All Party Parliamentary Group on Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

Monday 9 June 2025 Meeting: Minutes

Date and time: 14:00 – 15:45, Monday 9 June 2025

Location: Room S, Portcullis House, 1 Victoria Embankment, London, SW1A 2JR (hybrid online)

Attendees in person:

Jess Asato MP (Labour)
Emily Darlington MP (Labour)
Jonathan Hinder MP (Labour)
Luke Taylor MP (Liberal Democrat)
Office of Liz Saville Roberts MP (Plaid Cymru)
Claire Waxman OBE, Victims' Commissioner for London
Lived experience guest speaker
Suky Bhaker, CEO, Suzy Lamplugh Trust
Max Lawson, MOPAC
Jasmine Selby, MOPAC
Jo Todd CBE, CEO, Respect
Caroline Bernard, Director of Influence, Respect
Ailsa Malcolm, Policy, Public Affairs & Communications Manager, The Drive Partnership
Colin Fitzgerald, Head of Domestic Abuse Services, Cranstoun
Maria Cripps, Assistant Director of Services - Domestic Abuse, Cranstoun

Welcome and introduction – Jess Asato MP, Chair

Jess Asato MP welcomed attendees and outlined the meeting focus on stalking, the experiences of stalking victim-survivors, and responses to stalking perpetrators.

The experiences of stalking victims: Claire Waxman OBE, Victims' Commissioner for London

Claire Waxman shared an overview of the Office of the Victims' Commissioner's work to support victim-survivors of stalking across London, including the key issues and barriers that victim-survivors face in seeking support and justice.

- The Office of the Victims' Commissioner has been working to identify and challenge barriers for victim-survivors of stalking, particularly across the criminal justice system response. Through this work, clear that stalking is not being identified early enough or recognised as stalking – often being classified into other offences, such as malicious communication.
- The Office of the Victims' Commissioner commissioned research looking at the response to stalking victim-survivors across London, which was published in summer 2024. Key issues

revealed in the report include police not sufficiently recognising or risk assessing cases of stalking, limited use of restraining orders, and a lack of communication with victim-survivors. Victim-survivors feel more at-risk following reporting due to lack of communication or sufficient responses that centre victim-survivor safety – victim-survivors made clear that they want quick intervention and clear communication.

- It also found that there were much higher rates of 4A offences involving younger victim-survivors – believe that stalking behaviours may be more normalised for young people and as such they are only able to recognise and then report when it has reached higher risk, and have called for a campaign to raise awareness on stalking for younger people.
- Worked closely with Suzy Lamplugh Trust to call for Stalking Protection Orders, which have been a critical development, but are still not being used enough or issued quickly enough. Victim-survivors are also having difficulty accessing vital advocacy and support.
- ***Suky Bhaker*** added that, from national data, the chance of a positive conviction without an advocate is 1 in 1000, and with an advocate it is 1 in 4. For many victim-survivors it can take a long time to identify what they are experiencing, but time is critical because of how quickly 'low' levels can lead to high risk and harm.
- Calling on the Government to make a standalone offence for stalking – there are 5 separate offences within stalking, which can make it even harder to identify and respond to across the criminal justice system. As such there are high levels of inaction from police, despite cases that involve large amounts of evidence – victim-survivors can experience over 100 incidents before reporting to the police.
- Have been working closely with the MET to put in place a robust training package, with particular focus on needs assessments, and have called on the CPS for an inspection of stalking, which is taking place later this year.
- However, progress not fast enough – 62% of stalking suspects have previous convictions of another crime or stalking, and we're seeing an increase in the use of the civil courts by perpetrators to start vexatious claims. Also need to remember the long-term impact of stalking on victim-survivors' lives and mental health – not just the primary victim-survivor, but also wider family and children.

The lived experience of a stalking victim

Attendees heard from a victim-survivor of stalking who has been supported by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, who outlined the multitude of barriers that they faced and ineffective responses that they experienced – leading them to have to personally hire lawyers to gather evidence.

Outlined that their experience involved a female who was a stranger to them – highlighting that there is no one set type of stalking perpetrator. The stalking began when the perpetrator was released from prison for a custodial sentence for stalking. The huge impact was felt across their network of work colleagues, friends, and family, who also lived in constant fear for the safety of the victim-survivor.

Highlighted the focus on criminal justice responses, but this does not address the pattern of behaviour and fixation, as was clearly evident in this case considering the perpetrator's previous convictions. Outlined the importance of behaviour change intervention for the perpetrator – this is the only way to address the obsession and fixation at the root of stalking and break the cycle of harmful behaviour, and to effectively respond to an issue that – through its cyclical nature – causes a huge drain on services in terms of investigation, arrests, convictions and sentencing.

Stalking: the policy context, the psychology of stalking perpetrator programmes: Suky Bhaker, CEO, Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Suky Bhaker outlined a background to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, the UK's pioneering personal safety charity and leading stalking authority, established in 1986, following the disappearance of 25-year-old Suzy Lamplugh, an estate agent and lone worker who went to meet a client and never returned. Suzy was never found and eventually declared deceased after seven years in 1993. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust's mission is to reduce the risk and prevalence of abuse, aggression, and violence - with a specific focus on stalking and harassment - through education, campaigning, and support.

Suky Bhaker went on to explain the policy context and psychology of stalking perpetrator programmes:

- Multi Agency Stalking Intervention Programmes (MASIPs) bring agencies together to ensure a robust criminal justice response is paired with perpetrator intervention, while remaining survivor-centred and trauma-informed to enhance protection to those victimised. Offering bespoke interventions, MASIP aims to reduce risk and reoffending by identifying and addressing the specific patterns of fixated and obsessive behaviour at the earliest possible stage, and in some cases prior to any contact with the police, as well as individual motivations of stalkers depending on their typology. Originally funded in 2018 as a world first stalking intervention pilot project in 2018, the MASIP project continues in all three of its pilot sites
- Always ensure that wherever there is a MASIP there is a strong victim-survivor service in place in the area – victim-survivor safety and needs are always at the centre of any intervention work with perpetrators. There is also no one size fits all approach in this work – MASIP involves tailored interventions.
- Data shows the positive impact of MASIP – particularly in reducing reoffending rates. For example, across London the reoffending rates came down to 14%, when on average stalking reoffending is usually over 50%. The programmes are also cost-effective – with the cost saving ratio from every £1 spent ranging from £2 - £82 saved.
- Victim-survivors want behaviour change – always hear from the helplines that victim-survivors just want the stalking to stop.
- Criminal justice response alone isn't effective in changing behaviour and breaking the pattern – perpetrators often serve very short custodial sentences, so there is little opportunity for any meaningful behaviour change work during this time, and they often just continue to hold the fixation or obsession, and can continue stalking throughout prison or on immediate release.
- Early stalking intervention programme being piloted in London for lower-level offenders – those who have been issued an SPO or restraining order. This includes focusing on effective application and enforcement of SPOs, interventions with perpetrators to reduce breaches, and a holistic approach.
- Key asks to Government include ring fenced funding for specialist stalking support services, funding stalking specific perpetrator management interventions such as MASIP, developing clear and robust standards for stalking perpetrator intervention programmes, and a shift to a legislative and judicial system that supports and protects victims.

Discussion

- ***Jess Asato MP*** asked why MASIP has not been rolled out nationally.
  Suky Bhaker responded that that is the ask to Government as it should not be a post-code lottery.

- ***Emily Darlington MP*** shared her experience of stalking, which involved two stalkers – one pre-internet, and one recently focusing on political activity. In both cases the police focused on her behaviour and what she could do to keep safe, rather than the perpetrator changing their behaviour. ***Emily Darlington MP*** asked how social media companies are responding to this online and raised another question regarding the effectiveness of the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC).

Suky Bhaker responded that they are looking into social media – however it is very difficult to get tech companies to appreciate and respond, particularly as they often assess messages in isolation, which may not be threatening in themselves, but it is part of a wider pattern.
Claire Waxman added that she came across FTAC many years ago, and at the time thought that it was a very good model, however it was only dealing with Parliamentarians and Royal family members. Worth looking into what is considered the centre of excellence now.
Emily Darlington responded that in her experience FTAC didn't respond into specialist services and couldn't prosecute because she hadn't heard the threat first-hand, so it didn't fit into the offence.

- ***Jonathan Hinder*** raised a question regarding evidence – from experience in the police, it seemed that evidence of what works was limited.
  Suky Bhaker responded that they continue to add to the evidence base, but at the time it was limited due to the funding of the pilot and time frame to be able to mobilise and produce outcomes.
  Claire Waxman added that early evidence in London is very positive.

- ***Luke Taylor*** raised the example of V100 approach and asked if there was going to be any development on 2A and 4A offences in the Crime and Policing Bill.
  Claire Waxman outlined the limitations of looking at just 100, but that there's scope to take good practice from V100. On the 2A and 4A, they are part of a Home Office working group on this but concerned that the work is not progressing fast enough as the evidence is already apparent – can't recall any cases throughout the years that would fall in 2A, believe that it is now redundant.
  Suky Bhaker added that 4A was groundbreaking in picking up the impact on victim-survivors, but this is now where the police seem to be struggling in identifying and responding. There are flaws in the legislation.

- ***Jo Todd*** raised the importance of looking at the link between stalking and domestic abuse post-separation. So much of stalking is perpetrated post-separation, and we know that this is the highest risk period, so it's vital that we look at the whole picture – a history of domestic abuse will increase risk level in post separation stalking cases. Also need to not only look at risk but also how likely and willing perpetrators are to change, and the needs that must be addressed to enable change. Finally, adding to Claire Waxman's earlier point, there is also vexatious use of MPs by perpetrators, not just across the courts - MPs need training and guidance for case work in their constituencies.

- ***Jess Asato*** raised a question regarding training and asked if interventions are mandated.
- ***Suky Bhaker*** responded that specific training programmes have been designed with specialist officers, and that interventions are mandated as part of SPOs but that there has to be a level of buy in.

- ***Colin Fitzgerald*** raised a question on the tension of typologies and mental health.
- ***Suky Bhaker*** responded that a key typology is rejected partner with history of domestic abuse, which is about 50%, and is very high-risk.

- ***Suky Bhaker*** responded to a question in the chat regarding ESIP, and confirmed that it is part of the MASIP model.

- ***Nicole Westmarland*** requested to look into the data – ***Suky Bhaker*** confirmed that she would connect.

Closing remarks

- ***Claire Waxman*** referenced the Government's mission to halve VAWG and the 2025 Spending Review announcement and made clear that stalking and domestic abuse stalking must be central to the Government's mission – both in terms of victim-survivor support and perpetrator interventions. ***Claire Waxman*** added that the criminal justice system also needs to be aware of how much they can be used by stalking perpetrators and ensure they respond effectively – the criminal justice system can be gratifying for stalking perpetrators by either literally or figuratively bringing them in proximity to victim-survivors.
- **ACTION:** ***Jess Asato MP*** suggested issuing a letter on behalf of the APPG regarding the meeting focus.
- ***The lived experience pioneer*** concluded that supporting victim-survivors is multi-dimensional, and that they resonated with everything that was discussed at the meeting.
- ***Jo Todd*** concluded that all developments must be underpinned and accompanied by wider systems change.