

(THIRD) LEGISLATIVE CONSENT MEMORANDUM

CRIME AND POLICING BILL

Draft Legislative Consent Motion

1. The draft motion, which will be tabled by the Minister of Justice, is:

“That this Assembly endorses the principle of the extension to Northern Ireland of the provisions of the Crime and Policing Bill, as introduced as amendments in the House of Lords, dealing with powers to strengthen age verification requirements for on-line sale and delivery of knives and crossbows.”

Background

2. This Memorandum has been laid before the Assembly by the Minister of Justice under Standing Order 42A (9). The Crime and Policing Bill (“the Bill”) was introduced by the UK Government into the House of Commons on 25th February 2025. The latest version of the Bill can be found at: [Crime and Policing Bill](#).

3. Members will be familiar with the contents of the Bill as I brought forward two previous LCMs which received agreement of the Assembly on 23rd June 2025 and 2nd February 2026.

4. This Memorandum relates to one set of amendments tabled at Lords Report Stage relevant to Northern Ireland.

Re-tabled Provisions

5. In the Memorandum laid on 13 January 2026, in respect of the second LCM, I advised that provisions in relation to strengthened age verification requirements for the online sale and delivery of knives and crossbows were removed from LCM 2 due to a convention preventing the UK Government from making contested amendments at Lords Committee Stage.

6. As planned, the UK Government re-tabled the clauses at Lords Report Stage, and they were agreed by the Lords on 25 February 2026.

7. The amendments relate to existing provisions contained upon introduction relating to strengthened age verification requirements for the online sale and delivery of knives and crossbows in England and Wales (Clauses 31-35).

Reasons for amendments

8. The amendments clarify that the passport or driving licence required as proof of age for a remote sale of a knife, or for a remote sale or hire of a crossbow, must be a physical version.

9. They also add provisions that will allow the Secretary of State (or Department of Justice) to make regulations, subject to the affirmative procedure, prescribing an alternative process for age verification, such as digital ID.

10. These amendments are required to ensure that a digital ID can be used as evidence of identity wherever the physical ID is accepted.

11. The use of digital ID would not be mandatory; it is simply making provision for alternative forms of ID, digital or otherwise, to be used in future.

12. The amendments also ensure that all contractors in the delivery chain are responsible for age and ID verification on delivery of bladed products and crossbows to residential premises. This is to account for situations where the delivery company engaged by the seller to deliver the bladed product sub-contracts the delivery to other companies.

13. These amendments also extend the amended provisions to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Reasons for utilising the Bill rather than an Act of the Assembly

14. I fully appreciate that it is preferable that the Assembly legislate on devolved matters, however, the constraints on the legislative programme in this mandate mean that it would not be possible to achieve equivalent legislation via an Assembly Bill within the same timescale as can be achieved in the Westminster Bill.

15. It is therefore recommended that the most appropriate approach is to request legislative consent from the Assembly for Westminster to legislate on behalf of Northern Ireland in relation to the specific provisions of the Crime and Policing Bill as set out above.

Consultation

16. The Department of Justice has previously engaged with stakeholders and operational partners across the justice sector on a suite of proposals to combat knife crime and prevent knives being delivered to under 18s following remote sales. There is an agreement that we should maintain parity with England and Wales as far as possible.

17. The Department will continue to engage with operational partners as the additional measures are introduced.

Human Rights and Equality

18. A copy of the Government's Human Rights Memorandum can be found at [ECHRMemo.pdf](#)

19. The Department's assessment is that the proposals are considered to be compliant. The Department has liaised with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in relation to the amendments.

20. The Department has engaged with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in relation to the amendments. The Commission has advised that the ECHR analysis provided by the UK Government appears to be broadly sound with clauses appropriately drafted.

21. A screening exercise has also been considered in relation to Article 2 Windsor Framework implications. It is considered that the provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill which will extend to Northern Ireland will not result in a diminution of rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity provisions or discrimination protections. The

provisions in the Bill which will extend to Northern Ireland are considered to be compliant with Article 2(1).

Financial Implications

22. There are not considered to be significant financial implications arising from the measures.

Engagement to date with the Committee for Justice

23. The Department has engaged extensively with the Committee for Justice providing oral and written briefings on the measures above along with updates on the removal and re-tabling of the provisions.

Conclusion

24. It is my view that, in the interests of an improved ability to deal with serious organised crime and economic crime, as well as providing increased protection for victims, that so far as the provisions of the Bill deal with a devolution matter, they should extend to Northern Ireland.