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## Ten Years on: stalking in Kirklees policing and support for victims

LIVED EXPERIENCE VOICES: KEY  
FINDINGS REPORT

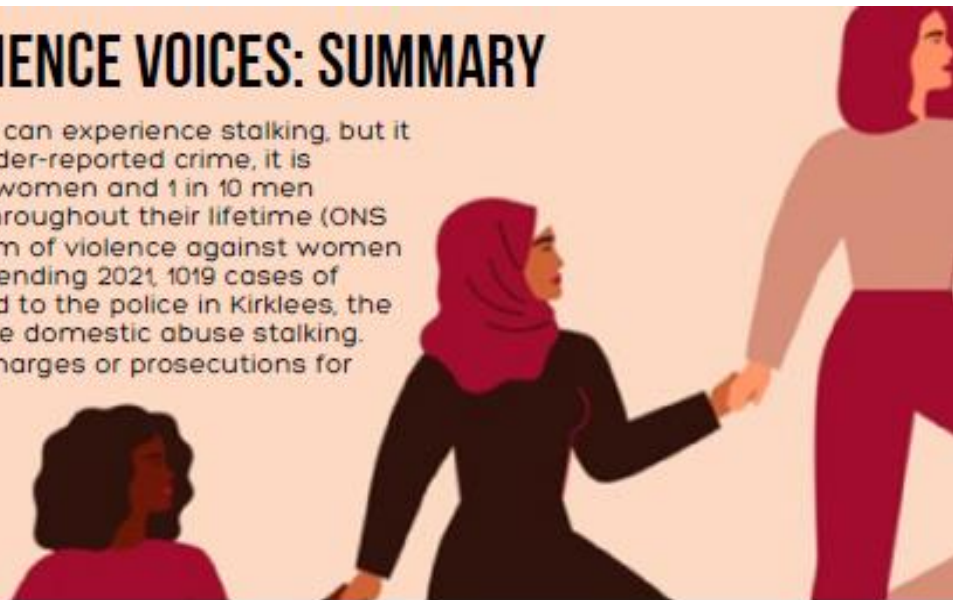
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December 2024

**Acknowledgements:** To all the women who contributed to this research and shared your stories, we are so grateful. Whilst for reasons of safety and confidentiality we can't name you, you know who you are. Deb thanks for making us all so welcome at PDAP, remaining positive throughout and sharing your supportive energy. Allie you are the queen of Canva, thanks for your support with the infographic. Thanks love and peace to all, you are all phenomenal women.

**Warning:** This report contains descriptions of stalking, coercive control, domestic abuse, and violence which some will find distressing.

## LIVED EXPERIENCE VOICES: SUMMARY

People of any gender can experience stalking, but it is a gendered and under-reported crime, it is estimated that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience stalking throughout their lifetime (ONS 2022), stalking is a form of violence against women and girls. In the year ending 2021, 1019 cases of stalking were reported to the police in Kirklees, the majority of these were domestic abuse stalking. Yet there were few charges or prosecutions for stalking.



Findings and recommendations are based on 18 interviews with women aged 18-62, who had lived experience of stalking (for the majority domestic abuse stalking) and on discussions amongst members of the lived experience and advocacy group "We are Hear" which took place during 2024. These were part of a wider action research project - "Ten Years On: stalking in Kirklees policing and support for victims"

44% of those interviewed were still experiencing stalking at the time of interview

### STALKING BEHAVIOURS EXPERIENCED

- Contacting survivor family/friends
- Wide range of online behaviours
- Use of filming
- Tracking tactics/technology
- Waiting outside home/following
- Stalking by proxy
- Issues concerning children
- Unwanted/continuous calls, texts, contact through apps

### NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- Mental health and psychological/cognitive impacts
- Impacts on relationships
- Economic impacts
- Impact on education



Many participants described incidents in which they felt they had narrowly escaped domestic homicide. Whether a woman's experience of stalking was through in-person behaviours or cyber-stalking it had profound effects on their lives, with women living in fear



## POLICING EXPERIENCES



- Taken seriously
- Compassion and empathy
- Recognising a pattern
- Rapid action and follow up
- Proactive in evidence gathering and safeguarding measures
- Consistency
- Access to female officers



- Stalking behaviours viewed in isolation
- Being dismissed and/or minimised
- Online and digital stalking not taken seriously
- Victim blaming
- Police susceptible to perpetrator manipulation
- Returning perpetrator to home
- Joined up working failures
- Lacking proactivity in evidence gathering

Deep dissatisfaction with CPS and Courts

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Police officers need to understand the very real risks, trauma and fears that stalking survivors experience



Police training around stalking, domestic abuse and coercive control should be delivered by specialist services with correct expertise along with those with lived experience



Police should consider using a version of a 'victim communication plan' template at the start of investigations



Officers under investigation for domestic abuse or stalking offences should be automatically suspended from duty



Adequate funding is needed for local domestic abuse support services and the specialist regional ISAC service to provide a timely and responsive service for those who seek support and be able to offer longer term specialist counselling



Establishing a Multi-agency Stalking Intervention Partnership (MASIP) in West Yorkshire should be a strategic priority in VAWG strategies



The national DA commissioner call for all offenders with a known history of domestic abuse to be exempt from the early release scheme to be enacted



Preventative interventions with perpetrators of stalking and domestic abuse in Kirklees need to be developed as a matter of urgency



Domestic abuse and stalking policies should be adopted in all workplaces and a campaign to encourage all Kirklees employers to adopt them



## 1. Background: Stalking in Kirklees a participatory action research project

The Economic and Social Research Council funded the project “Ten Years on: stalking in Kirklees policing and support for victims”, the idea for which had been developed because:

- Local agencies working with women and girls had identified stalking as an issue on the periphery of debates about domestic violence and abuse which was not getting the attention required.
- It was a pressing concern to local agencies because of the link between stalking and domestic homicide (Monckton Smith et al. 2017).
- There were concerns about high levels of stalking which as a gendered crime, formed part of a growing concern about the levels of violence against women and girls in the West Yorkshire district. 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience stalking throughout their lifetime (ONS 2022). People of any gender can experience stalking, but it is a gendered crime and is a form of violence against women and girls.
- There were concerns that reports of stalking made to the police had increased across West Yorkshire, including the Kirklees district, where in the twelve months to September 2021 reports increased from 554 (499 being Domestic Abuse Stalking (DAS) and 55 non-DAS) compared to the twelve months to September 2020 to 1019 (948 being Domestic Abuse Stalking and n=71 non-domestic abuse stalking).
- Yet across West Yorkshire convictions remained low and Stalking Protection Orders (introduced in early 2020) were being under used. (West Yorkshire Police, 2021) <sup>1</sup>.
- There had been no research exploring women’s experiences of stalking in Kirklees and at the time there was no specialist stalking support service which women or people, of any identity, in Kirklees stalking could access.
- There was concern that with services pressed and underfunded, survivors may not be getting the specialist support they needed.

This participatory action research project started in September 2022, ten years on from when the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) created two new offences of stalking, presenting an important juncture at which to take stock.

The project was coordinated by the University of Huddersfield, supported by a range of local partner agencies who have formed the “Kirklees: stalking research, prevention and practice hub”. Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership (PDAP), Independent Stalking Advocacy Service (Victim Support West Yorkshire), WomenCentre, West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (WYVRP), Safer Kirklees (KDACET), Change Grow Live, West Yorkshire Police, Connect Housing and Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield Rape and Sexual Assault Centre (RASAC) were amongst member organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> West Yorkshire Police (2021) Stalking, Force Desk Threat. N.B This increase reflected a national trend, which was partly attributed to changes in how domestic abuse harassment must be recorded by the police but was still concerning in terms of high levels of VAWG and in terms of justice for survivors.

As an action research project, forming this group was a key project objective, helping to bring a focus on stalking amongst practitioners and policy makers in Kirklees.

## 1.1 Participatory action research and centring lived experience

Participatory action research purposefully aims to create change with communities involved, shaping policy and practice. The project aimed to support and inform partnership work around stalking: creating new knowledge via action research driven by lived experiences and to establish a clearer picture of stalking in Kirklees.

The project methods involved analysis of police data, a survey of support projects, semi-structured interviews with women with lived experience of stalking and with police officers.

Another primary objective of the project was to centre lived experience voices in the research and in shaping change. A small group of women with lived experience of stalking advised throughout the project, they chose the name “influencers” to illustrate their role in shaping the research and their aspiration to change policy and practice for the better, transforming their experiences of abuse into actions for positive change. Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership (PDAP) provided a safe space and worked with the Lead Investigator to support this group.

## 2. We Are Hear!

At an event where findings from the project were shared with stakeholders in November 2024, several women of lived experience of stalking expressed a desire to establish a voice and advocacy group for women of lived experience of stalking in Kirklees. It was agreed, PDAP would initially facilitate this group, with the aim that this would transition to a peer led group. The group initially met in February 2024, and has met monthly since then, offering peer support and advocating for change. The formation of the group was indicative of both frustrations with the status quo and a desire for change in law, policy, and practice, expressed by women who took part in the research. It reflected a wish amongst women who took part in the research not to be simply labelled as “victims” but “survivors” who can go on to be influencers of policy and practice.

Women who were not initially part of the action research have gone on to join the group and the group advocates for change around not just stalking, but domestic abuse more broadly. In July 2024, the group hosted the Voices Lead from the Office of the National Domestic Abuse Commissioner Voices at the DAC. In November 2024, representatives from the group attended a meeting with staff from the North East region offices of the Independent Office of Police Complaints, with the Head of the IOPC present. At this meeting women of lived experience of DVA (including honour-based violence) voiced their concerns about the policing of VAWG, police complaints procedures, and police officers as perpetrators. In December 2024 the group submitted an application to the Mayors Safer Communities Fund for a small grant for the continuation and development of the group.

This report focuses on research findings from interviews with women of lived experience of stalking and discussions over the last twelve months, amongst “We Are Hear” members, about the findings and ongoing challenges survivors face. Members of this group have advised on this document, and we have worked together to co-produce recommendations.

N.B. Another report is being finalised which focuses on findings from interviews with Kirklees police officers, a survey of support organisations and those from an enhancement to the project, an online survey of young people in Kirklees, which was funded by West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership. It also captures the ongoing work of Kirklees stalking research, prevention, and practice hub.

### 3.National and Regional Policy Context

This research took place during a pivotal time for UK policing, with the recognition of entrenched misogyny in police forces, and when in 2023 violence against women and girls became a national policing priority for the first time, as part of the Strategic Priority Requirement. This enacted a recommendation from a major review by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS 2021)<sup>2</sup>, which looked at forces’ responses to violence against women and girls across England and Wales. This review which included stalking and harassment, called for urgent and fundamental cross-system change to tackle “an epidemic of violence against women and girls”. Such review, recognition and increased prioritisation, has been borne out of tragic and violent events for women, including the conduct of two Metropolitan police officers in the wake of the murders of sisters Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman in June 2020, and the murder of Sarah Everard by a Metropolitan Police officer in 2021. Also, during the early stage of Covid 19 pandemic 2020 the United Nations<sup>3</sup> referred to the “[shadow pandemic](#)” of violence against women and girls, making further visible the widespread nature of all forms of VAWG globally. The UN reported that prior to Covid 19, 1 in 3 women experienced physical or sexual violence mostly by an intimate partner. This had intensified during the pandemic with increased calls to helplines in many countries, including the UK. In the UK, several enquiries and reports followed such events (e.g. HMICFRS 2021; Casey 2022; IOPC 2022), and these have acted as lightning rods for demands for change in responses to VAWG nationally.

Regionally, the Mayor of West Yorkshire, made addressing Violence Against Women and Girls one of her 10 pledges in her election manifesto. Going on to publish her Safety of Women and Girls Strategy in 2022<sup>4</sup>. This was supported by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Alison Lowe who personally and publicly identifies as a survivor of domestic and sexual abuse. West Yorkshire Police published their own strategy in 2021<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(2021\) Police responses to violence against women and girls-final inspection report](#)

<sup>3</sup> [United Nations \(2020\) Covid-19 and Violence against Women and girls: addressing the shadow pandemic.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The Mayor of West Yorkshire safety of women and girls’ strategy 2021-2024.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [West Yorkshire Police launches strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.](#)

### 3.1 Shortcomings in the policing of stalking and stalking super complaint

As this research was focused on the policing element of criminal justice responses, it is important to acknowledge that serious shortcomings in the policing of stalking nationally were identified in 2017 in the report “Living in Fear”<sup>6</sup> published by the HMIC and HMCPSI, the first time the policing of stalking and harassment had been inspected.

A plethora of recommendations, addressed to the police, CPS, and other bodies, were made. Yet in November 2022 the Suzy Lamplugh Trust on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium submitted a stalking super complaint focused on policing; this again identified similar concerns to the HMIC inspection seven years earlier. The four primary areas of concern were:

- A lack of understanding among officers about what behaviours constitute stalking. Police officers minimising or trivialising stalking behaviours, as well as treating behaviours as single incidents as opposed to recognising the wider pattern of behaviour. They reported that it was common for the crime to be investigated as a ‘lower level’ offence, such as malicious communications, criminal damage, or harassment.
- Stalking cases often not being appropriately investigated and police dropping cases due to a “perceived lack of evidence”. This included the police *“failing to recognise the impact of online (or cyber) stalking and treat the behaviours as evidence; cases being erroneously NFA’d by the police due to lack of evidence”* (pg. 5) The complaint noted that *“in the year ending March 2022, a quarter of all stalking reports were dropped due to issues relating to evidence, in cases where the suspect had been identified and where the victim supported action”*.
- That the detrimental psychological impact on the victim was often not being recognised by police and within the court system.
- Police failing to offer or apply for Stalking Protection Orders (introduced in 2019 to protect stalking survivors), with little action taken if these, or other protective orders (Non-Molestation Orders, Restraining Orders, bail conditions,) are in place and breached.

They reported that an estimated 1.8 million people experienced stalking between April 2021 to March 2022<sup>7</sup>. They also noted that stalking is under-reported to the police and that there are high attrition rates for stalking crimes; this attrition is also reflected in West Yorkshire:

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<sup>6</sup> [Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(2015\) Living in Fear - the police and CPS response to harassment and stalking](#)

<sup>7</sup> Estimated calculation based on Office for National Statistics data.



	England and Wales year (ending 2020 <sup>8</sup> )	West Yorkshire (year ending 30/09/21 <sup>9</sup> )
Stalking cases reported to police	118,411.	6,129 (5669 domestic abuse stalking, 460 non-domestic abuse stalking)
Charges/criminal justice outcomes	5% resulted in a charge (5,948 charges in total). 2% drop from the previous year recorded.	Domestic abuse stalking outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 68 charged.</li> <li>• 6 summonsed.</li> <li>• 40 alternate offence charged.</li> <li>• 16 alternate offence summonsed.</li> <li>• 17 adult caution/conditional caution.</li> <li>• 9 alternate offence caution/conditional caution</li> <li>• 141 cps – named suspect, victim supports but evidential difficulties.</li> <li>• 1406 police - named suspect, victim supports but evidential difficulties.</li> <li>• 2906 victim declines/withdraws support - named suspect identified.</li> <li>• 18 suspect identified but prosecution time limit expired</li> <li>• 40 investigation complete no suspect identified.</li> <li>• 7 victim declines/unable to support action to identify offender</li> <li>• 5 named suspect too ill to prosecute or died</li> <li>• 3 Police - formal action not in public interest</li> <li>• 2 other body/agency has investigation primacy</li> <li>• 2 named suspect but victim/key witness deceased or too ill</li> <li>• 978 blank not known</li> </ul>
Went to trial	Approx. 4,000 to trial (3% of all reports)	Not available.
Convictions for stalking	2,000 convictions (2% of all reports)	Not available.
Stalking Protection Orders (introduced 2020)	436 interim and full SPOs granted 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 and 19 Jan 2021 <sup>10</sup>	3 applications (2 granted, one at final stage).  NB. Between 01/02/22 – 31/01/23 28 cases referred for initial legal advice; 5 authorised to proceed to

<sup>8</sup> All from [Police Recorded Crime Open Data Tables, ending March 2022](#).

<sup>9</sup> From West Yorkshire Police (2021) Stalking, Force Threat Desks.

<sup>10</sup> [Home Office \(2023\) Review of Stalking Protection Orders](#)

		court, 13 did not proceed,10 were awaiting legal advice <sup>11</sup> .
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### 3.2 Response to the super complaint

The report of the joint inquiry carried out in response to the super complaint was led by Independent Office of Police Complaints carried out with His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and the College of Policing; it was published in September 2024<sup>12</sup>. It reported that:

- Poor risk assessment and safeguarding was leaving some victims at serious risk.
- The laws and guidance for police are confusing and inconsistent.
- There is a lack of understanding by police of the scale and types of stalking in their area.
- There were issues with the quality and resourcing of some investigations.
- More can be done to share and build on the good work already being done in some areas.

They concluded that significant changes were needed to improve the police response to stalking reports and made 29 recommendations including:

- Outlining steps chief constables should take immediately to improve the quality of stalking investigations.
- Changing the criminal law on stalking, which is “currently confusing” to make it easier for police to understand and apply.
- Making stalking protection orders simpler and easier for the police to use.
- Ensuring police and support services work more closely together to improve the service provided to victims.

The National Police Chiefs Council were also asked to produce a report on progress in the coming months following publication.

Our research found that shortcomings in the policing of stalking and wider criminal justice system for survivors of stalking nationally were sadly also experienced by women in Kirklees. Women were telling local personal stories, but these reflected national issues.

## 4. Summary Findings: Women of Lived Experience of Stalking

<sup>11</sup> From West Yorkshire Police (2023) Stalking, Force Threat Desks.

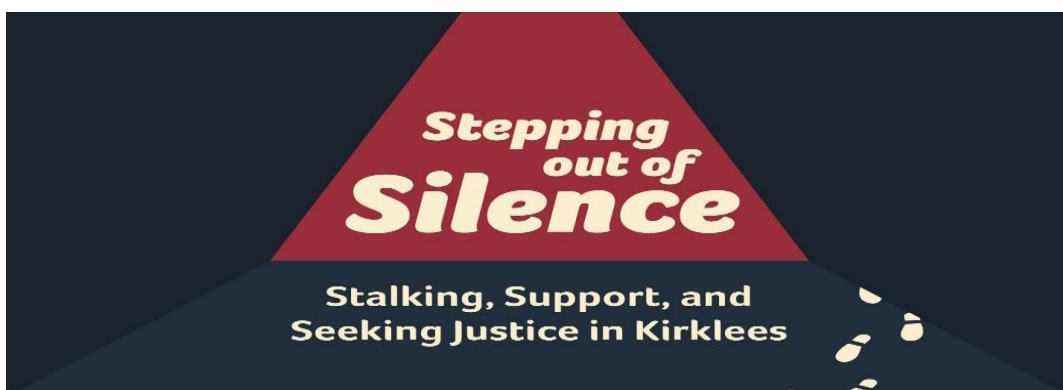
<sup>12</sup>[Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(2024\) An annex report about HMICFRS fieldwork to support the investigation of the super-complaint on the police response to stalking](#)

This document presents summary findings from the N=18 interviews with women of lived experience of stalking who live, work or study in Kirklees, carried out between January 2023 and October 2023.

Participants were aged between eighteen and sixty-two and were from a range of socio-economic groups. N=4 were from BAMER backgrounds (one identified as dual heritage Black British, one as Asian British, two women were recent migrants and identified as South Asian, fourteen identified as White British). Most participants were mothers, the majority of whom were still caring for their children. For the majority, their experience of stalking was recent (generally up to 2022/2023), and it was ongoing for N=8 at the time of interview. For two interviewees their stalking experience had ceased over four years ago, with one of these over twenty years ago. It is uncomfortable to revisit traumatic experiences, and we are indebted to those women who took part in research interviews. All did so with the objective of wanting to raise awareness and improve policy and practice so that stalking can be prevented, and survivors could get support as early as possible.

## 4.1 Stepping Out of Silence

The animation "[Stepping out of Silence](#)" offers a visual representation and record of key findings from lived experience voices in our project, the impacts of stalking and women's experiences of policing and recovery. This was co-produced with lived experience "influencers", other women who took part in research interviews, the University of Huddersfield researchers, PDAP and Fat Panda Digital content creators. To watch the animation, click on its title above or the image below:



## 4.2 Predominance of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) Stalking

As domestic violence and abuse (DVA) intimate partner stalking is the most common form of stalking in the UK and our recruitment was reliant primarily on services, most of our interviewees had experienced DVA stalking by a partner or former partner. In all cases of DVA stalking, this was a male partner.

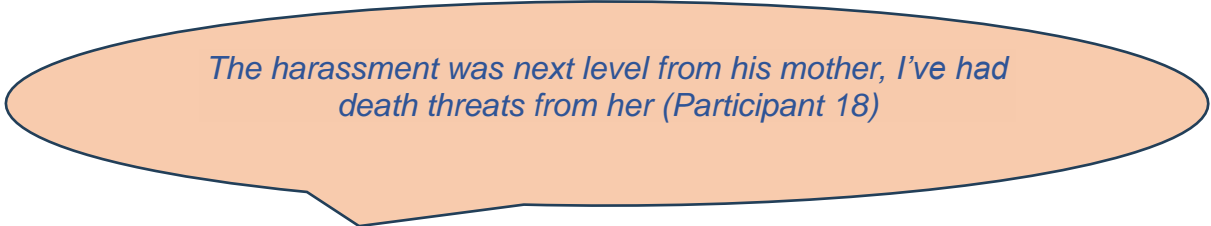
Our analysis highlighted that in most cases women's abusive partners had, in the early stages of their relationships, targeted various vulnerabilities amongst women, e.g. immigration status, recent divorce, childhood parental loss, bullying, childhood sexual abuse, and CSE. Perpetrators had engaged in intensive love bombing and grooming, and women reflected on what they described as red flag behaviours and incidents displayed by their ex-partners, which were designed to take control. They described the "skilled" and orchestrated emotional manipulation and gaslighting practised by their abusive partners, which was intertwined with stalking and other emotional, psychological, sexual, physical, and financial forms of abuse. These elements made up the domestic abuse and coercive control their perpetrators subjected them to, abuse which they struggled daily to survive.

### 4.3 Non-domestic violence and abuse stalking.

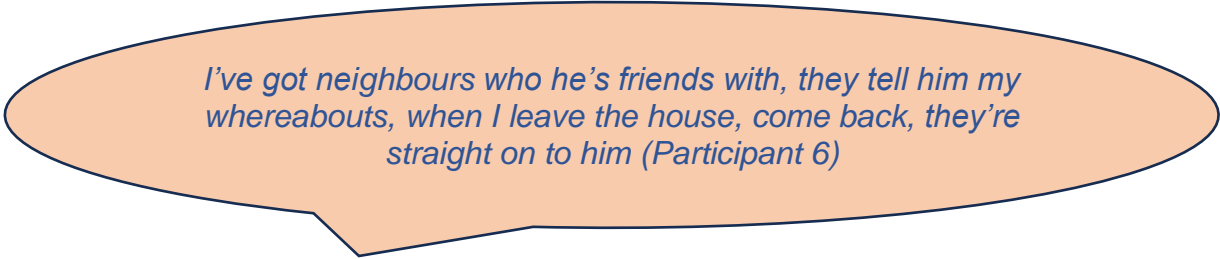
Exceptions to this were two participants, one who experienced intense cyber stalking by a man in her professional online networks and one who was stalked by a woman, who her husband had briefly dated during a period when she and her husband had been separated. By focusing on DVA stalking we in no way intend to minimise the experiences of people who endure other forms of stalking, and amongst these women, acute trauma and far-reaching negative consequences had been experienced.

### 4.4 Stalking by proxy

Stalking by proxy was a strikingly common experience amongst our participants, perpetrators of all genders were common amongst such proxies enlisted by primary perpetrators. They included new partners, mothers, sisters, fathers, brothers, neighbours, and friends of primary perpetrators.



*The harassment was next level from his mother, I've had death threats from her (Participant 18)*



*I've got neighbours who he's friends with, they tell him my whereabouts, when I leave the house, come back, they're straight on to him (Participant 6)*

Legal action had only been taken against such proxies in the case of two participants.

#### 4.4.1 Honour and shame

Proxy stalking and domestic abuse also had an honour-based element for two participants. Milani et al. (2018)<sup>13</sup> identified culturally specific issues in relation to intimate partner violence faced by Muslim communities including patriarchy, honour and shame, faith, collectivist and authoritarian cultures, and immigration. Honour (izzat) and shame (sharam) can be powerful mechanisms for conformity placed upon some women by significant others in their lives (Mansoor, 2015)<sup>14</sup>. These were elements which shaped Muslim women’s experiences of stalking and DVA in our study. Two women shared how some extended family members and others in the community had been part of stalking, abusive and controlling behaviours and how shame was used to intimidate women into not going to the police or to support police action. The need for an intersectional approach to adequately support Muslim female survivors, and those from other, racialised minoritised communities has been identified by Day et al. (2020)<sup>15</sup>. Choudry and Winder (2022)<sup>16</sup> advocate a “web model of domestic violence” be used by services working around domestic violence and abuse in Muslim communities to identify vulnerabilities and protective factors for victims. Such an approach “places the victim central to the DVA dynamics” and “explores the networks surrounding them in a holistic manner” to get a fuller understanding” of the DVA they are experiencing (pg. 15). This approach recognises that family and wider community members are sometimes intertwined with the primary abuse, but also that some are positive and safe people who can provide critical support essential for leaving abusive relationships and rebuilding life post-abuse. Choudry and Winder’s web model (2022) explores individual phyco-social-spiritual factors, as well intersectional and structural factors such as policies, legislation.

*She is saying he is using third parties to call her and her family, like his nephew and to post things on Facebook saying ‘This girl is a whore, she’s a bad person. She’s going to bring your family reputation down. She’d better stop the police investigation, or we’ll share videos (Support worker and translator for participant 3)*

## 4.5 Stalking behaviours experienced

Women recounted a wide range of stalking behaviours, just some of these are summarised below:

<sup>13</sup> Milani, A., Leschied, A. and Rodger, S. (2018) “Beyond Cultural Sensitivity”: Service Providers’ Perspectives on Muslim Women Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 12: 49–75.

<sup>14</sup> Mansoor, N. (2015). The Concept of Honour and Shame for South Asian British Muslim Men and Women. In: Nolan, G., West, W. (eds) *Therapy, Culture and Spirituality*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137370433\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137370433_5)

<sup>15</sup> Day, Aviah Sarah, and Aisha K. Gill. 2020. Applying intersectionality to partnerships between women’s organizations and the criminal justice system in relation to domestic violence. *The British Journal of Criminology* 60: 830–50

<sup>16</sup> Chowdhury R, Winder B. A (2022) Web Model of Domestic Violence and Abuse in Muslim Communities—A Multi Perspective IPA Approach. *Social Sciences.*; 11(8):354. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11080354>



- Unwanted/ continuous communications through phone, text, or apps.
- Waiting outside/ inside home, showing up elsewhere and following.
- Use of filming: via phone, laptop, security cameras, drone.
- Other online behaviours: hacking/accessing bank and other accounts, unwanted emails.
- Tracking tactics and technologies: e.g. Snap maps, other phone tracker apps, air tags, car trackers.
- Contacting survivor's family and friends.
- Stalking by proxy/ harassment or abuse through others.
- Issues concerning children.
- Escalation/ persistence/ threats /attempts to kill.

Many described intensive periods of stalking consisting of multiple stalking behaviours that dominated their lives.

#### 4.6 Life threatening incidents

Many women described life threatening incidents where they felt they had narrowly escaped domestic homicide.

*I'd split with him, he was tracking my phone...he headbutted me and put a knife to my throat, he got some rope and was on about tying me up and putting me in the boot, taking me to the moors and killing me then himself. I managed to calm him down and get my phone and keys and got him to let me go home by saying "We'll get back together" I sat in my living room in shock I really thought my life was over (Participant 11)*

The link between domestic abuse stalking and domestic homicide is well established (Monckton-Smith et al. 2017)<sup>17</sup>, with the period after a survivor has left the relationship being particularly dangerous. Indeed concerns from local practitioners about this link was one of the reasons this research project was developed; a tragic reminder of this real risk were the murders of [Katie Highton and Steven Harnett by Katie's ex-boyfriend in May 2023](#) which took place when this research was ongoing<sup>18</sup>. Nearby in central Bradford in April 2024, Kulsuma Akter was murdered in the street while she pushed her baby

<sup>17</sup> [Monckton-Smith, J. Szymanska, K. and Haile, S. \(2017\) Exploring the Relationship between Stalking and Homicide. Project Report. University of Gloucestershire in association with Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Cheltenham.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Constable, O. \(2024\) As it happened: Whole-life sentence for killer, BBC News.](#)

in a pram and her husband is due to stand trial in 2025, accused of her murder and of stalking<sup>19</sup>. At the time of her murder, she had left him and was staying at a safe house, she had report death threats to the police days before she was murdered.

## 4.7 Impacts of stalking

Whilst women survived the abuse, this was not without detrimental, life changing impacts and great disruption and distress, often during protracted periods of their life. Stalking victimisation has for a long time been ignored and minimised, yet its impacts are serious and far-reaching (Korkodeilou, 2016)<sup>20</sup>. Whether in the context of intimate partner abuse or other forms of stalking, every aspect of a victim's life is impacted, including home/family, at work, in public, socially, and online. Women who took part in our research described a wide range of acute impacts. We categorised these into the following:

- **General mental health and psychological/ cognitive impacts**, e.g., loss of confidence/memory, doubting own mind, stress anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and hypervigilance (sense of being under constant threat, constantly anticipating more stalking).
- **Physiological impacts**, e.g. sleep disturbance, weight/loss gain, eating disorders, neck, and other pain.
- **Impact on relationships**, including estrangement from or loss of trust/contact with, and, direct victimisation of, family, friends, and children. Not wanting future relationships.
- **Economic impacts**. Women discussed a range of economic costs they had to bear including the cost of security measures, legal costs, costs for childcare when attending family and criminal court proceedings. For those who had been in employment they described the loss of earnings when they had not been able to attend due to stalking and abuse.
- **Employment**. Some lost their jobs because of the abuse and stalking they suffered; some were sacked, and others felt they had no choice but to leave following unhelpful responses from employers. Indeed, there were a range of workplace related issues that emerged in this research, for example women being labelled as a safeguarding risk, or insensitive requirements to complete DA training when employers were aware of their recent return to work after dealing with stalking, DA, and coercive control. One participant, an experienced educational professional, sought a different job after her experience at work.

*At my employers there was never an ounce of compassion, I got no practical help whatsoever. I remember saying to the HR woman, 'I'm not in your policy, my situation isn't in there' They knew what was going on I had emails and letters from PDAP and the police which I could share. But there was no flexibility no recognition of the circumstances (Participant 16)*

<sup>19</sup> [BBC News](#)  
<sup>20</sup> Korkodeilou, M. (2016) *International Review of Victimology*.

- **Education and studies.** Those who were students described how the abuse had affected their studies detrimentally.

Whether a woman's experience of stalking was through in-person behaviours or unwanted repeated contact digitally facilitated by text, calls, emails, or social media, it has profound effects on their lives, with women living in fear. The experiences of women in this research stand testimony to this.

#### **4.8. Experiences of the police**

Experiences of policing could be described as mixed. Some women reported largely positive experiences with the police, whereas others described largely negative interactions. Alternatively, some survivors reported complex interactions with the police, some of which were felt to be both positive and negative. Amongst women who reported negative experiences there was strong dissatisfaction, frustration, and anger about the responses they received. Some described their experiences of dealing with the police as, equally traumatic as the stalking, abuse, and coercive control they had experienced.

##### **4.8.1 Positive experiences of policing**

When exploring with women what constituted good experiences of policing, the following were identified:

- Taking survivors seriously, including digital and nonphysical incidents.
- Recognising a pattern of stalking, not treating each incident in isolation and taking each incident seriously.
- Rapid action, follow up and regularly updating, without survivors having to chase officers for information.



- Being proactive in evidence gathering and not placing all responsibility on victims.
- Consistency in the allocation of officer.
- Showing compassion, patience, empathy, and sensitivity, including sensitive non-victim blaming language.
- Focusing on the suspects behaviour and less on the character and actions of survivors.
- Communicating in an appropriate manner, using sensitive language and methods of communication.
- Being truthful about what could be expected.
- Showing knowledge about and understanding about domestic abuse and stalking. including the highly manipulative nature of perpetrators.
- Being patient and reassuring.
- Access to female officers; for example, some participants expressed a clear preference for female officers, whereas others did not.

*My officer in charge, he was male I didn't feel comfortable talking to him. I remember going to give my video statement and there was this big camera in a small room. So, I got panicky (N.B. she had been under surveillance from her ex-partner), went and sat outside. There was a female officer with him, and she came out and made me feel relaxed, like what I was saying was valid, he felt like he was just ticking boxes, she asked if I wanted her to lead the interview I said "That would be massive", I ended up giving my statement to her in Refuge (Participant 4)*

## 4.8.2 Negative experiences of policing

Some women recounted highly negative experiences of policing. Poor policing consisted of:

- **Minimising risks.** Women's concerns and the risks they were experiencing being dismissed, because of stalking being missed or minimised.

*I was trying to explain to the police saying, he's literally just parked up in his car sitting and watching me. I've got all my blinds shut and I'm really scared...they were like "But why would you find that intimidating? If he's sad enough to spend all his time sitting at the top of the road to watch you, leave him to it. Why is that intimidating?" (Participant 7)*

- **Reported incidents of stalking (particularly digital behaviours) not being taken seriously and limited action taken.** A strong theme that emerged was that women felt non-physical stalking behaviours were taken less seriously, and appropriate police action only took place when things turned physical, with earlier opportunities for intervention being missed.

Indeed, in one interview a very distressed survivor who was experiencing intense, repeated digital stalking stated:

*Until he physically attacks me, they won't do anything  
(Participant 13)*

Notably, in the case of Participant 13 the lead researcher contacted the participant to invite her to an event towards the end of the project; sadly she updated that her perpetrator had physically assaulted her outside her home in what she described as "*the most terrifying experience of my life*". Since the physical attack "*everything has moved quickly, he has been remanded in prison and has not made bail, police found multiple trackers on my car and recording devices in my home*".

- **Returning the perpetrator to home/not seeing survivors individually and in a space where they were not under surveillance.**
- **Police susceptibility to manipulation/ false presentation/gaslighting by perpetrators, including police being influenced by perpetrators version of events.** This could include perpetrators weaponization victims' mental health. **Victim blaming and poor use of language.**



This took a range both subtle and blatant forms including cases where women were treated as the perpetrator and arrested. Language used and tone was important to survivors. The phrase “your word against his” was particularly upsetting for several participants as from their perspective they were living in constant fear. They had often been gaslighted by abusers to the point that sometimes they doubted their own mind. The power imbalance was also significant with some feeling as though they had swallowed their words many times. Reporting their experiences was hard and to consider there was equity was bewildering.

*There was victim blaming like “What have you said or done to provoke him to send the messages?” (Participant 12)*

*I was told I was creating the contact when I am legally required to contact him about child contact (Participant 18)*

*“It’s your word against his” it’s awful when someone says that when you have been abused by someone who puts you down and causes you to feel self-doubt (Participant 9)*

- **Issues around non molestation, harassment, and stalking protection orders.** Women felt breaches were not policed effectively to the point that women did not report them, they did not want to put their energy into something they felt to be “pointless”. Long delays in police securing (SPO’s) was an issue for the small number of women for whom police were looking at these women.
- **Issues around child contact.** Participants recounted incidents where acts of abuse and stalking were minimised because they took place in a child contact context.
- **Dealing with incidents in isolation and not seeing a pattern of behaviours.**

*There have been 53 incidents, over the last year and a half that have been reported to the police. They’d look at each one in isolation, not see the relentlessness of what’s happened (Participant 8)*

- **Lacking proactivity in investigation and evidence gathering, and putting the onus on the survivor to collect evidence.** Survivors detailed how they put a lot of time and effort into gathering evidence and yet this was not then used by the police. Similarly, survivors were frustrated that police advice often focused on changes women should make to their lives e.g. come off social media, rather than actions that would be taken against perpetrators to stop abuse and stalking.
- **Making promises that could not be delivered.**
- **Retelling stories.** Survivors were frustrated that during police investigations they would have to tell their stories repeatedly often to different officers, despite police having prior detailed statements. This was experienced as retraumatising for survivors and contributed to a sense of not having been listened to.

*I was asked to do my video interview again because the one I had done eight months earlier was “not the quality needed”  
But why did it take them eight months to tell me that. You think it’s done and then you must go through it all again!  
(Participant 4)*

- **Delays in assigning officers or officers not following up or keeping survivors informed in timely fashion.** Some women raised concerns about specific ways they were contacted during investigations, for example one participant had been contacted from a withheld number in the evening, they felt this was ill considered and did not taking account of how this could create anxiety for a survivor of DA and stalking.
- **Failures around joined up working.** Information not being shared when necessary or appropriate across professionals.

When participants highlighted poor responses from response officers, they saw this as resulting from a lack of experience, understanding and specialist knowledge about domestic abuse and stalking. Yet others praised response officers who they felt, as first responders saw the immediate distress and immediate impacts on the survivors and seemed attuned to domestic abuse. Some survivors praised specialist officers from the domestic abuse teams and felt their specialist training and experience of dealing with domestic abuse and stalking meant they understood the dynamics of abuse and were more victim centred.

*I remember speaking to the officer in charge of my case at Huddersfield police station. I'd never spoken to her; I remember being so vulnerable. I was talking about retracting my statement, she was just so supportive. She said that it's not me, I've done nothing wrong; it's his fault. She was upfront and honest; she knew what she was talking about. She knew the forms of abuse; you could tell she was specialised (Participant 11)*

Yet other women were critical of responses they had encountered within the specialist domestic abuse team and felt that some officers experienced “compassion fatigue” and become desensitised to DVA and stalking having to deal with it day to day.

*The patrol officers were fine. It was when it got passed to the Domestic Abuse Team, it fell apart, I expected the opposite but no I really felt they were desensitised to abuse and stalking especially non-physical abuse... It made me feel if it's not physical what's the point of reporting... It was mainly psychological and emotional abuse for me. (Participant 17)*

Procedural justice theory provides an explanation of why police behaviour which does not fit with the principles of procedural fairness undermines public trust in the police, reducing people's willingness to engage with police. Hohl et al. (2022)<sup>21</sup> in research looking at the policing experienced by survivors of rape and sexual violence, found that officer behaviour that denies voice, does not acknowledge harm, is judgemental, uncaring, intimidating, or insensitive, had negative or 'anti-therapeutic' effects, causing secondary victimisation. In our research women with negative experiences of the police reported a sense of hopelessness, re-traumatisation, anger, a wider sense of injustice and lack of faith in the police and wider criminal justice system. They did not have a sense of procedural justice.

*I felt like the police have put me on the same rollercoaster as the abuser. It seemed to depend on who was managing the case...I feel that West Yorkshire Police have caused me more anxiety than my abuser since the arrest (Participant 17)*

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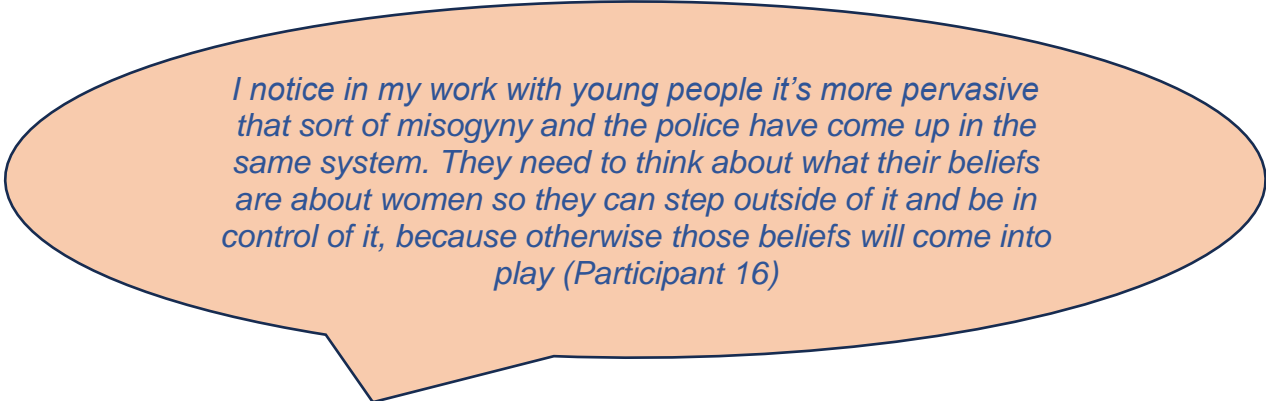
Indeed, one of the most worrying findings amongst women who took part in interviews and discussions within “We Are Hear” was that many said they could not say with confidence they would encourage other women to report crimes committed against them to the police. These feelings were often reinforced by women’s experiences of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and courts (section 5).

In contrast Hohl et al. (2022) found in their research that officer behaviour that acknowledged wrong and harm had been done to the survivor, which demonstrated non-blaming attitudes and compassionate listening, treated survivors as whole and valued persons contributed:

*“...to the validation of survivors experiences, reducing the harm and trauma associated with the crime and the police process, thereby aiding victim-survivors therapeutically” (Hohl et al. 2022).*

## 4.9 Misogyny and Policing

Some women unprompted, when discussing their experiences of policing, specifically referred to entrenched misogyny in policing, society, and culture more widely.



*I notice in my work with young people it’s more pervasive that sort of misogyny and the police have come up in the same system. They need to think about what their beliefs are about women so they can step outside of it and be in control of it, because otherwise those beliefs will come into play (Participant 16)*

## 4.10 Police Complaints

Two participants had made formal complaints against the police, because of their experience of unsatisfactory and harmful responses. Both found the complaints procedure to be extremely difficult,

confusing, drawn out, upsetting, traumatising, and exhausting. They noted how the responses they received were often characterised by features of the poor policing that had led to their complaint.

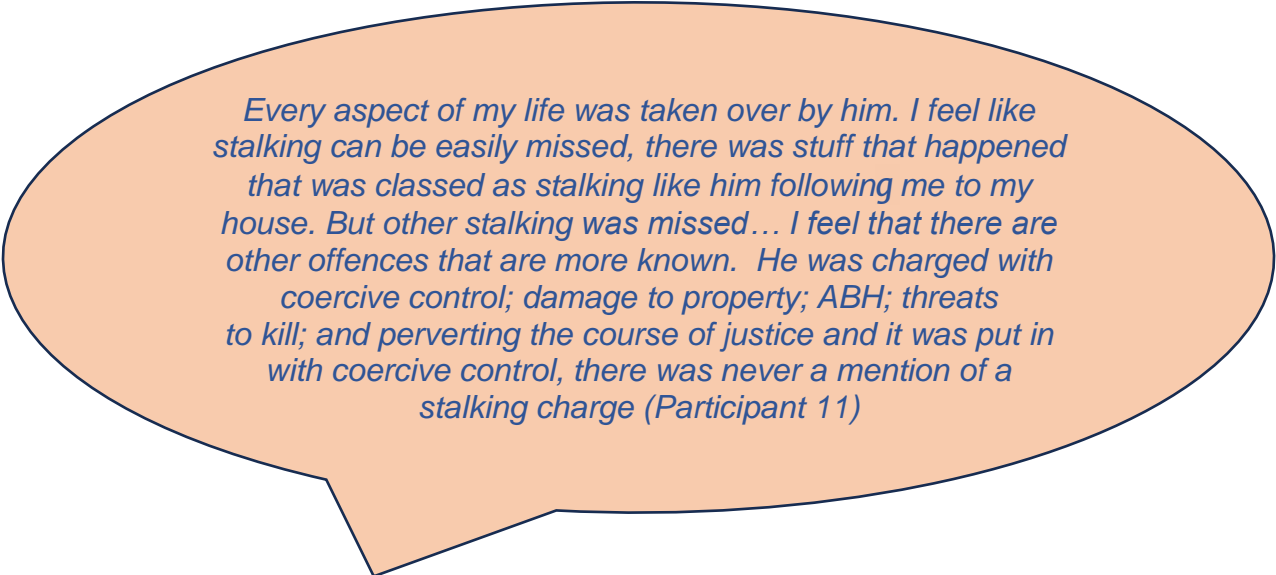
#### 4.11 Police as perpetrators

Before we touch on women's experiences of the CPS and courts, special mention is needed of the additional issues for women whose perpetrators of stalking and abuse are themselves police officers. Two women who took part in interviews had perpetrators who were police officers, both serving in other forces. Another participant had a perpetrator whose father was a serving police officer. For these women, their fear that they would not be taken seriously was heightened. They feared that because their perpetrators were police officers, their views would be prioritised or that they would be protected by the system in which they worked. Survivors also faced additional concerns that their perpetrator would be able to access personal information and the details of any investigations, either directly or through their police colleagues.

### 5. Beyond policing

#### 5.1 Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the criminal courts and sentencing

Whilst our study did not focus on the CPS and criminal courts specifically, some participants who were interviewed or who took part in the "We Are Hear" group wanted to speak about their experiences of these systems. They often expressed high levels of dissatisfaction, with women reporting that they found it to be traumatising, time consuming and difficult to navigate. Survivors were frustrated at decisions not to take certain charges forward (this included specific stalking charges), delays to trials and the trauma and anxiety this prolonged. Those who had support from specialist independent stalking advocacy case workers or domestic abuse advocacy workers through the process, valued them highly.



*Every aspect of my life was taken over by him. I feel like stalking can be easily missed, there was stuff that happened that was classed as stalking like him following me to my house. But other stalking was missed... I feel that there are other offences that are more known. He was charged with coercive control; damage to property; ABH; threats to kill; and perverting the course of justice and it was put in with coercive control, there was never a mention of a stalking charge (Participant 11)*



Participants supported preventative initiatives and early intervention in domestic violence abuse and stalking. Amongst We Are Hear members there was exasperation when the only DVA prevention provision in Kirklees (which had introduced a stalking module) was suspended in 2024. Yet punishment through prison sentencing was also deemed important by participants. The reasons given for this were to enable women to feel safer, make it clear to perpetrators that they will face consequences and will not get away with abusing women. Equally, another theme which emerged was the importance of sentencing; removing perpetrators from the community for a length of time for example allowed women to receive appropriate support and to recover fully before perpetrators are released. The survivor quoted above discussed how important it was for her to know that her perpetrator had received what she felt was a lengthy sentence (6 years), not only did it give her a greater sense of safety but time for full recovery, a path she felt she had only just begun to walk. Through the “We Are Hear group” we became aware that this survivor’s perpetrator had been released early and this was devastating for her, with her mental health deteriorating.

It is important to stress that women faced these struggles with the criminal justice system at a point in their life where they had experienced years or months of domestic abuse, coercive control and stalking, their resilience was low, they were exhausted, fearful and usually only at the very start of their recovery.

Our study found a deep dissatisfaction with the CPS and the courts, which reflects wider concerns that our criminal justice system in England and Wales is under resourced, in crisis, and letting down victims of many crimes (Victims Commissioner, 2023)<sup>22</sup> including those of stalking, DVA and other forms of gender-based violence.

## 5.2 Family courts

One key finding was that there was overwhelming frustration and anger with the family courts. All participants who had experience of family courts found that they minimised domestic abuse and were retraumatising for themselves and their children. They similarly felt that their ex-partners used the courts to continue their control and they found the whole system to be insensitive to survivors and children’s needs.

*The only way he's got access to me currently is when he's sat in court, that's the only reason why he's in court, he has done terrible things to the kids he doesn't care about them. He's manipulated the police, the contact centre, CAFCAS and now the family court, they don't seem to see financial and coercive control as an issue, everything is a battle (Participant 18)*

<sup>22</sup> [Victims Commissioner \(2023\) Victim's experiences annual survey 2022, Office of the Victims Commissioner.](#)

*Family court CAFCASS asked me to write a schedule of everything I could remember, I found it painful, and it took weeks. So, the court then had those document, my ex had eyes on it. A male judge said 'Can I just say family court, it's not an arena to air dirty laundry. It's for the benefit of the child' I'd been asked to do this and he also said, 'To me it sounds just like an unhappy relationship'. How could they say that? There had been my Ex's removal by the police and rape I'd experienced described in there! (Participant 16)*

The failure of family courts to support survivors of domestic abuse has been identified as a national priority by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2023)<sup>23</sup>.

## 6. Women's Experiences of Support Services



We found that women's experience of accessing specialist local DVA services and the West Yorkshire wide stalking service, were generally very positive and validating, with these seen as offering a lifeline for many. Our research found that local DVA services had been supporting survivors of DVA stalking for many years as part of their wider work.

A West Yorkshire wide Independent Stalking Advocacy Case Worker service (ISAC) was introduced at the start of our project. This was provided by Victim Support and commissioned by the Mayor's office to work with high-risk domestic abuse stalking.

<sup>23</sup>[Domestic Abuse Commissioner \(2023\) The Family Court and domestic abuse achieving cultural change. Office of the domestic abuse commissioner: London.](#)

Wider generic services (e.g. maternity services, schools, GPs) had, for many women, been important spaces where they could disclose. Some perpetrators had allowed them to access such services and through these they could be signposted to specialist provision.

*When I went to PDAP it was like a breath of fresh air they were like 'This is textbook abuser behaviour', You feel like "He's so clever, no one will ever believe me", you feel so alone... They were knowledgeable, kind, caring, compassionate and nothing was ever too much (Participant 7)*

*PDAP were life saving their outreach supported me and I went into refuge at one point. They built my confidence back up, I volunteered with them, and it gave me something to focus on until I felt able to return to work (Participant 1)*

*The stalking service have been there for me they have been a stable support option, I can contact my support worker anytime they've been so supportive and understanding, they understand the risk. They have chased lots of stuff up with the police, which is another force from where I live (Participant 13)*

There were a couple of exceptions with a minority of women expressing dissatisfaction with responses and support received from specialist services. The matters that caused dissatisfaction included women struggling to identify specialist services, a delayed initial response, delays in communication from

support workers, not being able to contact support workers for what survivors felt were long periods, what to them appeared to be limited cover for support workers during leave periods, workers not following through on tasks they had said they would action, not getting specific support they felt they needed (for example specialist advice about criminal and civil orders), and not getting access to the security resources.

*They were great till I got a conviction.... now I would not go back to the service. I asked for a letter for family court, they were meant to chase up breaches, I didn't hear back. Then my case worker went off sick...I understand that she was off for a long period, but no one picked her phone up.*  
(Participant 18)

One area where survivors valued support was counselling and other therapeutic support to deal with the trauma of stalking. Women who had accessed counselling from local DVA services valued it highly but found they needed more sessions than could be offered, as services often could only offer a limited number of sessions to make their counselling open to a wider number of women. Two women had paid for private counselling, but this was often a costly financial burden, and it was recognised that not many women would be able to access this as an option.

Survivors highly valued the support they received but were concerned about limited resources and capacity within services. In our survey of service providers, services identified the need for greater capacity and staff resourcing so they could enhance provision, provide more timely responses, support more people, and have better access to security resources for use in safety planning with service users. Some women interviewed saw resource restrictions on services as indicative of wider injustices and a failure to adequately support women in crisis and with recovery, in the wake of DVA and stalking.

## 7. Messages from Survivors and Recommendations

Key messages and recommendations growing out of the research with survivors and discussions within the “We Are Hear” group are now summarised.

### 7.1 Policing

- Police officers need to acknowledge the harm and understand the very real risks and trauma survivors experience and this needs to extend to those experiencing online/digitally facilitated stalking behaviours.

- Police responses should not pathologise survivors or minimise their fears and emotions. Officers should take concerns seriously and document appropriately. Police responses to stalking and domestic abuse should be informed by the principles of “procedural justice”.
- Police officers need to be mindful of how most perpetrators are very skilled at manipulation and therefore they need to carefully assess what is presented. Engaging in professional Reflective Practice is critical here.
- Police officers should make efforts to speak to survivors independently where possible, away from the perpetrator and away from the home where there may be cameras or recording devices.
- Survivors did not want to be interviewed at police stations and wanted a suite separate from the station. Providing spaces where survivors may feel comfortable helps to promote a sense of safety and trust.
- Police need to be mindful that some women are very uncomfortable talking to male officers and victims/survivors should be offered the option of speaking with a female officer.
- Women wanted a sense of consistency and for the police to regularly keep in touch. They wanted to be “kept in the picture”, with officers using women’s preferred methods of communication. They wanted to know where their perpetrator is living, when they had or would be released from custody, and the conditions of their bail.
- They wanted officers to fulfil actions promised and preferred officers be realistic with their promises and not to “make promises they can’t keep”.
- West Yorkshire police may consider using a ‘victim communication plan’ template, now used by Engagement Officers in some forces, at the start of the rape and sexual violence investigations to agree and record victim-survivors’ preferences on mode of contact (e.g. call, text message, or via their ISVA), progress updates, and any relevant safeguarding, additional needs, or privacy concerns.
- In officer selection, training, and supervision there needs to be an emphasis on developing emotional intelligence, active listening, and relationship building skills.
- Survivors wanted to see action taken to prevent “compassion fatigue” amongst police officers including those working in specialist domestic abuse teams.
- Survivors whose perpetrators are serving police officers need to be immediately informed and reassured about the measures that will be put in place to safeguard their confidentiality and other protective measures initiated.

- Officers who are under-investigation for domestic abuse or stalking offences should be automatically suspended from duty (N.B. This was in the new Labour government's manifesto).
- Police training around stalking, domestic abuse, and coercive control should be delivered by support services with expertise of working with survivors and should include lived experience input. When direct lived experience input is not possible, resources developed or co-designed with women with lived experience should be utilised. For example, the animation [Stepping Out of Silence](#).
- Officers need to be aware of all forms of stalking behaviours including those which take place online. They must understand that these are as impactful as in-person stalking behaviours.

Officers should be aware of intersectional issues and contexts. For example, following guidance around addressing Honour Based Abuse, as well as stalking, domestic violence, and abuse. Police and other agencies early in their investigations and interventions need to think beyond primary stalkers and abusers and adopt a 'web based' approach to domestic abuse and stalking as developed by Choudry et al. (2022), which considers the wider community.



- Officers need to be alert to the possibility of stalking by proxy in all cases.
- Survivors suggested a post within police domestic abuse teams which focused on listening to survivors' voices, supporting meaningful lived experience/ involvement and police service improvement in relation to VAWG.

## 7.2 Multi agency working

- Women reported that having to re-tell their story to different police officers and people from other agencies and services was re-traumatising, frustrating and exhausting. Ideally, they wanted to tell their story once and women wanted an integrated, centralised information



recording system so survivors do not have to re-tell their stories. Improvements are needed in joined up working within policing and across agencies, with further work around continuity and sharing of information to reduce survivor trauma and to allow agencies to see the wider picture/pattern and understand histories. Multi-agency stalking intervention partnerships (MASIP's) have been identified as best practice to address stalking nationally (Tompson et al. 2020)<sup>24</sup> and policy makers should establish such an approach in West Yorkshire. This should provide a conducive setting for the development of a more integrated centralised information recording system.

- Survivors wanted domestic abuse policies in place in all workplaces and favoured campaigns to encourage Kirklees employers to adopt such policies.

### 7.3 Support

- Specialist support for women was experienced as critical and highly valued for several reasons. These included help for women to help reduce trauma, contextualise experiences, address isolation, receive practical and emotional support during times of crisis, support going through the criminal justice system and during recovery. Survivors wanted to see adequate funding for local domestic abuse support services and the specialist regional ISAC service. They wanted to see services funded to a level that enabled them to have the required capacity to provide timely and responsive services for all survivors who seek support. They wanted to see longer term funding which mainstreamed domestic abuse support and specialist stalking support.
- A specific gap was identified in counselling and therapeutic support for survivors of domestic abuse and stalking in Kirklees. Survivors want to see funding provided to local domestic abuse services in Kirklees so they can provide longer term counselling to survivors of domestic violence abuse stalking. They also wanted to see funding for the ISAC service to be able to offer specialist counselling for stalking survivors.
- Free specialist counselling should be available for women who have experienced stalking and domestic abuse, to reduce the impact of trauma, and this should be available to support their longer-term recovery.

### 7.4 CPS and Courts

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<sup>24</sup> [Tompson, L. Belur, J. and Jerath, K. \(2020\) MASIP evaluation final report University College London.](#)

- Survivors were aware of the underfunding of the Criminal Justice System and the delays this had, and was causing, in cases coming to court. During the months “We Are Hear” had met, the early release prison scheme was introduced to address a lack of prison space. The scheme was meant to exclude perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, but it was becoming clear that in Kirklees and nationally that some such offenders were falling through the net and getting early release, creating fear and distress for survivors. Survivors supported the call to government by the national Domestic Abuse Commissioner that all offenders with a known history of domestic abuse must be exempt from this scheme. They also supported the call that sentencing for DVA related offences be monitored in the light of concerns that due to the lack of prison places more lenient sentences were being given to perpetrators.<sup>25</sup>
- There are systemic failings in the family courts across England and Wales and survivors supported an overhaul this system. Survivors supported the urgent implementation of the recommendation made by the National Domestic Abuse Commissioner in 2023<sup>26</sup> aimed at reversing the traumatising impact of the family courts on adult and child victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

## 7.5 Perpetrator interventions and Prevention

- Preventative interventions with perpetrators of stalking and domestic abuse in Kirklees need to be developed as a matter of urgency.
- These could be developed as part of a West Yorkshire wide approach, as this is a gap across the region.
- Work in schools, colleges, and universities to address misogyny and support young men in being good allies needs to be developed or maintained.

## 7.6 Building Trust in the Police

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<sup>25</sup> [Domestic Abuse Commissioner \(2024\) Commissioner warns early release scheme puts domestic abuse victims at risk, Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Domestic Abuse Commissioner \(2023\) The Family Court and domestic abuse achieving cultural change, Office of the domestic abuse commissioner: London.](#)

- Participants wanted to see bold and creative action from the West Yorkshire Police force to build trust amongst women and girls.
- A review of Kirklees and wider West Yorkshire Police complaints procedures to consider if these are trauma informed and appropriate for survivors of domestic abuse and stalking. This review should centre lived experience groups, with changes made accordingly following review.

## 8. More information and support

For more information about the “We Are Hear” group contact: Deborah Theabould-Ho Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership [d.theabould-ho@pdap.co.uk](mailto:d.theabould-ho@pdap.co.uk)

For more information about “Ten years on: stalking in Kirklees policing and support for victims” contact Dr Rosie Campbell OBE on [r.campbell@hud.ac.uk](mailto:r.campbell@hud.ac.uk) or go to the [project webpages](#)

***If you are experiencing stalking, or have in the past, and want to access support or information contact:***

**Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership:** on their 24-hour free helpline 0800 052 7222

**West Yorkshire Independent Stalking Advocacy Service (West Yorkshire Victim Support):** call 03003 730978 or email [WY ISAC Service@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:WY_ISAC_Service@victimsupport.org.uk) or contact the charity’s national 24/7 support line on 08 08 16 89 111.

**National Stalking Helpline:** call on 0808 802 0300 during opening hours (Weekdays 9.30-16.00 (till 20.00 on Wednesdays).

**The Suzy Lamplugh Trust** who run the help line have a lot of information about Stalking on their website. <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/pages/category/national-stalking-helpline>

**Paladin:** <https://www.paladinservice.co.uk/get-support>