

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
4 June 2025
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

**KNIFE CRIME PROPOSALS REGARDING AGE- VERIFICATION
CHECKS**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information regarding proposals to implement age verification checks and to seek control of the doorstep dropping of knives and bladed articles to greater protect young people from knife crime.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Joint Advisory Board Members note the additional proposals.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 On the 28 January 2025, the Government announced that stricter age verification checks and a ban on doorstep drops will be introduced to greater protect young people from knife crime.
- 3.2 These new measures have been identified as further controls preventing weapons getting into the wrong hands.
- 3.3 A stringent 2-step system will be mandated for all retailers selling knives online requiring customers to submit photo ID at point of sale and again on delivery. In addition, delivery companies will only be able to deliver a bladed article to the same person who purchased it.
- 3.4 The Government has set out its mission to halve knife crime within a decade as part of the Plan for Change and a core element of this will be addressing problems in the online sales space.
- 3.5 Under the proposed new measures, a person may need to submit a copy of a photo ID such as driving licence or passport, as well as proof of address such as a utility bill, before showing ID again when the package is delivered. This could also include a person submitting a current photo or video of themselves to an online retailer alongside their ID.
- 3.6 It will also be illegal to leave a package containing a bladed weapon on a doorstep when no one is in to receive it.

- 3.7 Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said: “It’s a total disgrace how easy it still is for children to get dangerous weapons online. More than two years after Ronan Kanda was killed with a ninja sword bought by a teenager online, too many retailers still don’t have proper checks in place. It’s too easy to put in false birth dates, parcels are too often being dropped off at a doorstep with no questions asked. We cannot go on like this. We need much stronger checks – before you buy, before it’s delivered. The measures I am setting out today will be crucial in addressing this problem and are part of our Plan for Change and mission to make streets safer”.
- 3.8 The Crime and Policing Bill 2025 which was introduced in the House of Commons on the 25 February 2025 will increase the maximum prison sentence for selling weapons to under-18s from two months to up to two years. That could apply either to an individual who has processed the sale or the Chief Executive of a company – giving online marketplaces an added incentive to take their responsibilities seriously.
- 3.9 The increased penalty will also apply to the sale or supply of prohibited offensive weapons such as recently banned zombie-style knives.
- 3.10 Retailers will also be required to report any bulk or suspicious-looking purchases of knives on their platforms to police to prevent illegal resales happening across social media accounts.
- 3.11 The new rules follow a spate of tragic incidents involving knives, including the deadly Southport attack in which Axel Rudakubana used a knife he had purchased on Amazon when he was 17 to attack and kill young children at a dance class.
- 3.12 The raft of measures are being referred to as ‘Ronan’s Law’, in tribute to Ronan Kanda, a 16-year-old who was killed in 2022 by a teenager carrying a 22-inch ‘ninja blade’ purchased online.
- 3.13 Last autumn, the government commissioned Commander Stephen Clayman, the National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for knife crime, to conduct a review into the sale of knives online. This report¹ was published on 31 January 2025. The review exposes loopholes in the sale of knives online and highlights the lack of minimum standards for age verification and delivery checks.
- 3.14 The report highlighted that Trading Standards have a key role in the identification of retailers not meeting the requirements of age verification, primarily through test purchase. Whilst in the physical world, test purchase can be completed by working with young people, as they enter a store to try and buy age restricted products, the online space presents far more challenges when it comes to delivery addresses and ID verification. This is particularly relevant when looking at couriers’ obligations as testing these cannot always be easily achieved and there is a reliance on the company’s own compliance mechanisms.
- 3.15 The report also recommended that a knife retailer registration scheme should be set up in order to close legislative loopholes and create an offence of unauthorised selling of knives. It would ensure that only reputable retailers who comply with the

¹ [Independent end-to-end review of online knife sales \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

law and prioritise public safety will be able to sell knives.

- 3.16 The Government has previously announced that they will hold social media executives to account for knife crime related content which glorifies and incites violence amongst young people. Senior executives of social media companies will face significant fines in the region of £10,000 for failing to swiftly remove knife crime related content from their platforms.
- 3.17 Brent and Harrow Trading Standards advises local businesses on their legal responsibilities and sign-up traders to our 'Responsible Trader Scheme' to promote best practice and support businesses who sell age restricted goods. We have also carried out test purchases when we have received intelligence that a trader may be selling knives to persons under the age of 18.
- 3.18 The tables below show the number of knife test purchases carried out over the last three years and the outcomes of those sales.

Harrow

Year	Attempts	Sales	Outcome
24/25	1	1	Letter of warning
23/24	1	1	Letter of warning
22/23	5	0	

Brent

Year	Attempts	Sales	Outcome
24/25	3	0	
23/24	6	0	
22/23	11	1	Company fined £1,500, awarded to pay £300 victim surcharge and costs £1,076

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There is no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it will affect all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

8.1 Not applicable.

Contact Officer

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