

# Draft guidance published to underpin the Offensive Weapons Act

[Draft guidance](#) published on August 15 sets out how Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) will provide an additional tool for police to steer young people away from serious violence.

The Home Office has also published [draft statutory guidance](#) on sections of the Offensive Weapons Act that deal with the possession, sale and delivery of knives, corrosives and certain offensive weapons, and the use of these to threaten others.

KCPOs are civil orders which can be imposed by courts on any person aged 12 or over who police believe is carrying a knife or people previously convicted of a knife related offence.

The orders – also part of the Offensive Weapons Act – are intended to be preventative rather than punitive, addressing factors that may increase the chances of offending through requirements such as attendance at educational courses, life skills programmes, participation in group sports, drug rehabilitation and anger management classes.

Courts will also be able to impose measures to prohibit activities such as associating with certain people, or to introduce geographical restrictions and curfews to help prevent further offences.

The Offensive Weapons Act, which received Royal Assent in May 2019, forms part of the government's action to tackle serious violence, which has been bolstered by the recruitment drive for 20,000 new police officers over the next three years, and the extension of a stop and search pilot to all forces in England and Wales.

The Home Secretary said:

We are cracking down on violent crime, which has a devastating impact on victims, their families and our communities.

Our Offensive Weapons Act will help to stop acids and knives making their way onto our streets and being used to carry out horrifying attacks.

This government will always give the police the support, resources and powers they need – including recruiting 20,000 new officers over the next three years and empowering them to use stop and search.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Serious Violent Crime, Acting Deputy Chief Constable Jackie Sebire said:

Knife Crime Prevention Orders will provide police with a further means to help deter young people from becoming involved in knife possession and knife crime.

These Orders will help to make young people stop and think about the choices and consequences of carrying a knife.

We know that early intervention is the best way to prevent knife crime and we continue to work alongside schools, charities and community groups, alongside the use of a range of other tactics.

Chief Superintendent Ade Adelekan, who heads up the Metropolitan Police's Violent Crime Task Force, said:

The Met supports the proposed Knife Crime Prevention Orders.

We feel they will help to discourage more young people from carrying knives in a positive rather than punitive format, giving them support and pathways away from potential crime or negative influences.

We will continue to work closely with our partners, particularly the new Violence Reduction Unit, the Home Office, local government and third sector organisations to not only suppress violence in the short-term, but to help take a truly integrated approach to long-term problem-solving, to help keep young people safe.

As the draft guidance makes clear, the nature of any requirements included in a KCPO will be for the court to determine. KCPOs will be piloted before they are rolled out across England and Wales.

The Offensive Weapons Act was introduced to enhance the response to serious violence, including knife crime and corrosives attacks.

It includes measures to:

- ban the sale of corrosive products to under-18s and make the possession of a corrosive substance in a public place a criminal offence
- stop knives being sent to residential addresses after they are bought online, unless the seller has an arrangement with the delivery company to ensure the product will not be delivered to a person under 18
- update the definition of flick knives to reflect changing weapons designs
- amend existing legislation to ban possession in private of certain

weapons such as knuckledusters and zombie knives

- change the legal definition for threatening someone with an offensive weapon

The draft guidance on these measures is aimed at agencies who will be responsible for enforcing the legislation, such as police and trading standards.

It also sets out how individuals, and organisations such as retailers and manufacturers, can comply with the Act.

Both guidance documents will now be subject to public consultations, which will allow stakeholders to put forward their views, before the final versions are published and the measures brought in to effect.

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## Work to clear surface weed on the River Colne

Invasive weeds are being cleared from the River Colne to benefit the environment.

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Environment Agency officers have been working hard to remove duck weed and invasive azolla from the River Colne in Colchester.

Due to prolonged dry weather this year and last year, there has been an increased amount of surface weed (including invasive azolla and duck weed) along the river. The dry weather causes low flows and together with higher temperatures, this encourages the vegetation to grow.

The Environment Agency has been trialling different techniques to remove the weed to create some refuge areas for the fish. This improves the dissolved oxygen levels in the water, which the fish depend on.

Officers recently went out in a boat and used a boom to gather the duck weed,

then a digger to scoop the aquatic plant out of the river. The work was carried out over a week at the end of July and more is planned.

A mound of duck weed and azolla weed removed from the river

Ben Norrington, fisheries officer in East Anglia, said:

We are clearing the surface weed proactively to avoid any incident that could arise from having this vegetation and impact the water quality.

As temperatures warm up, the surface weed sucks the oxygen out of the water. Then we have thunder storms, which lowers the temperature again. High temperature water mixed with low temperature rain can cause an oxygen crash and that's what will kill the fish.

The duck weed remaining has been thinned out meaning the sun and rain can break through, which will improve the levels of oxygen in the water.

The officers have also carried out duck removal on the River Bret, the River Gipping and on Lady Island in Sudbury.

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## Getting Clear on Student Finance

Students in England still have time to get their finances sorted for the 19/20 academic year. That's the message from the Student Loans Company (SLC) as Clearing ramps up.

Thousands of young people across England have now received their exam results and last year 55,000 people applied for student finance once they had received their exam results.

SLC is reminding all students to make sure they get their student finance in place and is offering some top tips to students going through Clearing.

Top tips for making the application process as smooth as possible include:

There's also a dedicated Clearing page with lots of useful information on Gov.UK at the following link: <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>

SLC's Director of Operations, Derek Ross said:

“It is important that Students complete their finance applications as soon as possible to ensure that their first payments are received at the start of term. The sooner they submit their application the sooner we can get their student finance in place.

“Those students who have already applied for student finance but want to change their course, university or college should update their details on their online account at [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)”

Students who have still to apply should do so as soon as possible as it can take six weeks to process an application. Student Finance England will make an initial assessment so you have some money as close to the start of your course as possible.

The fastest way to apply is by registering for an online account and submitting an application at: [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

We’re also hosting a live Clearing and Adjustment Facebook Q&A from 2pm on 20 August 2019: [www.facebook.com/SFEngland](https://www.facebook.com/SFEngland)

To help you sort out your student finance, SFE experts will also be available online Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm to answer your questions: [Twitter/SF\\_England](https://twitter.com/SF_England) and [Facebook/SFEngland](https://www.facebook.com/SFEngland)

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