



Dear Retailer

DON'T INADVERTENTLY CONTRIBUTE TO KNIFE & ACID CRIME!

We are writing to all retailers who sell knives or strong acids / ammonia in Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea to appeal to you to do everything possible to avoid underage knife sales and to think carefully about how they sell strong acids and ammonia. Teenage knife crime continues to be a problem across London and recently the number of disfiguring acid attacks has increased.

Of course, many knives and acids used as weapons are not purchased from retailers with this intention, but some are.

Retailers who sell knives or strong acids are asked to consider the questions below and ensure that knives and strong acids are displayed and sold responsibly and legally.

- **DO YOU HAVE TO SELL KNIVES?** Do you make enough profit from selling them to pay for the additional training and other precautions needed to avoid committing an offence by selling to anyone under 18 years old? Are you willing to risk the potential consequences of an underage sale, even if it is a simple mistake? **If the answer to either of these questions is 'No', then we are asking you to stop selling knives.**
- **IF YOU MUST SELL KNIVES, ARE YOUR PROCEDURES ADEQUATE?** Is your staff training sufficient? Do you do everything you can to prevent your staff making underage sales by mistake? **If the answer to either of these questions is 'No', we are asking you to make improvements to your management.**
- **WILL YOU TAKE KNIVES AND STRONG ACIDS OFF OPEN DISPLAY?** If they are on open display, they are vulnerable to theft and may even be used as weapons against you or your staff?
- **WOULD YOU VOLUNTARILY STOP SELLING STRONG ACIDS / AMMONIA TO UNDER 21s?** The law does not prohibit sales to under 18s, but we ask you to treat the sales of these items as you would other age-restricted goods, at least for customers you do not know. Use the 'Challenge 25' rule to require any young people for proof of age. Do not sell to them if they are under 21.

Comprehensive written guidance on the law and best practice is included with this letter.

Practical guidance on how to ensure you can follow best practice is available at a free training event for knives and acids retailers that will be run by the Council on Friday 20th OCTOBER, starting at 10.30. Attendance is highly recommended.



Your business will receive a visit from Trading Standards and/or and Police officers, either at the same time that this letter is delivered or within the next few weeks. They will check your procedures if you are selling knives and will ask you to carry out corrective action if they think any is necessary. It is important that you treat this process as an opportunity to make any improvements necessary, as test purchasing will take place in the coming months. Any business which sells a knife to an underage purchaser will be prosecuted if they cannot show they have taken all reasonable precautions to avoid an offence.

We have also enclosed with this letter, or have available, the following posters that will assist you in explaining the law / your policy to your customers and staff:

- A 'Knives' poster, explaining the law and informing customer that you will ask for proof of age;
- An 'Acid & Ammonia' poster to advise customers of your voluntary prohibition on sales to young people; &
- A 'Responsible retailer' leaflet to display where your other kitchenware and cleaning products are to inform your customers to ask.

If you have any questions, please contact Doug Love in Trading Standards using the contact details above.

Yours sincerely,

Ellie O'Connor
Borough Commander
RB Kensington and Chelsea Police

Gideon Springer
Borough Commander
LB Hammersmith and Fulham

Councillor Will Pascall
Deputy Leader and Lead for Borough Services
RB Kensington and Chelsea

Councillor Wesley Harcourt
Cabinet Member for Environment,
Transport and Residents' Services
LB Hammersmith and Fulham