Economic Note	Number: HO EN 1067
Title of regulatory proposal	Knife crime measures
Lead Department/Agency	Home Office
Expected date of implementation	October 2026 – April 2027
Origin	Domestic
Date	30/04/2026
Lead Departmental Contact	CrimeandPolicingBillTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk
Departmental Assessment	GREEN

Rationale for intervention, objectives and intended effects

Knife-enabled violence continues to cause serious harm, and existing powers and offences do not always allow timely intervention or reflect the seriousness of some behaviours. The measures aim to reduce access to bladed articles and improve enforcement by enabling police to seize and destroy knives held in private where there are reasonable grounds to suspect they could be used in serious violence, increasing maximum penalties, and creating a new offence of possessing a knife with intent to cause fear of harm. The intended effects are earlier disruption, stronger deterrence, and improved ability for police and prosecutors to investigate, contributing to a reduction in knife-related threats and serious violence.

Policy options (including alternatives to regulation)

Option 0: 'Do nothing' - no further government intervention on knife sales or criminal justice response to knife crime.

Option 1: Option 1: Implement new knife-crime measures—seizure/destruction powers, max penalty to two years imprisonment (including sales to those aged under 18 years), and a new "possession with intent" offence (to endanger life or cause fear of violence). **This is the government's preferred option.**

Costs and benefit summary

Set up costs include the familiarisation process for police. Ongoing costs are associated with the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and arise from increased case volumes and include legal aid costs, probation costs, prison place costs and court case costs. There would be a net benefit to society if four homicides were prevented over the 10-year appraisal period, or at least 944 incidents of violence resulting in injury during the same period.

Risks

Key risks relate to uncertainty in how the measures will operate in practice and how this will affect criminal justice system costs. There is uncertainty about the number of additional cases for selling knives to those aged under 18 years, although National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) estimates suggest around 50 additional cases per year. The offence of possession with intent is new, so case volumes, the threshold for proving intent and sentencing outcomes are uncertain. Sensitivity analysis has been used to reflect these uncertainties.

Total Cost (£m PV)	Transition Cost (£m Constant)	Cost to Business (£m PV)	
16.88 (central)	**0.92 (central)**	**0**	
Total Benefit (£m PV)	**NPSV (£m PV)**	**BNPV (£m PV)**	**EANDCB (£m PV)**
0	-16.88	0	0
Price Base Year	**PV Base Year**	**Appraisal period (Years)**	**Transition period (Years)**
2026/2027	**2026/2027**	**2026-2035**	**2026**

Departmental sign-off (*SCS*):	Nick Hunt	Date: 30/04/26
Chief Economist sign-off:	Tim Laken	Date: 17/07/26
Better Regulation Unit sign-off:	Emma Kirk	Date: 24/07/26

Evidence Base

A. Policy objectives and intended effects

1. These knife legislation proposals are in response to significant public and parliamentary concern about increases in knife crime. The provisions in the Crime and Policing Act 2026 provide a tougher response to knife crime and enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to clamp down on knife crime. The intended effects are earlier intervention by police, improved investigation and prosecution of knife-related offending, stronger deterrence, and a reduction in knife-related threats and serious violence.

2. The Home Office ran a public consultation between 18 April and 6 June 2023 seeking views on legislative proposals to reduce knife crime[1]. Not all the proposals covered in the consultation are included in this economic note (EN). This EN refers only to the measures to provide additional powers for police to seize, retain, and destroy lawfully held bladed articles held in private; increase the maximum penalty to two years imprisonment for the offences of private possession, importation, manufacture, sale, and general supply of prohibited and dangerous weapons and sale of knives to persons under 18 years old[2]; introduce a new possession offence of bladed articles with intention to endanger life or cause fear of violence.

3. The consultation received a total of 2,544 responses with most being supportive of the proposals. A number of respondents raised concerns in relation to police power to seize knives held in private particularly in relation to whether the new legislation would give rise to power to entry and the level of evidence for seizing.

B. Policy options considered, including alternatives to regulation

Option 0: 'Do nothing'

4. No further government intervention to restrict sales of knives or toughen the criminal justice response to knife crime.

Option 1: Preferred option

5. It is the government's preferred option to introduce measures to provide additional powers for the police to seize, retain, and destroy lawfully held bladed articles held in private; increase the maximum penalty to two years imprisonment for the offences of private possession, importation, manufacture, sale, and general supply of prohibited and dangerous weapons and sale of knives to persons under 18 years old; introduce a new possession offence of bladed articles with intention to endanger life or cause fear of violence to achieve its objective of tackling the use of knives in crime.

Non-regulatory options

6. Non-regulatory options were not considered because the measures require changes to criminal offences, police powers and penalties, which can only be made through primary legislation. Non-legislative action would not be enough to create new seizure powers, increase maximum sentences, or introduce a new offence, so it would not give effect to the government's objectives.

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1 Consultation on new knife legislation proposals to tackle the use of machetes and other bladed articles in crime: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/machetes-and-other-bladed-articles-proposed-legislation/consultation-on-new-knife-legislation-proposals-to-tackle-the-use-of-machetes-and-other-bladed-articles-in-crime-accessible

2 Individuals who are aged 17 and under

C. Past evaluations and rationale for government intervention

7. The government is taking action to continue the downwards trend in knife crime, given the impact that serious violence has on society. This includes the emotional and physical harms to individuals, and the wider impact on health services and the CJS. Police recorded 50,973 knife enabled offences in the year ending June 2024[3] and knives and sharp instruments are the most common method of homicide, and their use in homicides have increased since 2014. There were 225 homicides committed using a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending June 2024 (40 per cent of total homicides), compared to 183 in year ending March 2014. Reducing knife crime will be an important contributor to preventing homicides.

8. The measures included in the government's preferred option will contribute towards tackling knife crime and reduce the number of victims.

D. Appraisal

9. The following assumptions apply to all the measures in this note:

- The appraisal period for measuring the impacts of the proposed new legislation is 10 years, 2026 to 2035.
- Annual costs and benefits are in 2026/27 prices using the HM Treasury GDP Deflators (October 2024)[4].
- The present value base year is 2026/27.
- A 3.5 per cent annual social discount rate is implemented in line with the HM Treasury Green Book (2026)[5].

General assumptions and data

10. The analysis uses existing offences as a proxy for new measures. Possession of prohibited offensive weapons in private resulted in 711 prosecutions. Sale of bladed articles to those aged under 18 years resulted in 36 prosecutions. Possession of bladed articles in public resulted in 8,350 prosecutions.[6]

Measure 1: Additional powers for police to seize, retain, and destroy lawfully held bladed articles held in private

11. The analysis assumes that, for Measure 1, only seizures involving non-prohibited blades would have any additional costs and benefits, as seizures of prohibited offensive weapons held in private are already captured in the CJS through existing offences.

12. The analysis assumes in the steady state 1,659 seizures involving non-prohibited blades. This is arrived at by using the possession of prohibited offensive weapons in private (711) and proportion of knife related homicides which involve prohibited knives used as proxy for the percentage of blades seized which are prohibited (30 per cent, from Homicide Index). This appraisal assumes 60 per cent of blades used are non- prohibited and apply this to arrive at the volume of seizures involving non-prohibited blades.

13. The following appeal rate is assumed, 5 per cent in the low, 10 per cent in the central and 15 per cent in the high, a range has been selected as there is not a suitable proxy, applying this

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3 Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingJune2024

4 GDP Deflators (October 2024): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-october-2024-autumn-budget-2024

5 The Green Book (2026): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government

6 Outcomes by offence data tool December 2023: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly

to the seizures involving non-prohibited, this analysis arrives at 83 appeals in the low, 166 in the central and 249 in the high.

Measure 2: Increase the maximum penalty to two years for the offences of private possession, importation, manufacture, sale, and general supply of prohibited and dangerous weapons and sale of knives to persons under 18 years old

14. Under Measure 2, the government assumes there will be an increase in prosecutions for the offence of the sale of bladed articles to persons under 18 years; this increase is associated with the additional length of time police will have to investigate cases and make a charge. The current summary offence time limit is six months, and upgrading the mode of trial would remove the time limit for charges altogether. Moving the offence from 'summary' to 'either way' is intended to reflect the seriousness of the conduct and give police more time to investigate and bring charges.

15. There is not expected to be an increase in the number of prosecutions for other offences which fall within the scope of the measure due to the low volumes of searches instigated by possession of prohibited offensive weapons in private, and as there is already high compliance with the offence of manufacture, import, sale or hire of a prohibited offensive weapon.

16. The analysis assumes additional prosecutions for the offence of sale of bladed articles to those aged under 18 years as a low scenario of 25, central scenario of 50 and high scenario of 100, based on Home Office conversations with the NPCC. These investigations are more complex and time consuming as sales often take place online. It is assumed that additional investigation time will result in additional 0.5 and 2 additional prosecutions per police force each year, with a central estimate of 1.

17. The government assumes 100 per cent of additional cases going to Magistrates' Courts, as there have been no custodial sentences for the offence in the previous five years.

18. As well as an 82 per cent conviction rate for additional cases based on the average conviction rate from year ending December 2019 to December 2023. The likelihood of receiving a custodial sentence is 0 per cent and the likelihood of receiving community sentence is 3 per cent. Therefore, a low scenario of 0.7, a central scenario of 1.4 and a high scenario of 2.7 of additional community sentences are expected, by applying the conviction rate and community sentence rate to the number of additional prosecutions.

Measure 3: Introduce a new possession offence of bladed articles with intention to endanger life or cause fear of violence

19. The government assume the volume of possession of bladed articles offences prosecuted, where there is intent to use in unlawful violence is 695 in the low scenario, 1,097 in the central scenario, and 1,500 in the high scenario. The low scenario assumes that those sentenced to a custodial term of greater than six months were all possession with intent cases. The high scenario assumes that those sentenced to a custodial term of greater than or equal to six months were all possession with intent cases. The best estimate scenario takes a rounded mid-point. The charge rate under the new offence is expected at 10 per cent, this is included to reflect the likelihood that most possession with intent cases are unlikely to have sufficient evidence. The 10 per cent assumption is based on Home Office conversations with NPCC and the ratio of prosecutions of firearm possession offences with intent to harm against other firearm possession offences. Therefore, applying the 10 per cent from the previous assumption to volume of bladed article offences, 69.5 new prosecutions in the low scenario, 109.7 in the central scenario and 150 in the high scenario.

20. The analysis assumes a conviction rate of 62 per cent based on the average conviction rate for offence of possession of firearms with intent used as a proxy. The likelihood of receiving a custodial sentence on conviction is 63 per cent. The average custodial sentence length for the existing offence of possession of a bladed article in public is 6.7 months. To reflect the increased severity of the new offence, the average custodial sentence length is assumed to be double that of the current possession offence. Sentence lengths are then proportionally scaled to reflect the higher maximum sentence of seven years. Under these assumptions, the

policy is estimated to require an additional 13 prison places in the low scenario, 21 in the central scenario, and 33 in the high scenario.

Table 1: Assumptions underpinning familiarisation costs

Assumption (year one)	Value	Source Methodology
Length of documentation	Low: 2,000 Central: 3,500 High: 5,000	Consultation with NPCC stakeholders.
Number of police officers who will require familiarisation	Senior Police Officers: 10,000 Sergeants: 22,091 Constables: 114,976 PCSOs: 9,000	Consultation with NPCC stakeholders. Equivalent to 65 per cent of workforce.
Police officers labour cost	Senior Police Officers: £50.99 Sergeants: £40.13 Constables: £27.33	Home Office Internal Staff Cost Model. Assumed Senior Police Officer is equivalent to Inspector.
Police community support officers median hourly wage	PCSOs: £17.99	ASHE survey 2024 Adjusted to account for non-wage labour costs (22 per cent)[7].
Reading speed (words per minute)	Low: 700 Central: 300 High: 200	Readingsoft calculator[8].

Costs

Transition Costs

Familiarisation Costs

21. Police officers of varying ranks will need to familiarise themselves with the new legislation. The familiarisation costs only occur in year one (2026/27) after implementation, and are estimated to be between £0.23 million and £1.97 million, with a central estimate of £0.92 million.

Ongoing costs

Police and Criminal Justice System

Measure 1: Additional powers for police to seize, retain, and destroy lawfully held bladed articles held in private

22. This proposal includes a new right of appeal to the Magistrate's Court, meaning HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) may also incur costs associated with appeals. It is assumed there would be between 83 and 249 appeals per year, with a central estimate of 166 appeals. It is estimated that the cost of appeals heard in the Magistrate's Court will be between £0.19 million and £0.57 million, with a central estimate of £0.38 million over the appraisal period.

Measure 2: Increase the maximum penalty to two years for the offences of private possession, importation, manufacture, sale, and general supply of prohibited and dangerous weapons and sale of knives to persons under 18 years old

23. Discussions with NPCC stakeholders indicate that any cost associated with extra investigations would be negligible, as the cases related to the offences in question are likely

[7] ASHE Data: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/occupation4digitsoc2010ashetable14

[8] Reading soft calculator: http://www.readingsoft.com/

to be relatively simplistic, not requiring extra resource to investigate but merely more time to complete the charging process.

24. It is estimated that there will be between 25 and 100 additional prosecutions under the offence of selling knives to persons aged under 18 years of age, with a central estimate of 50 prosecutions.

25. The government assumes that all the cases will be heard in the Magistrate's Court, and the additional costs to the Magistrates' Court associated with these cases have been estimated to be between £0.17 million and £0.70 million, with a central estimate of £0.35 million over the appraisal period.

26. Legal aid costs associated with the additional cases in the Magistrates' Court are estimated to be between £0.09 million and £0.36 million, with a central estimate of £0.18 million over the appraisal period.

27. When further applying the conviction rate and the likelihood of receiving a community sentence, the CJS will incur probation costs associated with the additional community sentences awarded. This is estimated to be between 0.7 and 2.7, with a central estimate of 1.4 additional community sentences per year. Probation costs associated with these additional sentences are estimated to be between £0.03 million and £0.12 million, with a central estimate of £0.06 million over the appraisal period.

Measure 3: Introduce a new possession offence of bladed articles with intention to endanger life or cause fear of violence

28. The new possession offence is not estimated to create a significant additional cost to the police, despite the additional investigations and cases resulting from the proposal. Following Home Office discussions with NPCC stakeholders, it is estimated that investigators will likely have a reasonable idea very early on in the investigation, based on initial evidence, as to whether they will be able to prove intent. This means costs associated with additional investigations would be negligible.

29. There is no expected increase in prosecutions, however cases charged under the new possession with intent offence (instead of the existing possession in public offence) are expected to be treated more seriously in court.

30. Those who are charged under the possession with intent offence will have higher legal aid costs due to the higher category of offence payable under the Crown Court. Additional legal aid costs are estimated to be between £3.47 million and £7.49 million, with a central estimate of £5.48 million.

31. Measure 3 will require additional prison capacity, equivalent to the number of prison places which will be occupied per year in the steady state. Those who receive a custodial sentence are expected to have a higher average sentence length due to the increased severity of the new offence. To reflect the increased severity of the new offence, the average custodial sentence length is assumed to be double that of the current possession offence. Sentence lengths are then proportionally scaled to reflect the higher maximum sentence of seven years, resulting in an average custodial sentence length of 23.5 months.

32. In the steady state, the additional number of prison places occupied per year is estimated to be between 15 and 33, with a central estimate of 24. The ongoing costs associated with these additional prison places are estimated to be between £7.02 million and £15.35 million, with a central estimate of £11.19 million over the 10-year appraisal period.

Retailers

33. As Measure 2 will mean that police will have more time to investigate a suspected offence, knife retailers will need to ensure that they keep any relevant documentation (for example, copy of proof of age) for a longer time period following point of sale. This means they may face additional administration costs in relation to record keeping and General Data Protection

Regulation (GDPR) Responses to the consultation indicate that the cost associated with keeping records for longer would be negligible for the majority of retailers.

Benefits

34. Reduction in knife crime: The intention of each of the policy options is to reduce their possession and use in offences. This cannot be quantified as there is not sufficient evidence available to determine how many offences will be avoided as a result of individual proposals. However, breakeven analysis has been undertaken for policy option 1 to determine the number of homicides, robberies, and violence with injury offences which would need to be prevented for benefits to outweigh net costs of the policy. The estimated cost to society per homicide is £4.10 million, and violence with injury is £0.02 million.

35. Policy option 1 would need to prevent approximately four homicides across the 10-year appraisal period (in the central scenario), to have a net benefit to society. At least 944 incidents of violence with injury across the 10-year appraisal period (in the central scenario) would have to be prevented for the benefits to outweigh the costs.

36. Fear of crime: Some of the proposals may lead to a reduction in fear of crime, however this benefit has not been monetised due to absence of evidence on the specific drivers of fear of knife crime, and the extent to which the proposals will affect this.

NPSV, BNPV and EANDCB

37. The NPSV is estimated to be between -£10.04 million and -£24.01 million with a central estimate of -£16.70 million over the appraisal period. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 2: Summary CBA, NPSV, BNPV and EANDCB, £ million (PV) over 10 years.

Costs	Low	Central	High
Total set up costs	0.23	0.92	1.97
Total ongoing costs	9.93	15.96	22.29
Total costs	10.15	16.88	24.27
Benefits			
Total benefits	**0**	**0**	**0**
NPSV	-10.15	-16.88	-24.27
BNPV	0	0	0
EANDCB	0	0	0

Source: Home Office Estimates

38. It is not possible to **use the NPSV to assess** value for money, as benefits are not monetised. However, breakeven analysis has been undertaken to determine the number of homicides, and violence with injury offences which would need to be prevented for benefits to outweigh net costs. The policy would need to prevent approximately four homicides across the 10-year appraisal period (in the central scenario), to have a net benefit to society. At least 944 incidents of violence with injury across the 10-year appraisal period (in the central scenario) would have to be prevented for the benefits to outweigh the costs.

E. Wider impacts

39. Upgrading the category of selling knives to those aged under 18 years to an ‘either way’ offence will mean that retailers will need to ensure that they keep any relevant documentation (for example, copy of proof of age) for two years following point of sale. Moving the offence from ‘summary’ to ‘either way’ is intended to reflect the seriousness of the offence and extends the time available for investigation. This cost would be negligible for the vast majority of retailers, as many of them employ this practice currently,

40. These measures may lead to a reduction in fear of crime; however, this has not been quantified due to an absence of evidence on the specific drivers of fear of knife crime, and the extent to which the proposals will affect this.

F. Sensitivity

41. This measure is not a regulatory provision as defined under the Better Regulation Framework. The equivalent annual net direct costs to the public sector are less than +/- £20 million, so an Impact Assessment is not required. This Economic Note has been produced instead and contains proportionate analysis outlining the main costs, benefits, and NPSV calculations.

G. Risks

42. Across all options, the cost of familiarisation with the new legislation for all groups is dependent on the length of guidance produced, and the number of staff required to familiarise themselves with the guidance. To reflect the uncertainty associated with the length of guidance and volume of staff required to familiarise, sensitivity analysis has been adopted, covering a range of costs for low, central, and high scenarios.

43. Under the measure to introduce a new police power to seize, retain and destroy legally held knives in private, critical areas of uncertainty will include the number of weapons which will be seized and destroyed (that is, the extent to which the new powers will be used) and the appeal rate against seizures (which may have a feedback effect on use of powers). This will affect both police and CJS costs associated with the proposal. To reflect the uncertainty associated with the appeal rate, sensitivity analysis has been adopted, covering a range of costs for low, central and high scenarios.

44. Although the power detailed above, can be applied to any knife in a private property, the police would need to have reasonable grounds to suspect an article being used in serious crime. This could present a risk that a knife is left on the property because it was not deemed likely to be used for serious violence or crime but an individual resorts to using it in such a way because other knives have been removed from the property.

45. Under the measure to increase the maximum penalty for offences under section 141 and section 141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, there is uncertainty surrounding the number of additional cases of selling a blade to those under 18 years old. NPCC have advised there would be 50 additional cases per year, roughly one per police force. However, this is a rough estimate and will affect the CJS costs associated with the proposal. To reflect the uncertainty associated with the volume of additional cases, sensitivity analysis has been adopted, covering a range of costs for low, central and high scenarios.

46. Under the measure to introduce a new offence of possession of a bladed article with intent to endanger life or cause fear of violence, there is uncertainty over the expected volume of cases under this new offence. This is mainly due to this being a new offence, where the threshold for and ease of proving intent is unknown.

47. The estimated figure was obtained following analysis of the data on current possession of a bladed article offence, the proxy offence of possession of firearms with intent to endanger life or cause fear of violence, and consultation with NPCC stakeholders. To reflect the uncertainty associated with the volume of cases under the new offence, sensitivity analysis has been adopted, covering a range of costs for low, central and high scenarios.

48. There is further uncertainty surrounding how offenders under the new possession of a bladed article with intent to endanger life or cause fear of violence offence will be treated by the CJS. Assumptions on the conviction rate, Crown Court/ Magistrate's Court split, and sentencing outcomes were made using proxy offences.

49. A critical area of uncertainty is also the length of custodial sentence given to convicted offenders. The government has assumed that this will be double the average custodial sentence length for the existing offence of possession of a bladed article, with sentence lengths then proportionally uplifted to reflect the new maximum sentence of seven years. However, there is limited well evidenced data to support this. As the implications of this assumption on costs to the CJS are extremely significant, the Average Custodial Sentence Length (ACSL) of this new offence will be closely monitored following implementation.

50. It will not be possible to quantify the impacts on knife-related injuries, hospital admissions, and homicides resulting from the proposals in the final economic note. Benefits have been appraised using breakeven analysis, demonstrating the number of homicides, robberies, and violence with injury offences which would need to be prevented for proposals to have an overall net benefit to society. Reductions in harms under the measure to increase maximum penalty will depend on the extent to which more severe penalties act as a deterrent against knife crime.

H. Annex

Mandatory specific impact test - Statutory Equalities Duties	Complete
The Home Office has reviewed the available evidence and is satisfied that this demonstrates compliance, where relevant, with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and that due regard has been made to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. **The SRO has agreed these summary findings**	**Yes**