

Weapons being sold on shopping app for under £5 with no age checks

Weapons including knives and axes have been sold on the shopping app Temu without any age checks taking place, a consumer group has found.

Which? found some weapons on sale for as little £4.48.

Researchers also found weapons they believe to be illegal for sale on Temu including two folding knives, two knives disguised as keyrings, a survival knife and a baton.

These weapons are classed as banned weapons under the Criminal Justice Act, Which? said. Anyone caught with one of them could face arrest and a prison sentence, and they could easily fall into the wrong hands, the group added.

In total, researchers identified six weapons they believed to be illegal and were able to buy seven age-restricted products – five knives and two axes – without any age checks; but said they saw dozens of other listings with products that looked like they could potentially cause harm.

Temu was only launched in September 2022, but has quickly become one of the most popular online marketplaces worldwide. In the UK it was the most downloaded app for the year to August.

Which? said the lack of controls to stop children purchasing age-restricted items and even what it said were illegal weapons was particularly concerning given how widely advertised Temu is on sites like TikTok.

The group is calling for Temu to improve its checking system, remove dangerous items and hold third-party sellers to account

where breaches are found.

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“Problems with dangerous products are only going to get worse if new tech giants like Temu continue to be held to weaker standards than high-street retailers,” said Sue Davies, Which? head of consumer protection policy.

“The online marketplace needs to improve its checks, monitoring and takedown processes, and ensure third-party sellers cannot list these dangerous items – particularly to young people under the age of 18.”

A Temu spokesperson said: “Temu is committed to complying fully with relevant rules and regulations in all of the markets that we operate in, and we take all reports of

violations very seriously.

“After receiving a complaint of a person under 18 purchasing a bladed article from our platform, we immediately removed all related product listings.

“We also initiated a comprehensive investigation and review of our processes to further strengthen our safeguards and prevent similar cases from occurring again.”