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Dr. Richard Waite
The British Woodcarvers Association
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Dear Dr. Waite,

Thank you for your letter of 12th August 2018 to the Home Secretary about your concerns regarding the Offensive Weapons Bill. I am responding as a Home Office official.

You raise concerns about the delivery of knives purchased online to residential premises. The intention behind this proposal is not to stop people purchasing knives online or to stop manufacturers and retailers of knives from selling their products online. However, there is great concern about the sale of knives online to under 18s – this is already illegal but some sellers are not doing enough to stop children buying knives online. Therefore, in response, the Government has introduced legislation that will place more stringent controls on online sellers of knives. This will mean that for a seller to rely on a defence of having taken reasonable precautions and exercised due diligence they will need to meet certain conditions to verify a person's age to prevent a person under the age of 18 from buying such articles. The legislation will also make it an offence for the seller to send certain knives bought online to a premise that is used solely for residential purposes.

Following concerns raised as part of the consultation on prohibiting the delivery of all knives to residential premises we have limited the proposal in a number of ways. First, the proposal in the Offensive Weapons Bill is limited to bladed products that are capable of causing serious injury to a person by cutting skin. It would be for the Courts to decide in any particular case whether the item was a bladed product but it would not apply to items such as table knives. Second, the proposal only applies to deliveries to premises that are used solely for residential purposes so deliveries to businesses (including where a business is run from home) would not be affected. Third, encased razor blades and folding pocket knives with a blade of less than 3 inches are excluded from the proposals. Finally, we have provided defences for bladed products that are designed, manufactured or adapted to specifications provided by the buyer and for bladed products that are for sporting or re-enactment purposes. If ordered online, other bladed products will need to be collected from a collection point where age verification can take place, either by the purchaser or their representative. As you suggest in your letter this could be a local post

office or sorting office – there would be no need to travel to the source of where the bladed product originates from.

I hope this reassures you of the action the Government is taking against knife crime, whilst not infringing on those who use knives safely and responsibly.

Thomas Ellis

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