



## People for Proper Policing in North Wales

### Just one knife job receives maximum jail term

By James Slack, Daily Mail, 28th May 2009

Despite the Government increasing maximum jail terms for carrying knives, **Only one knife-carrying job has received the maximum jail sentence of 4 years in the past year despite repeated Government promises to get tough on the crime.** Figures released today reveal that of the **3,713 people sentenced to custody for possession of a knife in England and Wales between October 2007 and December last year, only one received a four-year term.**

The majority of offenders - **52 per cent** - received a sentence of up to **three months.**

**Just 15 per cent received a sentence of more than six months.** The remainder received periods of more than six months, but less than four years.

**Shadow Home Secretary Chris Grayling**, who obtained the information, said: *'We have to create a real disincentive for people who carry knives, and the fact that the supposed tough sentences just aren't happening sends out all the wrong messages.'*

In July last year, **Prime Minister Gordon Brown** declared: *'Those prosecuted for carrying or using knives get far tougher sentences.'*

**Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary**, said: *'I am serious about getting knives off our streets. We have doubled the maximum sentence for carrying a knife to four years.'*

#### One in six young people in England believe knife crime is a problem.

The Children's Commissioner sought the views of 1,700 children for the study on attitudes to gun and knife crime.

Seven per cent of eight to 17-year-olds felt guns were a problem. The figure rose to 15 per cent when asked about knives.

Almost half said longer prison sentences would be the best deterrent, while one third believed education about the consequences was the answer.

**The 2 per cent of those aged 12 to 17 who admitted carrying a knife illegally** said they did so **out of fear or for self-protection.** Curfews were also a popular way to deter offenders from carrying a weapon again.

The online poll was carried out by 11 Million, an organisation which aims to give children a voice, and YouGov.

**Children's Commissioner for England Sir Al Aynsley-Green** said it was important not to 'breed fear' of violent crime among young people.

*'There have been a number of fatal stabbings and shootings of young people in the last couple of years - every one has been tragic and they rightly attract attention. But at the same time, it is vital that we do not breed fear among young people - we know the numbers of carriers of weapons are low, and that often the main reasons for carrying, especially for knife carrying, are fear or self-protection and we must try to reduce that.'*

*'That means all adults, from politicians, to police, to media, taking a responsible line on this, and reassuring young people, rather than frightening or accusing them.'*

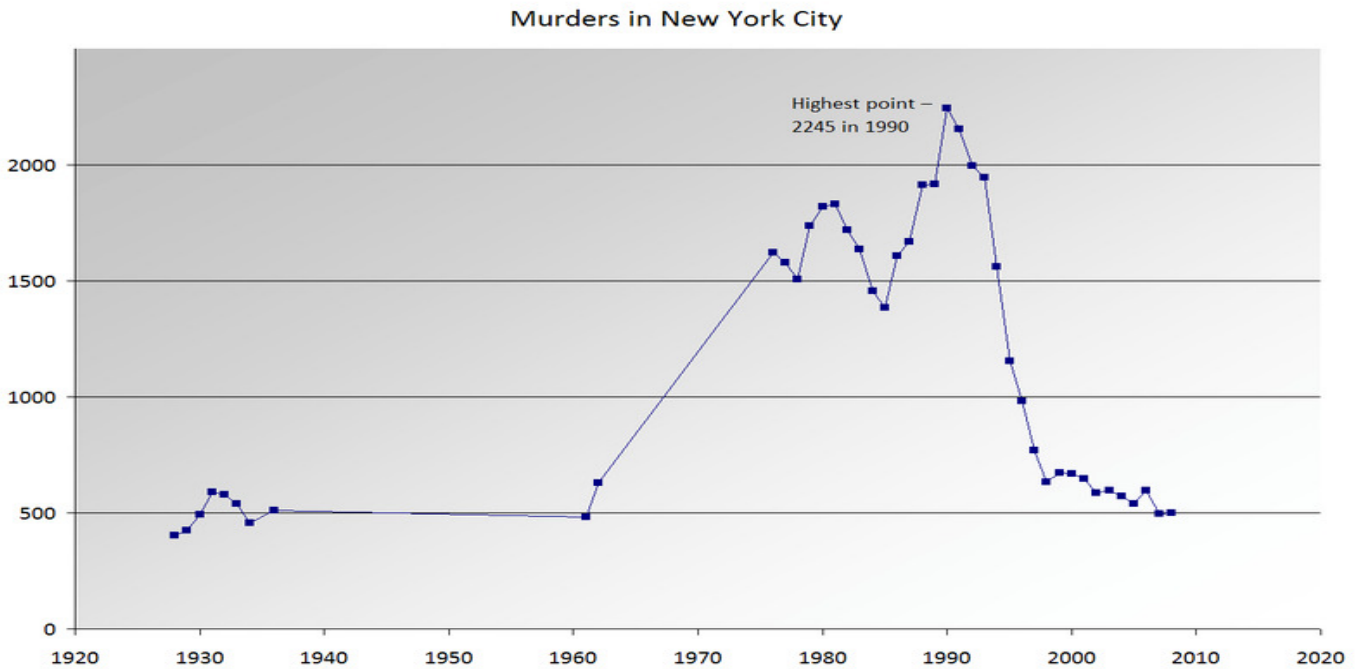
**Deputy Assistant Commissioner Alfred Hitchcock**, who heads the anti-knife crime programme for the **Association of Chief Police Officers**, said *"the organisation strongly supported the research.*

*'The numbers of young people who commit or suffer serious violent crime are, thankfully, a small proportion of the total.'* **Continued ...**

The PPP comments ... A lack of will AND prison places means little real progress. The media and the Politicians blow the problem up out of proportion BUT the figures are misleading as a high proportion of knife crime is concentrated in a few inner city areas with serious social and ethnic minority problems. We believe that these areas were allowed to become out of control with inadequate community policing over many years. Irrational and irresponsible statements like Chief Constable Brunstrom's to the BBC that '*slipping over a speed limit is no different to slipping a knife into somebody*' doesn't generate any respect for the police or the law. Zero tolerance policies via large numbers of highly visible community Police officers are needed to address these problems and will, of necessity, target certain groups who are at the greatest risk. This happened in New York, which still benefits from that program.

See the crime figures at :- <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/nycrime.htm>  
and the NYPD policy at :- [http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/faq/faq\\_police.shtml#1](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/faq/faq_police.shtml#1)

The dramatic reduction in murders is highlighted in the graph below :-



Most of the UK crime is similarly concentrated and needs similar but smaller scale responses. Any village in Wales without an adequate and ACTIVE Police presence will be subject to a 'wave' of crime and antisocial behaviour.