

Knife Crime: Policy and Causes

Introduction

In England and Wales last year, there were 261 homicide cases where a knife or sharp instrument was involved.¹ Although this amount represented a reduction of 4% from the previous twelve months, 4 in 10 (39%) of all such cases still involved a knife or sharp instrument, the same proportion as the previous year. The period also saw a volume rise of 6% in the number of police-recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, meaning that the level reported was the highest since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point for which comparable data is available.² Previous statistics, covering the year to March 2018, also reported the highest number of knife and sharp instrument homicides in England and Wales since the Home Office Homicide Index began in 1946 (285 cases).³ Statistics have also highlighted the increased involvement of young people in knife crime:

- the number of homicide victims aged 16 to 24 years old increased by 45% compared to the previous year in the year ending March 2018;⁴
- the number of homicides committed by under-18s rose by 77% between 2016 and 2018;⁵ and
- the number of under-16s admitted to hospital due to knife attacks has increased by 93% since 2012.⁶

For the Office for National Statistics (ONS), such figures have partially reflected an increase in serious violence in London and other cities “where young adults have been disproportionately affected”. The rise in knife-related offences has also been reported by the Ministry of Justice. It found that in 2018, 21,484 knife and offensive weapon offences were formally dealt with by the criminal justice system (CJS): the highest number since 2009.⁷

These trends have been highlighted in newspaper headlines,⁸ with some labelling the increase in knife crime an “epidemic”.⁹ However, the wide-ranging coverage has not put forward a consistent view on what is causing the increase or what should be done to curb it. This briefing explores current government policy in relation to knife crime and some of the possible causes of the recent increase.

Government Policy

Responding to the rise in serious violence, including knife crime, the Government has announced a series of initiatives aimed at tackling the problem. In April 2019, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, chaired a serious violence summit comprising over 100 attendees, including: the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Cressida Dick; Patrick Green from the Ben Kinsella Trust; and Baroness Newlove, the Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales.¹⁰ Opening the summit, Mrs May stated that the rise in serious violence was a “deep-seated” issue which required a coordinated response.¹¹ Focusing on actions to tackle the problem, Mrs May announced the creation of a ministerial taskforce that “will coordinate the Government’s role and make sure all departments are playing their part”. A new serious violence team, containing representatives from across government, would also be set up in the Cabinet Office to ensure a joined-up approach. Mrs May said it would be “well-placed to assist local areas as

they build operational equivalents in their own violence reduction units”. These units replicate action taken in London, where the mayor, Sadiq Khan, announced the creation of a violence reduction unit (VRU) in September 2018.¹² The unit brought together specialists from health, police, local government, probation and community organisations to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes.

Other ministers have also made announcements relating to knife crime. The summit saw the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Jeremy Wright, announce that the Government had “renewed its commitment” to use sport to support young people in serious violence hot spots, through work with the Premier League and Sport England.¹³ In the 2019 spring statement in March, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, announced £80 million for police forces in England to target knife crime, plus an additional £20 million of “reprioritised funding”.¹⁴

Several policies to tackle knife crime were announced by the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, in a speech to the Conservative Party conference in October 2018. A £200 million endowment fund to target young people at risk of starting a life of crime and violence was to be created. The charity Impetus has since been appointed to help deliver the fund, which will support “a public health” approach to tackling serious violence.¹⁵ In his speech, Mr Javid said that changes in the market for illegal drugs was one of the causes of the rise in serious violence.¹⁶ To address this, he announced a review of the illegal drugs market to look at who drug users are, what they take, and how they take it. Dame Carol Black has since been appointed to lead the review.¹⁷ Mr Javid also spoke of plans for a statutory duty on all agencies to work together to tackle knife crime. This duty, he said, could create conditions for “relevant agencies and partners to collaborate and communicate regularly to share information and take effective coordinated action in their local areas”. A consultation has since been launched by the Government on this matter which is due to close on 28 May 2019.¹⁸

The Government’s *Serious Violence Strategy* was also highlighted by Mr Javid in the speech. Published in April 2018, the strategy noted that while overall crime continued to fall, homicide, knife crime and gun crime had risen since 2014 across virtually all police force areas in England and Wales.¹⁹ Framed on four key themes, the strategy set out the Government’s analysis of the trends relating to, and drivers of, serious violence. It also detailed the approach the Government planned to take to tackle the problem. It said:

We want to make clear that our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but depends on partnerships across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, and victim services.²⁰

In relation to the four themes, government announcements referred to in the strategy included:²¹

- **Tackling County Lines and Misuse of Drugs:** the Home Office announced the development of a new national county line coordination centre—a new multi-agency team of experts from the National Crime Agency (NCA), police officers and regional organised crime units²²—as well as funding to support delivery of a new round of heroin and crack cocaine action areas, where partners are brought together to focus on the use of the drugs and offending in the local area.²³
- **Early Intervention and Prevention:** the Home Office has committed £11 million over the next two years through a new early intervention youth fund. It also announced that it would support the expansion of a youth violence intervention programme and continue to fund a young people’s advocates model. In addition, the Home Office would work with the Department for Education and OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) to focus on the risks surrounding crime and exclusion.

- **Supporting Communities and Partnerships:** the Home Office would support local partnerships through work with police and crime commissioners. It also committed £1 million of funding for both 2018/19 and 2019/20 for the community fund and would continue the ending gang violence and exploitation (EGVE) fund and EGVE review programme.
- **Effective Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Response:** the Home Office announced plans for new legislation to strengthen controls on knives, corrosive substances and firearms. This became the Offensive Weapons Bill (see below). The Home Office also stated that it would work with HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services) to ensure its PEEL inspections²⁴ would focus on serious violence and that a thematic inspection of county lines in 2018/19 would take place.

Following the publication of the strategy, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee launched an inquiry into serious violence in June 2018 to assess the effectiveness of the Government's approach to knife crime, gun crime and homicide.²⁵ The committee is currently taking evidence. The same month, the Government introduced the Offensive Weapons Bill in the House of Commons, which has since received royal assent.²⁶ The Act contains a range of measures intended to tackle violent crime, including:

- strengthening the arrangements for the online sale of bladed articles, bladed products and corrosive products; and
- prohibiting the possession of certain offensive weapons, such as flick and butterfly knives.

Causes of Knife Crime

The next section of this briefing considers some of the potential causes of knife crime.

Changes in the Drugs Market: 'County Lines' and Increase in Cocaine Use

There is evidence that, over recent years, young people's involvement with drugs has been growing. Data published by the Government has found a recent increase in recreational drug use (for example cannabis) among those aged 11 to 15 years old.²⁷ Although there is no evidence that this age group has additionally increased their use of class A drugs, convictions for young people aged 10 to 17 years for class A production and possession with intent to supply increased by 77% between 2012 and 2016: three times the equivalent increase among adult offenders. The Government has also argued that one of the most "striking findings" regarding the rise in serious violence since 2014 is that it has not been limited to metropolitan areas. As a result, the Government have linked increasing serious violence, including knife crime, to the phenomenon of 'county lines' dealing.²⁸

The county lines method of dealing has seen gangs from major urban areas—such as London, Liverpool and Birmingham—exploiting drug markets in other towns and areas, often using children and vulnerable people.²⁹ Dealers use dedicated mobile phone lines ('county lines') to take orders from drug users, with heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine the most common drugs involved.³⁰ However, unlike traditional dealing, most customers live in a different (less populated) area to where the dealers and networks are based (who are usually based in large cities). Therefore, drug runners are needed to transport the drugs to smaller cities, towns and rural areas and to collect payment. Children and vulnerable adults are often targeted to become runners in this form of dealing, as they are less likely to be suspected as being involved in drugs than adults. In some cases, dealers will also take over a local property, which usually belongs to a vulnerable person, and use it as a base to operate from: this is known as 'cuckooing'. The children and adults involved in running for county lines are often exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some cases are trafficked to areas a long way from home.

The problem of county lines has been growing. As of January 2019, the National Crime Agency (NCA) estimated that there were over 2,000 deal lines in the UK.³¹ It has also reported that nearly every police force in England and Wales has been affected by this trend to some degree.³² Serious violence has also been connected to county lines by the NCA. Of 44 police forces, 35 mentioned knife crime as linked to county lines, with 32 additionally connecting gun crime. Further to this, academic research has shown that county lines gangs are generally much more violent than the local dealers who had controlled the market previously.³³ NCA data has also linked children and young people to county lines.³⁴

Evidence suggests that the number of young people involved in episodes relating to knives is not part of a wholesale shift towards younger offending.³⁵ Commenting on this, the Government has stated that the number of young people involved in knife crime may be a result of spill over from the violence associated with the drugs market, with evidence showing that if gangs start carrying more weapons due to drug-selling activity, others may also then arm themselves for protection. Some argue that this is only likely to escalate violent trends, as any conflict is more likely to result in a more serious outcome. For example, John Coles, head of special operations at the NCA, has stated that gangs' drug activities "are in part fuelling the surge in violent crime in London".³⁶ The relationship between county lines dealing and serious violence has also been stressed by Rick Muir, director of the Police Foundation think tank.³⁷ He has highlighted statistics showing that the proportion of murders in which the victim or suspect was known to be using or dealing drugs had increased from 50% to 75% between 2016 and 2018. Regarding managing the problem of county lines, Mr Muir stated that a joined-up policing response was required, but that this was difficult due to the funding problems police forces are facing.

An increase in demand for cocaine has also been linked to these issues. The Crime Survey for England and Wales found that in 2017–18, an estimated 875,000 people used cocaine, the highest number in a decade.³⁸ Focusing on the type of people fuelling this increase, Cressida Dick has said:

There is this challenge that there are a whole group of middle-class—or whatever you want to call them—people who will sit round [...] happily think about global warming and fair trade, and environmental protection and all sorts of things, organic food, but think there is no harm in taking a bit of cocaine. Well, there is; there's misery throughout the supply chain.³⁹

David Lammy (Labour MP for Tottenham) has also commented on the issue, linking the growth of a middle-class market for cocaine with an increase in killings fuelled by an increase in the movement of drugs.⁴⁰

Gangs, Drill Music and Social Media

The rise of drill music—a form of rap—and social media by gangs has also been linked to the recent increase in knife crime. The Metropolitan Police has argued that lyrics found in drill music incite real-world violence and has requested that YouTube remove some of the videos.⁴¹ It has also built up a database of videos to use as an intelligence tool to reduce violent crime. Commenting on the issue, Cressida Dick has said: "drill music is associated with lyrics which are about glamorising serious violence: murder, stabbings [...] they describe the stabbings in great detail, joy and excitement".

Cressida Dick has also argued that gangs in London use drill videos to taunt each other, specifying what they are going to do and who they are going to do it to.⁴² This happened in the case of the 17-year-old rapper Junior Simpson, who was sentenced to life after he and three others stabbed 15-year-old Jermaine Goupall to death.⁴³ During the trial, the court heard that he had written a track about knife attacks before carrying out the killing. However, speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, drill musician DJ Bempah has stated that if violence is "what you see in your environment, as an artist, that's what you portray in your lyrics".⁴⁴ He also argued that while drill music can glamorise violent crime, "it

can't force your hand to commit those actions". The musician Big Narstie has asserted that drill music should not be used as a scapegoat for the rise in violent crime in London.⁴⁵

A report by the youth charity Catch 22 focused on drill music. It argued that "a clear distinction must be made between the vast majority of music videos that simply provide a raw reflection of the realities of young people's lives" and do not provoke violence, and the smaller number that "go well beyond this".⁴⁶ Regarding the violent videos, the charity stated that they act as a catalyst for violence, but should not be seen as the root cause. Speaking on the issue, Beth Murray, director of communications and engagement at Catch 22, stressed the positives of drill music, stating the videos have extraordinary production value, are creating "excellent content online" and giving people creative outlets.⁴⁷ She has also argued that the problems which cause knife crime existed before the advent of the internet and drill music:

The reason we have these problems is kids have nothing to do and nowhere to go and they're dropping out of school and growing up in areas where they'll never own [their own] house, facing regular stop and search—that's what's causing the problems.⁴⁸

The Government's *Serious Violence Strategy* argues that social media has provided new opportunities for individuals to become involved with violence and weapons.⁴⁹ It stated that some gang members have thousands of followers on social media, and referred to research by Catch 22 which showed that the most viewed comments and videos are the ones most likely to result in retaliatory violence.⁵⁰ The Government has claimed that the posts can glamorise weapons and gang life, possibly leading young people to want to emulate what they are seeing. For example, social media can be used as a method for promoting drug selling activity by framing it as a way to gain material goods which may be unobtainable through other means. While previously such an insight into the wealth and status of those at the top of the drug-selling hierarchy would have only been visible through physical proximity, cyberspace has removed this barrier. As a result, photos of individuals surrounded by money purportedly made through selling drugs are a common occurrence on social media.⁵¹

Although social media pre-dates the current increase in serious violence, the Government has argued that the growth of smart phones has transformed the accessibility of social media, creating an "almost unlimited opportunity for rivals to antagonise each other, and for those taunts to be viewed by a much larger audience for a much longer time period".⁵² Dan Hancox, the author of a recent history of the UK grime scene, has claimed that YouTube and social media can elevate tensions to the point where there is "a need to save face and stand by your words", thereby making violence more likely.⁵³ However, arguing that social media itself is not the cause of violence, Dawn Beverley Branley-Bell, a health, social and cyberpsychologist at Northumbria University, has asserted that online content does not cause violence, rather the "logical explanation" is that violent people seek out violent content.⁵⁴

The College of Policing has examined the evidence available on gangs and knife crime. In a briefing published in April 2019, it found that although gang-related knife crime was more likely to result in injury or fatality, such crime made up "only a small proportion of total knife crime with injury" (only 5 percent in 2016).⁵⁵ However, the briefing pointed to analysis that suggested in London there was a stronger causal link between gangs and knife crime. The study, by LSE academics Tom Kirchmaier and Carmen Villa Llera, studied crime data available on the Metropolitan Police Service website. The authors concluded: "our analysis supports the hypothesis that gang activity and knife crime are behind increased murders in London".⁵⁶ They added "correlations shown in this study aimed at shedding some light to the current rise in murders. In short, gang-violence and knife crime are a major concern since 2016".

Austerity

In 2010, the Coalition Government announced a programme of austerity aimed at reducing the deficit.⁵⁷

The policy saw a reduction in the budgets of some public services. For some, such as Stephen Case, professor of criminology at Loughborough University, austerity has contributed to the rise in knife crime:

Knife crime is a symptom of the toxic environments that adults create around children, who then become both perpetrators and victims. It is created by politicians and by the politics of austerity.⁵⁸

James Treadwell, professor of criminology at Staffordshire University, has also linked austerity to the rise in violent crime.⁵⁹ He has argued that the increase is not solely due to the reduction in police budgets, but rather a result of the state of the whole criminal justice system under austerity. Pointing to reduction in funding of various services—including prisons, probation services, social care, mental health services, youth services and local government—he has stated that the police have had to deal with austerity by becoming the service of “last resort”. Further to this, he has linked the issues of knife crime and county lines to the lack of support, services and opportunities available to vulnerable young people: “especially those from black and minority ethnic communities”. Considering these issues, Mr Treadwell has claimed that “the best way to stop the worsening violence on our streets is to end the violence of austerity”. Rick Muir, director of the Police Foundation think tank, has argued that it is “not unreasonable” to think that austerity has had an impact, or that funding pressures might have limited alternative provision, “which could have helped them on to a different path”.⁶⁰ In contrast, Iain Brennan, a professor of criminology at the University of Hull, has said that there has been “a long-term absence of societal and political commitment to improve the lives of young people”, so the current period of austerity alone should not be blamed.⁶¹

Police Officer Numbers

There has been debate as to whether there is a link between the falling number of police officers and the increase in knife crime.⁶² Between September 2009 and September 2017, police forces across England and Wales saw the number of police officers reduced by 20,000: a drop of 15%.⁶³ In addition, long-running annual figures have indicated that 2017 saw the lowest police officer numbers since 1981. Police activity has also decreased, with the number of arrests made in the past decade in England and Wales having halved.⁶⁴ These figures have been used to support the argument that, due to reduced resources, police have found it harder to gather intelligence, police neighbourhoods and build trust in communities, all of which may contribute to the rise in violent crime.⁶⁵ This view is held by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Cressida Dick, who has argued that “there must be some link” between falling police officer number and rising violent crime.⁶⁶

However, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, has said there is “no direct correlation between certain crimes and police numbers”.⁶⁷ She has argued that responding to knife crime is not a question of resources, rather “what matters is how we ensure that police are responding to these criminal acts when they take place”. Mrs May has also said that a cross-governmental approach is needed to tackle the problem, with much of the violence related to drugs and gangs. Responding to an urgent question on 4 March 2019 following the murders of two teenagers who were stabbed to death over one weekend, the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, also stressed the complexity of the causes of violent crime: “we all wish that there was just one thing that we could do to stop the violence, but there are no shortcuts and there is no one single solution”.⁶⁸ However, he argued “we must ensure that the police have the resources to combat serious violence”, and announced that he was raising police funding for the next year.

An independent review in 2011 by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services concluded that there was not enough evidence to say that higher numbers of police officers directly caused lower levels of violent crime.⁶⁹ In addition, a report by the National Audit Office (NAO)

found it was difficult to assess the impact of police budget reductions as “the available indicators of financial stress are limited, and there is insufficient information on service stress”.⁷⁰

Commenting on the issue, Susan McVie, chair of quantitative criminology at Edinburgh’s School of Law, said that “it would probably be more accurate to say that there is a lack of evidence about whether there is a direct correlation or not”.⁷¹ Siddhartha Bandyopadhyay, professor of economics at Birmingham Business School, agreed, stating he had not seen any academic research proving that knife crime has increased due to cuts to police. However, Stephen Case disagreed: “no evidence of this correlation doesn’t mean evidence of no correlation”. Rather, he argued that it is “common sense” that police cuts could increase fear of crime and persuade people to carry knives for protection. In addition, Rick Muir, director of the Police Foundation, has highlighted analysis conducted by the Home Office which found that the reduction in police resources was likely to be a “contributory factor” in the increase in violent crime.⁷² He also highlighted a summary of evidence on the relationship between policing activity and crime which showed that it was “plausible to claim that reduced police resources could be a contributory factor in increased violent crime rates”.

Further Reading

- Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, [Early Interventions to Reduce Violent Crime](#), 16 April 2019

¹ Office for National Statistics, [‘Crime in England and Wales: Year Ending December 2018’](#), 25 April 2019.

² The police recorded 44,443 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending December 2018. However, due to an undercounting issue, data collected by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) is not comparable over time. Therefore, the volume rise of 2,287 offences (6%) to 40,829 offences has been calculated through excluding GMP data.

³ Office for National Statistics, [‘Homicide in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2018’](#), 7 February 2019.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Emily Lindsay Brown, Gemma Ware and Khalil A Cassimally, [‘Knife Crime: Causes and Solutions—Editors’ Guide to What Our Academic Experts Say’](#), The Conversation, 11 March 2019.

⁷ Ministry of Justice, [‘Knife and Offensive Weapons Sentencing Statistics, England and Wales—2018’](#), 14 March 2019, p 1.

⁸ Richard Spillett, [‘Bloodbath Britain: Murder Rate Rockets by 14% and Knife Crime Soars by 12% in a Year—as Stats Show Offences Solved are at Lowest in Three Years’](#), *Daily Mail*, 18 October 2018; and *Telegraph* (£), [‘Six Stabbings in 90 Minutes in London as 13 Year-Old Left Fighting for His Life’](#), 6 April 2018.

⁹ Denis Campbell, [‘Trauma Doctors Reveal Horror of Knife Crime ‘Epidemic’](#), *Guardian*, 21 October 2018.

¹⁰ Mark White, [‘Knife Crime: PM Hosts Downing St Summit on ‘Deep-Seated’ Problem’](#), Sky News, 2 April 2019.

¹¹ Prime Minister’s Office, [‘PM Opening Statement at Serious Violence Summit’](#), 1 April 2019.

¹² Mayor of London, [‘What is the Violence Reduction Unit?’](#), accessed 27 March 2019.

¹³ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [‘Government to Harness Power of Sport to Help Tackle Youth Violence’](#), 1 April 2019.

¹⁴ HM Treasury and Home Office, [‘£100 Million Funding for Police to Tackle Violent Crime’](#), 13 March 2019.

¹⁵ Home Office, [‘Charity Chosen to Deliver £200m Youth Endowment Fund to Tackle Violence’](#), 23 March 2019.

¹⁶ Conservative Party, [‘Sajid Javid Speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018’](#), 2 October 2018.

¹⁷ Home Office, [‘Professor Dame Carol Black Announced as Independent Reviewer of Drugs’](#), 8 February 2019.

¹⁸ Home Office, [‘Consultation on a New Legal Duty to Support a Multi-Agency Approach to Preventing and Tackling Serious Violence: Government Consultation’](#), 1 April 2019.

¹⁹ HM Government, [‘Serious Violence Strategy’](#), April 2018, p 9.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p 9.

²¹ *ibid.*, pp 9–10.

²² Home Office, [‘National County Lines Coordination Centre to Crack Down on Drug Gangs’](#), 21 September 2018.

²³ HM Government, [‘Serious Violence Strategy’](#), April 2018, p 53.

²⁴ HMICFRS, [‘Annual, All-Force Inspections \(PEEL\) Assessments’](#), 19 January 2018.

²⁵ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [‘Serious Violence Inquiry’](#), accessed 27 March 2019.

²⁶ House of Lords Library, [‘Offensive Weapons Bill’](#), 18 December 2018.

- ²⁷ HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, p 22.
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, pp 22–3.
- ²⁹ *ibid.*
- ³⁰ National Crime Agency, '[County Lines](#)', accessed 29 March 2019.
- ³¹ National Crime Agency, [Intelligence Assessment: County Lines Drug Supply, Vulnerability and Harm 2018](#), January 2019.
- ³² HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, p 23.
- ³³ *ibid.*
- ³⁴ National Crime Agency, [Intelligence Assessment: County Lines Drug Supply, Vulnerability and Harm 2018](#), January 2019.
- ³⁵ HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, pp 27–8.
- ³⁶ Haroon Siddique, '[Middle-Class Cocaine Users Are Hypocrites, Says Met Chief](#)', *Guardian*, 31 July 2018.
- ³⁷ Helen Warrell, '[Why England is Facing a Rising Tide of Knife Crime](#)', *Financial Times* (£), 20 November 2018.
- ³⁸ Haroon Siddique, '[Middle-Class Cocaine Users Are Hypocrites, Says Met Chief](#)', *Guardian*, 31 July 2018.
- ³⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Jim Waterson, '[YouTube Deletes 30 Music Videos After Met Link With Gang Violence](#)', *Guardian*, 29 May 2018.
- ⁴² *ibid.*
- ⁴³ BBC News, '[YouTube Deletes Half of 'Violent' Music Videos](#)', 29 May 2018.
- ⁴⁴ Ben Beaumont-Thomas, '[Is UK Drill Music Really Behind London's Wave of Violent Crime](#)', *Guardian*, 9 April 2018.
- ⁴⁵ Sky News, '[Big Narstie Says Drill Music Not to Blame for London Violence](#)', 5 September 2018.
- ⁴⁶ Keir Irwin-Rogers and Craig Pinkney, '[Social Media as a Catalyst and Trigger for Youth Violence](#)', *Catch 22*, January 2017, p 8.
- ⁴⁷ Stephen Armstrong, '[Is Social Media Really to Blame for London's Knife Crime?](#)', *Wired*, 7 April 2018.
- ⁴⁸ Will Bedingfield, '[Why It's So Hard to Blame a Rise in UK Knife Crime on Police Cuts](#)', *Wired*, 7 March 2019.
- ⁴⁹ HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, p 31.
- ⁵⁰ Keir Irwin-Rogers and Craig Pinkney, '[Social Media as a Catalyst and Trigger for Youth Violence](#)', *Catch 22*, January 2017, p 18.
- ⁵¹ HM Government, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018, p 31.
- ⁵² *ibid.*, p 30.
- ⁵³ Jim Waterson, '[YouTube Deletes 30 Music Videos After Met Link With Gang Violence](#)', *Guardian*, 29 May 2018.
- ⁵⁴ Stephen Armstrong, '[Is Social Media Really to Blame for London's Knife Crime?](#)', *Wired*, 7 April 2018.
- ⁵⁵ Abigail McNeill and Levin Wheller, [Knife Crime: Evidence Briefing](#), College of Policing, 2019, p 2.
- ⁵⁶ Tom Kirchmaier and Carmen Villa Llera, '[Murders in London](#)', 26 July 2018, p 13.
- ⁵⁷ Daniel Pimlott and Chris Giles, '[UK Unveils Dramatic Austerity Measures](#)', *Financial Times* (£), 20 October 2010.
- ⁵⁸ Emily Lindsay Brown, Gemma Ware and Khalil A Cassimally, '[Knife Crime: Causes and Solutions—Editors' Guide to What Our Academic Experts Say](#)', *The Conversation*, 11 March 2019.
- ⁵⁹ James Treadwell, '[Knife Crime and Homicide Figures Reveal the Violence of Austerity](#)', *The Conversation*, 19 October 2018.
- ⁶⁰ Helen Warrell, '[Why England is Facing a Rising Tide of Knife Crime](#)', *Financial Times* (£), 20 November 2018.
- ⁶¹ Will Bedingfield, '[Why It's So Hard to Blame a Rise in UK Knife Crime on Police Cuts](#)', *Wired*, 7 March 2019.
- ⁶² Matthew Weaver and Helen Pidd, '[No Link Between Knife Crime and Police Cuts, Says Theresa May](#)', *Guardian*, 4 March 2019; and BBC News, '[Knife Crime: Theresa May 'Not Listening' Says Ex-Police Chief](#)', 6 March 2019.
- ⁶³ Rachel Schraer, '[Are There More Police Now?](#)', BBC News, 13 February 2019.
- ⁶⁴ Helen Warrell, '[Why England is Facing a Rising Tide of Knife Crime](#)', *Financial Times* (£), 20 November 2018.
- ⁶⁵ Anoosh Chakelian, '[Cocaine Clichés and London Blinkers: Yet Another Knife Crime Myth-Buster](#)', *New Stateman*, 5 March 2019.
- ⁶⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ Matthew Weaver and Helen Pidd, '[No Link Between Knife Crime and Police Cuts, Says May](#)', *Guardian*, 4 March 2019.
- ⁶⁸ [HC Hansard, 4 March 2019, col 667](#).
- ⁶⁹ Ben Bradford, [Police Numbers and Crime Rates—A Rapid Evidence Review](#), HMICFRS, July 2011, p 1.
- ⁷⁰ National Audit Office, [Financial Sustainability of Police Forces in England and Wales](#), 4 June 2015, HC 78 of session 2015–16, p 9.
- ⁷¹ Will Bedingfield, '[Why It's So Hard to Blame a Rise in UK Knife Crime on Police Cuts](#)', *Wired*, 7 March 2019.
- ⁷² Rick Muir, '[Have Police Cuts Contributed to the Increase in Violent Crime?](#)', *Police Foundation Blog*, 11 April 2018.

House of Lords Library briefings are compiled for the benefit of Members of the House of Lords and their personal staff, to provide impartial, politically balanced briefing on subjects likely to be of interest to Members of the Lords. Authors are available to discuss the contents of the briefings with the Members and their staff but cannot advise members of the general public.

Any comments on briefings should be sent to the Head of Research Services, House of Lords Library, London SW1A 0PW or emailed to purvism@parliament.uk.