



Best Practice Guide: The Safe and Legal Removal of Knives.

This guidance provides legal and practical advice on how to safely remove and dispose of domestic knives whilst replacing them with the safer alternative rounded-end knives. This is designed for individuals, community groups and organisations who want to reduce the presence of potentially dangerous knives in households, whilst ensuring that this process remains compliant with UK laws.

Knives are an essential part of a kitchen toolkit but in some circumstances, they can pose a risk to individuals and communities. To help prevent accidents and misuse, households and community initiatives are choosing to remove or replace sharp-pointed knives. This must be done carefully and legally to ensure safety and compliance with the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 and other relevant legislation.

Safe Removal and Replacement Procedure

1. Identify which knives in the home may pose a risk. Typically, those with long blades or sharp-pointed ends. Set aside time to carry out the removal with appropriate tools such as gloves, boxes, tape. If conducted as part of a community initiative, ensure any volunteers are trained and DBS checked (if appropriate).
2. Use Protective Equipment. Wear cut-resistant gloves to prevent injury. Handle all knives with care, keeping the blades pointed away from yourself and others. Do not attempt to carry large quantities at once.
3. Wrap any knives individually using cardboard or bubble wrap. Then secure the wrapped knife with tape, making sure no blade is exposed. Place the wrapped knives in a rigid container, such as a cardboard box or plastic storage tub that is sealed. Label the container clearly with “Sharp Objects – Handle with Care.”
4. Do not dispose of knives in household rubbish or recycling bins, this is dangerous. Take the knives to your local authority household waste recycling centre. Always transport knives in sealed containers and keep them in the car boot when travelling to a disposal site.
5. Replace any sharp pointed knives with a safer alternative. Rounded-end knives are widely available and offer reduced risk without sacrificing utility (in most food preparation tasks). Consider purchasing knives with ergonomic handles



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and non-slip grips for added safety. Schools, community kitchens, and vulnerable households should prioritise safety-rated cutlery too.

6. Legal Considerations. The possession and transport of knives in public without a lawful reason is an offence under the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Ensure your purpose is clearly lawful e.g. transporting knives for disposal or replacement. Avoid carrying knives on public transport, use a vehicle and keep items sealed and out of reach. Never sell or pass on sharp pointed knives.
7. Community Engagement. Promote knife safety initiatives through local newsletters, social media, and schools. Encourage community buy-in by explaining the purpose of rounded-end knives and how that can reduce accidents and prevent knife misuse. Work with local police or councils if you are planning a wider knife collection programme.

The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit are offering eligible households a Safer Knife Replacement Scheme (if the following criteria are met):

- The young person has been arrested for a weapon related offence or has intelligence suggesting they could be carrying a weapon.
- The young person is coming to the attention of the Police in relation to county lines, drug dealing, young street group activity or gang involvement.
- In relation to high-risk domestic abuse, the scheme compliments current safeguarding measures, it does not replace them.
- To reduce risk/harm within the household due to other potential risk factors.

Conclusion

Reducing the number of sharp-pointed or potentially dangerous knives in the home is a positive step towards improving household and community safety.

By following this guidance, individuals and groups can take lawful and meaningful action. Always make sure you prioritise safety, discretion, and the proper disposal channels. For further advice or support, contact your local council, neighbourhood policing team, community safety partnership or the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit via:

Email: vru.programme.delivery@kent.police.uk

Website: www.kentandmedwayvru.co.uk



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