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Sir Roger Gale MP
Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck MP
Mark Pritchard MP
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan
Co-Chairs
Public Bill Committee, Crime and Policing Bill
House of Commons

25 April 2025

Dear Sir Roger, Emma, Mark and Rosena,

CRIME AND POLICING BILL: GOVERNMENT AMENDMENTS FOR COMMITTEE

We are writing to provide members of the Public Bill Committee with details of a final tranche of Government amendments that we have tabled yesterday for Committee stage.

Online sale of knives and crossbows

On 19 February, the Home Secretary [announced](#) that the government would be bringing forward a package of measures to strengthen the law on the online sale of knives. Taken together these would be known as “Ronan’s Law” in honour of Ronan Kanda who was tragically killed in 2022 in a case of mistaken identity near his home in Wolverhampton aged 16. The amendments we have tabled today:

- give effect to our manifesto commitment to hold senior managers of online platforms personally liable for failure to take action to remove illegal content relating to knives and offensive weapons;
- strengthen age verification requirements for the online sale and delivery of bladed products and crossbows; and
- introduce a requirement on retailers to report bulk and suspicious sales of bladed articles and offensive weapons.



Personal liability of senior managers of online platforms (new Chapter 2 of Part 2: “Advertising etc of unlawful weapons: civil penalties” and amendment to clause 134)

New Chapter 2 of Part 2 of the Bill (comprising 15 new clauses and a new Schedule) provides the police with the power to require online social media, marketplaces and search services to remove or hide illegal knife and offensive weapon related content.

It provides the police with the power to issue Content Removal Notices to online platforms and a designated UK-based executive of that company. These will require companies to take down specified illegal content relating to the sale of knives and offensive weapons within 48 hours. If the company fails to take down the specified content it will be liable for a Civil Penalty Notice of up to £60,000 and the designated executive will be personally liable for a Civil Penalty Notice of up to £10,000, subject to various safeguards.

When requested to do so by the police, online companies will be required to designate a UK-based senior executive who would be responsible for taking down specified illegal content, if such an appropriate person exists. If the company fails to designate a senior executive or confirm that no such person meets the criteria, then it will be liable for a Civil Penalty Notice of up to £60,000.

The police will exercise the powers under this regime through a national coordination hub. Content Removal Notices will typically be issued where the police come across illegal content in the course of their investigations or when notified of such content by a member of the public.

The provisions apply UK wide.

Age verification for the online sale and delivery of knives and crossbows (new clauses “Remote sales of knives etc”, “Delivery of knives etc”, “Remote sale and letting of crossbows”, “Delivery of crossbows” and “Sale and delivery of crossbows: supplementary provision” and amendment to clause 134)

Remote sale of knives

These amendments prescribe the actions that a seller, a delivery company and delivery driver must carry out to ensure that knives are not sold or delivered to a person aged under 18.

Existing provisions under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 already include the offence of selling to those under the age of 18 and a requirement, as part of the applicable defence, to have systems in place for age verification that meet defined standards. The amendments will require that sellers ensure that a package for delivery is marked as containing a bladed article and that it must only be delivered into the hands of a person aged 18 or over. Where the buyer is an individual, that person must be the buyer.



These provisions will strengthen the standards of age verification at both the point of sale and at delivery. Sellers will be required to check the buyer's age and identity using a passport or driving licence, and a current photograph. We are also introducing a new requirement that the item cannot be delivered to anyone other than the buyer, where the buyer is an individual. At delivery, age and identity will be verified again using an official identity document, namely a passport or driving licence. The delivery person will be required to hand the package only to the buyer and to nobody else, where the buyer is an individual. We anticipate that this two-step verification process will result in fewer instances where knives are sold to, and/or delivered into the hands of, a person under 18.

These provisions apply to England and Wales.

Remote sale and hire of crossbows

The Crossbow Act 1987 currently makes it an offence to sell or hire a crossbow to a person under 18. The new age verification provisions as set out above for knives will be mirrored as far as possible for the remote sale and hire of crossbows or crossbow parts. The amendments require that sellers (or delivery companies who transfer packages) ensure that packages are marked as containing a crossbow when sent for delivery and that, at point of sale, photographic identification, such as a passport or driving licence, will be required to prove the buyer's age, and at the point of delivery photographic identification will be required to form a two-step verification process.

These provisions apply to England and Wales.

Report of bulk or suspicious purchases of knives (new clause "*Duty to report remote sales of knives etc in bulk: England and Wales*")

This new clause will create an obligation on knife sellers to report to the police bulk or suspicious purchases of specified bladed articles, as defined under section 141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (excluding cutlery knives, that is knives for eating food other than steak knives with a sharp point), made online. A "bulk" purchase will be defined in the legislation as the purchase of six or more knives on a single occasion. A "suspicious" purchase will be the purchase of six or more knives in more than one transaction in a 30-day period to the same person or same address. In addition, there will be a limited exception for the purchase of sets of knives containing three or more different knives, such as knife blocks. Where more than one set is bought in a single transaction or in a 30-day period this will be considered a bulk or suspicious purchase respectively. The new clause includes a power to amend the definition of a bulk purchase by regulations.

These provisions apply to England and Wales.



Public order (new clauses “*Places of worship: restriction on protests*”, “*Powers of senior officers to impose conditions on protests*” and “*Amendments relating to British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police*” and amendments to clauses 134 and 135)

The Home Secretary announced on 27 March ([Places of worship to be protected from intimidating protests - GOV.UK](#)) the Government’s intention to bring forward amendments to the Bill introducing new measures to protect places of worship, such as synagogues, mosques, churches and other places of worship from intimidating levels of disruption caused by protest activity. New clause “*Places of worship: restriction on protests*” builds on existing powers under sections 12, 14 and 14ZA of the Public Order Act 1986 (the 1986 Act) by providing a new threshold for officers to be able to impose conditions – including on the route and timing of a protest – where the effect of a protest in England and Wales is to intimidate those attending a place of worship and deter them from accessing it. This will give the police clarity on how and when they can protect religious sites from the types of protest designed to disrupt them.

New clause “*Powers of senior officers to impose conditions on protests*” amends the definition of “senior police officer” within sections 12 and 14 of the 1986 Act. Currently, for conditions imposed on planned protests in advance of them going ahead or people gathering, the senior police officer is the chief constable (or the Commissioner in the case of the Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police). For conditions imposed on protests where people are assembling with a view to taking part in the protest or where the protest is already in the process of taking place, the term senior police officer refers to the most senior officer present at the scene at the time. This new clause extends the power to place conditions to the senior officer (in England and Wales) with direct oversight of the operation. This would allow for tactical and strategic commanders, who are not present at the scene but nonetheless are leading the operation, to be able to impose conditions as well as the senior officer present at the scene. The police have stated that this would improve their ability to effectively manage protests to maintain public order and public safety.

Finally, new clause “*Amendments relating to British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police*” ensures that public order legislation applies appropriately to the British Transport Police (BTP) and Ministry of Defence Police (MDP). In particular, the new clause addresses the following issues:

- Sections 14 and 14A of the 1986 Act allows for the imposing of conditions on public assemblies and for prohibiting trespassory assemblies that take place in an open-air location. This restriction limits the scope of these powers where a public assembly or a trespassory assembly takes place at a railway station. The new clause amends the 1986 Act definitions to ensure that BTP can properly exercise these powers within their jurisdiction. This provision applies to Great Britain.



- Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (the 1994 Act) provides for a power to stop and search in an area where a police authorisation is in place in anticipation of, or after, serious violence. Section 60AA of the 1994 Act then confers a power on a constable to require a person in an area where an authorisation is in place under section 60 or 60AA to remove a face covering or other item where the constable reasonably believes it is being used to conceal the wearer's identity. These powers may be authorised by an officer of at least the rank of inspector. Amendments made to section 60AA in 2004 erroneously prevented BTP from exercising the powers in that section as originally intended. The amendment to section 60AA (which applies to England and Wales only) rectifies this defect in the legislation. In addition, the new clause enables the MDP to exercise the powers in sections 60 and 60AA within their jurisdiction, subject to the same safeguards as provided for in those sections.

Anonymity of firearms officers (new clauses “Anonymity for authorised firearms officers charged with qualifying offences”, “Anonymity for authorised firearms officers appealing convictions for qualifying offences”, “Authorised firearms officers: reporting directions” and “Authorised firearms officers: anonymity orders” and amendment to clause 134)

In criminal courts, adult defendants do not have a general right to anonymity, reflecting the principles of open justice. However, judges may impose reporting restrictions in exceptional circumstances to prevent the publication of identifying details if doing so would pose a substantial risk of prejudice to the administration of justice. These restrictions only apply after a person has been charged. Suspects who have not been charged with a criminal offence should not ordinarily be named by the police except in exceptional circumstances, such as a threat to life.

The work of armed police officers is unique and dangerous. Firearms officers are trained to use lethal force on behalf of the state to protect life. They and their families are likely to be at increased risk of reprisal from criminals and organised gangs if their identity is revealed following an armed incident.

These new clauses therefore establish:

- a presumption that prevents the names, dates of birth and addresses of firearms officers who are charged with offences relating to, and committed during, their duties from being released in the listing for the first hearing and in open court.
- a presumption that reporting restrictions will be ordered which prevent the publication of details relating to the defendant that are likely to reveal their identity.



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- a statutory power to enable the court to direct that any measure can be taken to prevent the defendant's identity from being known by the public present in the courtroom, where necessary in the interests of justice; and
- a power for the court to consider an application for anonymity to continue post-sentence, where necessary in the interests of justice, should the defendant wish to appeal the conviction.

These provisions apply to England and Wales insofar as they relate to proceedings in respect of firearms officers who are members of a police force in England and Wales, the National Crime Agency, the British Transport Police, Ministry of Defence Police and Civil Nuclear Constabulary, and apply anywhere in respect of proceedings in respect of firearms officers who are members of the armed forces.

Dangerous cycling (new clause "*Dangerous, careless or inconsiderate cycling*" and amendment to clause 134)

This new clause amends the Road Traffic Act 1988 to update road traffic law by introducing new offences of causing death by dangerous cycling, causing serious injury by dangerous cycling, causing death by careless or inconsiderate cycling, and causing serious injury by careless or inconsiderate cycling. These new offences match the motoring offences (and maximum penalties) that already exist for similar behaviour by drivers. These new offences will extend to public roads and other public places, again to match the existing motoring offences. This measure applies Great Britain-wide.

We attach supplementary delegated powers and ECHR memorandums.

We are copying this letter to all members of the Public Bill Committee, Dame Karen Bradley (Chair, Home Affairs Committee), Sir Iain Duncan-Smith and Lord Alton of Liverpool (Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights).

Yours sincerely,

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Minister of State for Policing
and Crime Prevention

Alex Davies-Jones MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Victims