

REQUEST

The British medical association carried out a study and investigation of stabbing wounds from kitchen knives (most commonly used knives in attacks) and consulted widely with surgeons who had to deal with the wounds. They also consulted chefs and those who use kitchen knives who confirmed that the sharp point of the knife is not really required and is rarely used or needed in cooking, so why have lethal weapons on sale when you can round off the tip of practically all kitchen knives and reduce the number of people being killed with one bold decision?

A rounded tip makes it very hard for anyone to plunge a knife deep into another person. These deep wounds are the ones that surgeons fear and struggle to fix. Slashing wounds from the blade are not as life threatening and surgeons save far more people from these wounds. The Royal college of Surgeons have confirmed this and would welcome the removal of the sharp point from kitchen knives. French knives have a downward facing point but the end is rounded this would also be a good compromise (so you can still have a point but it faces down and not straight).

A copy of the text issued by A&E Doctors and reported on the BBC in 2005 is below:

Doctors' kitchen knives modification call'

A&E doctors are calling for a ban on long pointed kitchen knives to reduce deaths from stabbing.

A team from West Middlesex University Hospital said violent crime is on the increase - and kitchen knives are used in as many as half of all stabbings.

They argued many assaults are committed impulsively, prompted by alcohol and drugs, and a kitchen knife often makes an all too available weapon.

The research is published in the British Medical Journal.

The researchers said there was no reason for long pointed knives to be publicly available at all. They consulted 10 top chefs from around the UK, and found such knives have little practical value in the kitchen.

None of the chefs felt such knives were essential, since the point of a short blade was just as useful when a sharp end was needed.

The researchers said a short pointed knife may cause a substantial superficial wound if used in an assault - but is unlikely to penetrate to inner organs.

In contrast, a pointed long blade pierces the body like "cutting into a ripe melon".

The use of knives is particularly worrying amongst adolescents, say the researchers, reporting that 24% of 16-year-olds have been shown to carry weapons, primarily knives.

The study found links between easy access to domestic knives and violent assault are long established.

French laws in the 17th century decreed that the tips of table and street knives be ground smooth.

A century later, forks and blunt-ended table knives were introduced in the UK in an effort to reduce injuries during arguments in public eating houses.

The researchers say legislation to ban the sale of long pointed knives would be a key step in the

fight against violent crime.

"The Home Office is looking for ways to reduce knife crime.

"We suggest that banning the sale of long pointed knives is a sensible and practical measure that would have this effect."

The link to the British Medical Journal article is :

<https://www.bmj.com/content/330/7502/1221.full>

I believe that the Government at the time ignored the above call which has had tragic and ongoing consequences. It is lamentable that many deaths could have been prevented by making it harder to use a knife in a stabbing action. This information was available in 2005!!

Please can you tell me if the Mayor's Office for policing is aware of the above and please can you provide me with any new reports or correspondence which have looked at modifying the point of kitchen knives which are on the shelves of our high street stores and in the kitchens of homes.

Making pointed kitchen knives illegal for sale would also make policing the carrying of knives on the street easier, because if found it would be clear that there would be no other reason for carrying such a knife.

I would appreciate it if you could provide any update or reports that have been done by the Mayors Office in removing the point from large kitchen knives.

RESPONSE

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 9 November to the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC). I apologise for the delay in replying to you.

I confirm that your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that MOPAC does not hold any information relating to your request.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) may be able to assist you and you can send your request to them, here:

<https://www.met.police.uk/rqo/request/ri/request-information/rip/request-information-police/>

If you are unhappy with the response to your Freedom of Information requests, please see the MOPAC website on what the next steps are at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/governance-and-decision-making/freedom-information>

It may be of assistance to make you aware of the London Knife Crime Strategy that the Mayor launched in June 2017.

The Mayor's strategy supports a comprehensive public health approach, focused on prevention, diversion and enforcement, concentrating in six key areas;

- **Targeting lawbreakers** – recognising that knife crime is a major concern for the public, myself, and the police. Commitments in this section are focused on the immediate enforcement response to knife crime;
- **Keeping deadly weapons off our streets** – addressing the accessibility and availability of knives focusing on retailers and licensing;
- **Protecting and educating young people** – recognising the importance of prevention and working alongside schools;
- **Standing with communities, neighbourhoods and families against knife crime** – working with Londoners who want to stand up against knife crime and the harm it does to communities and families;
- **Supporting victims of knife crime** – ensuring that improving support to victims is at the heart of a holistic response;
- **Offering a way out of crime** – recognising that young people should be offered interventions which help them move away from criminality towards a brighter future.

We have made a lot of headway in the delivery of the strategy. Some key areas to highlight are that, for the first time, every single London borough now has a bespoke local knife crime action plan created in partnership with the Met police. The Mayor is also supporting schools to safeguard their students by providing knife wands for every school or college that want one, over 200 wands are now in our schools. The Mayor has also increased the number of Safer Schools Officers across the capital and we are working with the Met to provide more.

The Mayor's ongoing social media campaign LondonNeedsYouAlive #LNYA raises awareness of the dangers and consequences of knife crime and provides reassurance and advice for young people and parents who are concerned about an individual's involvement in knife crime. For more details, please visit <https://www.london.gov.uk/content/london-needs-you-alive>. A toolkit for schools, colleges, community groups, parents and others has been developed to make use of the campaign's materials and can be accessed [here](#).

You will note that within the Knife Crime Strategy is a strand relating to keeping deadly weapons off our streets. This includes work by trading standards and police on each borough to test that legislation in respect of sales of knives to those under the age of 18 are enforced, local responsible retailer agreements and checking the security and storage arrangements of retailers in respect of knives for sale. Whilst the proposals for changing the design of knives to remove the pointed end are interesting, this would require legislation, which is outside the Mayor's power. Such changes would be the responsibility of central government, through the Home Office.

The Mayor has recently announced plans to establish a new Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) for London. This will include specialists in health, police and local government to lead and deliver a long-term public health approach to tackling the causes of violent crime.

The Mayor has provided an initial £500,000 towards establishing the VRU, following extensive research to understand the approaches taken in Glasgow, where a long-term public health approach to tackling serious violence was adopted. As you may be aware, in Glasgow the approach has been in place for more than a decade and has delivered large reductions in violence. This initial set-up funding is in addition to the £45m Young Londoners Fund, £1.4m which The Mayor has allocated to support 43 grass root community led anti-knife crime projects across the capital; and the £15m dedicated violence reduction funding he has provided to the Metropolitan Police.