

**2026 No. 0000 (C.)**

**CRIMINAL LAW**

**The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 (Commencement No.2) Order  
(Northern Ireland) 2026**

*Made* - - - - - XXXXXX  
*Coming into operation* XXXXXX

The Department of Justice, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 70(3) of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 (a), makes the following Order.

Citation and interpretation

1.—a) This Order may be cited as the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026.

(1) In this Order “the 2019 Act” means the Offensive Weapons Act 2019.

Appointed Day

2. The day appointed for the coming into operation of the following provisions of the 2019 Act is xxxx—

- (a) Section 48(3) and (5) (surrender of prohibited offensive weapons) (so far as they confer functions on the DOJ NI and the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland); and
- (b) Section 49(5) to (12) (payments in respect of surrendered offensive weapons).

3. The day appointed for the coming into operation of the following provisions of the 2019 Act is xxxx—

- (a) Section 43(2) (amendments to the definition of “flick knife”);
- (b) Section 44(5) to (7) (prohibitions on the possession of certain dangerous knives);
- (c) Section 46 (prohibition on the possession of offensive weapons); and
- (d) Section 47 (prohibition of the possession of offensive weapons: supplementary) except so far as it makes provision in relation to a defence for a person charged with an offence under section 50(2) or (3) of the Customs and excise Management Act 2019.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Justice on xxx 2026



---

(a) Offensive Weapons Act 2019

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

These regulations bring into operation, on xxxx, the following provisions of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019: sections 43(2), 44(5) to (7), 46,47,48(3) to (5) and 49(5) to (12).

Section 43(2) makes amendment to the definition of a flick knife contained within Article 53 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (manufacture or sale etc of certain knives) to include any knife that opens automatically from a closed position, or partially opened position, by means of any manual pressure that is applied to a button, spring or other device which is contained either within the knife or is attached to the knife.

Section 44(5) to (7) amend Article 53 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 to insert the new possession offence, new defences to enable museums and galleries to possess, lend and hire such knives and penalties in Northern Ireland. The maximum penalty on summary conviction is 12 months imprisonment, a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both and on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 4 years or a fine or both.

Section 46 creates an offence of possession in private of a weapon to which section 141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies. In private is defined in Northern Ireland as any place other than a public place, school premises, or further education premises. Any person who possesses a weapon to which the section applies in private is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction in Northern Ireland to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum, or both on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding four years or to a fine or to both. Defences for private possession of items of historical importance, for possession by museums or galleries and for educational purposes are created.

Section 47 makes amendments to the Schedule to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) Order 1988 (SI 1988/2019). Knives known as “zombie knives” and “cyclone knives” are added to make their manufacture, sale or hire, importation, and possession in private, an offence in Northern Ireland. Subsections (4) to (7) amend the operation of the defence in the 1988 Order so that they apply to the new offence of private possession of a weapon created by section 46. They also amend the use for “religious ceremonies” defence to permit use for “religious reasons”.

Subsection (8) sets out a new defence for a person of Sikh faith who presents another person with a curved sword (as covered by section 141 of the CJA) in a religious ceremony or other ceremonial event. It also provides a defence to the offence of possession in private for Sikhs possessing such swords for the purposes of presenting them to others at a ceremony and for the recipients (whether a Sikh or non-Sikh) to possess swords that have been presented to them.

The section also provides a defence for the ancillary acts covered by section 141(1) of the CJA 1988 (manufacture, sale, hire).

Section 48 provides the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland with the power to make appropriate arrangements to secure the surrender of weapons which will become unlawful to possess due to the operation of sections 44 and 46 (by themselves or in combination with sections 43 and 47 respectively). Subsection (5) makes provision for the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland to designate any police station in Northern Ireland as being suitable for the receipt of surrendered weapons of a particular description.

Section 49 applies if the Department of Justice make arrangements for the surrender of weapons in accordance with section 48 (surrender of prohibited weapons). The Department of Justice must, by regulations, provide for payments to be made in respect of weapons which are surrendered in accordance with such arrangements. Payments may only be made when a claim for compensation meets specific criteria. Subsection (11) sets out the provision that may be made by regulations

under subsections (2) or (6), which includes restricting eligibility to receive compensation payments and the procedure to be followed to determine claims.

**NOTE AS TO EARLIER COMMENCEMENT ORDERS**

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

The following provisions of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 have been brought into operation in Northern Ireland by Commencement Orders made before the date of this Order –

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Date of Commencement</b>	<b>S.R./S.I. No</b>
Section 6	6 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	2022 No. 23
Section 64(5), 65, 66(4) and 67	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	SI 2022/40 (c.15)
Section 55, 56 and Schedule 2	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	SI 2021/819 (c.46)

DRAFT