

These notes refer to the Specialist Printing Equipment and Materials (Offences) Act 2015 (c.16) which received Royal Assent on 26 March 2015

SPECIALIST PRINTING EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS (OFFENCES) ACT 2015

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND

4. Identity fraud was estimated to cost individual UK adults £3.3million during 2012. False documents are a key enabler of this crime, allowing organised criminals to escape monitoring mechanisms and maintain the profits from their activity. Criminals require specialist printing equipment to make false documents such as passports, driving licences and credit cards. While the possession and use of such false documents is illegal, there is currently no specific offence of supplying such equipment to criminals and it is difficult to prosecute those who knowingly supply equipment to them for use for criminal purposes. This Act provides such a specific offence.
5. The Metropolitan Police's Project Genesis was set up in 2007 and operates jointly with the specialist printing industry to prevent the supply of such equipment to criminals. The Project agreed a voluntary Code of Conduct for suppliers of specialist printing equipment, and that Code forms the basis of the advisory guidance published alongside this legislation.
6. The Act creates a new criminal offence of knowingly supplying specialist printing equipment to criminals. It is expected that this will act as a deterrent to such supply and therefore make it more difficult for criminals to obtain the necessary equipment to create false documents, thus helping to reduce identity crime.