime

Background statistics on offences involving a weapons for Scotland can be found in the Library Briefing Paper: [Firearm Crime Statistics: Scotland](#)

And for England and Wales: [Firearm Crime Statistics: England & Wales](#)

The latest figures on offences involving firearms in England and Wales can be found in the ONS publication: [Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2017](#) (published 26 April 2018).

2.3 Robbery

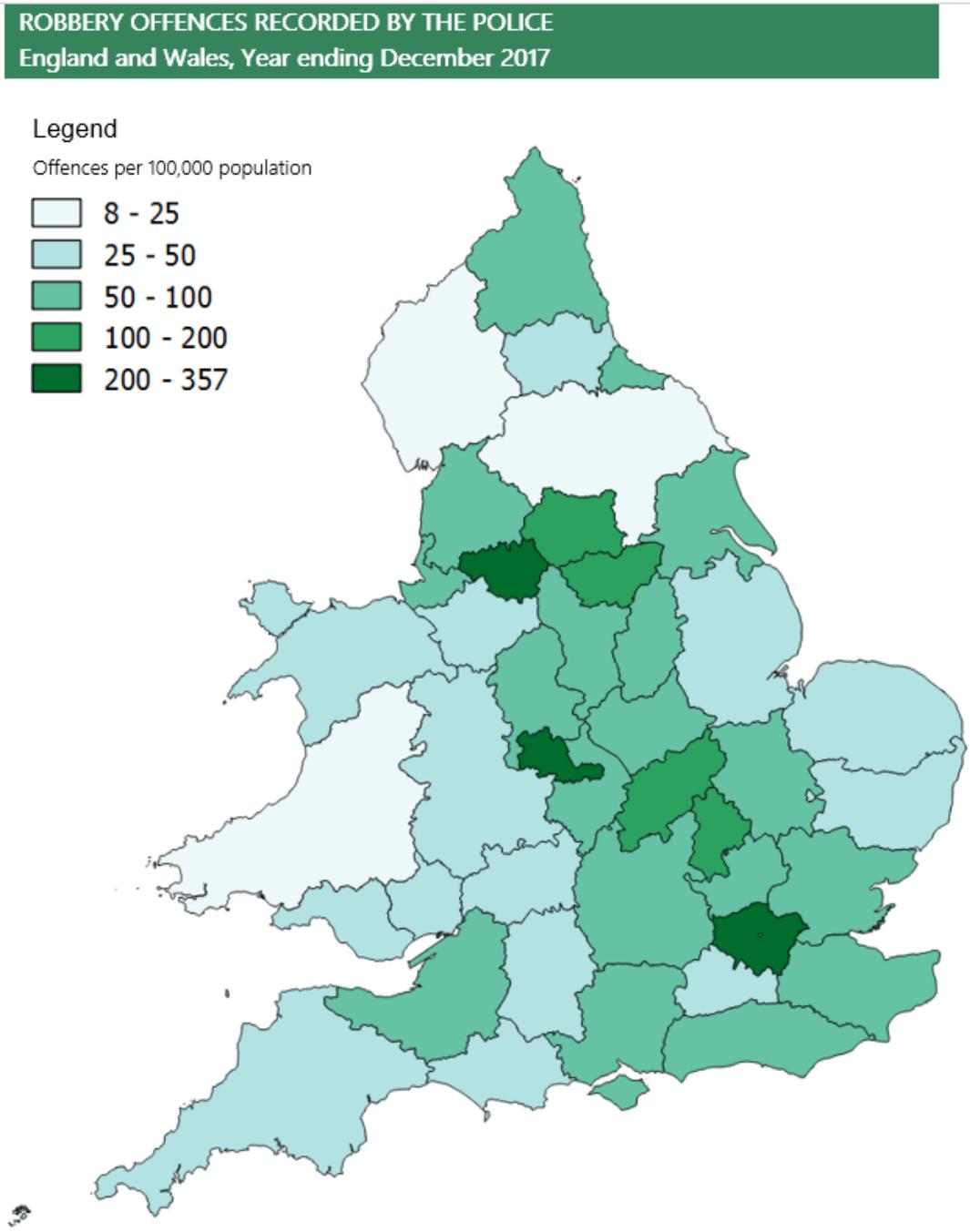
For the year ending 30th December 2017 there were 74,130 Robbery offences recorded in England and Wales – a rate of 127.0 per 100,000 of population. Excluding the City of London, the Metropolitan Police Service recorded the highest Robbery offences rate at 82.6 per 100,000 of population. The Police Force with the lowest recorded Robbery offences rate is Dyfed-Powys which has 8.3 recorded per 100,000 of population.

The table below shows the number of Robbery offences recorded in each Police Force in England and Wales since 2013:

POLICE RECORDED ROBBERY OFFENCES BY POLICE FORCE AREA					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Avon and Somerset	746	857	964	1,166	1,326
Bedfordshire	679	541	489	684	751
British Transport Police	427	345	342	354	469
Cambridgeshire	352	458	514	523	665
Cheshire	298	270	258	278	371
City of London	49	46	40	31	47
Cleveland	263	273	337	360	430
Cumbria	65	64	65	77	84
Derbyshire	575	616	516	559	599
Devon and Cornwall	372	378	404	386	518
Dorset	230	166	189	221	286
Durham	96	102	114	162	232
Dyfed-Powys	26	29	31	50	43
Essex	1,115	936	977	1,104	1,482
Gloucestershire	204	275	231	281	307
Greater Manchester	3,760	3,739	3,537	4,174	6,469
Gwent	172	159	157	183	248
Hampshire	668	648	750	848	1,127
Hertfordshire	489	452	428	599	859
Humberside	478	590	746	723	855
Kent	1,044	1,027	998	1,087	1,481
Lancashire	729	634	584	702	949
Leicestershire	721	718	607	652	795
Lincolnshire	168	188	196	213	228
Merseyside	1,186	1,190	1,091	1,127	1,408
Metropolitan Police	30,020	22,586	21,611	22,812	31,290
Norfolk	172	199	274	377	413
North Wales	118	143	139	135	199
North Yorkshire	123	136	168	137	165
Northamptonshire	608	624	638	813	981
Northumbria	449	498	533	705	787
Nottinghamshire	1,044	1,071	879	889	1,010
South Wales	383	378	389	336	491
South Yorkshire	1,006	1,055	1,026	1,285	1,667
Staffordshire	527	523	559	577	800
Suffolk	210	164	233	264	360
Surrey	241	259	257	282	345
Sussex	606	612	679	834	982
Thames Valley	1,074	941	931	964	1,268
Warwickshire	242	250	221	269	369
West Mercia	349	396	477	573	555
West Midlands	5,334	5,107	4,787	5,581	7,262
West Yorkshire	1,869	1,813	2,117	2,311	2,896
Wiltshire	138	142	207	204	261
Total	59,425	51,598	50,690	55,892	74,130

Source: Home Office, *Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017: Recorded Crime Data at Police Force Area Level (including pivot table)*, accessed 18 May 2018

The map below shows the number of recorded Robbery offences (per 100,000 head of population) by Police Force Area in 2017:



Source: ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area Data Tables](#), 26 April 2018

2.4 Police workforce

Statistics on Police Officers and other police force employees can be found in the Library Briefing Paper: [Police service strength](#). The Briefing Paper suggests that:

United Kingdom: Total police officer strength in the United Kingdom increased year on year between 2003, when there were 155,000 officers, and 2010, when there were just over 171,600. Since 2010 the number of police officers has fallen each year. At 31 March 2017 there

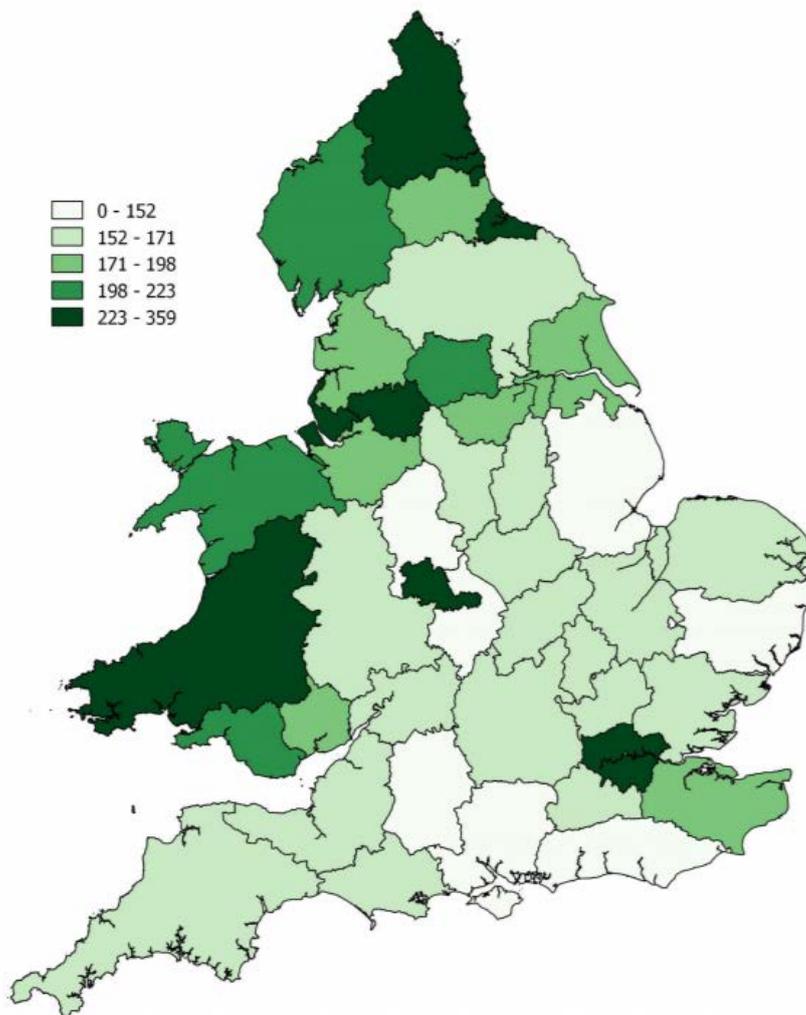
were a total of 150,000 police officers operating within the United Kingdom. This was a reduction of 3.3% compared to 2003 and a decrease of 12.4% from 2010.

England & Wales: on 30 September 2017, there were 126,252 police officers in England and Wales. This is around the same number as at September 2016.

Scotland: on 31 December 2017, there were 17,256 police officers in Scotland. This has not changed from December 2016.

Northern Ireland: at the beginning of November 2017, there were 6,756 police officers in Northern Ireland. This was roughly the same number as in December 2016, when there were 6,827.

ENGLAND AND WALES: POLICE OFFICERS PER 100,000 OF POPULATION, SEPTEMBER 2017



3. News and blogs

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

[Gang matrix a human rights violation: new report](#)

9 May 2018

Mayor of London

[Here's what the Mayor is doing to tackle violent crime](#)

6 May 2018

National Police Chiefs' Council

[Despite a rise in crime, police forces are committed to keeping people safe](#)

CC Bill Skelly 26 April 2018

Home Office

[New taskforce to take action against violent crime](#)

25 April 2018

Police Foundation

[Have police cuts contributed to the increase in violent crime?](#)

Rick Muir 11 April 2018

Home Office in the media

[Serious Violence Strategy funding](#)

10 April 2018

Early Intervention Foundation

[Serious Violence Strategy: government needs to start engaging with the evidence base](#)

10 April 2018

Redthread

[Redthread's response to the Serious Violence Strategy](#)

10 April 2018

Home Office in the media

[Serious Violence Strategy and police resources](#)

9 April 2018

St Giles Trust

[Home Office Serious Violence Strategy – St Giles Trust’s response](#)

9 April 2018

Association of Directors of Children’s Services

[Response to the government’s Serious Violence Strategy](#)

9 April 2018

Local Government Association

[LGA responds to Serious Violence Strategy](#)

9 April 2018

Home Office

[Home Secretary launches Serious Violence Strategy](#)

9 April 2018

Home Secretary Amber Rudd set out a multi-million pound commitment to steering young people away from crime and tackling violent drug-dealing gangs.

College of Policing

[£3m for police to tackle violent crime](#)

9 April 2018

Home Office

[Home Office announces plans for Offensive Weapons Bill to tackle serious violence](#)

8 April 2018

Police Foundation

[Crime is up – blame the police?](#)

Gavin Hales 14 March 2018

Home Office

[Home Office announces package of measures to tackle violent crime](#)

14 October 2017

3.1 Press

Guardian

[Why is violent crime on the rise – and who is most at risk?](#)

27 April 2018

Guardian

[Surge in knife and gun crime in England and Wales](#)

26 April 2018

Financial Times

[Sharp jump in homicides and violent crime in London](#)

26 April 2018

Economist

[A shift in the drug market may help to explain a surge in stabbings](#)

12 April 2018

Times [Subscription]

[Leak shows police cuts hampering gang efforts](#)

10 April 2018

Guardian

[Police cuts left out of government's key violent crime strategy](#)

9 April 2018

Independent

[If we really want to tackle youth violence on the streets of London, we can start by getting rid of the term 'gang'](#)

9 April 2018

Guardian

[Amber Rudd denies seeing leaked Home Office violent crime report](#)

9 April 2018

Guardian

[Corbyn berates Amber Rudd over leaked violent crime report](#)

9 April 2018

Guardian

[Police cuts 'likely contributed' to rise in violent crime, leaked report reveals](#)

9 April 2018

Guardian

[Amber Rudd says police cuts not to blame for violent crime rise](#)

8 April 2018

Telegraph

[We are determined to tackle violent crime, and there are enough officers on the streets to do so](#)

Amber Rudd 7 April 2018

Independent

[Violent crime in London would have been tackled better – and sooner – if the victims were white](#)

7 April 2018

Times [Subscription]

[Glasgow is the model in fight against knife crime](#)

7 April 2018

Financial Times

[London's violent crime wave can be beaten back](#)

5 April 2018

Economist

[Knife crime is surging in London](#)

5 April 2018

New Statesman

[The truth about violent crime in London](#)

3 April 2018

Telegraph

[Government crack down on gangs using social media to incite violence and fuel rise in killings](#)

2 April 2018

BBC News

[Can Scottish police help stop violent deaths in London?](#)

24 January 2018

Guardian

[Knife crime needs public health strategy, says London police chief](#)

6 January 2018

Guardian

[How Scotland reduced knife deaths among young people](#)

3 December 2017

4. Parliamentary Business

4.1 Debates

[Police Funding](#)

HC Deb 28 March 2018 c848-98

[County Lines Exploitation](#)

HC Deb 17 January 2018 c328WH

[Knife Crime](#)

HC Deb 6 September 2017 c276-84

4.2 Parliamentary Questions

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Leo Docherty

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to reduce knife crime in Hampshire.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

On 9 April 2018, the Government published the Serious Violence Strategy that set out action being taken to address serious violence and in particular the recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. This also includes the national knife crime media campaign, #knifefree, to raise awareness of the consequences of knife crime among young people and to encourage them to take up positive activities.

We will continue to encourage police forces in England and Wales to undertake a series of coordinated national weeks of action to tackle knife crime under Operation Sceptre. In February this year, Hampshire Police participated in Operation Sceptre, which includes targeted stop and searches, weapon sweeps, test purchases of knives from identified retailers, the use of surrender bins and educational activities. We also announced up to £1million for a new round of the anti-knife crime Community Fund which will invite bids for funding later this Spring from community groups to tackle knife crime in their area.

15 May 2018 | Written question | 141871

[Crimes of Violence](#)

Asked by: Lord Ouseley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what innovative measures are being introduced to tackle the causes of increasing levels of knife, gun and violent crimes; and what consideration they have given to supporting and replicating the preventative work of the St Giles Trust's SOS project.

Answered by: Baroness Williams of Trafford | Home Office

On 9 April the Government published the Serious Violence Strategy, which sets out our response to serious violence and in particular recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. The strategy stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes of serious violence and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence. It contains over 60 commitments including the announcement of a new £11 million Early Intervention Youth Fund and a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to tackle violent and exploitative criminal activity associated with county lines.

Voluntary sector organisations, such as St Giles Trust, will be essential partners in ensuring effective delivery of the strategy. In 2017/18 we funded St Giles Trust to deliver a pilot support service for victims of county lines and we are currently awaiting the final evaluation in order to draw from and build on the learning from this pilot.

08 May 2018 | Written question | HL 7417

[Crimes of Violence](#)

Asked by: Louise Haigh

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what his Department's definition of serious violent crime is; and which offence types his Department includes in that definition.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

However, the scope of the Serious Violence Strategy is concerned with specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.

Serious violence also extends to other forms of serious assault. We know that a significant proportion of violence is linked to either domestic abuse or alcohol, but these two important elements are not driving the increases we are seeing in violent crime. The strategy also does not address specifically sexual abuse, modern slavery or violence against women and girls. They may all involve forms of serious violence but there are already specific strategies addressing those important issues, and so they are not included within the scope of the Serious Violence Strategy.

08 May 2018 | Written question | 140165

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Louise Haigh

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her article in The Daily Telegraph of 7 April 2018, we are determined to tackle violent crime, and there are enough officers on the streets to do so, if she will publish the statistical data on which the levels of knife crime were cited.

Answered by: Nick Hurd | Home Office

The Home Office publishes Open Data Tables on the number of selected offences involving a knife or a sharp instrument recorded by the police in England and Wales at the police force area level. The data are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

The police have the resources they need to do their important work. The police funding settlement for 2018/19 increases overall investment in policing by £460m, including over £280m from increased local funding through Council Tax. Decisions about the allocation of police resources and deployment of officers are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable PCCs. They are responsible for ensuring the needs of the local community are met. Many PCCs have set out their intention to use their additional funding to maintain or enhance front line policing.

30 April 2018 | Written question | 136056

[Crimes of Violence: Crime Prevention](#)

Asked by: Bambos Charalambous

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support his Department provides to local authority schemes to reduce levels of violent crime.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

The Home Office provides support to tackle gang related violence and exploitation through the funding of local and regional reviews. Local authorities can apply for a local review on a match-funded basis if they are experiencing a new or increased threat from gangs such as county lines related violence. This support has largely gone to areas outside of London as the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime provide similar match-funded support to London Boroughs. In addition, we have funded a number of projects delivered by local authorities through the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) Fund. The Serious Violence Strategy, launched on 9 April, commits to further rounds of the EGVE Fund in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The new strategy also includes the commitment to introduce a new Early Intervention Youth Fund which will support local communities tackle violence.

30 April 2018 | Written question | 905029

[Organised Crime: Drugs](#)**Asked by: Sarah Jones**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data her Department has collected to identify growth in county lines activity across the UK.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

The NCA produces a threat assessment that provides information about the extent of county lines across England and Wales. Following a request from the Home Office, the NCA undertook the first national county lines assessment in 2014 which was published by the NCA in August 2015. They then provided a second threat assessment on county lines in November 2016 and its most recent threat assessment was published on 28 November 2017. This sets out how the issue of county lines has continued to develop and is now being seen as a problem in more areas of England and Wales.

We are supporting the work of the NPCC and NCA to establish a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC) by providing specific funding of £3.6 million over the next two years (2018/19 and 2019/20).

The NCLCC will help bring the law enforcement effort together as the links behind county lines are complicated and the threat crosses police force boundaries. The NCLCC will support operational policing, for example, through supporting police forces in their use of the Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders (DDTROs) to close down mobile phone numbers used for county lines drug dealing, as well as providing a central point at which intelligence and information is shared and the links with criminal exploitation and illegal drugs markets are identified.

23 April 2018 | Written question | 135362

[Organised Crime: Drugs](#)**Asked by: Sarah Jones**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timetable is for the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to be fully operational.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

The National County Lines Co-ordination Centre is being established by the National Police Chiefs' Council lead and the National Crime Agency. The Centre will be fully operational later this year subject to recruitment of staff.

18 April 2018 | Written question | 135293

[Organised Crime: Drugs](#)**Asked by: Catherine McKinnell**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of 17 January 2018, Official Report, Column 348WH, on County Lines, when she plans to launch the nationwide awareness-raising campaign.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

The nationwide awareness-raising communications activity on county lines was launched on 9 April. The activity is targeted to young and vulnerable people on how to avoid becoming involved and exploited by gangs.

The Home Secretary also launched the Serious Violence Strategy on 9 April, which builds upon the significant programme of work already underway to tackle county lines and other forms of serious violence. The Strategy sets out a new balance between prevention and the rigorous law enforcement activity already happening up and down the country.

16 April 2018 | Written question | 134993

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Harriet Harman

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on tackling knife crime in each of the last seven years.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

It is not possible to disaggregate all funding for tackling knife crime as it is provided through a number of routes. This includes funding for police forces in England and Wales and our overall investment in policing will grow from £11.9 billion in 2015/16 to around £13 billion in 2018/19. Our work to tackle knife crime has been taken forward through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme and the subsequent Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation programme.

In October 2017, we launched our anti-knife crime Community Fund through which we awarded £765,000 to 47 successful projects to support local communities tackle knife crime, and we announced in March up to a £1million for a new round of the Community Fund in 2018/19 and this will be launched later this Spring. We have also just launched a new £1.3 million national media campaign under the banner of #knifefree which is aimed at 10 -21 years old and is aimed at bringing home the consequences of carrying a knife and to inspire young people to take up more positive activities.

On 9 April, we published the Serious Violence Strategy to take action to address serious violence and in particular the recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. The strategy represents a step change in the way we think and respond to serious violence. Our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but depends also on partnerships across a number of sectors such as

education, health, social services, housing, youth services, victim services and others.

16 April 2018 | Written question | 134763

[Crime Prevention: Glasgow](#)

Asked by: Heidi Alexander

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Police Scotland's violence reduction unit in Glasgow, and whether she has plans to replicate the work of that unit in England.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

We have not made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Violence Reduction Unit in Scotland. We will shortly be publishing our new Serious Violence Strategy which will respond to concerns about serious violence especially recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide.

The approach we will set out in the Strategy will give much more of an emphasis to prevention and steering young people away from crime in the first place, and it will put in place measures to tackle the root causes of the problem.

3 April 2018 | Written question | 134089

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Tulip Siddiq

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to provide extra funding to the Metropolitan Police to tackle knife crime.

Answered by: Nick Hurd | Home Office

The Government has increased funding for the police by £450 million in 2018/19, including around £270 million of direct funding for forces from increased precept flexibility. The Mayor of London recently announced that he would be providing £110 million of additional funding to the Metropolitan Police in 2018/19, drawn in part from his decision to use this flexibility to raise over £40 million of additional local income.

5 March 2018 | Written question | 130438

[Schools: Knives](#)

Asked by: Sarah Jones

To ask the Minister for the Home Office, with reference to the Department for Education's consultation, Keeping children safe in education; proposed revisions, launched on 14 December 2017, what plans she has to review her Department's guidance, Advice to schools

and colleges on gangs and youth violence, published on 2 August 2013 in respect of knife offences on school premises.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

The Home Office is working with the Department for Education to make clear in the updated guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education the risks of carrying knives and raise awareness about this issue among education practitioners.

We have awarded £765,000 from the new anti-knife crime community fund launched in October 2017 to support local communities to tackle knife crime, including supporting knife crime awareness sessions delivered in schools. In addition, we continue to encourage police forces to take part in the anti-knife crime weeks of action under Operation Sceptre and as part of this action police forces have delivered education sessions in schools.

We have also launched a consultation on new laws on offensive weapons. The consultation was closed on 9 December and we are now considering the responses. The proposals included legislation to extend the knife possession offence currently applying to schools to education institutions other than schools.

In July 2017 we published guidance to help frontline practitioners, including education professionals, identify victims of county lines and make appropriate referrals. We keep our guidance under review and we will consider whether our 'Advice to Schools and Colleges on Gangs and Youth Violence', which was revised in 2015 to adapt it to primary schools, needs to be updated.

2 February 2018 | Written question | 125492

[Knives: Crime](#)

Asked by: Joan Ryan

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effect of social media on trends in knife crime.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

As part of our work to develop a new Serious Violence Strategy the Home Office has considered a range of factors that may be driving increases in serious violence including the role of social media.

The Home Office is aware that gangs make use of a number of social media platforms to incite violence and taunt rival gangs and we work closely with the police to identify good practice in tackling this issue and to encourage the police to take action. Operation Domain is an ongoing successful Metropolitan Police Service project taking action against gang-related activity online, working with social media companies to remove relevant content.

The new Serious Violence Strategy will be published early this year.

29 January 2018 | Written question | 124497

[Crimes of Violence: Young People](#)**Asked by: Alex Sobel**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent young people committing violent crimes.

Answered by: Victoria Atkins | Home Office

The Government is delivering a range of action to prevent violent crime including action to tackle knife crime and gang related violence and exploitation.

Our work to tackle knife crime includes early intervention and prevention work with key partners such as the charity Redthread who intervene with young people in hospital at the 'teachable moment'. We have awarded £765,000 from a new anti-knife crime community fund launched in October 2017 to support local communities to tackle knife crime. 47 different projects have been supported through the community fund, and the projects awarded funding were particularly aimed at helping young people.

We are also supporting the Operation Sceptre national week of action by police forces to tackle knife crime which is taking place in February. Police forces will be undertaking weapon sweeps, targeted stop and search operations, undertaking test purchasing, encouraging the use of surrender bins, and carrying out educational activities with young people.

Through the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) programme the Home Office is providing match funding for local area and strategic reviews in areas experiencing gang related issues and challenges to test and build local resilience towards tackling these types of criminal activity, especially county lines. 13 local areas were reviewed in 2016/17 and a further 15 areas are benefiting from these reviews in 2017/18. This supports our wider work to tackle county lines and especially preventing young people becoming offenders or victims through county lines drugs dealing with its associated violence and exploitation. The new Drugs Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders (DDTROs) introduced in December will also help tackle county lines drugs dealing.

We have provided funding for 12 Young People's Advocates to work directly with gang-affected women and girls. We have also provided funding in 2017/18 of over £280,000 to 16 local EGVE projects, including projects delivering gang, knife and county lines awareness training for young people, practitioners and foster carers, community sports and arts projects and mentoring programmes.

An action plan to tackle the use of acid and other corrosives in violent attacks was announced by the Home Secretary in July 2017. This included actions to improve the policing response and also the introduction of a voluntary set of commitments for retailers to not sell

certain particularly harmful corrosive substances to under 18s. The agreement with retailers was introduced earlier this month.

The Government will be publishing a Serious Violence Strategy shortly.

25 January 2018 | Written question | 124106

5. Organisations and further reading

Library papers

[Knife crime statistics](#), Commons Library briefing paper SN04304, 16 March 2018

[Acid attacks](#), Commons Library briefing paper CBP-8041, 17 December 2017

[Knives and offensive weapons](#), Commons Library briefing paper SN00330, 4 August 2017

Library statistical briefings

[Police service strength](#), Commons Library briefing paper SN00634, 19 April 2018

[Firearm crime statistics: England & Wales](#), Commons Library briefing paper CBP-7654, 7 August 2017

[Firearm crime statistics: Scotland](#), Commons Library briefing paper CBP-7672, 2 August 2017

Government publications

Home Office, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), 9 April 2018

Home Office, [Offensive and dangerous weapons: new legislation](#), 14 October 2017

Office for National Statistics, [The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#), 8 February 2018

Other organisations

[Police Foundation](#)

Full Fact, [What happened to violent crime in London since 2008?](#), 26 April 2018

[Violence Reduction Unit](#)

“The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit is a national centre of expertise on violence. Part of Police Scotland the VRU targets violence wherever it occurs whether it’s on the streets, in schools or in our homes. Supported by the Scottish Government the unit has adopted a public health approach, treating violence as an infection which can be cured. The VRU is the only police member of the World Health Organisation's Violence Prevention Alliance. The VRU believe violence is preventable – not inevitable”.

Cardiff University, Research innovation and impact, [Reducing violent crime](#)

John Middleton and Jonathan Shepherd, [Preventing violent crime](#), BMJ, 2018 (361), 8 May 2018

Ingrid Torjesen, [Can public health strategies tackle London’s rise in fatal violence?](#), BMJ, 2018 (361), 6 April 2018

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).