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Dear Gill,

Thank you for your email of 17 July to the former Minister of State for Policing and Crime on behalf of a number of your constituents about measures in the Crime and Policing Bill 2025 relating to the reporting of bulk online sales of knives. I am replying as the Minister of State for Policing and Crime, and I am sorry for the delay in replying – there has been a change-over of Ministers.

You have expressed concerns about the impact of these measures on legitimate purchases and the administrative load for online retailers. We know that more needs to be done to tackle the sale of knives and offensive weapons online which is why last October, the then Home Secretary asked Commander Stephen Clayman, as the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for knife crime, to carry out a review into the online sale and delivery of knives. The review was published on 19 February and may be viewed at the link below:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-end-to-end-review-of-online-knife-sales.

One of the key concerns raised in the report was about 'grey market' sellers who buy knives in large numbers online and then sell them on to others via, for example, social media platforms, without undertaking the age verification checks which are required by law. The Duty to report remote sales of knives etc in bulk: England and Wales" contained in the Crime and Policing Bill 2025, is aimed at these 'grey market' sellers.

You have mentioned sets of knives. Under the new proposed measures, it will not affect members of the public who want to buy a block of mixed kitchen knives (qualifying set of bladed articles). It only becomes relevant if more than one such block is bought in the same 30-day period as the original purchase. In addition, any business-to-business sales are exempt from the measure and so this would not impact on a supplier selling to a canteen for example, if it is a registered business. Cutlery knives, defined in legislation as knives, other than steak knives, designed to eat food are exempted from the reporting requirement.

I acknowledge that sets of six or more identical knives, such as a set of six identical steak knives, will be reportable under the measure. This wording is to pre-empt irresponsible knife retailers from creating sets of identical knives in an attempt to bypass the reporting

requirement. In setting the number of knives that are reportable at the level we have, we aim to strike the right balance between providing the police with useful intelligence of serious crime whilst minimising the impact on retailers and the general public.

We developed this proposed legislation in consultation with Commander Stephen Clayman, following his review and during our development of the measures, officials met with representatives of the retail sector to discuss the new legislative proposals around the online sale of knives, including the bulk sales reporting measure. We will continue to engage with the sector as we implement the legislation and continue to develop, in cooperation with the police, the details of how to report these sales to the police.

Please thank your constituents for raising their concerns.

Very best wishes,

Sarah Jones MP
Minister of State for Policing and Crime