



Home Office

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21 November 2024

Dear Rachel, Andy C, Andy M,

I am writing to respond to the recommendations directed to the Government in the report outlining the findings of the super-complaint on the police response to stalking.

I would like to begin by thanking you for the careful and rigorous consideration your organisations gave to the claims set out by the National Stalking Consortium regarding alleged failings in the police response to stalking. As a prevalent and high-harm crime, tackling stalking is an extremely important part of this Government's mission to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. We will use every tool available to target perpetrators, protect victims and address the root causes of abuse and violence.

This letter outlines how the Government will respond to recommendations directed at us. We will publicly announce our response to the super-complaint alongside six measures to tackle stalking on December 3. We will also be working closely with policing, the NPCC, College of Policing and CPS as they implement their recommendations.

### **Recommendation 1**

Stalking is a complex and nuanced crime that requires full consideration of a perpetrator's course of conduct. I believe that one of the biggest challenges in the effective management of stalking crimes is that the police and other statutory professionals can struggle to understand what constitutes stalking. That is why I agree with your assessment that the legislation on stalking, contained in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, could be contributing to confusion regarding how stalking is described.

However, careful consideration needs to be given to the specific areas of legislative change your report highlighted to understand their potential impact and whether there are

further changes that should be made. This is why, in response to this recommendation, **I am committing to conducting a review of the stalking legislation to determine how the law should be changed.**

**I also intend to legislate at the earliest opportunity to introduce multi-agency statutory guidance on the crime of stalking.** For the first time, this will set out a multi-agency framework to which statutory agencies such as the police, healthcare and education must have due regard. This will include a clear definition of stalking and guidance on how agencies should work together to pursue perpetrators and protect victims.

## **Recommendation 2**

I accept this recommendation. **The Home Office will update information on stalking and harassment in the Home Office crime recording rules** to align with how stalking is described in the current statutory guidance for the police on Stalking Protection Orders.

## **Recommendation 3**

Given the Government's manifesto commitment to strengthen Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs), I was pleased to see this recommendation in your report. I know that when implemented and monitored effectively, SPOs represent a vital tool in tackling the perpetrator's behaviour while putting in place essential protections for victims. The challenge is that all too often SPOs aren't managed effectively or, in even more cases, they aren't put in place at all.

This is why I welcome the spirit of this recommendation and **I am committing to legislate at the earliest opportunity to enable the courts to issue an SPO on conviction or acquittal.** I agree that the current practice of using restraining orders in such scenarios is inadequate and we must act to close that gap.

However, more consideration is needed regarding the remaining areas of change that you recommend. I want to ensure that we consider all aspects of the SPO process, that we do it properly and we do it right. That is why **I have asked my officials to conduct a deep dive on SPOs to explore each recommended change** alongside whether other measures are needed to strengthen SPOs in line with our manifesto commitment. This will ensure that any changes to SPOs also align with wider reform to protective orders.

## **Recommendation 4**

I accept this recommendation. **The multi-agency statutory guidance mentioned in response to recommendation 1 will include a section on protective orders** to cover the most appropriate protective orders to use in stalking cases. My officials will work with the College of Policing and other criminal justice system partners to develop an accepted position on the most appropriate protective orders to use in stalking cases.

## **Recommendations 5, 6 and 8**

I accept these recommendations. The Home Office will **progress work to find the most appropriate way to include stalking in the national standards for incident recording and assessment while also reviewing the impact of the principal crime rule** on the identification and investigating of stalking.

**I also commit to publishing disaggregated police recorded crime data on stalking** meaning that data on the Section 2A and Section 4A offences will be separated.

## Recommendation 9

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) regularly publishes prosecutions and convictions data for breach of SPOs as part of the Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly. This data is included in the Criminal Courts statistics because breach of an SPO is a criminal offence. Data on volumes of SPOs, as civil orders applied for and granted by the magistrates' courts is collected by the MoJ at present but is not yet routinely published, however the data is made available to the Home Office on an annual basis. The Home Office have previously published this data, including when conducting their review in effectiveness of SPOs in 2022. The Department is working at pace to ensure the data that is collected is robust and meets the required standards for routine publication of the MoJ court data.

**I would therefore like to accept your recommendation to begin routine publication of this data**, but I am unable to confirm the exact date when this may be achieved. I can, however, give assurances that this will be done as soon as it is technically possible. When this publication becomes possible, the data will be published as part of MoJ Civil Court Statistics quarterly publication.

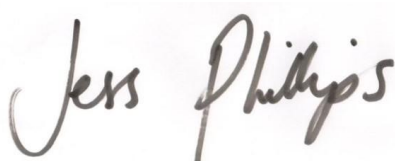
## Recommendation 26

I accept this recommendation. Effective and evidence-based stalking perpetrator interventions are an essential element of tackling stalking. We need provision that is consistent, available across the whole country and that will be effective in addressing perpetrator behaviours. I cannot confidently say that this is the current situation and that is unacceptable.

That is why **I am committing to publishing national standards for stalking perpetrator interventions**. Using the existing domestic abuse (DA) standards as a starting point, my officials will review the local evaluations from programmes funded through the Home Office Domestic Abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Intervention Fund while also conducting further research to gather the evidence base on what works. This will then form the basis of a set of principles that such interventions should follow. As it is also important that perpetrator programmes take note of these principles, **I have also asked my officials to explore accreditation akin to that provided by Respect for DA perpetrator interventions**.

Thank you once again for your organisation's work on the investigation of this super-complaint. You will see from the Government's response that we have carefully considered all the recommendations directed at the Government. Stalking can have a devastating impact on the lives of victims. For too long we have not placed the importance on tackling stalking that it deserves. This why I am proud that our response represents a step-change in combatting stalking that will have real-world impacts on the lives of stalking victims across our country.

Yours sincerely,



**Jess Phillips MP**  
**Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls**