

[New measures to restrict access to corrosives and knives](#)

Measures in the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 to prevent young people buying and possessing weapons and corrosive substances come into force today (Wednesday 6 April), as part of the government's continued efforts to tackle youth violence under the [Beating Crime Plan](#).

The Act places new responsibilities on retailers and delivery companies during the online sale and delivery of knives and corrosives, as packages containing these items are now only handed over to the recipient when it has been verified that the customer is over 18. The sale of corrosive substances has also been banned to anyone under the age of 18.

To tackle acid attacks, the government has also made possessing a corrosive substance in a public place an offence, with those found guilty facing up to four years behind bars.

Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse, said:

Too many lives have already been lost to youth violence and we are doing everything we can to stop young people accessing, carrying and using dangerous weapons.

The measures coming into force today will help prevent these weapons getting into the wrong hands and will give the police extended powers to ensure that potentially dangerous weapons such as knives and acids are taken off our streets.

Graham Wynn, Assistant Director for Consumer, Competition and Regulatory Affairs at the British Retail Consortium said:

The BRC has been working closely with the Home Office and welcomes the commencement of these measures introduced in the Offensive Weapons Act. We have been working with retailers to ensure they are ready to implement the guidance from today.

We strive to protect the public and close all loopholes which allow young people to access prohibited products and this guidance will support us to do this.

Furthermore, current laws around the possession of knives or offensive weapons on school premises have been extended to cover sixth form colleges and other further education colleges as well.

Enforcement powers for trading standards bodies have also been strengthened

for those who do not adhere to the new regulations on the sale of knives, corrosive products and offensive weapons. The government has also changed the definition for the offence, threatening with an offensive weapon in public, to make prosecutions easier.

We have already seen the impact that the Offensive Weapons Act can have. Prior to the ban on the possession of certain knives, offensive weapons and firearms coming into force in July 2021, a successful surrender and compensation scheme ran for three months.

This led to over 1,100 firearms and almost 15,000 knives and offensive weapons being surrendered. The additional measures from the Offensive Weapons Act that come into force today will go even further in restricting access to dangerous weapons, and will help to keep our streets safe.

Ben Kinsella's Trust CEO, Patrick Green said:

Knife crime has an impact on us all, and it is vital to do all we can to remove knives from our streets.

The importance of this act in helping to do this cannot be overstated. It will put in place measures to ensure that irrespective of whether you buy a knife on the high street or online, you will be subject to an age verification process.

Alongside this, the act will also ban the sale of some dangerous knives and increase police powers to seized knives. These are critically important changes to the law that will help in our fight against knife crime.

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Knife Crime, DAC Graham McNulty said:

The harm caused by knife crime to families and communities is devastating and the issue remains a top priority for policing but is not something that can be solved by policing alone.

We are working closely with schools, charities, community schemes and partners to help people understand why carrying a knife is never the right choice. Early intervention plays a vitally important role in preventing young people from turning to a life of crime.

We welcome the final changes to legislation being introduced by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019, complementing those that were brought into effect last year.