

Written evidence submitted by Alex James (OWB44)

Summary of items for discussion

- new restrictions on online sales of bladed articles and corrosive products, including restrictions on deliveries to residential premises
- a new offence of possessing certain offensive weapons (the weapons concerned are already subject to restrictions on their sale, manufacture and importation)
- Amendments to the definition of a "flick knife"

I am submitting evidence on behalf of myself in response to the proposed changes listed above. I am a keen Bushcrafter (e.g.: Ray Mears) and wood carver who is looking to become employed in this sector, I rely heavily on the sale and delivery from online retailers for the knives and tools which I use as well as being a keen knife collector.

I will first start with saying I agree with the restrictions of corrosive products as the use of these items by criminals has become somewhat of an epidemic.

I do not agree however with the new restrictions on sales of bladed articles to residential addresses. As stated I am a keen bushcrafter and wood carver and need new knives and tools on a regular basis depending on what type of project I am working on.

All of the stores I order from do age checks before they dispatch any knives or restricted items in the first place, if other retailers are not then surely they are already committing an offence so why is the law coming down on innocent people who enjoy collection and the safe use of knives.

The simple fact of the matter is that if delivery was banned the nearest store that stocks these items is a 4 hour one way trip, so it would take me 8 hours just to pick up what is essentially a tool for my hobby as the items in question are not practical for over the counter stores to stock all the time and usually require a special order followed by a lengthy wait if possible at all. This is just not practical in the slightest and would certainly affect any hopes of starting my own business.

As a keen knife collector I believe parliament needs to look at the type of knives used mainly in crime and from what I have seen they are mainly CHEAP low quality blades or KITCHEN knives, I have never seen any images of the £100 to £1000 plus custom knives in any police photographs or presentation as the criminals simply do not go around stabbing one another or threatening the public with these blades they get the cheapest largest number of knives they can so if needs be can be thrown away after a crime.

Next I will come to the offence of possessing certain weapons such as "flick knives" and the updated definition of "Flick knife" which as stated are already illegal to sell or import.

I personally do not own or see the need for assisted style blades or any blades on the banned list as to me as with many other law abiding people a knife is a tool to be used for a hobby/job , I do own fixed bladed knives , folders both locking and non-locking and I carry a non-locking UK legal multi-tool at all times and use it at least once a day ,they is no need for an assisted or "flick" opening knife for everyday use.

Where I do take concern is with the offence to now possess these items on private property with more and more knives becoming illegal to buy or own such as now with the updated definition of "Flick Knife" this will involve many good law-abiding people to have to get rid of the knives they spent hard earned money on. Even though I personally prefer manual operated knife as I believe these are safer for the end user as you control the blade opening not a spring or mechanism, to punish people who already own these items before the ban is disproportionate.

If parliament does go ahead with banning of these items on private property it is only the law abiding who will surrender these items the criminals will not, so they only people it effects is the law abiding.

A buy back scheme I firmly believe is the only way to stop these knives getting into criminals hands, as many of them will just be dumped in the trash making it easier for a criminal to find or come across them.

As well as being the only fair way to say to the law abiding thank you for surrendering your items you spent your hard-earned money on.

I hope that the points raised will help the Committees decision and allow parliament to come to fair standing for all of those concerned, and I thank you for your time.

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