

TKC149

TACKLING KNIFE CRIME – A CONSULTATION

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am responding as an individual to the Scottish Executive's Tackling-Knife-Crime Consultation. I agree to my response and my name being made available to the public (in SE library and/or on SE website), but I wish my address (postal and e-mail) to remain confidential. I am happy for the Scottish Executive to contact me again on issues relating to the consultation and/or to my response.

As a practitioner of historical European swordsmanship, I am interested primarily in those issues that relate to swords:

Q6 Should shops require a licence to sell swords?

No. The consultation does not provide a valid argument for the licensing of sword vendors. There is no evidence that licensing sword vendors would reduce knife crime. The cost of new legislation cannot be justified on the basis of conjecture.

Q7 Should the sale of swords by shops be restricted to require them to sell only to members of approved organisations?

No. The consultation does not provide a valid argument for restricting the sale of swords in Scotland to 'approved organisations'. There is no evidence that restricting the sale of swords to 'approved organisations' would reduce knife crime.

I feel that the criminal fraternity would obtain their weapons of preference via other means. As an example, obtaining guns legally is virtually impossible for law abiding members of the public, however the press would have one believe that guns were more common than ever amongst members of the underworld.

The cost of new legislation cannot be justified on the basis of conjecture.

This proposal would be practically impossible to implement. Even if local authorities were able to decide upon criteria for the approval of organisations within their jurisdiction, how would they assess potential buyers from other regions or other countries?

Q8 Should the sale of swords be banned?

No. The consultation does not provide a valid argument for banning the sale of swords in Scotland. There is no evidence that banning the sale of swords would reduce knife crime. The cost of new legislation cannot be justified on the basis of conjecture.

Anyone in Scotland wanting to buy a sword would just buy it elsewhere.

Q10 Should the sale of only samurai swords be banned?

No. The consultation does not provide a valid argument for banning the sale of samurai swords in Scotland. If there is statistical evidence that banning the sale of samurai swords in Scotland would reduce knife crime, it is not presented in this consultation paper. The cost of new legislation cannot be justified on the basis of conjecture.

Anyone in Scotland wanting to buy a Samurai sword would just buy it elsewhere.

Q13 Is there a case for individual licences for the purchase of swords?

No. The consultation does not provide a valid argument for individual licences for the purchase of swords. . There is no evidence that the introduction of individual licences would reduce knife crime. The cost of new legislation cannot be justified on the basis of conjecture.

I am concerned at what I perceive to be the Executive's discriminatory attitude towards swords, especially as the Executive admits to a lack of specific evidence relating to sword-crime. No evidence is presented to suggest that sword-crime is a significant problem in Scotland. There is evidence (paragraph 2) of a local problem regarding knife-crime in the Strathclyde area but no indication that sword crime contributes significantly to this. It would be a misappropriation of taxpayers money to implement changes in areas where there is no evidence that changes are necessary.

I urge the Executive to continue to support research into Strathclyde's 'knife culture' and to concentrate on the enforcement of existing laws rather than implementing the proposals in this consultation paper.

Sincerely yours,
Dr Barry N. Young