

New stop and search powers for convicted knife criminals

Police will be given new, personalised stop and search powers targeted at known knife criminals under plans outlined by the Government today (Monday 14 September).

Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs) are designed to ensure repeat offenders are more likely to be caught and put in prison.

SVROs could apply to individuals previously convicted of carrying a knife or an offensive weapon, including those who have received non-custodial sentences such as community orders or suspended sentences.

The orders would be imposed by a court, which could also decide on the exact length of the order.

Police could then stop and search those who are subject to an SVRO to check if they are unlawfully carrying a knife or offensive weapon again.

If caught and convicted a second time, offenders could then expect to receive a custodial sentence under the existing 'two strikes' legislation brought in by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015.

The new orders, which build on existing stop and search powers, will help the police to better target the small minority of persistent offenders who repeatedly flout the law.

The proportion of offenders who have already committed one or more previous knife and offensive weapons possession offences has risen from 20% in the year ending March 2010 to 29% in year ending March 2020.

Crime and Policing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

Knife crime has a devastating effect on young lives and our neighbourhoods.

Our ambition is for these new powers to transform the way stop and search is used by targeting the small number of the most serious and persistent criminals.

The law-abiding majority should not have to live in fear, which is why we are taking action across all fronts to keep them safe.

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Serious Violent Crime, Assistant Chief Constable Jackie Sebire, said:

We welcome this consultation and the opportunity it gives

communities and partners to contribute their thoughts on the proposed power.

We know that it is only by listening and working together that we can bring about the sustained changes needed to tackle the harms of knife-crime.

Patrick Green, CEO of the Ben Kinsella Trust, said:

We are pleased that the Government is setting out to do more to take knives and those who chose to persistently carry them off our streets.

Reoffending rates have been one the scourges of knife crime. SVROs give us a chance to look again at stop and search and what more can be done in the courts to reduce offending. We welcome the Government's decision to open SVROs to consultation, this will enable front line organisations to lend their expertise and experience to these orders.

Today, the Home Office has launched a public consultation to seek views on the design of SVROs.

They are a key part of the Government's wider commitment to reducing violent crime and making our streets safer.

The consultation will run for eight weeks and end on 8 November. Views will be sought on how SVROs could work, including monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure transparency and accountability.

The aim is for SVROs to help the police to take an intelligence-based, targeted approach to those who pose the most serious threat – keeping communities safe and strengthening police-community relations.

The orders, which were a manifesto commitment, were proposed by the Centre for Social Justice in a 2018 report.

Andy Cook, Chief Executive of the Centre for Social Justice, said:

This consultation on Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs) is an important step in the right direction. SVROs send a strong message that violence and carrying weapons can and will be stopped.

It is also about understanding the need to step in and help those caught up in violence to turn away from gangs and seek help. This is both tough and compassionate and shows that decisive action is being taken to put an end to violence.

Our research tells us that these measures are supported by the great majority of people living in some of our most deprived

communities, who want to see the scourge of knife crime and the routine carrying of weapons brought to an end.

SVROs will complement Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs), which will be available to the courts when the police believe a person aged 12 or over is regularly carrying a knife, or upon conviction for an offence involving a knife or violence.

KCPOs are intended to be preventative, to help people avoid being drawn into knife crime and include positive requirements such as attendance at educational courses or drug rehabilitation.

The Government is also bolstering the police by recruiting 20,000 additional officers over the next three years and providing the most substantial increase in police funding in a decade.

Other measures include investing £70 million to develop Violence Reduction Units to divert people away from crime and changing the law to make it a legal requirement for public bodies to work together to address the root causes of serious violence.

[Rule of six comes into effect to tackle coronavirus](#)

New laws prohibiting social gatherings of more than six people come into effect today (Monday 14 September) as the Government calls on the public to remain vigilant in the fight against coronavirus.

The new “rule of six” simplifies and strengthens the rules on social gatherings, making them easier to understand and easier for the police to enforce.

It means that – apart from a set of limited exemptions including work and education – any social gatherings of more than six people will be against the law.

Police will be able to disperse any such gatherings and fine individuals involved £100, doubling up to a maximum of £3,200.

Home Secretary Priti Patel held a call with Chief Constables to support police enforcement of the law.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Across the country, we have all made enormous sacrifices in the

fight against coronavirus. However, the recent rise in cases makes it clear that more needs to be done to stop the spread of this disease.

From Monday new laws will enable the police to fine anyone in breach of the rule of six. As we continue to fight this virus, I urge the public not participate in social gatherings of more than six people in any setting, indoors or outdoors.

The rule of six will be enforceable in law from Monday.

The change follows a rapid increase in the number of daily positive cases. The Government, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor all agreed that urgent action was necessary to stop the virus spreading and continue to protect the NHS.

The rule applies across England and replaces the existing ban on participating in gatherings of more than 30 and the current guidance on allowing two households to meet indoors.

Now the only rule that people need to remember is to not participate in social gatherings of more than six people in any setting, indoors or outdoors.

It remains the case that organisers and facilitators of larger gatherings of more than 30 people – such as unlicensed music events – can be subject to fines of up to £10,000.

The Prime Minister has spoken to police forces about enforcement and the new lower limit will make it easier for police to identify illegal gatherings.

Police have continued to step up patrols in recent weeks and have cracked down on illegal gatherings during the pandemic. Deployments in some areas of concern – such as Leicester and Greater Manchester – have been larger than on New Year's Eve.

The police will continue their tried and tested approach of engaging with the public, explaining the rules, encouraging gatherings to disperse, but will be empowered to enforce the rules and issue fines where needed.

Exemptions include cases where a single household or support bubble is larger than six people. The rule also does not apply to gatherings for work or education purposes, and to other gatherings including weddings, funerals, and team sports organised in a COVID-19 secure way.

Venues following COVID-19 secure guidelines – such as places of worship, gyms, restaurants and other hospitality venues – can still hold more than six people in total. But within those venues, there must not be individual groups larger than six, and groups must not mix socially or form larger groups.

The rule will be kept under constant review and will only remain in place as long as is necessary.

The most important thing everyone can do is remember the basics: Hands. Face. Space.

Everyone should continue to follow guidance on:

- Washing your hands regularly and for 20 seconds
- Wearing a face covering in settings where it is required and where it is difficult to maintain social distancing
- Staying 2 metres apart from people you do not live with or 1 metre with extra precautions, such as a face covering

[View the full list of exemptions.](#)

Chief of Defence Intelligence comments on threats the UK will face in coming decades

The UK's adversaries are developing new ways of operating, backed up by cutting edge military capabilities that leverage advanced technologies, the Chief of Defence Intelligence today warns.

In the first ever media briefing at Defence Intelligence's Cambridgeshire base, Lt Gen Hockenhull has said that the shifting global picture has changed the character of warfare in ways that will challenge the West to keep pace with adversaries who do not play by the rules.

Global players such as Russia and China continually challenge the existing order without prompting direct conflict, operating in the expanding grey-zone between war and peacetime.

Conflict is bleeding into new domains, such as cyber and space, threatening our cohesion, our resilience and our global interests.

Chief of Defence Intelligence, Lieutenant-General Jim Hockenhull said:

Whilst conventional threats remain, we have seen our adversaries invest in Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and other ground-breaking technologies, whilst also supercharging more traditional techniques of influence and leverage.

As we have seen in Salisbury, hostile states are willing to take incredible risks. We must make sure that we have both the intent and the capability to ensure that such wanton acts of irresponsibility will not go unpunished.

Traditionally more comfortable in the shadows, Defence Intelligence [DI] have been brought to the fore by recent developments. Tasked with watching for global instability, tracking threats to the UK and monitoring human rights violations, amongst other things, analysts at DI provide advice to senior officials, shaping the Government's approach to emerging threats and supporting UK forces deployed across the globe.

DI are already well placed to make this shift. Operating the world's only fully integrated TOP SECRET collaboration centre, they are already working closely with 5 Eyes partners and other allied intelligence agencies.

Moreover, in their support to the Coronavirus response, they have already proved their agility and adaptability when faced with new challenges. Possessing the UK's sole strategic medical intelligence capability, they rapidly shifted focus the Covid Assessment Team, or CAT. This moved their analysts from tasks such as assessing the UK's overseas medical capabilities and understanding bio-hacking, to assessing the current and future threat posed by COVID-19.

[UK-Japan Agreement: Response to media outlets](#)

News story

Response to inaccurate reporting following the signing of the UK-Japan Agreement in Principle on 11 September 2020.



Flight path

Following yesterday's (11 September 2020) signing of the UK-Japan Agreement in Principle (AIP), there has been some inaccurate reporting.

A rebuttal can be found below:

A scoping assessment was conducted before the Agreement was concluded, showing that the deal will increase trade between the UK and Japan by £15.2 billion annually. This government has committed to publishing updated figures in due course now that we have a final Agreement with tangible benefits for the UK.

This government has also committed to submitting an Impact Assessment before Parliament, reflecting the final Agreement before its ratification. Ministers have committed to transparency on the impacts of our trade negotiations and to keeping Parliament informed.

This government's current analysis approach to gauge long-term benefits of the Agreement is akin to that used by trade ministries globally. It is an approach we have been consistently open about, to the praise of external commentators, and one we consider to be robust.

The deal is tailored to the UK economy and secures additional benefits beyond the EU-Japan trade deal, giving UK companies exporting to Japan a competitive advantage in a number of areas. It will help to boost jobs and drive economic growth throughout the whole of the UK.

The deal is also an important step towards joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This will give UK businesses a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region and help to increase the resilience and diversity of our supply chains.

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[Defence Secretary announces investment in strategic Omani port](#)

News story

The Defence Secretary has announced a further £23.8 million investment in the UK logistics hub at Duqm port



The Defence Secretary speaks to members of the Armed Forces based at Duqm

The Defence Secretary has announced a further £23.8 million investment in the UK logistics hub at Duqm port, as part of a visit to Oman and Qatar to discuss shared security challenges and future collaboration.

The investment in the Omani port will triple the size of the existing UK base and help facilitate Royal Navy deployments to the Indian Ocean. It also has a dry dock facility which could support the UK's two aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

The port was used in 2018 for Exercise Saif Sareea 3 and the expansion will further support British Army training in Oman.

On the Qatar leg of the visit the Defence Secretary offered support to the Football World Cup in 2022, with the UK ready to provide advice and guidance needed to deliver a safe and successful event.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The long standing friendships between the UK and the Gulf states are more important than ever. With shared defence and security interests, it is vital we work together for both regional and global stability. Our trade links are just as strong, too – from cotton to aerospace.

Whether tackling Daesh, or making our streets in the UK safer thanks to our intelligence networks, these are hugely valuable relationships that I am pleased to be able to renew this week.

The UK and many of the Gulf states work closely together on counter-terrorism, sharing information and resources to tackle violent extremism. Oman and Qatar and are all members of the Global Coalition against Daesh alongside the UK, where they work together to combat the violent ideology and network of terrorist fighters.

The Defence Secretary was able to see this first-hand when he visited the

Combined Air Operations Centre in Qatar where strikes are coordinated from as part of Operation Shader, the name for the UK's military contribution to the Global Coalition.

The importance of the Gulf region to global security was also demonstrated last year when the Royal Navy helped to protect freedom of navigation by escorting cargo vessels through the Straits of Hormuz, a vital shipping channel for international trading.

The details of two strikes by RAF Reaper unmanned aircraft against Daesh have also been released today by the Ministry of Defence that were co-ordinated by the RAF's No.83 Expeditionary Air Group in Al Udeid, Qatar.

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