

News story: Government introduces new Offensive Weapons Bill to tackle serious violence

The [Offensive Weapons Bill](#) will make it harder for young people to buy knives and acid online with sellers requiring rigorous age verification to prove those purchasing knives or corrosives are over 18. Failure to do so will leave them liable for prosecution.

The Bill will also ban possession of weapons such as zombie knives, knuckle dusters and death stars both in public and private. Those who do will be forced to hand them in.

As part of the new legislation the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, has been clear in his support to police officers, with measures in the Bill ensuring that the police have the powers to seize illegal weapons whenever they are found.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

It is totally wrong that young people are able to get their hands on dangerous weapons such as knives and harmful acids.

That is why we are making the laws around this even tighter.

Earlier this week I saw the great work our front line officers do to keep our communities safe – and I am determined to do everything I can to help them keep weapons off our streets.

The Bill forms part of the government's response to the recent rise in serious violence, set out in the £40 million Serious Violence Strategy, which places a new focus on early intervention alongside robust law enforcement.

As such, existing offences of possessing a bladed article or offensive weapon on school premises has been extended to cover further education premises in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The full measures of the Offensive Weapons Bill are:

- the Bill creates a new criminal offence of selling – both online and offline – a corrosive product to a person under the age of 18. The substances and concentration levels of what constitutes a corrosive product are set out in the Bill
- it creates a new criminal offence of possessing a corrosive substance in a public place. There is a defence of possessing the corrosive substance for good reason. There is a minimum custodial sentence in England and Wales where a person is convicted for a relevant offence a second time

- where a corrosive product or bladed product is sold online, the defence of having taken reasonable precautions can only be relied on where the seller meets certain conditions in terms of age verification and packaging and delivery of the items
- it creates new criminal offences prohibiting the dispatch of bladed products and corrosive products sold online to a residential address. The offence for bladed products is limited to those that can cause serious injury and includes defences for made to order items and those for sporting and re-enactment purposes
- it creates new criminal offences on delivery companies of delivering a bladed article or a corrosive product on behalf of a seller outside the United Kingdom to a person under 18
- it updates the definition of a flick knife and prohibits the possession of flick knives and gravity knives (their sale etc is already prohibited)
- it amends existing law to make it a criminal offence to possess certain weapons (such as knuckledusters and death stars) – the sale and importation of these is already prohibited. It provides for compensation of owners
- it extends the existing offences of possessing a bladed article or offensive weapon on school premises to cover further education premises in England and Wales and Northern Ireland
- it amends the legal test for threatening with an offensive weapon in England and Wales to aid prosecution;
- it prohibits high energy and rapid firing rifles and a device known as a “bump stock” which increases the rate of fire of rifles and provides for compensation of owners.