



Wales Safer Communities Network response to

Home Office consultation: [Licensing for knife sales - GOV.UK](#)- Closed 24/2026

Response submitted 24/02/2026 via online form

Size and scope of the market

As part of this consultation, the government wants to develop an estimate of the size and scope of the market.

1. Do you sell knives or other bladed articles?

No

2. If you answered yes above, do you consider yourself to be (tick all that apply):

- Online seller
- Face-to-face seller
- Private/second-hand seller
- Importer
- Other (please explain)

3. If you sell knives or bladed articles how large is your business?

- Small (1-10 employees)
- Medium (11-50 employees)
- Large (over 51 employees)

Licensing for knife sellers

The government have proposed all online sellers, including retailers and private sellers, should hold a licence, and this could be expanded to also cover face-to-face sellers in the future.

4. Should businesses which sell knives and bladed articles be required to hold a licence?

Yes



5. Should private sellers who sell knives and bladed articles be required to hold a licence?

Yes

Licence duration

The government have proposed a licence should be valid for 3 years before needing to be renewed.

6. How long do you think a seller's or importer's licence should be valid for before it needs to be renewed?

- **3 years**
- 5 years
- 10 years
- Other

Licensing for knife importers

The government have proposed 4 options for who should be able to obtain a licence and therefore import knives and bladed articles.

7. Who should be required to hold a licence to import knives and bladed articles?

- UK-based authorised importer
- Retailers, not including private individuals
- **Anyone – including private sellers and individuals importing items for personal use**
- Other – All sellers

Impacts

As part of this consultation, the government want to develop an understanding of the expected impact of this legislation on sellers and importers.

8. Do you anticipate that this measure will impact your business/business operations?

Yes



Please give reasons (max. 250 words)

We are responding as a network on behalf of multiple member organisations in Wales, including police forces, councils, fire and rescue services, and other partners with statutory and strategic responsibilities for community safety.

Overall, it is hoped that a licensing framework for the sale or importation of knives and bladed articles would have a positive impact on communities by reducing accessibility and providing clearer guidance and accountability for regulating sales. If well designed and adequately resourced, the measure has the potential to support harm reduction and contribute to wider efforts to prevent serious violence.

However, we anticipate that the introduction of a licensing framework would have operational implications for public sector partners. In particular, it is likely to place additional time, capacity, and resource pressures on Trading Standards teams and police forces, including in relation to administration, compliance monitoring, and enforcement activity. These impacts would need to be carefully considered as part of implementation planning.

We would therefore strongly advocate that any proposal is accompanied by appropriate and sustainable financial support for the authorities responsible for delivery and enforcement, to ensure that the measure can be implemented effectively and contributes to genuine community safety outcomes, rather than creating additional unfunded burdens.

General

If you have any other thoughts on the proposals, please use this answer box.

9. Have you got any other comments?

Yes

Please give reasons (max. 250 words)

From a community safety standpoint, a licensing framework for the sale or importation of knives and bladed articles would be supported in principle, but it should be understood as one element of a broader, whole-system response to serious violence. Licensing in isolation is unlikely to deliver meaningful harm reduction unless it is accompanied by action to address demand, prevent displacement, and tackle the wider social and contextual drivers of knife carrying, particularly among children and young people. There is also a need to anticipate displacement into informal, online, or peer-to-peer markets, and to ensure that any licensing regime is underpinned by consistent national standards, sufficient enforcement capacity, and robust evaluation. In this context, we support calls from Trading Standards Wales for clearer and more enforceable responsibilities on online marketplaces and social media platforms, particularly in relation to peer-to-peer sales, where monitoring and enforcement currently present significant challenges.



Careful consideration should be given to the scope and delivery of any licensing arrangements to avoid unintended consequences, including the potential for purchasing to shift towards less regulated routes. Efforts to reduce overall accessibility should therefore form part of a proportionate prevention approach. As set out above, the introduction of licensing will have resource implications for enforcement bodies, including Trading Standards and police forces, regardless of where responsibility sits. Adequate and sustained funding will be essential to support effective implementation.

Licensing should also include clear suitability requirements, with powers to refuse or restrict licences where appropriate. This would help ensure the framework operates as a meaningful safeguard in support of community safety, rather than as a purely administrative measure.

About you: Respondent's information

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