

2026 No. 0000

CRIMINAL LAW

COMPENSATION

**The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons)
(Amendment, Surrender and Compensation) Order (Northern
Ireland) 2026**

Made - - - - - xxxxx

Coming into operation in accordance with article 1(2) xxxxx

The Department of Justice makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 141(2), (11D) and (12A) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (a).

PART 1

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) (Amendment, Surrender and Compensation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026.

(2) This Order comes into operation as follows –

- (a) This Part, Part 3 and Part 4 come into operation on xxxx;
- (b) Part 2 comes into operation on xxxx.

PART 2

Amendment of the Criminal Justice Act (Offensive Weapons) Order 1988

2.—(1) The Schedule to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) Order 1988 (2) is amended as follows.

(2) In paragraph 1–

- (a) – after sub-paragraph (s) insert—

“(sa) the weapon sometimes known as a “zombie style knife” or “zombie-style machete”, being a bladed article with —

- (i) a plain cutting edge
- (ii) a sharp pointed edge; and

- (iii) a blade of over 8 inches in length (the length of the blade being the straight-line distance from the top of the handle to the tip of the blade),

which also has one or more of the features specified in paragraph 1A and which is not a weapon that falls under paragraph 1(s); and

- (b) after sub-paragraph (t) insert –
- (u) the weapon sometimes known as a “ninja sword”, being a sword with—
 - (i) a blade whose length is at least 14 inches, but no more than 24 inches (the length of the blade being the straight-line distance from the top of the handle to the tip of the blade),
 - (ii) a primary straight cutting edge,
 - (iii) a secondary straight cutting edge,
 - (iv) a blunt spine, and
 - (v) either a tanto style point or a reversed tanto style point.”.

(3) After paragraph 1, insert—

“1A.—(1) For the purposes of paragraph 1(sa), the specified features are—

- (a) a serrated cutting edge (other than a cutting edge of up to 2 inches next to the handle);
- (b) more than one hole in the blade;
- (c) spikes;
- (d) more than two sharp points in the blade (other than a sharp point of a kind specified in sub-paragraph (2)).

1B.—(1) For the purposes of paragraph 1(u)(iv), a spine is blunt if it is not adapted to cutting.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph 1(u)(iv)—

- (a) a sword has a tanto style point if—
 - (i) the angle between its primary straight cutting edge and its secondary straight cutting edge is greater than 90 degrees, and
 - (ii) the angle between its secondary straight cutting edge and its spine is less than 90 degrees;
- (a) a sword has a reversed tanto style point if—
 - (i) the angle between its primary straight cutting edge and its secondary straight cutting edge is less than 90 degrees, and
 - (ii) the angle between its secondary straight cutting edge and its spine is greater than 90 degrees.

(3) For the purposes of paragraph 1(u)(ii) and (iii) and this paragraph—

- (a) a primary straight cutting edge is the longest cutting edge of a blade which immediately connects to the handle;
- (b) a secondary straight cutting edge is a cutting edge—
 - (i) which forms an angle with the primary straight cutting edge and the spine, and
 - (ii) is no more than 5% longer or shorter than the width of the blade immediately after the handle.”.

(4) In paragraph 4, after “paragraph 1(r)” in both places where it occurs insert “or (u)”.

(5) In paragraph 5A, after “paragraph 1(r)” in both places where those words occur insert “or (sa)”.

(6) In paragraph 5(b) –

- (a) in sub-paragraphs (1) to (4), after “curved sword”, in each place those words occur, insert “, zombie-style knife or zombie-style machete”;
 - (b) after “the sword”, wherever those words occur, insert “knife or machete”;
 - (c) in sub-paragraph (5), after the definition of “curved sword”, insert—
 - ““zombie-style knife or zombie-style machete” means a weapon to which section 141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies by virtue of paragraph 1(sa);”.
- (7) After paragraph 5B, insert
- 5C.** It is a defence for a person charged—
- (a) with an offence under section 141(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988; or
 - (b) with an offence under section 50(2) or (3) of the Customs and excise Management Act 1979,
- in respect of any conduct of the person relating to a weapon to which section 141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 by virtue of paragraph 1(sa) or (u) to show that the weapon in question is one of historical importance.
- 5D.—**(1) It is a defence for a person charged—
- (a) with an offence under section 141(1) or (1A) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988; or
 - (b) with an offence under section 40(2) or (3) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979,
- in respect of any conduct of the person relating to a weapon to which section 141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies by virtue of paragraph 1(sa) or (u) to show that the weapon was made by hand.
- (2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1), a weapon is made by hand if the making (including construction, finish and decoration) of the weapon is accomplished predominantly by one of more of the following methods—
- (a) hand labour;
 - (b) manually-controlled methods which permit the maker to control and vary the construction, shape, design and finish of each part of each weapon (including the use of hand-controlled power tools).
- 5E.—**(1) It is a defence for a person charged—
- (a) with an offence under section 141(1) or (1A) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988; or
 - (b) with an offence under section 50(2) or (3) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979,
- in respect of any conduct of the person relating to a weapon to which section 141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies by virtue of paragraph 1 (r),(sa) or (u) to show that the weapon in question blunt.
- (2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1), a weapon is blunt if it does not have any of the following elements—
- (a) a thin edge adapted to cutting;
 - (b) a sharp point adapted to piercing;
 - (c) any other element adapted to cutting or piercing.”.
- (8) In paragraph (6) for “5A and 5B” substitute “and 5A to 5E”.

PART 3

Interpretation

3. In this Part and Part 4—

“the Department” means the Department of Justice;

“officer” means any person authorised to accept surrender of weapons in accordance with arrangements made under article 4 (1);

“the standard level of compensation” means the level of compensation provided in article 5.

Arrangements for surrender of weapons

4.—(1) The Department must make such arrangements as the Department thinks fit to secure the orderly surrender at designated police stations in Northern Ireland of weapons the possession in private of which will become unlawful by virtue of Part 2.

(2) The Chief Constable of Northern Ireland may designate any police station in Northern Ireland as being suitable for the receipt of weapons surrendered in accordance with the arrangements made under paragraph (1).

PART 4

Value of surrendered weapons

5. The standard level of compensation to be paid for each weapon surrendered in accordance with the arrangement under this Part is £10.

Eligibility for compensation

6. Compensation may be claimed by a person—

- (a) in respect of a weapon, possession in private of which will become unlawful by virtue of Part 2;
- (b) who—
 - (i) owned the weapon on xxxxx, or
 - (ii) on or before xxxxxx had contracted to acquire the weapon;
- (c) who has surrendered the weapon at a designated police station in accordance with arrangements made under article 4 within the period beginning with xxxx and ending with xxxx; and
- (d) who has made a written declaration that the person is the legal owner of the weapon and that it was lawfully acquired.

Receipt for weapon surrendered

7.—(1) An officer receiving a weapon must, if satisfied that the criteria in article 6 have been met, issue a receipt containing a unique reference number to the person who surrendered the weapon.

(2) The officer must ensure a copy of the receipt is retained with the weapon surrendered.

Claims for compensation

8.—(1) The Department must publish, in such a manner as the Department considers appropriate, a claim form to be used for the purposes of this article.

(2) A person who has surrendered a weapon in accordance with arrangements made under article 4 may make a claim to the Department on the claim form mentioned in paragraph (1).

(3) The claim form, to be forwarded by the officer who accepted the surrender of the weapon, must be submitted at the same time as the weapon is surrendered.

(4) The claim form must contain—

- (a) the claimant's full name, date of birth and address;
- (b) the date on which the weapon was acquired or contracted to be acquired;
- (c) details of the bank account into which any compensation is to be paid;
- (d) the unique reference number contained on the receipt issued under article 7; and
- (e) the amount of compensation sought.

(5) If the amount of compensation sought is higher than the standard level of compensation, the claimant must provide sufficient evidence of valuation of the weapon to enable the Department to determine the claim.

(6) Evidence of a valuation of a weapon may include—

- (a) a valuation from an auction house;
- (b) evidence of the price paid for the purchase of the weapon and the date of purchase; or
- (c) published evidence of the value of the weapon.

(7) If not satisfied that the evidence of valuation supplied under paragraph (5) is sufficient to enable a determination of the claim to be made, the Department may request additional evidence to be supplied.

Determination and payment of claims

9.—(1) The Department must determine a claim made under article 8 as soon as reasonably practicable.

(2) No compensation is payable in respect of a claim which amounts to less than £30, but subject to that, the amount payable is to be determined in accordance with paragraphs (3) and (4).

(3) The amount of compensation payable, if any, is the standard level of compensation, unless the claimant has indicated that a higher amount of compensation is sought.

(4) Where the claimant has sought a higher amount of compensation than the standard level of compensation, the amount payable, if any, is to be determined by the Department taking account of the valuation evidence supplied.

(5) If satisfied that compensation is payable under this Part, the Department must—

- (a) notify the claimant in writing of the amount of compensation that the Department considers is payable and give reasons for the decision; and
- (b) make payment of the amount determined into the bank account nominated for this purpose of the claim form submitted by the claimant.

(6) If not satisfied that compensation is payable under this Part, the Department must notify the claimant in writing that no compensation is to be paid and give reasons for the decision.

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



Naomi Long
Minister of Justice

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

Section 141 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (“section 141”) provides that any person who manufactures, sells or hires or offers for sale or hire, exposes or has in his possession for the purpose of sale, or hire, or lends or gives to any other person, a weapon to which that section

applies shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine or both. The importation of any such weapon is prohibited. Section 141 also provides that any person who possesses in private to which the section applies is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 51 weeks, to a fine or both.

The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) Order 1988 (S.I. 1988/2019) (the “1988 Order”) specifies descriptions of weapons to which section 141 applies and sets out defences to the section 141 offences.

Part 2 of this Order adds a new weapon description at paragraph 1(sa) in the Schedule to the 1988 Order (the weapon sometimes known as a “zombie-style knife” or “zombie-style machete”), provides for defences to the section 141 offences in relation to this new weapon description, and provides for a bluntness defence which applies to both paragraph 1(sa) and paragraph 1(r) weapons (curved swords).

It adds a new weapon description at paragraph 1(u) in the Schedule to the 1988 Order (the weapon sometimes known as a “ninja sword”) and provides for defence to the section 141 offences in relation to this new weapon description.

Part 3 and 4 of this Order provide for a scheme under which compensation can be claimed by persons surrendering weapons which fall under the new paragraph 1(sa) or 1(u).

Article 6 makes provision as to the eligibility for compensation, article 7 provides for officers accepting the surrendered items to issue a receipt, article 8 provides for claims to be submitted where knives have been surrendered and for the forms to be transmitted to the Department, and article 9 provides for determination of claims and payment by the Department.