

Press release: Home Office announces package of measures to tackle violent crime

The measures include a new offence of possession of a corrosive substance in public without a good or lawful reason.

It would place the onus on the individual caught in possession to explain why they are carrying it, rather than on the police to prove that it was intended to cause injury.

Those convicted of this offence for a second time would face a mandatory minimum sentence in line with existing knife possession laws.

The proposals are part of the '[Consultation on new legislation on offensive and dangerous weapons](#)', which sets out legislative measures to reduce violent crime; respond to recent rises in police-recorded knife and firearm offences; and the emergence of attacks using acids and corrosive substances.

Home Secretary, Amber Rudd said:

All forms of violent crime are totally unacceptable, which is why we are taking action to restrict access to offensive weapons and crack down on those who carry acids with the intent to do harm.

Acid attacks can devastate lives and leave victims with both emotional and physical scars.

By banning the sale of the most harmful corrosive substances to under 18s and introducing minimum custodial sentences to those who repeatedly carry corrosive substances to cause harm, we are sending a message that the cowards who use these as weapons will not escape the full force of the law.

Other measures on which the government will consult are new offences on the sale of acids and the most harmful corrosive substances to people aged under 18, possession of a corrosive substance in public and restricting online sales of knives so they cannot be delivered to a private residential address and must instead be collected at a place where age ID can be checked.

Other measures included in the consultation include:

- amendments to threatening with a knife or offensive weapon offence to lower the evidential requirement for prosecutors
- allowing police to seize offensive weapons which are already banned in public places from private properties
- prohibiting knives (currently banned on school premises) from other

educational institutions such as colleges

- updating the current legislation on the definition of flick knives (to reflect new designs)
- moving two firearms (.50 calibre and certain rapid firing rifles) from the general licensing arrangements to the stricter provisions of section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968

Members of the public are encouraged to submit their opinions on the consultation which will be open until 9 December.

The Home Office will also review the Poisons Act and include sulphuric acid, meaning it would only be available to purchase with a licence above a certain concentration.

Sarah Newton, the Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, also today announced the launch of the £500,000 [Community Fund for local projects aimed at tackling knife crime](#) and more than £280,000 of successful bids for community work aimed at ending gang violence and exploitation.

Sarah Newton said:

We know these crimes cannot be ended with legislation alone. We need wide-ranging action, including supporting communities to take action. Which is why I'm pleased to announce that we are awarding just over £280,000 funding to projects across the country to help people avoid and escape a life of gangs and violence.

We are also inviting bids for a new £500,000 Community Fund to help grassroots organisations tackle the scourge of knife crime.