

# The Angiolini Inquiry

Part 2 First Report: Prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public

December 2025

Return to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons dated 2 December 2025 for

# The Angiolini Inquiry

Part 2 First Report: Prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public

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#### **Foreword**

# Preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

This inquiry was established by the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Priti Patel MP, following the horrifying abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by off-duty police officer Wayne Couzens. While the Inquiry's work on Sarah's assailant concluded when the Part 1 Report was published on 29 February 2024, the Inquiry's connection to Sarah's case and her loving family has remained.

Sarah's mother, Susan, eloquently describes the loss and impact of Sarah's murder below:

"I read that you shouldn't let a tragedy define you, but I feel that Sarah's death is such a big part of me that I'm surprised there is no outer sign of it, no obvious mark of grief. I have been changed by it, but there is nothing to see. Outwardly we live our normal lives, but there is an inner sadness. People who do know are unfailingly kind and have helped more than they will ever know. We are not the only ones to lose a child, of course, and we form a sad bond with other bereaved parents.

After four years, the shock of Sarah's death has diminished but we are left with an overwhelming sense of loss and of what might have been. All the happy, ordinary things of life have been stolen from Sarah and from us – there will be no wedding, no grandchildren, no family celebrations with everyone there. Sarah will always be missing and I will always long for her.

I go through a turmoil of emotions – sadness, rage, panic, guilt and numbness. They used to come all in one day but as time goes by they are more widely spaced and, to some extent, time blunts the edges. I am not yet at the point where happy memories of Sarah come to the fore. When I think of her, I can't get past the horror of her last hours. I am still tormented by the thought of what she endured.

We find we still appreciate the lovely things of life, but, without Sarah, there is no unbridled joy. And grief is unpredictable – it sits there quietly only to rear up suddenly and pierce our hearts. They say that the last stage of grief is acceptance. I am not sure what that means. I am accustomed to Sarah no longer being with us, but I rage against it."

In recent months, I have had the great privilege to meet a number of other families bereaved by femicide. I am very grateful to them for being willing to share with the Inquiry their experiences and loss, and their ideas for how policing can improve. I am humbled by their strength and grace. The evidence they provided to the Inquiry will be used in the Inquiry's third report.

I never lose sight of why the Inquiry was set up and why the recommendations within the Inquiry's reports are so important to prevent recurrence. As such, I have also included an update on the progress to implement recommendations from Part 1 in this Report. These can be found in Chapter 1.

Sarah's abduction from a London street by an off-duty police officer brought into sharp relief the fear that many women experience in public spaces and the risks they face from men seeking to perpetrate sexually motivated crimes against them. The phrase 'she was only walking home' resonated with many women, as they reflected on how their own rights and freedoms in public spaces are inhibited by the possibility of suffering a similar tragic fate.

There is no national data on how many sexually motivated crimes against women take place in our public spaces every year. The women who are victims suffer sometimes devastating impacts. Moreover, the fear of these crimes affects many more women overall. Our public survey found that only around three in five women felt safe overall in public spaces.

This is not a new finding. Women are asked regularly in surveys about their experiences in public, and consistently say they do not feel safe.

Somehow, we have simply come to accept that many women do not feel safe walking in their streets. Now is the time to show them their voice matters and to take meaningful and effective action to address their concerns. At the time of finalising this Report, the Home Office had not yet published its new violence against women and girls strategy and action plan – for halving violence against women and girls – nor has this been shared in draft with the Inquiry. I hope that the recommendations and findings within this Report are carefully considered by those seeking to tackle this pervasive and harmful problem.

### **Inquiry findings**

This Report deals with the third section of the Part 2 Terms of Reference for this Inquiry, specifically: "The extent to which existing measures prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces." The Inquiry published a List of Issues to provide further insight into how it has interpreted the Terms of Reference for Part 2, and this explains how the Inquiry has defined public spaces and other relevant terms.<sup>2</sup>

Sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces should be seen as a problem for all of us, and comprehensive and unrelenting actions will be needed to prevent such crimes. It is therefore encouraging that in reviewing numerous measures the Inquiry identified excellent examples of work to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces from a wide range of sectors and organisations. These include the education, health, building, retail and transport sectors; central and local government; policing, prosecutors, prisons and probation; the charity and voluntary sector; academia; and community groups.

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

There are impressive initiatives at local, regional and national level. This includes a significant increase in policing focus on preventing these crimes. I want to pay particular tribute to everyone involved in two projects: Project Vigilant, a policing operation started in Thames Valley Police to target men predating on women in the nighttime economy; and Operation Soteria, a programme of work to improve the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape, and which explicitly aims to prevent further offending.

Operation Soteria and Project Vigilant have a common theme: a clear-sighted and unrelenting focus on identifying predatory men and rapists, and preventing them from offending or reoffending. This focus on perpetrators is critical. In seeking to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, there is much work – some of it excellent – to make places safer (through better lighting, for instance, or police patrols of problem areas), or to put in place extra safeguards for women in those places (through the provision of safer transport options after a night out, and apps which identify safer routes home, for instance). Most of the measures reviewed for this Report focus on one or both of these areas. But advice to women and improvements to the design of public spaces cannot prevent perpetrators committing crimes.

Therefore, the evidence that there is an increase in the focus being placed on the perpetrator is welcome. This should now be accelerated at pace. A much sharper and more immediate focus is needed on preventing predatory individuals from offending as well as preventing perpetrators from further offending. This requires much better data and information on patterns of offending, motivations for behaviour change, and what will stop them. Some of this information is available from:

- behaviour change programmes in prisons or the community;
- policing work to identify the men who pose the greatest risk to women;
- · Operation Soteria;
- Project Vigilant; and
- work following Part 1 of this Inquiry on patterns of offending, and more.

But this needs to be pulled together at speed and put into action to identify and – crucially – disrupt these men's behaviour.

The current Government's ambitions to halve violence against women and girls within a decade are laudable and right. A focus on perpetrators will help achieve these.

This laser focus on the perpetrators of these offences needs to be coupled with more and better efforts at ensuring a consistent and effective response when crimes are reported. We must never forget the litany of missed opportunities in the Couzens case, as detailed in this Inquiry's Part 1 Report.

Overall, there also needs to be a much better grip on and coordination of activity to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. All too often in response to tragic events, we see short-term initiatives and bursts of activity. Many of the measures we reviewed have been put in place since Sarah's murder. They are being led by passionate and committed organisations and individuals, but the result is a scattergun approach to

prevention. This makes it hard to identify and implement nationally the best initiatives. It is also inefficient, with very similar measures taking place in slightly different ways across England and Wales, and researchers, organisations and communities frequently competing for small pots of funding for what are sometimes very similar projects.

Coordination by the current Government would help to support these organisations and individuals, standardise approaches and evaluation methods, and roll out those measures that work nationally. The Inquiry found that, in the measures in place since 2021, there was too often a type of paralysis around a national roll-out because of the difficulties in proving return on investment, or because of the lack of ability to implement a single model consistently (particularly in policing). This is not the case, however, in other high-risk crime areas, such as serious and organised crime, and counter-terrorism, where funding and preventative activity (with sometimes little data on success) is the norm. To encourage a more unified and consistent approach in policing, I have recommended one measure for swift and consistent roll-out: Project Vigilant (described in Chapter 5).<sup>3</sup>

Some of this coordination and focus could be funded by bringing together current disparate initiatives and resources. Ultimately, however, the Inquiry concludes that the long-term change that is needed cannot be achieved through short-term investment and activity. In a time of fiscal constraint, prevention can often fall away, given that there are challenges in measuring its success. It will take brave and committed leadership, with collaborative skills, and politicians who recognise and acknowledge this challenge, to ensure that prevention remains a priority and is funded to succeed.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped and supported me with this Part of the Inquiry. I am particularly grateful to:

- the witnesses who participated in the Inquiry, for their time and candour in providing evidence;
- the organisations who disclosed material and gave evidence to the Inquiry;
- Four Communications for its media advice and support;
- Hestia's counselling services for support to the Inquiry Secretariat;
- my Reference Group members for their sage advice and guidance: Andrea Simon, Zoë Billingham CBE, Sir Stephen Lander KCB, Sir Iain Livingstone QPM, Nóirin O'Sullivan, Baroness Ruth Hunt and Charlotte Triggs OBE; and
- Solicitors to the Inquiry: Isabelle Mitchell, Susanna Medemblik and their colleagues from Eversheds Sutherland for all of their advice and excellent support.

Katherine Riley has made a major contribution to the research and drafting of this Report and is one of the most gifted individuals I have had the privilege of working with. I am so very grateful to her.

<sup>3</sup> This will build on funded work by the Home Office to strengthen Project Vigilant in 2025–26; see Chapter 5.

Warmest thanks also to Fran Tomlinson, Aisling O'Keeffe, Karen Lancaster, Sophie Harkins and Helen Noone for their expertise, analysis and hard work on the Report. I am also especially grateful to all the members of the team for their dedication and support in preparing this Report for publication. Special thanks also go to Mary Conaty Bruce who has been a brilliant support to me and all members of the Inquiry.

I would also like to give special thanks to Laura Gibb, who continues to be an outstanding Secretary to the Inquiry and a tremendous source of advice and guidance to me and to the Inquiry team. Her expertise, dedication and wisdom are absolutely exemplary and a credit to the Civil Service.

#### Conclusion

This Report is intended to keep women safe by helping those who are responsible for preventing sexually motivated crimes to improve what they do. It relies on a whole system of organisations and individuals to understand how best to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces and continue to listen to those most knowledgeable about, and most affected by, these crimes.

Then Angalini

Rt Hon. Lady Elish Angiolini LT DBE PC KC

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#### Note on the text

#### Language and terminology

This Report uses graphic and sexually explicit language to describe certain activities, behaviours and situations. Some readers may find this distressing.

This Report uses the term 'victim' to refer to a person who has had a crime, proven or alleged, committed against them, whether or not it was reported to the authorities. The person who is alleged to have perpetrated that crime against them is referred to as a 'perpetrator', unless they have been convicted of the crime, in which case the term 'offender' is used. Those who predate on women with the intention of committing sexually motivated crimes in public spaces are referred to as 'predatory'.

For the purposes of the Inquiry's work, 'women' are females aged 18 or above. Not all data referred to in the Report is collected using that same definition; for instance, some does not distinguish between women and girls. Any such differences are highlighted in the text. 'Public spaces' are registered common land, streets, open public spaces, unregulated outside space such as publicly accessible sports grounds, public areas outside buildings, and public transport. 'Sexually motivated crimes' are crimes which are sexual offences as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, or those which are not defined as sexual offences but are for the sexual gratification/fulfilment of the perpetrator.

While the Inquiry's Terms of Reference are specific to sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, several strategies, data collections and ambitions referenced in this Report relate to the wider category of violence against women and girls. This is the umbrella term used by the UK Government to refer to crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls, of which sexual offences are one category, together with crimes such as domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (which we know can have a sexual motivation or element), forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

#### Witness anonymity

In accordance with the commitments the Inquiry made to witnesses, every effort has been made to protect the privacy of those who provided evidence. As such, material has been presented in such a way as to ensure, as far as possible, that individuals are not identifiable. Those witnesses named or clearly identifiable either hold an accountable role in an organisation or have provided evidence as witnesses with expertise, or their identity is relevant and necessary to fulfil the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

#### References

Some footnotes in this Report contain document reference numbers used for the evidence that has been relied on by the Inquiry. These reference numbers have been redacted, as have any other associated documentation or sources from which evidence has been drawn. This is to ensure that the identities of individual witnesses and victims are kept confidential, as there is a risk that documents could be linked together, and sources discovered. The remaining footnotes are explanatory and designed to help readers understand technical or other specialist terms or to provide brief background information.

### **Executive summary**

#### Setting up the Inquiry

- ES.1 On 30 September 2021, Wayne Couzens, a serving officer with the Metropolitan Police Service, was sentenced to life imprisonment, with a whole-life order, for the abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard.
- ES.2 On 22 November 2021, the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Priti Patel MP, addressed Couzens' crimes and sentencing, announcing to Parliament that she was "launching an independent inquiry" and confirming that "the Right Honourable Dame Elish Angiolini QC has agreed to be the Chair of that inquiry". This was the first announcement confirming that the Angiolini Inquiry would be established.

#### Scope of the Inquiry

- ES.3 In her announcement on 22 November 2021, the then Home Secretary confirmed that the Inquiry would be made up of two parts. **Part 1** examined how Couzens "was able to serve as a police officer for so long and [sought] to establish a definitive account of his conduct". The Part 1 Report was published in February 2024.
- ES.4 The Terms of Reference for **Part 2** of the Inquiry were informed by the work of Part 1, as well as by submissions received as part of a public consultation. Part 2 examines broader issues about policing and the safety of women, raised by the cases of Couzens and the convicted rapist and former police officer David Carrick. It comprises three strands: (i) the recruitment and vetting of police officers and (ii) the culture and standards of policing both of which are currently being examined; and (iii) measures to help prevent sexually motivated violence against women and girls in public spaces which is the subject of this Report.
- ES.5 In February 2023, a former Metropolitan Police Service officer, David Carrick, was convicted of 49 crimes, including rape. The then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Suella Braverman MP, extended the scope of the Angiolini Inquiry to look into Carrick's criminal behaviour and the decision-making around his police vetting, as well as any abuse of police powers. The Terms of Reference for this **Part 3** of the Angiolini Inquiry were published on 7 February 2023, and the work is ongoing.

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Terms of Reference for this Part of the Inquiry

- ES.6 The Terms of Reference for this Part of the Inquiry were to examine the following: "The extent to which existing measures prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, including producing a summary of existing measures."<sup>3</sup>
- ES.7 The Inquiry published more information on how it intended to fulfil these Terms of Reference in May 2024,<sup>4</sup> and added to this in February 2025.<sup>5</sup> This set out how the Inquiry would:
  - examine quantitative and qualitative data in relation to sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces; and
  - identify barriers to/opportunities for the more effective use of existing measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Evidence-gathering and investigation**

- ES.8 The Inquiry received examples of preventative measures and other information from a range of organisations across Government (including the Home Office, the Welsh Government, the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Transport), the criminal justice sector (including HM Prison and Probation Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the Crown Prosecution Service and the National Crime Agency), and the charity and voluntary sector. The Inquiry also interviewed witnesses, including the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, the Rt Hon. Jess Phillips MP, senior victims' representatives, academics, and senior leaders from policing and the wider criminal justice system.
- ES.9 Fieldwork within eight forces (referred to as 'the fieldwork forces') took place across a three-month period, between September and November 2024. This included: a review of 240 case files, focusing on the response to reports of rape, sexual assault and indecent exposure committed against women in public spaces; interviews with Chief Constables, and leads for investigations, innovation, communications and public protection; and focus groups with current police officers and police staff. Relevant information and documents were also requested from these forces.
- ES.10 The Inquiry also held in-person and online evidence-gathering sessions with groups of representatives from the Government, policing, probation, inspectorates, academia, and the charity and voluntary sector. Finally, the Inquiry commissioned a survey of 2,000 members of the public (referred to as 'the Inquiry's public survey').
- ES.11 The full methodology is given in Appendix A.

<sup>3 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### **Inquiry findings**

# The prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is not known

- ES.12 The scale of the issue of violence against women and girls is stark and well rehearsed. The *Violence Against Women and Girls National Policing Statement 2024* from the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing<sup>7</sup> noted that 1 in 20 adults in England and Wales are recorded as perpetrators of violence against women and girls per year (with "the actual number of perpetrators [...] likely [to be] substantially higher than this estimate", while "at least" 1 in 12 women will be victims of gender-based violence. Police-recorded crimes counting as violence against women and girls constituted just under 20 per cent of all crime recorded in England and Wales (excluding fraud), with an estimated 2,959 crimes being recorded by police daily in 2022/23. This does not take into account the significant number of crimes that are unreported.
- ES.13 However, within these statistics, data on the number and type of sexually motivated crimes committed against women in public is difficult to obtain, patchy and incomplete. As an example, no single set of data shows how many women have been raped in a public place in England or Wales in the last year. This needs urgent attention.
- ES.14 In contrast to the relative lack of data recorded by the police and the Government, women have frequently and consistently recorded and reported the impact that these sexually motivated crimes in public have on them. Victim Personal Statements lay bare the torment that such offending can cause.
- ES.15 Many surveys have been carried out to ask women what their experiences have been, and when and where they feel unsafe. Across all these surveys including the survey carried out for this Inquiry the results are remarkably consistent. Women (including many of the female police officers interviewed as part of this Inquiry) are routinely altering their plans, routes and behaviours to try and stay safe. They give advice to their female friends and relatives about this, and receive advice in return. They have normalised sexual harassment, and the state of being on high alert particularly at night, in parks and on public transport, but also in any environment where they feel at risk of sexually motivated crime (which can be in any public space). This fear is not unfounded: in 2021, a United Nations survey of over 1,000 UK women reported that 71 per cent had experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space, at some point in their lives previously.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>8 [\*\*\*].</sup> While this information has been collated by the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Home Office only endorses the following sources of data: official crime statistics from the Crime Survey for England and Wales; police-recorded crime statistics published by the Office for National Statistics; and, for some types of crimes counting as violence against women and girls, the Home Office. See more detailed analysis of data in Chapter 2.

<sup>9 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>10 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

ES.16 In terms of what would make women feel safer in public spaces, the answers consistently selected were "greater police visibility", 12 more CCTV and better lighting (see Chapter 5 in this Report). 13 Women also answer that they would report more incidents to the police if they trusted that the police would take their report seriously and act upon it.

# There is widespread recognition of the crucial role of prevention in reducing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces (and fear of them) – and structures are mostly in place

- ES.17 The governments in the scope of this Inquiry have set major and ambitious targets for violence against women and girls: namely, the Welsh Government has aimed, since 2022, "to make Wales the safest place to be a woman"; <sup>14</sup> and the current UK Government plans to halve violence against women and girls within the next decade. Witnesses also referenced work in Scotland and Australia with common themes, suggesting shared ambitions in this area. There are strategies, processes and governance structures in place to support these ambitions, across which prevention is emphasised as key to reducing violence against women and girls. These provide a solid framework for delivering effective preventative activity. With very few exceptions, witnesses did not suggest more was needed (in terms of additional orders to manage men who posed a risk to women, for instance, or new legislation for offences).
- ES.18 Instead, the Inquiry concludes that a unifying approach is needed. Since 2021, there has been an upturn in references to 'whole-system' approaches to tackling violence against women and girls. For instance, the Inquiry saw references to whole-system, <sup>15</sup> whole-school <sup>16</sup> and whole-policing <sup>17</sup> approaches. The Department of Health and Social Care defines this in the following way:

"A whole system view means all parts of the system are resourced and held accountable for duties and responsibilities placed upon them." 18

ES.19 Broadly, this phrasing recognises that reducing violence against women and girls is a societal issue, and a whole-system approach will require coordinated partnership working, with the support and effort of the community and statutory and non-statutory services, and access to a range of tools and mechanisms to tackle the crimes.

<sup>12</sup> Although this was not true in all demographics, with Black women and women from other ethnic minority groups less likely to choose this option than white women in most surveys.

<sup>13</sup> What is known of the effectiveness of some of these measures in preventing crimes is covered in Chapter 7.

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>15 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

ES.20 The Inquiry agrees that a whole-system approach is needed. But witnesses told us that too much of the focus for preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces remains with the police. Prevention is the first Peelian principle, <sup>19</sup> and policing undoubtedly has a critical role to play in it. However, it is crucial that all parts of the system are working together, funded properly and united around a single vision. This includes within policing itself, where some senior leaders have disagreed about the extent of the role that police officers should have in primary prevention.

#### **Evaluation of prevention measures is limited – and challenging**

- ES.21 The lack of data on the prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces severely limited the Inquiry's ability to evaluate the measures designed to prevent this type of crime. In addition, many witnesses from operational policing and other sectors told us that prevention was, in itself, hard to prove (how do you know what might have happened, if it had not been prevented?).<sup>20</sup> The Inquiry notes the risk that this can create a sort of paralysis, where the difficulty of evaluating prevention contributes to a lack of investment particularly in times of tight budgets.
- ES.22 Some of the measures the Inquiry looked at had been formally evaluated. There was no standard way of doing this. The most common metrics used were: surveys assessing the impact of a measure on women's feelings of safety; surveys assessing impact on the number of crimes or incidents reported; surveys of awareness (of a particular campaign, for instance); and surveys of reported attitudinal change (for instance, related to confidence to intervene if a woman is being sexually harassed). There were, however, limitations to all these metrics. For instance, measuring awareness provides solid quantitative data on whether an individual has seen a specific poster (for instance) or not, but the evaluations seldom then explored attitudinal change (does the individual report that they are more likely to take action, for instance?), and even fewer looked at behavioural change or other outcomes. This is in line with the *Policing and Health Collaboration:* Landscape Review 2021, which considered the effectiveness of primary prevention in a public health and policing context: "Studies often describe interventions and how they are delivered. However, studies rarely focus on how and why an intervention influences, or does not influence, specific outcomes."21
- ES.23 Overall, therefore, the Inquiry finds inconsistent levels and types of evaluation of preventative measures across and within all sectors. The current lack of data on the prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, together with the inconsistent approach to evaluating preventative measures, affected the Inquiry's own ability to determine the extent to which individual measures prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.<sup>22</sup> As a result, in some instances, when the Inquiry attempted to gather evidence on the effectiveness of some measures, it was not possible to do so. Evaluations of measures were

<sup>19</sup> The Peelian principles are a set of nine principles for policing. They are seen as underpinning how policing operates in England and Wales.

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>22</sup> The Home Office notified the Inquiry that, as part of the new violence against women and girls strategy, it is engaging with the Office for National Statistics to produce a suite of headline metrics to measure the progress of halving violence against women and girls in a decade [\*\*\*].

examined where these were provided, alongside thematic evaluation reviews (such as the College of Policing's series of evidence briefings entitled 'Interventions to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces').<sup>23</sup> This Report highlights some measures where the Inquiry considers that the weight of evidence collected means those measures are particularly effective in helping to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

#### At a local level, creative and targeted prevention work is taking place to keep women safe from sexually motivated offences in public spaces

- ES.24 Witnesses to the Inquiry from all sectors almost universally thought there had been an increase in activity to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces since 2021. They attributed this to an intense focus on tackling violence against women and girls more widely, following Sarah's murder, as well as some strong leadership on the issue. Another factor was the reopening of nightlife venues, such as bars and clubs, after COVID-19, and police forces and local authorities seeing this as a chance to reset and refocus efforts to make town centres and journeys home safer for women.
- ES.25 As a result, the Inquiry saw evidence of excellent, targeted prevention work taking place across England and Wales, with some exceptional leadership and commitment at all levels dedicated to preventing offending and keeping women safe. Case studies are given throughout the Report to illustrate this work; it would have been possible to include many more examples.
- ES.26 This preventative work includes: individuals and companies working closely with architects to design spaces where women are safe and feel safe; targeted and active management of known sexual offenders; use of apps to report incidents or feelings of being unsafe (in one example, a woman sent a photo of a perpetrator to British Transport Police from a train after he had assaulted her, and the offender was arrested shortly afterwards);<sup>24</sup> positive male role modelling;<sup>25</sup> training drugs dogs to detect spiked drinks;<sup>26</sup> and innovative use of technology (for instance, to identify patterns of movement across transport networks that are associated with predatory behaviour).

#### At a national level, prevention is underfunded and underprioritised

ES.27 While the structures, powers and processes in place for prevention were seen as relatively complete, they were described by one witness as "a bit like a puffball [... it] looks very big, but there's nothing there",<sup>27</sup> with little substance and limited capability to effect change. For instance, since 2023 violence against women and girls has been in the Strategic Policing Requirement (the Home Secretary's assessment of the current national threats, and the policing capability required to respond to them);

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>24 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>25 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

but it was not supported with the required funding to meet the level of challenge, in the way that other types of crime were (such as counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime). More generally, the Inquiry found too many instances (across different sectors) of stated commitments to prevention without the presence of the funding, data, evaluation or plans needed to make them sustainable. For example, the Inquiry heard that civil orders<sup>28</sup> were available but not used because of a lack of knowledge or confidence in applying for them, and that prevention initiatives were cut short (or cancelled altogether) because of late funding decisions or the abstraction of staff (taking officers away from their core roles to cover other duties).

- ES.28 These issues are all related and present a Catch-22 situation. Without data on sexually motivated crimes in public, on the offenders and the victims or on reoffending rates, it is impossible to evaluate the success of any initiative. However, without data-driven proof of success, it is hard to attract funding to pilot an initiative. The situation is exacerbated by starting off with inconsistent quality of data in the first place.
- ES.29 While the Inquiry acknowledges these issues, it also notes that other sectors (especially health) are far more advanced in being able to demonstrate the impact and necessity of preventative measures.

# The result is extremely inconsistent preventative activity across all levels

- ES.30 Where there was long-term ambition but an absence of long-term resourcing, the Inquiry found some examples of small, short-term pieces of prevention work set up to try and bridge the gap. These were many in number, and uncoordinated, with new measures being launched regularly and some measures also ending during the course of the investigation.<sup>29</sup> Combined with the number of strategies and action plans related to violence against women and girls more widely, the result is a very fast-moving and changing environment (of which this Report represents a snapshot in time).
- ES.31 This also results in inefficiencies and missed opportunities. There is much repetition across England and Wales, some of which (for example, public information campaigns on acceptable behaviours) the Inquiry considers could be brought together, for efficiency and consistency.
- ES.32 When there are promising measures introduced, there are few mechanisms in place for successfully identifying them and moving them quickly into national use, or for providing accreditation on the basis of meeting particular standards. This creates a risk to sustainability, and has led to a proliferation of measures, some of which have been tweaked and so weakened.
- ES.33 This use of scarce resources on piloting the same (or very similar) measures independently in different parts of the country also means that some of the areas where there is a greater need for research and activity are not being resourced. The

<sup>28</sup> Civil orders are legal means by which the police and others can try and prevent harm or further harm, by placing restrictions or requirements on individuals.

<sup>29</sup> For instance, the Railway Guardian and One Scream apps (see Chapter 5).

Inquiry notes that there is a campaign saturation, with adverts sometimes containing very similar public information messages (relating to bystander interventions and acceptable behaviour, for instance) all headed up, funded and evaluated separately by local, regional and national organisations. However, there is a relative lack of prevention initiatives aimed squarely at changing perpetrator behaviour.

ES.34 The funding situation is partly to blame for (and exacerbates) this picture. The Inquiry saw evidence that:

- Decisions around prevention activity were sometimes based on being able to spend money quickly (which could be needed, for instance to use up budgets as financial year end approaches), as opposed to a long-term view of what might best work.
- Some of the victim support services that might help prevent revictimisation (and so offending) faced a cliff edge of funding, which meant that they could not retain staff with the right expertise and skillset.
- Overworked probation and police officers had very large numbers of sexual offenders to manage with the aim of preventing reoffending.
- There were limited resources for behaviour change programmes or therapeutic support for men who recognised their own harmful behaviour.
- Innovation was being hampered by the need to apply for lots of little pots of funding, often at speed.

#### Perpetrators must be the focus

- ES.35 It is important to recognise that, sadly, even with the best processes in the world working well, there will always be a cohort of individuals who commit sexual offences and pose a threat to women in public. It is these dangerous individuals who must be targeted with the full weight of prevention activity.
- ES.36 Multiple witnesses told the Inquiry about how women and girls have repeatedly been told that their safety is up to them, and that they must change their behaviour. This is often instead of telling predatory men to change their behaviour to stop being a predator. This has been described to the Inquiry by witnesses as 'responsibilising' the person to whom the behaviour has happened in other words, assigning responsibility to them rather than the person actually carrying out the behaviour.<sup>30</sup> One witness said:

"Many prevention messages focus on giving women instructions such as, 'don't walk home alone at night', 'take your phone out with you', 'watch your drinks', 'watch your friend's drinks' [...] Most women have been doing that since childhood."<sup>31</sup>

ES.37 There is also no way of calculating how many crimes are already being prevented by women changing their behaviour and being on alert.

<sup>30 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

ES.38 But advice to women and improvements to the design of public spaces cannot prevent perpetrators committing crimes. A greater emphasis should be placed on preventing perpetrators from reoffending – or from being able to perpetrate in the first place. But the Inquiry found that the data on, and understanding of, the men who perpetrate sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is limited and disjointed. So too is the information for men, or their families, who recognise they need help before they offend, alongside the understanding of what will stop them committing crimes, and clarity on the options available if the answer to that is 'nothing'.

# What's needed: Exploiting what is already in place – and resourcing it properly

- ES.39 There are multiple examples of processes that could effectively support crime prevention if they were deployed to the cause of preventing these public space crimes. For instance:
  - a. There are Designing Out Crime Officers in every police force. Their job is to help planners and architects in the design of safe public spaces – but they have not all been tasked with focusing on preventing violence against women and girls as part of this; and when they do give advice on this subject, it is sometimes ignored.
  - b. Civil orders<sup>32</sup> are legal means by which the police and others can try and prevent harm or further harm via restrictions or requirements on individuals. In relation to perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes, this can include placing restrictions or requirements on men who represent a danger to women in public. For instance, by requiring them to stay away from particular areas, or even by preventing them from speaking to women they don't know. Civil orders are available and witnesses liked them but some forces tend to use them far more often than others.
- ES.40 The Inquiry considers that the wider community itself is a major untapped resource. This is recognised in the campaign for a Good Samaritan law, as is being championed by Farah Naz, Zara Aleena's aunt and campaigner. Evidence was also presented on a range of measures already taking place, from 'safety escorts', to community involvement in the design of green spaces, to accreditation schemes whereby shops and supermarkets can show themselves to be safe havens. The Inquiry saw many excellent examples, often led by local authorities with a range of local partners, of truly community-based comprehensive planning. These represent good models.

#### Long-term commitment is needed for long-term change

ES.41 The Inquiry understands that 'proving' that prevention is working is hard. But this should not be a barrier to doing it more effectively. As one witness pointed out, prevention is just as hard in the areas of serious and organised crime and counterterrorism, yet is being used far more heavily in response to those types of crime.

<sup>32</sup> The statutory basis for the different preventative orders is set out in Chapter 5.

- ES.42 One difference between these crimes is the sheer volume of sexual offending that takes place. HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Andy Cooke QPM DL, told the Inquiry: "If you could get the world to stop for just six months, you could build a really good preventative base." The Inquiry agrees with this sentiment. But this demand on policing and public services is not going to decrease. There will never be a better time than now.
- ES.43 There needs to be a long-term, comprehensive prevention strategy, which sets out a positive ambition, and is bold in recognising the length of time that improvements will take. The Inquiry considers the model of public health campaigns useful in this regard (for instance, in eradicating smoking). Change needs to be sustainable, not based on a few individuals fighting for their preferred measures, whose legacy may collapse when they leave.<sup>34</sup>
- ES.44 The Inquiry concludes that sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces have not received sufficient coordinated scrutiny or activity to enable fully effective prevention. This is evidenced by (among other things) the lack of data (on prevalence or perpetrators), the relative absence of specific programmes aimed at tackling this kind of offending (compared with, for instance, domestic abuse which can include sexual violence<sup>35</sup>), and the limited funding and capability allocated to initiatives in this area.

# There is a need to improve the identification of and information on perpetrators

"[T]o protect women [...] we need to understand men."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>36</sup>

"If you want to understand what's going on in society and predict and prevent sexual offending, you need to understand what perpetrators are doing, how and why."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>37</sup>

ES.45 Police prevention initiatives around rape and serious sexual offences (Operation Soteria) and predatory men in the nighttime economy (Project Vigilant), together with the various police operations to identify the most harmful violence against women and girls offenders, are providing a wealth of new data on perpetrators.<sup>38</sup> It is imperative that this is harnessed to improve identification of predatory men. This work should exploit artificial intelligence to build a profile of offenders who can then be actively managed – the Inquiry heard some very positive examples of this. But

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34</sup> The Inquiry was informed that prevention would be a key pillar of the new violence against women and girls strategy

<sup>35</sup> Although the Inquiry acknowledges that demand also outstrips supply for domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.

<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>38</sup> This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

this needs to be consistent and specifically based on a better understanding of why men commit this type of crime; and the profiling then needs to be followed up with targeted interventions that help prevent offending, or further offending.

#### There is no silver bullet

ES.46 The Inquiry considers that there is not one silver bullet in tackling sexually motivated offences against women in public. Instead, there needs to be long-term commitment, cross-party agreement and a steady course in preventing these crimes – through education, thorough investigations and swift arrests – always with an unswerving focus on the perpetrators of crimes against women.

#### Conclusion

- ES.47 Prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is a stated strand of activity within violence against women and girls strategies published by a range of national and local government and other public sector organisations. Activity is taking place, with some creative and excellent examples, strong leadership and an unswerving commitment to making public spaces safer for women.
- ES.48 Some of the measures the Inquiry reviewed showed evidence of positive impacts. These were most often related to: women's increased feelings of safety; the number of men displaying predatory behaviour who were disrupted; or swift and effective action when a crime had taken place, preventing further crimes. The Inquiry considers all of these to be appropriate ways of evaluating the success of measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- ES.49 But it is difficult to answer the question of the cumulative effectiveness of prevention activity. There are a wide range of measures across primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention. Few are targeted specifically at preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, but many that have wider aims are still relevant and contribute to prevention. Measures are also too scattergun, and inconsistent across and within sectors or geographical areas, as well as often too short-term. There are no agreed metrics, or even consistent, reliable data on the prevalence of perpetrators, upon which to base a cumulative assessment of effectiveness.
- ES.50 Prevention of these sometimes devastating crimes is not properly coordinated, funded or evaluated, and too often officers and staff are abstracted from prevention duties. Strategies in place to support prevention (across sectors) too often do not have adequate funding or resourcing to underpin them. Missed opportunities, lack of resources and mistakes in the system have had very real consequences in failing to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- ES.51 The Inquiry considers that efforts to try to achieve long-term change are met with a series of uncoordinated, short-term measures, powered by good will as opposed to proper funding. This will not work. Women will continue to be harmed.

ES.52 Sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces is a whole-society problem. The whole of society now needs to play its part in preventing it. Within this, there are specific measures that the Inquiry considers should be nationally implemented immediately. These are: a single public information campaign; the roll-out across all forces of Project Vigilant, a policing approach aimed at identifying predatory men in the nighttime economy, and preventing them from offending; and a properly funded and resourced Operation Soteria (the policing programme that aims to prevent further rape and serious sexual offences by effectively investigating cases, which should lead to more prosecutions). These would provide a visible grip on prevention, with a focus on perpetrators, and start to provide better guiderails for a fully coordinated response.

#### Recommendations

- ES.53 This Report is the second report from the Angiolini Inquiry. The numbering of the recommendations follows on from the 16 recommendations made in the Part 1 Report.
- ES.54 The recommendations in this Report are being made now because it is important that action is taken to improve prevention activity, but they do not anticipate or prejudge the evidence that will be considered in the later stages of the Inquiry, or the conclusions to be made from that evidence. The Inquiry expects to make further recommendations in subsequent reports.
- ES.55 The Inquiry commends these recommendations to those who have responsibility for prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

#### Recommendation 17: Collection and sharing of data at national and local levels

Immediately, the Home Office should lead work, coordinated by the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, to significantly increase both the collection and use of data on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, in order to establish an informed understanding of these crimes and assist in building effective preventative measures. This work should:

- a. Add requirements for police forces to consistently record and provide data on: (i) the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim (i.e. whether they are strangers, or known to each other); and (ii) a description of the location of the offence(s) (by way of defined categories of public spaces or private premises), as part of their annual data returns. Consideration should be given to how this data can usefully inform the work of the Safer Streets mission to improve and better target prevention activity.
- b. Review the capability and capacity of police analysts, working to increase the recruitment, retention and recognition of the central role these professionals play in helping to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

- c. Establish annual information collection, using existing surveys, to understand women's perceptions of safety and their experiences and the public's perception of sexually motivated crimes in public settings. Consideration should be given to how this data can usefully inform the work of the Safer Streets mission to improve and better target prevention activity.
- d. Set clear guidelines that, where data is gathered by policing from female victims of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, they should be offered the opportunity to share information regarding protected characteristics. This is to ensure that, where possible, an accurate picture of victimisation is provided, and the correct support is available. Guidelines should cover details of how to conduct this data collection in a way that is sensitive to the needs of victims.

# Recommendation 18: Increased use of police Designing Out Crime Officers in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

By November 2026, the Government should explore how to improve the impact that the safety advice provided by police Designing Out Crime Officers could have on the prevention of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, including by amendments to policies and changing their status within relevant planning legislation.

#### Recommendation 19: Targeted and consistent public messaging

By March 2026, the Home Office, as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls, should agree funding for a multi-year series of public information campaigns centred around the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. These campaigns should be managed and funded centrally by the UK Government, but rolled out regionally and locally in a sustainable and consistent way. They should all have the same central purpose and messaging, and include evaluation metrics based on behaviour and attitudinal change, as well as communications reach and engagement.

This recommendation should not be seen to supersede any progress made against Recommendation 5 from the Part 1 Report (the Home Office should launch a public information campaign on indecent exposure). Instead, any activity to implement Recommendation 5 from the Part 1 Report should seek to incorporate any relevant learning from this, subsequent, recommendation as part of the response (despite the passage of time and nine-month delay in implementation; see Chapter 1 on the implementation of recommendations from the Part 1 Report for further details on this).

#### Recommendation 20: Empowering and engaging citizens to take action

The public has a pivotal role to play in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. In recognition of that:

- a. By April 2026, the Home Office, as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls, should agree funding for (and later implement) a multi-year series of active bystander public information campaigns centred around the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. Campaigns should be launched by no later than December 2026. These should be managed and funded centrally by the UK Government, but rolled out regionally and locally in a sustainable and consistent way. They should all have the same central purpose and messaging, and include evaluation metrics based on behaviour and attitudinal change, as well as communications reach and engagement.
- By July 2026, the Home Office should agree which agencies should have ownership of the coordination standards and messaging around active bystander training.
- c. By July 2026, the Government should consider the arguments for the introduction of a wider Good Samaritan law, as is being championed by Farah Naz, Zara Aleena's aunt and campaigner; and in particular consider the potential impact that introducing such a law could have on the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

#### Recommendation 21: National roll-out of Project Vigilant

By April 2026, the Home Office, the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, and the National Police Chiefs' Council should roll out Project Vigilant nationally and consistently across all forces in England and Wales. This should be introduced primarily across nighttime economy spaces but should then be expanded to other suitable environments in which Project Vigilant could help prevent and interrupt perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. In addition, Police and Crime Commissioners should specifically liaise with Chief Constables on the implementation of Project Vigilant in their areas, to understand its impact on the delivery of the force's Police and Crime Plan, and its contribution to national policing capabilities aimed at tackling violence against women and girls.

### Recommendation 22: Information and early intervention for men and boys to create a culture of positive masculinity

By September 2026, the Home Office (as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls), working closely with the Department for Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the Department of Health and Social Care, should increase and improve the information, support and programmes available to men and boys that create a culture of positive masculinity, to help prevent them from committing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This work should include:

- a. implementing the recommendation from Creating a Safer World The Challenge of Regulating Online Pornography (the 2025 Independent Pornography Review conducted by Baroness Bertin) that "resources and funding should be focused on school and community programmes specifically for boys and young men in order to encourage healthy discussions about positive masculinity and relationships, and to counter misogynistic culture";<sup>39</sup>
- b. creating a comprehensive and easy-to-access online space that provides support to intervene and prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces by providing information directly to perpetrators and their families; this could take a similar form to information available on the Enough website aimed at domestic abuse perpetrators, and should be designed in collaboration with specialist organisations who support perpetrators;
- c. increasing the availability of early interventions available via GPs, self-referral, social workers for individuals who have not yet committed a sexual offence but have concerns about their thoughts or behaviours, as well as the availability of interventions via probation officers where the individual is already within the criminal justice system; and
- d. reviewing the availability, use and effectiveness of behaviour change programmes for these men and boys (whether self-referred, GP-referred or provided as part of a condition on a criminal justice order), with actions to increase the availability of these programmes as necessary.

# Recommendation 23: Police prioritisation of the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

Immediately, Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners should ensure that the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is an essential part of: (i) their violence against women and girls plans; and (ii) the Police and Crime Plans. This should include:

 a. circulating consistent and sustained leadership communications across the force, with Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners making very clear the priority placed on these offences;

- b. senior officers reviewing and taking appropriate action on metrics around these crimes, as part of standard and regular force performance management;
- c. formal reviews by the senior officer team in every force to ensure that all relevant force functional areas have clear roles and responsibilities regarding the prevention of these crimes, with mechanisms in place to test officer and staff understanding; and
- d. in addition to Recommendation 18 increased use of police Designing Out Crime Officers in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces – taking sustained action to train, empower and embed these roles in forces.

#### **Recommendation 24: Implementation of Operation Soteria**

By March 2026, the Home Office, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council, and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, should agree plans for the full, consistent and sustainable implementation of Operation Soteria across all forces in England and Wales.

This should include agreement of multi-year funding, covering the period until Operation Soteria has been both fully implemented and evaluated in all forces, with any issues arising from each evaluation being addressed. In addition, Police and Crime Commissioners should specifically liaise with Chief Constables on the implementation of Operation Soteria in their areas, to understand its impact on the delivery of the force's Police and Crime Plan, and its contribution to national policing capabilities aimed at tackling violence against women and girls.

### Recommendation 25: A truly whole-system approach to preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

By June 2026, building on the wider violence against women and girls strategy, the Government should publish a comprehensive, multi-year and whole-system prevention strategy, which specifically targets the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This strategy should:

- a. coordinate activity and measures aimed at: (i) preventing these crimes happening in the first place; and (ii) reducing the risk of perpetrators reoffending;
- b. coordinate and direct work to encourage reporting of these crimes;

- c. be based on: (i) a clear expectation of how and why the planned actions aim to contribute to prevention of crimes (informed by the research commissioned under Recommendation 17(b); and (ii) comprehensive and meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including charity and voluntary sector groups who represent victims and perpetrators;
- d. adopt a public health approach, with prevention activity across primary, secondary and tertiary levels;
- e. provide absolute clarity on the roles and responsibilities of essential and accountable sectors, agencies and departments to help avoid duplication in efforts and strengthen joint working this should include: (i) following liaison with the National Police Chiefs' Council, clarity on the extent of the role of policing in primary prevention (i.e. tackling the underlying roots of violence against women and girls); and (ii) where appropriate, introducing statutory duties where this is assessed as most needed;
- f. have secure multi-year funding, aligning with at least the ten-year period specified for halving violence against women and girls; and
- g. include the establishment of a robust evaluation mechanism in order to measure the success of the prevention strategy which should be aligned with the recommendations of the Home Affairs Committee's 2025 report *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls: Funding* and include a set of common metrics to allow for assessment of activity across all levels, and to measure progress.

If an assessment is made that new statutory duties or obligations are required to support the implementation of this prevention strategy and avoid duplication in efforts and strengthen joint working, steps should be taken without delay to secure the introduction of the relevant legislation.

### Recommendation 26: Improved mechanism for converting a promising policing initiative from local to national practice

By March 2026, the College of Policing, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council including the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Adviser, the Home Office, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, should ensure that there are improved mechanisms in place to identify, test and roll out promising initiatives designed to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This should include:

a. continuing to encourage local innovation, but with an improved, standard mechanism in place by which local innovations can be tested, rolled out and evaluated nationally, learning from Operation Soteria; and

b. working with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners on an approach that encourages Police and Crime Commissioners (and their successors) and mayoral offices to liaise with Chief Constables about the implementation of rolled-out measures, the impact they can have on delivery of the forces' Police and Crime Plans, and their contribution to national policing capabilities in prevention of violence against women and girls; this work should include obtaining an understanding of the rationale behind any decision **not to** implement any measure, and recording those reasons.

#### **Recommendation 27: Perpetrator focus and interventions**

Immediately, the Home Office, as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls, in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Transport, and national and local policing organisations, should prioritise prevention activity targeting the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This should include the following actions:

- a. Immediately, the Home Office commissioning research to draw together and analyse information on the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public, in order to help target preventative activity. This should include analysis of:
  - information from behaviour change programmes on perpetrators' patterns of behaviour; their motivations for behaviour change; and what is most effective at preventing this behaviour; and
  - ii. information from academic and operational knowledge produced by Project Vigilant, Operation Soteria, the Metropolitan Police Service's Violence Against Women and Girls 100 (V100) programme and similar programmes of perpetrator-focused work.
- b. By November 2026, the College of Policing and, within it, the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, in collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council, should use this research to develop training and guidance on how to identify and target policing activity against potential perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This should include an interventions toolkit for use in forces. The training and guidance should be rolled out to forces by April 2027. It should then be updated annually, based on priorities identified in the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat Risk Assessment (which the National Police Chiefs' Council should update in light of the research in Recommendation 17(a)).
- c. By December 2027, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary should complete an inspection of the implementation of the new training and guidance in Recommendation 17(b), and of the efficiency and effectiveness of forces in adopting a perpetrator focus. This should include assessment of how successfully forces are balancing this focus with an appropriate and effective response to victims.

d. Immediately, and while acknowledging the fact that many sexual offences are never reported to the police, the Home Office should include, as a metric within its evaluation of the success of the Government's commitment to halve violence against women and girls in ten years, the number of perpetrators of these crimes who are prevented from further sexual offending. As a minimum, this should include: the number of perpetrators who are (i) arrested; (ii) prosecuted; and (iii) convicted of these crimes; and in addition (iv) information on reoffending rates for these categories; and (v) data on the number of individuals interrupted through Project Vigilant patrols.

# Recommendation 28: Improvement of the investigation of sexually motivated crimes against women and girls in public spaces

By March 2026, the College of Policing and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Crown Prosecution Service, should create a consistent and clear standard for police investigations in this area, explicitly addressing the detection of predatory perpetrators. The Home Secretary should give consideration to using her powers under section 53A of the Police Act 1996, which enables her to issue regulations that mandate police forces to follow particular procedures and practices.

### Recommendation 29: Government prioritisation of the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

Immediately, the Government should take action to make it clearer that preventing sexually motivated offences against women in public is an essential part of tackling violence against women and girls. This should include the following:

- a. The Government should ensure that this Report, the detail of the violence against women and girls strategy, and the prevention strategy at Recommendation 25 (and the evaluation of its success, if available) are before the Secretary of State to inform her view on how to update future versions of the Strategic Policing Requirement. This is so that the Secretary of State can use this information to assess the level of importance and prominence to give to the threat of violence against women and girls (compared with the other identified national threats); and specifically to the prioritisation of the prevention of sexual offences against women in public spaces.
- b. The Government should commit to and pursue a positive ambition that generally these crimes are preventable, not inevitable, with a clear focus on prevention being key to meeting the target of halving violence against women and girls over ten years.

- c. The Government should ensure that there is a clear focus on identifying, responding to and preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces in the job descriptions, training and guidance for the remodelled neighbourhood policing roles.
- d. The Government has, previously, provided an initial response to *Creating a Safer World The Challenge of Regulating Online Pornography*, the 2025 Independent Pornography Review conducted by Baroness Bertin. This included recognising the need to act urgently to tackle the harms from illegal and harmful pornography online, and the link between attitudes and behaviours in the online and offline world. The Government also recognised that this is crucial in order to deliver the mission to halve violence against women and girls in ten years. It is deeply worrying that harmful content that would be illegal offline remains unrestrained online. Therefore, the Government should provide a full response to each of the recommendations in the Review by February 2026, to enable cross-cutting prevention activity alongside the recommendations in this Report.

# Chapter 1. Implementation of recommendations from Part 1 Report

#### Introduction

- On 29 February 2024, the Angiolini Inquiry Part 1 Report was laid in Parliament and published. Within it, I made 16 recommendations designed to strengthen police vetting and recruitment procedures to ensure that someone like Wayne Couzens could not enter or remain in policing. I also made recommendations to build and strengthen policing's understanding of indecent exposure, so police officers are better equipped to respond appropriately to those who report, and catch those who perpetrate, such distressing crimes. I made these recommendations after careful consideration of the significant body of evidence I received during Part 1 of this Inquiry.
- 1.2 I remain of the view that these recommendations are relevant and necessary. They are particularly relevant to the issues that are being explored during Part 2 of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference (and in due course Part 3), including those covered in this Report. In order to ensure that the recommendations I make during Part 2 are relevant, and reflect the current position in policing, it is therefore important that I consider the extent to which my Part 1 recommendations have been implemented. This Report (addressing Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference) seeks to do that, the Inquiry having gathered information from relevant stakeholders about the progress that has been made. The information provided by stakeholders reflects the status as of 9 October 2025.
- 1.3 On the day of publication of the Part 1 Report, the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, released a statement acknowledging how:

"Across history there are crimes that send a signal to us all. A signal not just about the depravity of the perpetrator, but one of problems in our society or failures in our institutions. This is a glowing red signal to all police leaders that we must do everything humanly possible to enact these recommendations and change policing for future generations.

We are taking action to ensure there is nowhere to hide in policing for wrongdoers, that our misconduct and vetting processes are reformed, and that our ethics and values are reset. This report makes clear that we have much more to do."<sup>1</sup>

1.4 The recommendations made in the Part 1 Report were accepted in full within a month of publication. The then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP, made a statement to the House of Commons on 25 March 2024 explaining how the

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Government accepted the recommendations addressed to it (Recommendations 3, 4 and 5). He also referred to how the National Police Chiefs' Council and College of Policing were "committed to addressing the remaining recommendations in Lady Angiolini's report concerning police culture and increasing the robustness of police vetting".<sup>2</sup>

- 1.5 The speed with which the recommendations were accepted, and the wholehearted commitment from across Government and policing to implement them, reassured me. It also brought comfort to Sarah Everard's loving family that the words of apology given by policing leaders on the day of publication would be followed by the action required to prevent recurrence.
- 1.6 I am very grateful to Chief Constable Gavin Stephens for his leadership on the implementation of the recommendations and for providing regular updates to me on progress. I set ambitious and challenging deadlines for the recommendations. I did so because so much needed to be done, and done quickly, to prevent another perpetrator like Couzens from entering or remaining in policing and committing such heinous acts against women.

#### **Progress to date**

1.7 The section below summarises the information provided by the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing (as those named in the recommendations) on steps taken to implement each of the recommendations as of 24 September 2025,³ and their view of the result of those steps and any outstanding actions. I have not provided an assessment of progress made against each of the individual recommendations or measured purported outcomes against evidence gathered for Part 2 of the Terms of Reference (which is ongoing): I am not charged with holding policing accountable for their actions – that role belongs to Police and Crime Commissioners and, ultimately, the Home Secretary. Instead, this section shines a light on what has been done, what remains to be done and the remaining challenges in between.

#### Recommendation 1: Approach to investigating indecent exposure

At the earliest opportunity, and by September 2024 at the latest, police forces should ensure that they have a specialist policy on investigating all sexual offences, including so-called 'non-contact' offences, such as indecent exposure.

1.8 The Inquiry was told by the National Police Chiefs' Council that, in August 2024, the College of Policing developed guidance to support forces to implement their own specialist policy that addresses non-contact sexual offences. This guidance combined the existing Authorised Professional Practice and Operation Soteria principles of being "victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led".4

<sup>2 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 1.9 The National Police Chiefs' Council has been monitoring force delivery of this recommendation. As of September 2025, 74 per cent of forces reported this recommendation as complete. The National Police Chiefs' Council stated that "for the vast majority of the remaining forces [...] activity to review existing policies [is taking place] to determine whether they are sufficient, or [they are] consulting on new policies to align with the College of Policing's guidance".<sup>5</sup>
- 1.10 **Summary of progress:** In September 2025, 26 per cent of police forces had not yet implemented a specialist policy on investigating sexual offences, including 'non-contact' offences such as indecent exposure.

#### Recommendation 2: Guidance and training on indecent exposure

By December 2024, the College of Policing, in collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council, should improve guidance and training on indecent exposure, in order to improve the quality of investigations and management of indecent exposure cases. In particular, the College of Policing should:

- a. review and update training, informed by crime statistics and research into the nature of indecent exposure and its impact on victims;
- b. review and update the guidance for police officers to improve the handling of indecent exposure cases;
- c. include guidance on appropriate resourcing for investigations; and
- d. ensure that guidance and training reflect the Sentencing Council guidelines, which recognise factors indicating increased harm and culpability.

This activity should be informed by the results of Recommendation 4 below.

- 1.11 In June 2024, the existing Investigation Authorised Professional Practice was updated by the College of Policing to "reflect the stance on indecent exposure".6
- 1.12 Separately, in January 2025, a new e-learning module for forces was launched, with supporting guidance, to cover the response and investigation of indecent exposure offending, as well as other non-contact sexual offences, including online exposure and voyeurism.
- 1.13 The Inquiry has been told that, as of September 2025, 66,332 police officers have completed this training.
- 1.14 **Summary of progress:** While guidance has been produced and made available for policing, nine months after the deadline, not all officers have completed this training.<sup>7</sup> To give perspective on this, as of March 2025, there were 148,886 police

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>7 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

officers in England and Wales. If all the officers who have completed the training are still serving (66,332 as outlined above), the Inquiry calculates that this would account for approximately 45 per cent of headcount having completed the new training on non-contact sexual offences since the launch in January 2025.8

### Recommendation 3: Treatment of masturbatory indecent exposure within the criminal justice system

With immediate effect, the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council should work together to conduct a fundamental review of the way masturbatory indecent exposure is treated within the criminal justice system. The review should focus on: recognising the seriousness of the offence; identifying it as an indicator of disinhibition by perpetrators; and understanding and addressing the wider issue of sexual precursor conduct so as to prevent victimisation, improve the response to victims when it occurs and bring more offenders to justice.

1.15 **Summary of progress:** The Home Office has initiated a review into how forces identify, disrupt and manage non-contact sexual offences, engaging with 13 forces and utilising the e-learning developed in response to Recommendation 2. In September 2025, the findings from this work were shared in draft with the Inquiry and had not yet been published.<sup>10</sup> This report is being reviewed by ministers, who will agree next steps.<sup>11</sup>

#### Recommendation 4: Research into masturbatory indecent exposure

With immediate effect, the Home Office, in collaboration with the College of Policing, should commission research to establish if there is an evidence-based link between active masturbatory indecent exposure and subsequent contact offending. Where relevant, findings should then be used to shape policy, training and guidance for police officers investigating indecent exposure cases (as per Recommendation 2).

1.16 To address this recommendation, the Inquiry was told that the Home Office is "aiming to look at perpetrators known to the police, with or without a charge", as well as convicted sexual offenders, to "examine the broadest pool we can". 12 Accessing data on suspects, as opposed to convicted offenders, has been described as a "more challenging" task. 13

<sup>8 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>9</sup> The Inquiry was told that the forces were self-selecting and participated following an open invite from the Home Office to engage between October 2024 and February 2025. The police forces were Thames Valley, West Yorkshire, Avon and Somerset, Wiltshire, Metropolitan Police Service, British Transport Police, Sussex, North Yorkshire, Merseyside, Essex, Greater Manchester, Durham Constabulary and Dyfed-Powys.

<sup>10 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>13 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 1.17 To gain information from the right source, the Home Office is seeking data from local police force systems to address this recommendation. The Inquiry was told that, in May 2025, information-sharing agreements were in train. Analysis of this data was then to be conducted over the summer of 2025, with completion set for later in 2025. As described in this Report (see Chapter 6), we identified disparities among forces in how they assess information to identify the top or most dangerous offenders.
- 1.18 **Summary of progress:** The Home Office is working with local police forces to gather information, not just on convicted sexual offenders but also on those who are known to the police, with or without a charge. Analysis of this information is set to be completed by the end of 2025.<sup>14</sup>

#### Recommendation 5: Public information campaign on indecent exposure

By March 2025, the Home Office, together with the National Police Chiefs' Council, should launch a public campaign to:

- raise awareness about the illegality/criminality and legal consequences of any type of indecent exposure and boost the confidence of victims to report cases of indecent exposure to ensure that more offenders are brought to justice; and
- b. increase publicity around the relevant legislation in order to encourage reporting of unsolicited photographs sent of genitals with the intention to cause harm, distress or humiliation and to discourage perpetrators from doing so.
- 1.19 **Summary of progress:** The Home Office told the Inquiry in September 2025 that a national communications campaign will be launched later this year or early next, to raise awareness about indecent exposure offences being criminal acts and to increase public confidence in reporting these crimes.<sup>15</sup>
- 1.20 Separately, the National Police Chiefs' Council explained how it was trying to "fill the gap whilst we wait for the Home Office campaign" by evaluating force-level awareness campaigns of non-contact sexual offences to consider whether an existing campaign can be repurposed for use across all forces. 16 In July 2025, the National Police Chiefs' Council issued an awareness campaign toolkit offering clear, victim-focused messages for police forces to use, with poster and digital media templates to support local delivery. 17

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>15 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Recommendation 6: Review of indecent exposure allegations and other sexual offences recorded against serving police officers

By September 2024, the National Police Chiefs' Council, in collaboration with all force vetting units, and building on the results of the recent data-washing exercise, should conduct a review of the circumstances of all allegations of indecent exposure and other sexual offences recorded on the Police National Database and the Police National Computer against serving officers. This is to identify, investigate and ultimately remove those officers found to have committed sexual offences from all police forces.

- 1.21 The Inquiry was told that, in January 2023, all police forces were asked to prepare human resources<sup>18</sup> data so that all officers, staff and volunteers could be checked against the Police National Database (PND).<sup>19</sup> This Historic Data Wash<sup>20</sup> checked over 307,000 officers, staff and volunteers, and, by early 2024, 461 individuals had been referred to an appropriate authority.<sup>21</sup> Of these:
  - 9 triggered further criminal investigation;
  - 88 triggered disciplinary investigation;
  - 139 triggered vetting clearance;<sup>22</sup>
  - 128 triggered management intervention; and
  - 97 required no further action.<sup>23</sup>
- 1.22 However, the National Police Chiefs' Council stated that the use of the PND for this purpose "was not a sustainable exercise due to the amount of resourcing required to deliver".<sup>24</sup>
- 1.23 Instead, to address this recommendation moving forward, a new national vetting process (the Continuous Integrity Screening tool, which aims to identify any criminal concerns as well as welfare risks and other indicators of harm or misconduct) will be introduced on a phased basis in 2026, subject to funding, testing and capability.

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>19</sup> The Police National Database is a data store of operational policing information and intelligence provided by individual forces. It contains copies of locally held police records covering intelligence, crime, custody, child protection and domestic abuse investigations.

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21</sup> The appropriate authority is the term for the person responsible for considering complaints made about the force and/ or individuals within it. Appropriate authorities are the rank of at least chief inspector or police staff equivalent with accredited training. They work within the Authorised Professional Practice and are usually based within a Professional Standards Team.

<sup>22</sup> In addition, the Home Office has now amended police regulations to enable Chief Constables to dismiss those who fail to maintain vetting clearance. This provides a route to exit those identified through the Historic Data Wash and Continuous Integrity Screening.

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>24 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Work is under way to secure this. As of September 2025, a proof-of-concept pilot ran in one force and another is due to run in three forces and will complete in March 2026.<sup>25</sup>

1.24 Summary of progress: The Historic Data Wash identified 461 individuals who were subsequently referred to an appropriate authority. From 2026, the Continuous Integrity Screening tool will be used to identify, investigate and ultimately remove those officers found to have committed an offence, including sexual offence(s), subject to funding, testing and capability.

#### Recommendation 7: In-person interviews and home visits

With immediate effect, the College of Policing, in collaboration with force recruitment, should ensure that every new candidate applying to become a police officer in any police force undergoes an in-person interview and home visit. This should be designed to provide a holistic picture of the candidate and a better understanding of the candidate's motivations for joining the police and their dedication to serving the public. In particular, this should include the following:

- a. An in-person interview with the candidate to ensure that face-to-face contact is made with the recruiting force before the vetting or onboarding of the candidate is progressed.
- b. A visit to the residence of all new candidates. This should be used as another opportunity, in advance of vetting enquiries, to engage with the candidate, relevant family members or other occupants of the residence, wherever possible.
- c. An integrity questionnaire, used as part of the in-person home visit, to explore fully the candidate's personal attitudes and values, including increased scrutiny of the candidate's motivations and suitability for joining the police.
- d. Corresponding guidance and training for home visits must be developed to ensure that the visits will enable a better sense of the candidate's character, rather than judge living arrangements or socio-economic status.
- 1.25 The National Police Chiefs' Council described this recommendation as "one with the most difficult deadline, and with the biggest difference in terms of views from Chief Constables", particularly in relation to home visits. <sup>26</sup> However, the National Police Chiefs' Council, in conjunction with the College of Policing, is "scoping a more probative recruitment assessment" either way that will be designed to test ethical reasoning, motivations and values. <sup>27</sup> The National Police Chiefs' Council hopes that this assessment will "genuinely scope and understand motivations, values and broader ethical underpinnings of each new recruit", which can be used either as part of a home visit or broader force assessment processes. <sup>28</sup>

<sup>25 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>28 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 1.26 In relation to Recommendation 7(a), the National Police Chiefs' Council outlined that forces "should complete the College [of Policing]'s in-force interview face to face, or another assessment of the appropriate standard agreed by the College [of Policing]".<sup>29</sup>
- 1.27 A pilot for home visits has also been implemented, with the National Police Chiefs' Council working with four volunteer forces (Cheshire Constabulary, Devon and Cornwall Police, the Metropolitan Police Service and Kent Police), all of which either were already doing home visits or were willing to participate in a pilot. A further pilot is under way in the Metropolitan Police Service and Greater Manchester Police to test the use of home visits as part of the vetting process, with the evaluation planned for early 2026.<sup>30</sup>
- 1.28 However, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens told the Inquiry that he does "not believe we will get to a position where all forces implement home visits, in full", given the "mixed perspectives" on the recommendation.<sup>31</sup> Instead, he outlined the focus as being on specific cohorts where greater risk assessment was necessary and the use of home visits in these instances.<sup>32</sup>
- 1.29 Summary of progress: A pilot to evaluate the implementation of home visits has been carried out with four volunteer forces and a practice-sharing document developed to share learning with other forces. However, there is disagreement about the implementation of home visits nationally; a way forward on this in particular is unclear.

#### Recommendation 8: Recruitment and vetting policy, processes and practices

By June 2024, the College of Policing, in collaboration with force vetting units, should take further steps to prevent those unsuitable for policing from joining the policing profession. This should include further developing the Vetting Code of Practice, Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting, and other guidance on recruitment and vetting practices in order to prevent those who commit sexually motivated crimes against women and those otherwise unsuitable for policing from holding the office of constable. In particular, recruitment and vetting policy, processes and practices must be developed in the following areas:

- a. Applicants should be required to undergo an assessment of their psychological suitability for the role (which is not just a questionnaire).
- b. There should be more robust use of the Police National Database during vetting, including as a tool to reveal unreported adverse information about applicants to ensure that potential risks are not missed. In particular, the Database should be used when individuals attempt to move between forces.

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>30 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>32 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- c. Any individual identified as having a conviction or caution for a sexual offence should be rejected during police vetting. This should be clearly outlined in the Vetting Code of Practice and reflected in the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting, which should consider all contact and non-contact sexual offences.
- d. The Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting should be amended to make it clear that military and/or Ministry of Defence checks should be carried out on all applicants who have served as military reservists.
- e. There should be a fundamental review of the link between debt, mental health, vulnerability to corruption and suitability to be a police officer, to inform vetting decisions. Detailed consideration should be given to the amount of unsecured personal debt held by officers, and rules should be amended to mandate officers to report any significant changes in debt to vetting teams. In addition, the rules should require applicants and officers to provide further insight into their finances, including any payday loans, when requested during the vetting process.
- f. There should be increased rigour in relation to checks for authorised firearms officers, to ensure that vetting standards are met, as well as the introduction of a psychological assessment and an appropriate process for seeking feedback from supervisors or line managers to determine suitability for the role.
- g. No police officer should be onboarded, even if only for initial training, before all vetting is complete. In addition, each officer's force vetting should be completed before their National Security Vetting is initiated. All force vetting information should be passed to National Security Vetting officers for consideration.
- 1.30 The National Police Chiefs' Council explained that due to "the complexity of work required", implementation of this recommendation has been delayed.<sup>33</sup> The bullet points below provide the National Police Chiefs' Council's update against each of the sub-recommendations:
  - 8(a). "There was no pre-existing evidence base to draw from in the UK" in relation to psychological assessment for recruitment purposes. 4 Work to bring together an evidence base on what works, to underpin this recommendation, is expected to be completed in 2026, "to allow time for the evidence base to be gathered, evaluated and pulled into a pilot to be tested". 5 This work was described by the National Police Chiefs' Council as being "long term and still in the early stages of development". In the meantime, the National Police Chiefs' Council is considering how psychological assessment could be used within current processes.
  - 8(b). The revised Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting has strengthened the position around the use of the PND to check applicants. However, full completion of this recommendation is dependent on the delivery of the

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Continuous Integrity Screening tool (see update on Recommendation 6 for further information on this).

- **8(c).** The National Police Chiefs' Council and College of Policing initially accepted this recommendation, which was designed to ban individuals with a conviction or caution for a sexual offence from being able to join, or remain in, policing. However, when the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting was revised and published in December 2024, this was not implemented fully. After challenges from the Inquiry Chair, on 17 September 2025 Chief Constables agreed to change their position and apply a blanket ban for any new entrants attempting to join the police, including applicants with a juvenile conviction or caution for a sexual offence, which had been a point of debate.<sup>37</sup> However, they maintained the rebuttable presumption for any existing officers and staff with convictions or cautions for sexual offences on the grounds that to do otherwise would be unlawful. Despite this agreement, the draft Police Vetting Regulations issued by the Home Office for limited consultation on 25 September did not reflect the change in position.38 The Inquiry was told that this was due to the Home Office not being formally notified of the Chief Constables' revised position until after the consultation had started.<sup>39</sup> The Home Office has now informed the Inquiry that it does intend to update the regulations to extend the ban to include applicants with a juvenile conviction or caution for listed sexual offences, but this has not happened yet. 40 There is also no retrospective application of this ban.
- **8(d).** The updated Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting addresses this through the addition of specific wording on reservists to the previous Authorised Professional Practice's prescription of military and/or Ministry of Defence checks.
- **8(e).** The National Police Chiefs' Council told the Inquiry that the previous Authorised Professional Practice already covered the financial aspect of this sub-recommendation and on this basis Recommendation 8(e) was complete. However, the National Police Chiefs' Council also confirmed that further work was being undertaken to better understand the impact poor mental health can have on suitability to be a police officer and that a "fundamental review" will be part of ongoing vetting transformation work. The National Police Chiefs' Council also noted that the Authorised Professional Practice has been amended with specific reference to payday loans included.<sup>41</sup>
- **8(f).** It has been made mandatory within the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting for firearms officers to have Management Vetting.
- 8(g). The National Police Chiefs' Council Vetting Portfolio is "seeking to recommend the development of mutual data sharing between Policing & National Security Vetting".<sup>42</sup> A pilot is also under way between the National Police Chiefs' Council and UK Security Vetting to assess PND information as part of the

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>38 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>39 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>40 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>42 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

National Security Vetting process. The target date for completion of Recommendation 8(g) is October 2025.<sup>43</sup>

1.31 Summary of progress: The 'complexity' of this recommendation has delayed progress. Three out of the seven sub-recommendations have been implemented through updating relevant guidance; four are outstanding, reliant either on evidence-gathering processes or the development of an overarching tool. The target date for completion of this recommendation is not until 2026.

#### Recommendation 9: Professional rigour in decision-making

By March 2025, the College of Policing, in collaboration with force vetting units, should take steps to improve the quality and consistency of police vetting decision-making. This should include encouraging the use of greater professional rigour and curiosity when investigating lines of enquiry, in order to prevent those who commit sexually motivated crimes against women and those otherwise unsuitable for policing from joining the policing profession. These steps should include the following:

- a. Recruiting forces should be able to request that unresolved allegations discovered during vetting processes be reinvestigated.
- b. In collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council, a national vetting capability should be created, as an advisory function, to provide another layer of confidence in instances where complex vetting investigations and decisions are required. In such cases, forces should approach the national vetting function to seek proposed lines of enquiry and ensure that they are following an agreed, standardised approach when considering complex cases.
- c. Consideration should be given during vetting to any information or intelligence about police officers being reported missing, regardless of how quickly such reports were closed.
- d. Forces must ensure that force vetting units are complying with and practising Section 6.2 of the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting (2021), which states that force vetting units "must record the results of vetting enquiries; the rationale for refusing, suspending, withdrawing or granting clearance, including with restrictions; and where adverse information has been revealed and considered". This is to ensure that an audit trail is recorded to give the force confidence in decisions made at the time and to allow future vetting officers to constructively scrutinise vetting enquiries and outcomes.
- 1.32 The National Police Chiefs' Council confirmed that Recommendations 9(a) and 9(d) have been addressed through the revised Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting; however, Recommendation 9(b) has been marked as closed.

Recommendation 9(b) has not been implemented, but the National Police Chiefs' Council reports that work is ongoing to ascertain what the central coordination function to support police vetting units will need to look like.<sup>44</sup>

- 1.33 In relation to Recommendation 9(c), the Inquiry was told by the National Police Chiefs' Council that "queries regarding the proportionality of putting missing person reports for officers onto PND" were raised. However, the National Police Chiefs' Council Vetting Portfolio, Missing Persons Portfolio and Workforce Coordination Committee have produced guidance which considers what the service needs to do when a police officer goes missing, including the potential of triggering a vetting review and ensuring that the investigation is recorded. However, the National Police Chiefs' Council Vetting Portfolio, Missing Persons Portfolio and Workforce Coordination Committee have produced guidance which considers what the service needs to
- 1.34 **Summary of progress:** This recommendation is partially implemented. While elements of Recommendation 9(c) have been addressed through guidance, this recommendation has not been fully implemented as set out in the recommendation. Furthermore, Recommendation 9(b) has not yet been implemented.<sup>47</sup>

#### **Recommendation 10: Vetting Code of Practice and transfers**

With immediate effect, all recruiting forces should have regard to the new Vetting Code of Practice, which requires the parent force to provide all relevant information requested about the transferee to enable an effective assessment of risk by the force conducting a full re-vet of the transferee.

1.35 **Summary of progress:** The National Police Chiefs' Council confirmed that this recommendation has been implemented in full.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Recommendation 11: Information-sharing**

By December 2024, the College of Policing, in collaboration with force vetting and recruitment units, should ensure that information-sharing practices, including data retention policies, are strengthened in order to prevent those who commit sexually motivated crimes against women and those otherwise unsuitable for policing from remaining in, or moving across, the policing profession. In particular, there should be a focus on the following information:

a. Previous failures to achieve vetting should be recorded by all forces and flagged to recruiting forces. This should also trigger a re-vet with the current or recruiting force.

<sup>44 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>45 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>47 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>48 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- b. A shared agreement should be made about the quality, relevant and necessary content, and sources of information that will be provided in a reference for a future force, also known as a 'shared referencing protocol', with directed questions that must be answered (for example, regarding any past disciplinary or honesty/integrity issues). Information to be shared as part of the protocol should be covered within the relevant forces' fair processing notices. The protocol should apply to all transfers and applications to police forces from individuals in the uniformed services, including:
  - the Ministry of Defence (including the Army, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, as well as their respective reserve forces);
  - fire and rescue services;
  - HM Prison and Probation Service;
  - other police forces; and
  - relevant government agencies, such as Border Force or Immigration Enforcement.

This is to improve forces' access to – and ability to use – the totality of information they hold about officers in order to prevent, detect and deal with those likely to commit offences.

- c. As per Recommendation 8(b), there should be expanded access to and use of the Police National Database, including as a tool for revealing relevant uninvestigated adverse information about officers.
- d. Any adverse information or intelligence (developed or otherwise) should be passed by the current Professional Standards Directorate to the receiving Professional Standards Directorate for any officers transferring. No decisions on their appointment should be made until that intelligence has been reviewed, recorded and closed and the vetting units have had time to consider it. If the recruiting force identifies adverse information as a result of the vetting process, this should be shared with the current force for consideration and potential action.
- 1.36 The National Police Chiefs' Council described this recommendation, and what needs to be in place to deliver it, as "multifaceted", 49 which meant the deadline for implementation was missed. The Inquiry was told the following:
  - 11(a). The "long term solution"<sup>50</sup> to allow forces to flag, and share, previous vetting failures has been described as a cloud-based system that all forces can access. As of March 2025, all forces are either using the system or are being onboarded; however, not all forces are on the latest version, meaning currently not all forces can access, update and use the same version of the system. The National Police Chiefs' Council's mitigation against this is that "if the reason for

<sup>49 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>50 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

vetting refusal is so significant that it is unlikely the vetting applicant would ever gain clearance, an intelligence report should be created in the PND".<sup>51</sup> The target date for delivery has been moved to summer 2025.<sup>52</sup>

- 11(b). The National Police Chiefs' Council is working with agencies such as HM Prison and Probation Service to develop data-sharing agreements regarding employment history where there is high risk. It is hoped that this will be delivered by September 2025.<sup>53</sup>
- 11(c). Implementation relies on the delivery of the Continuous Integrity Screening tool, due to be launched in 2026, as described in the response to Recommendation 6.<sup>54</sup>
- 11(d). This has already been included in the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting and forces should have been acting in line with this for a period of time.
- 1.37 **Summary of progress:** While progress is being made, three out of the four sub-recommendations for Recommendation 11 are dependent on the implementation of the right IT systems or external organisations, potentially causing a delay of six months to two years until successful implementation.

#### **Recommendation 12: Right to privacy**

With immediate effect, police forces should convey to all existing and prospective officers and staff that they must be held to a higher standard of behaviour and accountability than members of the public, and that therefore their right to privacy can be fettered in certain circumstances. These circumstances include, but are not limited to: recruitment, vetting, aftercare, transfer, promotion, role change, returning to policing and maintaining standards. This is to ensure that members of the police are fully aware and accountable for the unique powers entrusted to them and the standards of professional behaviour they swear to uphold. Updated fair processing notices concerning changes to processing of personal data should be provided prior to any new processing taking place, including data-sharing.

1.38 **Summary of progress:** This recommendation was reported as complete, with the publication of the new Code of Ethics. In particular, the National Police Chiefs' Council identified that Section 2 of the new Code makes clear the high standards expected of those working in policing, and Section 3 notes that "Being a member of the policing profession" means that higher expectations are placed on the police compared with the general public. The Inquiry was told that the College of Policing

<sup>51 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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continues to work closely with forces to embed the Code. The Inquiry was also told that the 'right to privacy' and expectation of impingement on this right is also made clear in a number of areas in the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting.<sup>57</sup>

#### **Recommendation 13: Aftercare**

By December 2024, the College of Policing, in collaboration with all force vetting units, should develop a stronger approach to force vetting aftercare in order to monitor an individual effectively throughout their career with the police and be aware of any change in circumstances as soon as possible to ensure that potential risks/red flags are identified and assessed. In particular, that approach should include the following:

- Mandatory, randomised re-vetting should be introduced, as an additional layer to standardised vetting periods, for police officers and staff, akin to randomised drugtesting.
- b. In addition to police officers and staff being required to declare any material changes in their circumstances within a managed system, such as a human resources system, supervisors, or anyone with concerns relating to behaviour, welfare or performance, should report them to Professional Standards Departments at any point.
- Professional Standards Departments should systematically exchange relevant and necessary information with vetting and counter-corruption units to consider information disclosed by any individual, and any action necessary.

#### 1.39 The Inquiry was updated as follows:

• 13(a). "[T]he spirit of the sub-recommendation was met through a change to the Vetting APP [Authorised Professional Practice]" in 2025, with the National Police Chiefs' Council intending to use wider vetting reform work to maintain "a focus on randomised re-vetting". 58 Mandatory randomised re-vetting has not yet been introduced. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has included in the new inspection methodology a question on whether forces are undertaking randomised re-vetting. 59 Connected with vetting aftercare, The Police (Vetting) Regulations 2025 and The Police (Conduct, Performance and Complaints and Misconduct) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 came into force in May 2025. Among other things, these regulations ensure that officers convicted of certain criminal offences should automatically be found to have committed gross misconduct. They also create a presumption of dismissal where there is a finding of gross misconduct, and provide a process for police forces to dismiss officers who cannot hold vetting. 60

<sup>57 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>58 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>59 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 13(b) and 13(c). These sub-recommendations have been addressed in the previous and revised versions of the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting.<sup>61</sup>
- 1.40 **Summary of progress:** The National Police Chiefs' Council confirmed that "this recommendation has been delivered in full";<sup>62</sup> however, mandatory randomised re-vetting has not yet been introduced.

## Recommendation 14: Positive culture and elimination of misconduct or criminality often excused as 'banter'

With immediate effect, every police force should commit publicly to being an antisexist, anti-misogynistic, anti-racist organisation in order to address, understand and eradicate sexism, racism and misogyny, contributing to a wider positive culture to remove all forms of discrimination from the profession. This includes properly addressing – and taking steps to root out – so-called 'banter' that often veils or excuses malign or toxic behaviour in police ranks.

- 1.41 The National Police Chiefs' Council advised that work to implement this recommendation was paused due to the General Election in summer 2024. In February 2025, the National Police Chiefs' Council issued a press release formally, and nationally, committing to being anti-discriminatory.
- 1.42 In relation to individual force progress on this, in May 2025, 33 per cent of forces marked this recommendation complete, with another 44 per cent reporting that it was on track. For the remaining 23 per cent, the reasons as to why they are not on track are that either: work was "already in train" or work is still under way for something bespoke. The Inquiry was told: "There is not a one size fits all for this commitment with forces tailoring their approaches to their areas." 64
- 1.43 **Summary of progress:** While a national commitment to being anti-discriminatory has been made (rather than anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-misogynistic, as the recommendation stated), this commitment has not been made or implemented by each and every police force in England and Wales.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>62 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>63 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>64 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>65 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Recommendation 15: Reporting by police officers and staff of harassment, sexual offences and inappropriate behaviour committed by fellow officers

With immediate effect, all police forces should take action to understand and confront the barriers that police officers and staff face when reporting sexual offences committed by a person that they work with or in the workplace. This is in order to encourage victims, who are also police officers or police staff, to come forward and submit complaints, as well as to identify and remove those who are not fit for service. To do this, forces should:

- a. ensure, when a complaint is made, that sufficient and appropriate resources are dedicated to supporting the complainant, including maintaining anonymity where needed or requested, and ensuring an investigation is carried out as appropriate;
- b. address cultural barriers to reporting, such as re-victimising complainants by labelling or treating them as 'troublemakers'; and
- c. provide dedicated reporting processes for women in police forces who experience inappropriate behaviour related to their gender.

#### 1.44 The Inquiry was updated as follows:

- 15(a). As of May 2025, the majority of forces had reported this as complete or on track. However, a minority of forces cited capacity issues, stating that "further scoping is required" to determine how best to deliver. Three forces reported that 'limited progress' was being made, while a further force marked 15(a) as closed, meaning that work to deliver this part of the recommendation was "not being progressed".<sup>66</sup>
- 15(b). After initial work to develop a "toolkit for forces who want to change their culture", it was determined that "it was difficult to identify evidence which could be used to inform the desired toolkit". 67 Instead, the National Police Chiefs' Council now intends to produce a guide on culture change, incorporating evidence from forces and the College of Policing's Upstander training, as well as academic research from culture change experts. This work and further research (subject to funding) will then be 'operationalised' by producing a toolkit. The National Police Chiefs' Council acknowledged that work in this space has not progressed as quickly as expected, citing funding issues and a lack of strategic leadership capacity. The new target deadline for the guide on culture change has now been set for the end of the autumn period 2025.
- 15(c). Forces have acknowledged the importance of reporting processes through the monthly survey. However, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens reflected on inconsistency in force progress to address this sub-recommendation, explaining that "it is unlikely that all forces will implement a dedicated reporting process for women".<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>67 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>68 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

1.45 **Summary of progress:** Progress on this recommendation has not been made as planned, with feedback from forces showing disagreements in how and when implementation of this recommendation will take place, and what form it will take at a force level. Despite this, the Inquiry was told that efforts to address this nationally will be made through the introduction of a National Police Chiefs' Council Assurance Lead to manage and evaluate progress. The College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council's joint Culture and Inclusion Strategy 2025–2030 sets out a national plan to embed diversity and inclusion, strengthen leadership accountability and empower officers to challenge poor behaviour.<sup>69</sup>

#### Recommendation 16: Recruitment and retention of women in police forces

By September 2024, the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council should review and examine the conditions of female officers and staff in order to encourage more women to join the police and progress in policing careers. To ensure success, this should include a review of:

- a. working conditions that do not address the realities of modern working lives, including families where both parents are officers and share caring responsibilities;
- b. processes, training and refreshers for officers returning from parental leave; and
- c. kit, equipment and facilities designed largely by and for men.
- 1.46 The Inquiry was told that the deadline of September "was not achievable" due to a National Police Chiefs' Council lead for this recommendation not being appointed until June 2024. To Similarly, while progress was "already underway" at a local level, it was found to vary across forces and "there was no single repository of best practice thus restricting the ability to rollout proven initiatives nationally". An effort to "map" practices and developments was due to be completed at the end of 2024; however, "this has now slipped".
- 1.47 Early analysis of a national survey on kit and equipment found that trousers are still the biggest uniform issue female officers are facing, after 20,000 survey responses. Funding has been agreed "around the whole life cycle for future kit and equipment". The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025. The survey results will be discussed at the next Workforce Committee meeting on 16 October 2025.
- 1.48 The Family Friendly Policy has been rewritten to help officers returning to work after long-term parental leave. However, a concern has been raised that this will not be implemented by all forces, as it "is simply guidance". This is constable Gavin Stephens has suggested that a minimum set of requirements for forces to adopt should be established. This is not yet in place.

<sup>69 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>70 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>71 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>72 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>73 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>74 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>75 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 1.49 A revised deadline for this recommendation is needed.
- 1.50 **Summary of progress:** As with Recommendation 15, forces are showing varying levels of progress and disagreements about the level of implementation against this recommendation, indicating that commitment to ensuring provision and equity for women in the workplace still needs to improve.

#### Conclusion

- 1.51 I would like to give my thanks to all those who have worked to implement the recommendations. There are a considerable number of people involved in developing guidance, delivering training and undertaking research. Credit is due in particular to those involved in developing the new training package on indecent exposure. Their efforts to engage victims and the families of victims are to be commended. I am pleased to see progress against some of the recommendations.
- 1.52 That said, I am deeply disappointed that, more than 18 months since Part 1 was published, some recommendations have not been implemented and in some cases will never be implemented because of a lack of consensus across policing about their necessity and/or the appropriate way of implementing them consistently. Announcements made by policing leaders when the recommendations were accepted without qualification set public expectation about the commitment and drive to remedy the problems my first report identified. Policing leaders need to explain to the public if they have changed their minds about the relevance and necessity of implementing the recommendations they committed to so publicly, or provide reasons for having to implement recommendations in a way that is different from how I had intended.
- 1.53 I have been told that some delay with implementation relates to other factors including the 2024 General Election, which was called some four months after the recommendations were accepted, and the tragic Southport attack shortly thereafter when the violent disorder that followed created significant demands on policing and policing leaders. However, what I have also heard about implementation of the recommendations reveals to me problems that are inherent in a devolved system of more than 40 forces which provides extensive discretion and flexibility to individual Chief Constables to derogate from national policy and guidance. The public deserve to trust that, when a police officer arrives in their hour of need, they have been recruited, vetted and trained to the same high standards irrespective of their postcode or force area. This is not currently the case and, despite having accepted recommendations – which if implemented would provide some of that assurance to the public – progress on some recommendations has not yet started. This is because of a failure to reach consensus, or what could be perceived as an absence of will to use the available levers to ensure that this happens, through, for example, statutory guidance or mandated collaboration arrangements.
- 1.54 By way of example, prior to publication of this Report, I wrote to the National Police Chiefs' Council to express my concern about Recommendation 8(c) (in which I recommended that no one with a conviction or caution for a sexual offence should ever be able to pass vetting to become a police officer). This recommendation, like all others, was accepted in March 2024. At the time of writing this Report, however, the existing Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting still enables a route for

those with convictions or cautions for sexual offences to enter the profession of policing.<sup>76</sup> Despite reassurances given to the Inquiry, there has been miscommunication and misalignment between those responsible for these rules about how this recommendation will be implemented.

- 1.55 In December 2024, the College of Policing published an updated version of the Authorised Professional Practice on Vetting. This updated guidance did not implement the recommendation and instead left the existing rebuttable presumption for those with a conviction or caution for sexual offences. I wrote to challenge this position in both February 2025 and August 2025. In September 2025, I was told that Chief Constables had reconsidered their position and would now adopt the recommendation in full for new entrants to policing, including those with a juvenile conviction or caution for sexual offences. Despite this progress, on 25 September the Home Office put out for limited statutory consultation some draft amendments to the Police Vetting Regulations 2025, but these still allowed for applicants with a juvenile conviction or caution for sexual offences to be considered for police vetting (under a rebuttable presumption) rather than put in place the outright refusal the recommendation requires.<sup>77</sup> I understand that the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council did not formally notify the Home Office of their change in position prior to the start of the consultation.78 The Home Office has since confirmed that it does intend to revise the draft amendments to the regulations, to put into effect the changed position of the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council.<sup>79</sup> The Inquiry has not seen the revised draft amendments to the regulations, so cannot confirm whether it provides the outright ban for applicants that the recommendation requires.
- 1.56 I made Recommendation 8(c) because I believe that the police need to draw a clear bright line that shows that those with convictions or cautions for sexual offences have no place in policing. There is no absolute right to be a police officer, and, by setting high standards and expectations, the police could attract more of the people they need rather than leave open an opportunity for any individual to become a police officer after having been convicted or given a caution for a sexual offence.<sup>80</sup>
- 1.57 I am aware that since the publication of the Part 1 Report the judgment of *Di Maria v Metropolitan Police*<sup>81</sup> and others has been handed down, and I appreciate that this has resulted in activity by both policing and the Government in respect of removing vetting for existing officers. My concern has always been that continuing to direct (through guidance or regulations) a regime which keeps the door open to those with a conviction or caution for sexual offences creates an unnecessary and unacceptable level of risk for the public. To further complicate matters, decisions are being made by individuals working in 43 separate teams (many of whom are funded, trained and supervised to different standards). I am pleased that policing and government are now moving towards raising these standards, but it is disappointing that this progress was not made as soon as the recommendation was first agreed nearly two years ago.

<sup>76 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>77 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>78 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>79 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>80 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>81 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 1.58 I also continue to challenge the police on the approach to the implementation of Recommendation 14, which sought a commitment and declaration by every police force to being anti-sexist, anti-misogynistic and anti-racist. In response, the National Police Chiefs' Council chose to declare itself 'anti-discriminatory' in order to be inclusive of other protected characteristics. But by using this 'catch all' phrase, policing leaders risk failing to speak directly to those who need to be heard. Those experiencing racism have a different experience from those experiencing homophobia or misogyny; they each deserve to have their experiences recognised and to hear the commitment of policing leaders to tackling the problems they experience.
- 1.59 In respect of both of these recommendations, and some others, what has frequently been described to me as implementation with the 'spirit of the recommendations' in mind can in fact lead to very different outcomes to that which I intended, and thereby not address closely enough the issues I identified. As I described in the Part 1 Report, policing leaders need to provide clear and brave leadership in accepting what needs to change in order to start the process of improving policing for everyone.
- 1.60 In this Report, I make 13 new recommendations to improve the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. The themes throughout this Report include the need for consistent and efficient investment to prevent crimes (made once rather than in 43 disparate ways). These themes resonate with the problems in implementing the Part 1 recommendations: too much local discretion and variation leading to inconsistency and risk to the public.
- 1.61 I will provide a further update on progress on the implementation of the Part 1 recommendations, as well as the recommendations arising from this Report, in my next published report. I hope to see greater progress, and where policing determines that it will not implement recommendations it previously accepted, that position should be explained to the public and those who hold policing to account. Public trust and confidence in policing is still feeling the seismic aftershock of the actions of Wayne Couzens, David Carrick and the many other police officers who have abused their police powers to predate on and harm women. Strengthening organisational systems, policies and processes to identify those who wish to cause harm is an arduous and ongoing challenge. I hope policing leaders remain committed to investing what is required to achieve this.

# Chapter 2. The case for prevention: Impact, cost and prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

This chapter sets out a summary of evidence on:

- the impact of sexually motivated crimes on women who are victims, and the cost to society;
- the impact of the fear of these crimes on women's behaviours and freedoms;
- the data on the prevalence of these crimes, their victims, locations and perpetrators; and
- approaches to prevention of violence against women and girls.
- 2.1 Sexually motivated crime against women is never acceptable. No woman should experience it, or have her daily life impacted in a way that limits her ability to enjoy the rights and freedoms she should be able to take for granted. This kind of crime causes far-reaching damage, and not just for those who are its victims; the "memory or fear of it" affects many women's behaviour, choices, and confidence in public spaces.

#### Impact and cost of these crimes

2.2 The devastating impact of rape and sexual assault on victims is well known.<sup>2</sup> The Inquiry reviewed how extensive the available evidence was, specifically on the impact of being a victim of a sexually motivated crime in a public space, committed by an unknown perpetrator. The Inquiry also obtained further bespoke data through conducting a public survey (for further information on how this survey was carried out, please see paragraphs A.51 to A.54 in Appendix A).

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Figure 1a: Findings from the Inquiry's public survey on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

#### The Inquiry ran a survey of 2,000 people

	the state of the s			
Incidents where they felt unsafe	Around half of women had experienced an incident in the last three years where they felt unsafe in a public space due to the actions or behaviour of (an)other person(s) (48%). This was significantly higher than for men (42%).			
Likelihood of incident(s) in the last three years	The likelihood of experiencing an incident appeared to decrease with age. Almost 9 in 10 women aged 18–24 had experienced (an) incident(s) in the last three years (87%).			
	Some 76% of women aged 18–24 had specifically felt unsafe in a public space due to the actions or behaviour of a man or men. For 28%, a mixed group of people had been involved in the specific incident.			
	Respondents from ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities) were significantly more likely to report having experienced an incident in the last three years (58%) than those who were white (including white minorities) (43%).			
	Respondents living in urban areas were significantly more likely to report having experienced an incident in the last three years (48%) than those who were living in rural areas (32%).			
Impact of incidents where respondents had felt unsafe in a public space	Respondents who felt unsafe, or very unsafe overall in public spaces were significantly more likely to have experienced an incident (80%) than those who felt safe or very safe (37%).			
Times of incidents	Of respondents who had experienced an incident:			
	Over half had experienced an incident in the evening (7pm to 10pm) (54%); the second most likely time was nighttime (10pm to 6am) (40%).			
	Women were significantly more likely to have experienced an incident in the morning (6am to 12pm) or the afternoon (12pm to 7pm) than men were. Of those who had experienced an incident, 19% of women had experienced an incident in the morning, compared with 11% of men; 44% of women had experienced an incident in the afternoon, compared with 26% of men.			
	Men were significantly more likely to note having experienced an incident at nighttime (10pm to 6am).			
	Of respondents who had experienced an incident:			
Reporting of incidents	One in five respondents who had experienced (an) incident(s) had reported (an) incident(s) in the last three years. <b>Just over three-quarters had not reported</b> (79%).			
	Men were significantly more likely than women to have reported (an) incident(s) (24% of men and 17% of women).			

<sup>3</sup> Where they felt unsafe in a public space in the last three years due to the actions or behaviour of (an)other person(s).

Figure 1b: Headline findings from the Inquiry's public survey on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

#### Feelings of safety in public over the last three years

48% of women

told us they had experienced an incident where they **felt unsafe in a public space** due to the actions or behaviour of (an)other person(s).

For women aged 18–24, this went up to

87%

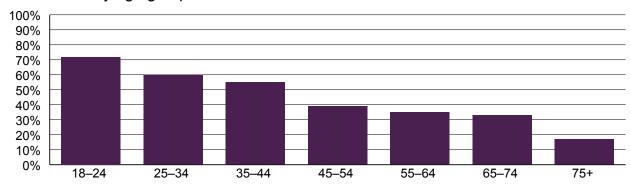
... almost 9 in 10 women.

## Around three-quarters of women

aged 18–24 had **specifically** felt unsafe in a public space due to the **actions or behaviour of a man or men**.

## Figure 1c: Age insights from the Inquiry's public survey on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

Percentages of respondents who have experienced an incident in the last three years where they felt unsafe in public space due to the actions or behaviour of (a) person(s) – broken down by age group



Weighted bases: 18–24 years, n=217; 25–34 years, n=342; 35–44 years, n=324; 45–54 years, n=345; 55–64 years, n=310; 65–74 years, n=250; 75 and over, n=212

Source: Information is from the Angiolini Inquiry's survey of 2,000 members of the public.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Victim impact**

- 2.3 Victims of sexually motivated crimes talk of the devastating impacts of their experiences. Victims reported feeling "really angry and humiliated" that the offence had happened to them,<sup>5</sup> and described being left "upset and shocked".<sup>6</sup>
- 2.4 The lasting impacts of victimisation mean that many victims have changed the way they live their lives and how they feel in public spaces. Victims described being constantly on edge in public, even in daylight, and stated that simple behaviours from passers-by, such as cars slowing down, left them in a state of panic and very upset, planning escape routes or reaching for a rape alarm.<sup>7</sup> This reported impact is consistent with the evidence provided to the Women and Equalities Committee on the impact of public sexual harassment on women.<sup>8</sup>
- 2.5 There is also clear evidence that incidents of sexual harassment impact on women's subsequent feelings of safety. In 2024, this Inquiry surveyed 2,000 members of the public to find out more about this, and about other related issues of interest.9 Respondents were asked if they had experienced any incidents where they felt unsafe in public spaces over the last three years, due to the actions or behaviour of another person. Of respondents who reported feeling overall unsafe, or very unsafe, in public spaces, eight out of ten had experienced an incident in the last three years (80 per cent). Almost half of women had experienced an incident (48 per cent) and only six in ten women responding felt safe in public spaces overall (61 per cent). This included those who had not been a victim recently.

#### Financial impact to society

2.6 As well as the impact on individual women, these offences have a financial cost to all society. While there is no estimate for these crimes in particular, the Inquiry notes the estimated figures produced by the Home Office in 2021 as an indication of the cost of violence against women and girls crimes to society. At that time in England and Wales (based on historical statistics and cost estimates at 2021 prices), rape cost society £5.5 billion and domestic abuse £74 billion.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>7 [\*\*\*]</sup> 8 [\*\*\*]

<sup>9 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>10</sup> Total reached by combining the estimates in the UK Government's 2021 Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy of the different crime types and victim impact: [\*\*\*]. To note, this includes all crimes included under the umbrella term of 'violence against women and girls', including some high-volume crimes (such as domestic abuse). Note that the total costs uprated to 2021/22 prices only account for changes in inflation and do not consider other potential changes in prevalence and estimated unit costs of crime.

#### Fear of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces

"Women are essentially being told that they are the reason this is happening [...] because they were by themselves; or wearing a certain outfit; or walking in a certain place; or that the behaviour was meant as a compliment that they have taken the wrong way [...] these messages – that women need to change their behaviour to prevent this happening to them – leads women to then change their behaviour."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>11</sup>

- 2.7 Women continue to be restricted by the threat of being the victim of sexual offending in public spaces, and engage in routine avoidance activities. These include: modifying their use of public transport; 2 avoiding dark streets, 2 even if it means going out of their way or walking further; 4 not going out at night; 5 spending excess money on taxis; keeping heads down and/or headphones in; 6 and even going so far as to change their job because of their perceptions about the safety of public spaces.
- 2.8 There is no data on how many crimes women are effectively preventing by engaging in this type of behavioural change, which has been termed as "women's safety work". 18
- 2.9 This is an issue for the whole community. Therefore the whole community must actively seek to resolve it.

# Prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in England and Wales

#### Data sources

2.10 Sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces is a significant and growing issue, but the actual prevalence is unknown because of gaps in and problems with data and recording.

<sup>11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>13 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>15 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 2.11 There are nationally collated and quality-assured police-recorded crime statistics<sup>19</sup> on the number of sexual offences in a year, which are published and publicly available, but such data includes offences perpetrated against men and children as well as against women, and does not specify location, or whether the victim was known to the perpetrator. The Inquiry was told that forces can provide information on location and the role of the perpetrator to the Home Office as part of crime data collection, but that data is not included in the publicly available statistics for reasons of data quality and data protection.<sup>20</sup> The actual number of sexual offences is, however, understood to be higher. The Office for National Statistics notes that under-reporting to the police is particularly acute for sexual offences, with many more offences committed than are reported to and recorded by the police.<sup>21</sup>
- 2.12 Because of this under-reporting, the Office for National Statistics has stated that the Crime Survey for England and Wales provides a more reliable measure of trends in sexual offences than police-recorded crime data.<sup>22</sup> The Crime Survey for England and Wales measures crime by asking members of the public about their experience of crime over the last 12 months. It splits data depending on whether the victim was female or male. It includes some details of the relationship between the victim and perpetrator. It also has some information on location of the offence, although only for rape and assault by penetration. While this is more detail than is held in police-recorded data, it still does not provide a complete picture of the prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- 2.13 The Inquiry concludes that, based on police-recorded data and the Crime Survey for England and Wales, it is not possible for policing, government or the public to understand the extent of the problem of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This is a significant barrier to being able to measure the effectiveness of any initiative to prevent this kind of offending (this is covered further in Chapter 7).
- 2.14 Over the course of 2023 and 2024, the National Police Chiefs' Council compiled and published a *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment*,<sup>23</sup> which aims to help fill this data gap. Forces in England and Wales provided data to the National Police Chiefs' Council. This included a specific request from the National Police Chiefs' Council for information on where the offence took place. However, some forces could not provide this.
- 2.15 The Inquiry also made its own data request to the police forces visited during fieldwork.

<sup>19</sup> Two documents (the National Crime Recording Standard and the Home Office Counting Rules) set out when the police should record a crime, and the legal criteria to use in doing so [\*\*\*].

<sup>21 [\*\*\*].</sup> The Inquiry commented on this under-reporting in its Part 1 Report, and made a recommendation for a public information campaign on indecent exposure to raise awareness about the illegality of this offence and to boost the confidence of victims to report cases, in order to ensure that more offenders are brought to justice. [\*\*\*]

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

2.16 All four of these data sources (police-recorded data, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment*, and the Inquiry's own data request) are referenced in this Report.

#### Data on sexual offences (overall)

2.17 The definition used in this Inquiry for sexually motivated crime is when the crime is a sexual offence as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, or when it is not defined as a sexual offence but is for the sexual gratification/fulfilment of the perpetrator. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (which came into force on 1 May 2004) identifies a wide range of sexual offences. These include rape, sexual assault and indecent exposure,<sup>24</sup> all of which are within the scope of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

#### Police-recorded crime statistics: All offences, all victims

- 2.18 For January–December 2024, police-recorded official crime statistics show the police in England and Wales recorded 205,465 allegations of sexual offences against (all) victims.<sup>25</sup> This included:
  - 48,616 allegations of rape offences against a female aged 16 or over;<sup>26</sup>
  - 51,200 allegations of sexual assaults of a female aged 13 or over;<sup>27</sup> and
  - 15,948 allegations of indecent exposure and voyeurism.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Crime Survey for England and Wales**

2.19 Based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales, in the year ending March 2025 it is estimated that 1.9 per cent of people aged 16 years and over had experienced sexual assault (rape or assault by penetration (including attempts), indecent exposure or unwanted touching) – approximately 900,000 people. However, the Inquiry notes the issue of under-reporting to the police, as evidenced in the Office for National Statistics publication 'Nature of Sexual Assault by Rape or Penetration, England and Wales: Year ending March 2020', which reported that of adults aged 16–59 who had experienced sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts) since the age of 16, only 16 per cent had reported the assault to the police.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Under section 66 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the legal term used to describe the crime of intentionally exposing one's genitals with intent that someone will see them and be caused alarm or distress is 'exposure'. However, throughout this Report, the Inquiry has chosen to refer to this offence as 'indecent exposure'. The Inquiry considers that the addition of the qualifier 'indecent' better reflects the sexual and offensive nature of this crime.

<sup>25</sup> This data set of police recorded sexual offences [\*\*\*] does not give a breakdown by sex or age for the overall count of sexual offences, though this can be distinguished for some specific offences.

<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>28 [\*\*\*].</sup> To note, there is no separation within this data set for indecent exposure and voyeurism cases based on the age or sex of the victim.

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Data on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

- 2.20 To help fill these gaps in official and nationally collected data, the Inquiry asked fieldwork forces for information on reported sexually motivated crimes against women perpetrated by strangers in public spaces. Anecdotally, forces appeared to find it easier to access data on the victim's relationship to the perpetrator than on the location of the crime, and whether it was in a public or private space.
- 2.21 The unpublished data from the eight fieldwork forces seen by the Inquiry shows that, since 2021, there have been thousands of recorded sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces perpetrated by strangers although the data quality was variable. As Table 1 shows, the percentage of these cases in which offenders are charged, and the time taken between report and case being finalised (in whatever form), varies between forces.

Table 1: Number of incidents, charge rates and investigation lengths of sexual offences against women in a public space by a stranger recorded by seven fieldwork forces in England and Wales since 2021<sup>30</sup> \*

	Sum of incidents provided to the Inquiry since 2021 in seven fieldwork forces		Time between report and case finalisation in days (range)	Time between report and out-come in days (mean average)
Rape	3,700	2–18	0–1,110	146
Sexual assault	14,500	9–21	0–1,143	94
Indecent exposure	4,600	5–25	0–894	56

Source: Number of incidents, charge rates and investigation lengths of sexual offences against women in public spaces by a stranger from fieldwork force disclosure to the Angiolini Inquiry.

- \* Notes on data used in Table 1
- Based on data from seven forces. Due to data quality and continuity issues, this data should be considered with caution, particularly as forces used differing definitions and some conducted additional analysis. Incident figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
- The end date varied by force, depending on when they compiled the data. Overall, the data represents the period from the start of 2021 to summer 2024. Specifically, the actual end date varied between June and August 2024.
- Some forces had fewer than 100 cases, so percentages should be treated with caution.
- For time between report and outcome data, this is based on the six forces who provided this data. One of these forces only provided time data for 2023 onwards.
- 2.22 One of the fieldwork forces (South Wales Police) provided data for the proportion of these types of sexually motivated crimes against women which have been identified as being carried out by a stranger in a public space, as opposed to in another setting, such as a domestic situation.<sup>31</sup> This force's data showed that:
  - 6 per cent of reported adult female rapes were carried out by a stranger in a public place.

<sup>30 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 27 per cent of reported adult female sexual assaults were carried out by a stranger in a public place.
- 61 per cent of reported female victim exposure crimes were carried out by a stranger in a public place.
- 2.23 This fieldwork force noted that the relationship of suspect to victim was not a mandatory field,<sup>32</sup> so there are limitations to the data available. To develop these figures, the force needed to conduct a deep dive of the data and manual coding. This was also the case for counting cases within public spaces, as this field was not readily available within the data. Due to this, the percentages above should be treated with caution, and are not considered official figures. South Wales Police assured the Inquiry that each occurrence was manually researched and reviewed, to ensure that the data provided was as rich as possible.<sup>33</sup>

#### Conclusion

2.24 Because this data is not gathered consistently across forces, it is not being analysed to spot patterns in offending. It also means that it is not possible (for instance) to say how many women reported that they were raped by strangers in England and Wales in a public space in the last year, or whether this figure is increasing or decreasing. Combined with significant under-reporting of sexual offences, this is a significant block to understanding the prevalence of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and the extent to which existing measures prevent these types of crimes.

#### Recommendation 17: Collection and sharing of data at national and local levels

Immediately, the Home Office should lead work, coordinated by the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, to significantly increase both the collection and use of data on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, in order to establish an informed understanding of these crimes and assist in building effective preventative measures. This work should:

- a. Add requirements for police forces to consistently record and provide data on: (i) the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim (i.e. whether they are strangers, or known to each other); and (ii) a description of the location of the offence(s) (by way of defined categories of public spaces or private premises), as part of their annual data returns. Consideration should be given to how this data can usefully inform the work of the Safer Streets mission<sup>34</sup> to improve and better target prevention activity.
- b. Review the capability and capacity of police analysts, working to increase the recruitment, retention and recognition of the central role these professionals play in helping to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

<sup>32</sup> The Inquiry was informed that discussions are ongoing as to whether the relationship field will become mandatory in the force's data repository.

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34 &</sup>quot;The safer streets mission aims to reduce serious harm and increase public confidence in policing and in the criminal justice system." It is one of five missions the Government has set itself. [\*\*\*]

- c. Establish annual information collection, using existing surveys, to understand women's perceptions of safety and their experiences and the public's perception of sexually motivated crimes in public settings. Consideration should be given to how this data can usefully inform the work of the Safer Streets mission to improve and better target prevention activity.
- d. Set clear guidelines that, where data is gathered by policing from female victims of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, they should be offered the opportunity to share information regarding protected characteristics. This is to ensure that, where possible, an accurate picture of victimisation is provided, and the correct support is available. Guidelines should cover details of how to conduct this data collection in a way that is sensitive to the needs of victims.

#### Relevant crime statistics

## Data on the victims of sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces

- 2.25 Sadly, many women experience sexually motivated incidents and crimes in public spaces. For example, in the Inquiry's survey of 2,000 members of the public (women and men):
  - One in five women had experienced catcalling in the last three years (21 per cent).
  - One in ten women had been inappropriately touched or pressed up against in the last three years in a public space (10 per cent).
  - Around half (48 per cent) the women had experienced an incident in the last three years where they felt unsafe in a public space due to the actions or behaviours of another person.<sup>35</sup>
- 2.26 Some groups of women are more likely than others to have been victims of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces. For example, in the Inquiry's public survey results, younger women (18–24 years) reported higher rates of being victims, indicating that younger women were more likely to have experienced incidents:
  - Just under a third had been inappropriately touched or pressed up against without permission in a public space in the last three years (31 per cent).
  - 76 per cent had experienced an incident in the last three years where they felt unsafe due to the actions or behaviour of a man or men.
  - 64 per cent had been catcalled in the last three years.

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 2.27 Because the number of respondents in this age group was small (104), this data may not be representative. But the responses also match previous surveys which showed that sexual harassment is more common for younger women. For instance, in a survey of 1,650 people in Great Britain carried out by the End Violence Against Women Coalition in 2016:<sup>36</sup>
  - 64 per cent of women of all ages reported that they had experienced unwanted sexual attention in public places and 35 per cent had experienced unwanted sexual touching; but
  - when focusing on young women aged 18–24, the percentages increased significantly: 85 per cent had faced sexual harassment in public spaces and 45 per cent had experienced unwanted sexual touching.
- 2.28 Figures from the Office for National Statistics reflect this further, with an experimental Crime Survey for England and Wales module, collected between October 2022 and March 2023, finding that 23 per cent of women aged 16–24 surveyed had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months. This percentage decreased with age for female respondents. For example, 16 per cent of women aged 25–34 and 7 per cent of women aged 35–44 had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months.<sup>37</sup>
- 2.29 These results reflect the fact that different groups and individual women experience forms of sexual violence differently. This is in part due to intersectionality, which is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class and gender that create overlapping and independent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
- 2.30 It is also important to understand how this may affect the risk of sexually motivated crimes against those women in public spaces. The Office for National Statistics' Crime Survey for England and Wales found that, for the year ending March 2022:
  - 3.3 per cent of women in England and Wales aged 16 years and over had experienced sexual assault (including attempts); but
  - 14.6 per cent of women aged 20–24 had; and
  - while 2.6 per cent of straight women experienced sexual assault (including attempts), this figure was much higher for bisexual women (20 per cent).<sup>38</sup>
- 2.31 In the absence of better quantitative data, several qualitative studies have sought to explore and explain further the differences in experiences of different groups of women. For instance, there is evidence that sexual harassment and verbal abuse can have a different impact on young Black women and women from an ethnic minority background in the UK, as it can be racist as well as sexualised and

<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>38 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

misogynistic,<sup>39</sup> and on women with disabilities (people with disabilities felt less safe in all public settings than non-disabled people did).<sup>40</sup> Women who are experiencing homelessness<sup>41</sup> also display (or experience) multiple vulnerabilities and can be at heightened risk of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, where they may be sleeping. These examples are not exhaustive.

2.32 The Inquiry's conclusion is that while all women are vulnerable to the risk of being the victim of a sexually motivated crime in a public space, some women are made more vulnerable by various interconnecting factors. As a first step, this needs to be better understood and recorded by policing.

## Data on whether the perpetrator of sexual offences knew the victim

- 2.33 Police-recorded official crime statistics for rape, sexual assault and indecent exposure do not include details of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (i.e. if the perpetrator is known to the victim, or a stranger). The Inquiry was, however, told that data is collected about victim/offender relationships, but that this is not necessarily consistent across all forces. Where it is available, the Inquiry heard, it was reported to the Home Office through the Annual Data Requirement process.<sup>42</sup>
- 2.34 There is some combined data in the Crime Survey for England and Wales, for the years ending March 2017 and March 2020, which provides an indication of the victim's relationship to the perpetrator. More than one in seven women (15 per cent) aged 16–59 years had reported rape or sexual assault by penetration (including attempts) by a stranger since the age of 16.44 While recognising some data limitations, the National Police Chiefs' Council estimated, in its 2024 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment, that stranger offences account for 26 per cent of all sexual offences, and that they are more likely to be linked to sexual assault, indecent exposure or voyeurism. 46

<sup>39 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>40 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>42 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>43 &</sup>quot;These data are based on combined data from the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2020 to create a larger sample size" (Office for National Statistics). This question set was only asked every three years.

<sup>45</sup> The National Police Chiefs' Council specifically warns of issues related to the quality, consistency and availability of police data at a national level.

<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Data on where sexually motivated crimes against women take place

2.35 Police-recorded published statistics do not include information on the location of offences (i.e. public, private or online).<sup>47</sup> Typically, any location data is high level, for example the police force area in which the crime occurred. The Inquiry has also found that location data is not captured consistently across forces. The National Police Chiefs' Council's 2024 *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment* states:

"Last year's STRA [Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment] assessed the nature of violence against women and girls within public, private and online spaces to identify the most harmful spaces using data and insight from force problem profiles. However, many forces reported that this data was either not possible to extract from their crime recording system or there were inconsistencies in how it was captured and was not always accurate."

- 2.36 Some data is available from the Office for National Statistics Crime Survey for England and Wales, which indicates the settings in which rape or assault by penetration offences happened to women aged 16–59. The most common location was a private setting (i.e. the victim's home (38 per cent), followed by the perpetrator's home (26 per cent)). 49 Nearly one in ten women (9 per cent) were victimised on the street or in a car park, park or other open public space. 50 The equivalent data does not currently exist for other sexually motivated crimes for example, sexual assault without penetration or indecent exposure.
- 2.37 The National Police Chiefs' Council's 2024 *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment* found that when sexual offences occur in public spaces, these are often focused around public transport hubs and nighttime economy locations such as nightclubs and bars.<sup>51</sup> While the Inquiry's Terms of Reference are focused on public spaces, preventative activity in the nighttime economy is inevitably designed to address risks in both public and private settings.

<sup>47 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>48 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>49 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>50 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>51 [\*\*\*].</sup> The Inquiry's Terms of Reference do not include preventative measures within those venues, but rather on the public spaces associated with them, such as town centres and the public routes by which women going to bars and nightclubs travel to and from home.

- 2.38 Other research shows that the relative risk of being a victim of a sexually motivated crime in a public space varies by time of day<sup>52</sup> and day of the week.<sup>53</sup> This risk is also seasonal in nature.<sup>54</sup>
- 2.39 In 2023, the College of Policing published research<sup>55</sup> related to mapping public space violence against women and girls. This suggested that stranger-based violence against women and girls is highly concentrated in certain public spaces within relatively small geographical areas.

## Data on perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

- 2.40 Data from the Inquiry's case file reviews of reports of sexual assault, rape and indecent exposure offences against a female victim in a public space by a stranger indicated that the overwhelming majority of suspects and offenders were male (an estimated average of 96 per cent, across the five fieldwork forces who provided this data). The Inquiry saw evidence which concluded that some perpetrators of violence against women and girls more widely are responsible for a disproportionate amount of harm, caused sometimes to multiple victims. The sexual assault, rape and indexed the provided by a stranger indicated that the overwhelming majority of suspects and offenders were male (an estimated average of 96 per cent, across the five fieldwork forces who provided this data). The sexual assault, rape and indicated that the overwhelming majority of suspects and offenders were male (an estimated average of 96 per cent, across the five fieldwork forces who provided this data).
- 2.41 In some regards, the identities of perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes may differ depending on the context<sup>58</sup> in which the crime occurs. For example, workbased sexual harassment is more likely to be perpetrated by someone known to the victim, whereas strangers typically engage in street-based harassment. Research published in 2010<sup>59</sup> found that men were more likely to engage in the sexual harassment of strangers when they were in a group.
- 2.42 In July 2024, the College of Policing published an article written by a detective inspector at Thames Valley Police, which referenced the Serious Crime Analysis Section of the National Crime Agency's finding that two-thirds of stranger rapes start with benign interactions known as 'behavioural try-outs'. These allow the offender to assess the vulnerability of potential victims and the presence of guardians, such as police or friends, before deciding whether the potential rewards of their actions outweigh the risks involved. Though their work focused on the nighttime economy, Thames Valley Police identified how suspects pretended to innocently loiter in the

<sup>52</sup> For instance, a survey by Transport for London in 2013 found that women relayed accounts of a wide range of disturbing experiences of men groping and engaging in frotteuristic acts (rubbing against them with an erection) in rush hour. More common at off-peak times were men masturbating or committing indecent exposure, and late in the evening or at night on public transport women said they were grabbed, kissed, propositioned or verbally abused. [\*\*\*]
53 [\*\*\*]

<sup>54</sup> In a survey of 16–25-year-olds by Plan International, the majority of girls and young women (59 per cent) feel they are more likely to be sexually harassed in public in the summer months compared to the rest of the year. [\*\*\*] 55 [\*\*\*]

<sup>56 [\*\*\*].</sup> Due to issues with data quality and consistency, this data should be considered with caution.

<sup>57 [\*\*\*] –</sup> four police forces were asked to identify ten perpetrators they considered to pose the greatest threat to women and girls. Of those identified, nearly half had offended against two or more women and girls; but 14 had harmed three or more, and some eight or nine women and girls [\*\*\*].

<sup>58 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>59 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

streets, often standing alone. They identified that suspects used dark doorways or bus stops as "staging grounds", watching and following women – sometimes engaging them in conversation – and that this behaviour typically targeted individuals perceived as vulnerable.<sup>60</sup>

- 2.43 Academically, this type of behaviour has been explored further. Research into the 'hunting patterns' of sexual offenders (also described as 'geographic profiling') has outlined and grouped these behaviours into four main categories:
  - hunter goes in search of suitable victims in areas where there are suitable targets;
  - poacher travels outside of home area to locations where they know they can find victims;
  - troller seizes opportunities in the course of their normal routine; and
  - trapper holds a position of authority which allows them to entice victims to a location.<sup>61</sup>
- 2.44 Some relatively new policing programmes are providing new information about the offending patterns of men who rape and seriously sexually assault women (Operation Soteria see Chapter 6), and who show predatory behaviour towards them (Project Vigilant see Chapter 5). The Inquiry considers this to represent an excellent opportunity to create more robust profiles and understanding of the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, which could help to identify and prevent offending much more quickly and effectively. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.
- 2.45 The current Government has committed to halving violence against women and girls within a decade. Comprehensive data will be necessary to understanding both progress and success. The Inquiry was informed by the Home Office that, as part of the new violence against women and girls strategy, it is engaging with the Office for National Statistics to produce a suite of headline metrics to measure the progress of halving violence against women and girls in a decade. A new combined prevalence measure of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking has been produced from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and this will be the main measure for monitoring progress against this ambition.

<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>62 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>63 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

# A public health approach to prevention of violence against women and girls

- 2.46 It is clear from the Inquiry's review of measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces that there is no single approach to how these measures are organised. The public health approach uses a three-part classification to categorise activities to prevent and respond to violence, according to when the activities occur:<sup>64</sup>
  - Before the problem starts (primary prevention): These are activities which take place before violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimisation.
  - Once the problem has begun (secondary prevention): This refers to early
    intervention in response to risk of violence and immediate responses after
    violence has occurred to deal with the short-term consequences of violence,
    to respond to those at risk and to prevent the problem from occurring or
    progressing.
  - Responding afterwards (tertiary prevention): This refers to long-term responses after violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence, minimising its impact and preventing further perpetration and victimisation.
- 2.47 There are several advantages to adopting a public health approach. It positions the problem in this case, sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces as a complex issue requiring a comprehensive evidence-based response not just from policing but from a range of different partners working collaboratively and towards the same objectives, with defined roles and responsibilities at the local level. It also recognises that different agencies are likely to be responsible for activities at the different levels (for instance, education at the primary level), equipped with strong data, to be able to drive and monitor the level of activity required. Finally, it chimes well with the language of the 'epidemic' of violence against women and girls<sup>65</sup> and presents an approach to it which is rooted in evidence about how to respond to health epidemics. The application of a public health approach to the prevention of violence against women and girls, and corresponding activities, is set out in Figure 2 below.

<sup>64</sup> The definitions given here for the three parts have been developed by the Inquiry, based on a review of existing public health approach descriptors.

Figure 2: A public health approach to prevention of violence against women and girls

# Primary Prevention

Population-based, proactive – directed at everyone

Focus: Stop crime before it occurs

- Community education campaigns
- Relationship and consent lessons in schools
- Addressing underlying social contributors (such as poverty, misogyny)

## Secondary Prevention

Intervene early – directed at some

Focus: Address emerging risks

- · Youth mentoring programmes
- Targeted policing in high-risk areas
- · Use of civil orders to prevent harm

#### Tertiary Prevention

Rehabilitation and harm reduction, response – directed at few

Focus: Reduce harm after crime has occurred, and prevent further offending

- · Behaviour change programmes
- · Rehabilitation for offenders
- Effective investigation and prosecution
- 2.48 This Report therefore categorises measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces into primary, secondary and tertiary interventions (while recognising that the delineation is not always absolute).

# Chapter 3. Primary prevention: Tackling the root causes of crime

"Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence [are] not inevitable. It is more than 'behaviours' that enable [them], it is societal norms, attitudes and beliefs that must be challenged as these are what perpetuate, excuse and legitimise."

Welsh Government, Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: Strategy 2022 to 2026, 2022<sup>1</sup>

This chapter sets out a summary of the measures that the Inquiry has considered and evidence gathered about which of these are in place to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces happening in the first place (primary prevention). It covers:

- context the root causes of violence against women and girls;
- educational prevention measures seeking to bring about generational changes in attitudes towards women and gender norms and a clear understanding of consent; and
- measures to design and update public spaces with prevention of violence against women in mind.
- 3.1 Primary prevention aims to prevent a problem from developing in the first place, by tackling its underlying roots. The National Police Chiefs' Council Prevention Strategy defines it as: "Preventing or minimising the risk of harm to individuals through a focus on large populations."<sup>2</sup>

# Context: The root causes of violence against women and girls, and creating a healthy society

3.2 The UK does not have a prevention strategy for violence against women and girls which lays out primary prevention activity, as it does for other crimes (such as serious and organised crime<sup>3</sup>). There are, however, examples of prevention

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- strategies from Wales,<sup>4</sup> Scotland<sup>5</sup> and Australia.<sup>6</sup> These strategies and their supporting documents set out that the underlying causes of violence against women and girls more widely include gender inequality, gender norms and poverty.
- 3.3 The Inquiry gathered evidence from witnesses in England and Wales relating to the broad inequalities which can lead to an environment where crimes against women take place. A range of factors were suggested as important in contributing to tackling these inequalities in order to help prevent all violence against women and girls. These include:
  - mental health services;<sup>7</sup>
  - reducing inequalities in wealth and opportunities;<sup>8</sup>
  - alcohol licensing;<sup>9</sup>
  - child and young person well-being;<sup>10</sup>
  - tackling gender norms;<sup>11</sup>
  - family support;<sup>12</sup>
  - early years investment;<sup>13</sup> and
  - the role and value of early intervention workers.<sup>14</sup>

#### Gender norms

- 3.4 In relation to the primary prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public specifically, the Inquiry found many measures related to tackling gender norms.
- 3.5 In 2021, the former Government commissioned research and analysis on *Changing Gender Norms: Engaging with Men and Boys*, which discussed the "considerable body of evidence demonstrating the ways in which gender norms, and in particular norms of men and masculinities, play a central role in different forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls".<sup>15</sup>

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]
5 [\*\*\*]
6 [\*\*\*]
7 [\*\*\*]
8 [\*\*\*]
9 [\*\*\*]
10 [\*\*\*]
11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 13 [\*\*\*]

<sup>15 &</sup>quot;Norms of masculinity are at the roots of a range of significant policy and public health issues, from men's mental health to violence against women." [\*\*\*]

3.6 Many of the primary prevention measures the Inquiry examined aimed to educate people and shape gender norms, as well as to construct a shared understanding of acceptable attitudes and behaviours towards women. The most common examples were: (i) public awareness campaigns on acceptable behaviour (covered in Chapter 4); and (ii) educating children on gender norms, healthy relationships and consent. The Inquiry's assessment of these is summarised below.

# Educational prevention measures – seeking to build generational change

- 3.7 In the Inquiry's interviews and evidence-gathering sessions, one frequently cited activity to help prevent violence against women (including sexually motivated crimes against women) appeared to be work in schools to educate children about gender norms, the nature of sexual harassment, healthy relationships and consent. The Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, the Rt Hon. Jess Phillips MP, went so far as to say that education is "a silver bullet" in terms of prevention work. The Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, the Rt Hon. Jess Phillips MP, went so far as to say that education is "a silver bullet" in terms of prevention work.
- 3.8 Education of children is seen as critical both to shaping the underlying attitudes and behaviours which will help prevent violence against women, 18 and to keeping girls safe in and after school. 19 While girls and the school environment are not within the scope of the Inquiry, given the evidence from surveys and reports about the high levels of sexual harassment suffered by adolescent girls, 20 the Chair wishes to stress the priority of keeping girls safe.
- 3.9 Educating children on healthy relationships and consent has been found to be successful in some respects in preventing violence, which is explored in more detail below.<sup>21</sup>

#### Relationship, sex and health education in schools

3.10 In England, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a duty on the Secretary of State to make regulations on education relating to relationships and sex. It permitted regulations to be made to cover other types of personal, social, health and economic education. The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 came into force on 1 September 2020. These Regulations required all pupils in England receiving primary education to be taught relationships education, all pupils in secondary

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>18</sup> This is also a focus in Scotland. [\*\*\*]

<sup>19 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

education to be taught relationship and sexual education, and all pupils in both primary and secondary education to be taught health education (with exemptions for independent schools).<sup>22</sup>

- 3.11 The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance, updated in September 2021, includes age-appropriate sections on consent, gender norms and healthy relationships, together with explicit reference that: "Schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled."

  The guidance also outlined that pupils should know "what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable". 24
- 3.12 During the course of the Inquiry's evidence-gathering for this Report, the current Government published updated guidance in July 2025. This is set to replace the existing guidance from 1 September 2026.<sup>25</sup> Crucially, this new guidance, while addressing very similar themes, builds on the existing guidance by naming violence against women and girls directly, and the approach staff should take to challenge the ideas first:

"Both within and beyond the classroom, staff should be conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes, and should take action to build a culture where prejudice is identified and tackled [...] Pupils should understand the importance of challenging harmful beliefs and attitudes and should understand the links between sexism and misogyny and violence against women and girls. Where misogynistic ideas are expressed at school, staff should challenge the ideas, rather than the person expressing them."<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, the new guidance outlines not only that pupils should know "what constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence and that such behaviour is unacceptable" but also that it should be emphasised "that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it".<sup>27</sup>

3.13 In particular, some witnesses cited the *Relationships Education*, *Relationships and Sex Education* (*RSE*) and *Health Education* guidance as key, and stressed the importance of early education in helping to prevent violence against women and girls.<sup>28</sup> The Department for Education stated that this guidance means that "all pupils should be taught about what constitutes sexual violence and sexual harassment

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>24 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>25 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>28 [\*\*\*].</sup> See also End Violence Against Women's 2025 report, which stated: "Quality, research-led relationships and sexual health education based on consent and equality should therefore be central to the government's mission to halve VAWG [violence against women and girls] crimes in the next decade by addressing the root causes of VAWG, right from primary through to the end of a young person's education." [\*\*\*]

before they leave secondary school", and that this includes information on where sexual harassment can happen – including in public.<sup>29</sup> However, some witnesses flagged the concern that the approach and delivery of teaching Relationships, Sex and Health Education sensitively in schools to address prevention of violence against women and girls gets "stuck" when the "quality of lesson is not being rolled out across schools up and down the country". 30 The need to support teachers to deliver Relationships, Sex and Health Education has been identified before; in 2022, the Women's Health Strategy heard from teachers who "reflected they were not always adequately equipped to teach certain topics effectively".31

- 3.14 Funding has also been cited as an issue.<sup>32</sup>
- 3.15 Some evidence focused on the importance of consent, which features in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance (September 2021).33 The English quidance<sup>34</sup> is similar in many respects to the Relationships and Sexuality Education Code 2021 in Wales<sup>35</sup> (issued under section 8 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021). This sets out, for instance, that for children from age 11 upwards, learning should support:

"Understanding of how consent can be communicated in different social contexts and relationships, including online. A critical understanding of how consent is impacted by perception and social context and the factors that influence and impair people's ability to engage in consensual behaviour, for example, substances, violence, coercion and relationship norms."36

3.16 In addition to Relationships, Sex and Health Education, the Department for Education gave evidence about targeted teacher webinars which were produced in 2022, on subjects including pornography and the impact of viewing harmful content.<sup>37</sup> In December 2024, it issued a guide to help teachers to spot incel culture, and to know what to do when a child displays extreme misogynistic or incel<sup>38</sup> ideologies.<sup>39</sup> Positively, the Department for Education stated that this "is complementary to the cross-government programmes on Safer Streets, VAWG [violence against women and girls], [the] 'Enough' [communications campaign (see

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 30 [\*\*\*]

<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>32 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>38 &</sup>quot;Incels are a sub-culture community of men who forge a sense of identity around their perceived inability to form sexual or romantic relationships. In recent years, there has been a small, but growing, number of violent attacks that have been attributed to individuals who identify as incels." [\*\*\*] 39 [\*\*\*]

- Chapter 4 of this Report)] and RSHE [Relationships, Sex and Health Education]", suggesting successful coordination and consistency of messaging across government departments.<sup>40</sup>
- 3.17 Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) provided evidence that its inspections have found all secondary schools were teaching some content about sexual harassment and violence, as well as related content for example, on consent and personal boundaries.<sup>41</sup>

## Beyond the curriculum: Police, prosecutor and charity and voluntary sector engagement with children

- 3.18 Beyond lessons given by teachers, the Inquiry was told about interventions aimed at reducing violence against women in early years, primary and secondary school settings, from a range of organisations.
- 3.19 In particular, there were examples of the police engaging in schools, and with children in other settings. For instance:
  - All schools in one city (London) are offered a named officer contact.<sup>42</sup>
  - Some forces conduct school meetings and outreach in primary schools.<sup>43</sup>
  - One force had police community and support officers connected to children's homes.<sup>44</sup>
- 3.20 While no officer was in these settings solely to provide education to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women, during the Inquiry's evidence-gathering all these instances were given as examples of how the police were using their contact with children to help educate and safeguard them, which contributed to education as a primary prevention measure.
- 3.21 The Inquiry found limited evidence of evaluations being conducted by forces or others to assist its examination of effectiveness of this as a measure for preventing sexually motivated crimes against women (for instance, by measuring attitudes before and after lessons). It is notable that the College of Policing received government funding<sup>45</sup> to research "Police officers in the classroom", in order to evaluate the impact of teaching "sexual consent and the law".<sup>46</sup> Emerging findings include "an increase in pupils' confidence in their understanding of sexual consent and feeling they would be able to say no to something sexual if they don't want to", and that teachers "thought it was more impactful having a police officer deliver the lesson as they could answer nuanced questions about the law and it was more engaging than their usual class teacher".<sup>47</sup>

<sup>40 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>43 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 47 [\*\*\*]

3.22 However, the Inquiry found that this activity by forces in delivering primary prevention could be contradictory to the College of Policing statement on the police's role in primary and secondary prevention:

"The police are particularly well placed to deliver tertiary prevention activities. The police's roles and responsibilities in the delivery of primary and secondary prevention are not clear cut. Parenting and educational interventions appear more effective than policing interventions in preventing crime in the longer term."

- 3.23 This is discussed further in Chapter 6.
- 3.24 The Inquiry found that there is some disagreement across the system about the role of police and also the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to some aspects of prevention. The Inquiry heard evidence that the "language of prevention is key in policing, but the nature of the work carried out by the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] is necessarily more reactive".<sup>49</sup>
- 3.25 However, the Inquiry was also told about the ways in which the Crown Prosecution Service does carry out public-facing community engagement work to address prevention, including educational activity around consent:

"[This] work was initiated by a college asking [for] community engagement managers to offer some guidance on consent which [...] involved [the Crown Prosecution Service] designing case studies for the students reflecting real life scenarios and asking them to identify criminal offences."50

- 3.26 This revealed that "there was a real lack of understanding about the legal consequences of some behaviours which might result in criminal offences and the definition of consent",<sup>51</sup> which echoes some of the points outlined by the College of Policing, above.
- 3.27 Finally, charities<sup>52</sup> are providing prevention-related content. In some cases, this includes information on bystander interventions (see Chapter 4).

## Interventions focused on engaging with boys and young men

3.28 The Inquiry was told about a number of interventions and programmes aimed specifically at engaging with boys and young men on issues of gender stereotyping and norms.<sup>53</sup> For instance, the National Education Union has resources titled 'Working with boys and young men to prevent sexism and sexual harassment', which explicitly draw the link between attitudes and action:

<sup>48 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>49 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>51 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>53 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

"Gender inequality and gendered social norms – the beliefs that a person's sex should involve certain behaviours or roles in society – contribute to entrenched patterns of violence against women and girls. Equally, they stop individual boys and young men from fulfilling their potential."<sup>54</sup>

- 3.29 The Inquiry also saw evidence on the work delivered by Tender Education and Arts, a charity that works with young people and schools to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence, which included a similar focus.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the Welsh Government has published an 'Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention Toolkit'.<sup>56</sup> While this work is not specific to sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, the focus on consent within this toolkit works to raise the understanding of acceptable behaviours and attitudes. This concept runs through the more focused educational interventions provided in the toolkit.
- 3.30 The Welsh Government's Sound campaign also has strands dedicated to engaging with boys and is discussed in Chapter 4.57
- 3.31 The issues of evaluating the effectiveness of this work with schoolchildren and young men are common to all prevention activity the difficulty of proving what might have happened, but did not. The Inquiry recognises the additional problem for these measures in that they are also aiming at intergenerational changes in attitudes that is, a long-term impact. The weight of the evidence as laid out in this section, however, means the Inquiry concludes that these educational measures are key to preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in the long term.

#### **Universities**

3.32 The Inquiry also saw evidence of primary prevention educational measures in higher education establishments, with an emphasis on building shared understanding of consent, and keeping students safe.<sup>58</sup> The Department for Education highlighted its support for the Emily Test (a set of standards, a toolbox and guided coaching aimed at enabling universities and colleges to effectively prevent, intervene in and respond to gender-based violence).<sup>59</sup>

#### Workforce

3.33 Beyond education, there is some evidence of organisations engaging with their workforces (in particular, with those employees who are men) to help ensure shared understanding of acceptable attitudes and behaviours towards women, and to build positive workplace cultures. 60 Again, these examples tended to be designed to help prevent all violence against women and girls offences, as opposed to being focused on sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. It is, however,

<sup>54 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- another example of primary prevention activity intended to build common understanding of what is and what should not be tolerated, in order to create an environment more hostile to sexual offences.
- 3.34 The Inquiry heard evidence of particularly impressive (and integrated) work in this regard from NHS England. In 2022, NHS England established a domestic abuse and sexual violence programme. This brought together and developed work on how healthcare services respond to patients who are victims of these crimes, as well as leadership for its own workforce (the NHS is the UK's largest employer: 1 in 50 people in England are NHS employees). Work included: establishment of executive leads for domestic abuse and sexual violence in every NHS Trust and Integrated Care Board, "to advocate and prioritise" prevention activity; a project to improve the capture and collection of data in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence across the NHS, having identified gaps and issues in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence data for staff and patients; and the creation of a national sexual misconduct policy framework, with a clear-sighted view of the link between this and the impact on wider society. It has been suggested that:

"As the largest employer in Europe, actions the NHS takes in relation to tackling sexual misconduct can have a positive impact both on its own employees and on wider society." <sup>63</sup>

- 3.35 The Inquiry considers this an excellent example of a whole-system approach, clearly linking responsibilities around behaviour and culture within the workforce, for the benefit of society's safety more widely.
- 3.36 This is mirrored to some degree in the evidence provided by the UK Health Security Agency, which provided information about its approach to vetting its workforce and its organisational sexual harassment policy, which it saw as action contributing to the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. <sup>64</sup> The Inquiry welcomes and encourages this approach of explicitly linking work done to prevent sexual misconduct in the workplace with the impact this may have on wider society. For instance, activity to emphasise zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace can be viewed as contributing to overall societal change.

## **Education in the community**

3.37 Most of the examples of measures to educate in the community reviewed by the Inquiry were public information campaigns (see Chapter 4). There was, however, some evidence of charities running awareness-raising sessions aimed at particular groups. For instance, Bawso (a charity that "provides practical and emotional prevention, protection and support services to Black Minority Ethnic (BME) and migrant victims" who have experienced domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage and other types of abuse)<sup>65</sup> runs sessions for men, women, asylum seekers, newly arrived migrants and young people. Bawso told the Inquiry that the sessions aim to change people's mindsets, change behaviours that are of an

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>62 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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abusive nature, identify both their actions and the "drivers of perpetration before violence takes place, [and] before violence escalates", 66 and consider how to change these. 67

## **Public space measures**

3.38 Crimes are committed by people in places. The Inquiry therefore also examined what measures are in place to help prevent sexually motivated crimes against women through the design, planning and improvement of public spaces.

# Designing spaces in a way that keeps women safe from sexually motivated crimes

3.39 The Inquiry examined evidence setting out how, traditionally, towns and public spaces have been designed primarily by men, to meet the needs of men.<sup>68</sup> UN Women published extensively on the need for safe transport, green spaces and cities for women and other vulnerable groups as part of its Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative.<sup>69</sup> Dr Ellie Cosgrave, Associate Professor in Urban Innovation at University College London, also gave evidence addressing this issue:

"[P]atriarchal processes and ways of thinking [...] are embedded into all of the decisions we make about who is important in public space, whose needs are prioritised, what kind of activity [...] is prioritised, and who is cared for, if at all. That needs to change, rather than just lighting."

- 3.40 Dr Ellie Cosgrave also gave evidence that the building industry goes through waves of being interested in focusing on the needs of women when planning.<sup>71</sup> She mentioned the lack of sustainability of this approach, with interest from organisations sometimes only lasting if the women who championed it remained in role see paragraphs 3.54 to 3.65.<sup>72</sup>
- 3.41 She elaborated on this point by explaining:

"[There] is often a peak of interest in this work [around] conferences and symposiums to discuss the issue, but those people, who are usually women, get tired of doing extra events and extra labour that is not part of their daily job. It's not going to get them a promotion, it's not valued and they want to go and live their lives."

3.42 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has ownership of the National Planning Policy Framework for England, which sets out the Government's planning principles and how they should be applied. The Framework states that local authorities should aim to achieve "healthy, inclusive and safe spaces, which

<sup>66 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>67 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>70 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>71 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>72 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>73 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion".<sup>74</sup> The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government also produces the National Design Guide for England, which sets out the ten characteristics of well-designed places (for example, that the identity of a place should be attractive and distinctive, and that it should be easy to move around in) and demonstrates what good design means in practice.<sup>75</sup>

- 3.43 In Wales, planning is devolved. Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 set out the Welsh Government's national planning policy, where new developments are proposed. Planning Policy Wales explains: "A clear rationale behind the design decisions made [...] should be sought throughout the development process and expressed, when appropriate, in a design and access statement."

  The guidance for design and access statements for Wales categorises five key objectives of good design (Access, Character, Community Safety, Environmental Sustainability and Movement) and explains how meeting these objectives should ensure that both design quality and inclusive access are given sufficient consideration in the planning process. Design and access statements have been required in Wales for many planning applications since 2009 and have been part of legislative requirements since the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.
- 3.44 In Wales, local authorities are under legal obligation to consider and address crime while in the process of planning:<sup>78</sup>

"Local authorities [in Wales] are under a legal obligation to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder in all decisions that they take. Crime prevention and fear of crime are social considerations to which regard should be given in the preparation of development plans and taking planning decisions. The aim should be to produce safe environments that do not compromise on design quality in accordance with the cohesive communities wellbeing goal." <sup>79</sup>

- 3.45 The Inquiry considers that there would be an opportunity to place a greater focus on preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces if this priority were reflected in planning guidance and principles.
- 3.46 For instance, neither the English nor the Welsh documentation contains specific reference to considering how design can help prevent violence against women in public spaces. The Inquiry saw evidence of this being discussed:

"Under public spaces in the National Model Design Guide it mentioned well located, attractive public spaces. But there is no mention of violence against women and girls. There is minimal mention of crime reduction, just that amenity spaces should make people feel safe, help overcome crime, reduce the fear of crime."80

<sup>74 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>75 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>80 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 3.47 The Inquiry was told by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that the current Government intends to update the National Design Guide for England and will consider issues of violence against women and girls when doing this.<sup>81</sup>
- 3.48 The Inquiry was told that Active Travel England, a statutory consultee on large developments, reinforces the approach set out in the National Design Guide for England:
  - "[...] through their planning assessment toolkit, which tests whether development proposals have good street lighting, good natural surveillance and clear lines of sight in relation to pedestrian access to local amenities and access to public transport".82
- 3.49 The Inquiry was told that Active Travel England's inspectors and planners have all undertaken training in using design to reduce violence against women and girls.83

#### Making spaces (feel) safer

- 3.50 When places have already been designed, the Inquiry heard that common measures which were added or improved in order to prevent crimes in general related to:
  - increasing surveillance in the space (predominantly CCTV: the use of this as a preventative measure is covered in Chapter 5);
  - increasing lighting (which the College of Policing found resulted in a 21 per cent reduction in all violent crime): the College of Policing suggested that improvements to the physical environment such as this could better protect women in public spaces;<sup>84</sup> and
  - increasing footfall.<sup>85</sup>
- 3.51 While these measures are intended to reduce all types of crime, they align precisely with the measures women reported they wanted taken in order to stay safe from sexually motivated crimes. The majority of women who responded to the Inquiry's survey believed that increased visibility of neighbourhood police officers, more CCTV cameras, changes to street lighting and changes to park lighting would make women feel safer in public spaces, in addition to more initiatives targeted at changing men's behaviour, and greater criminal penalties for offenders.

<sup>81 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>82 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>83 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>04 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>85 [\*\*\*] &</sup>quot;The presence of women is one of the best ways to signal feelings of safety amongst other women, so if parks can be designed in a way that encourages women to use them, it will create a positive feedback loop whereby the presence of women in an area increases the likelihood of other women being present."

86 [\*\*\*]

#### Accrediting places as safe for women

- 3.52 The Inquiry noted an increase since 2021 in the number of schemes and mechanisms by which different types of public spaces are accredited as 'safe' or 'safe spaces' for women and girls. Perhaps because these focus on particular spaces, the associated requirements are more specific than the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Welsh Government design principles, which talk broadly about space design, how it contributes to "overcom[ing] crime and the fear of crime",87 as well as to "prevent and reduce crime and disorder".88 These include:
  - **Green Flag:**<sup>89</sup> Following research by the University of Leeds exploring women and girls' perceptions of what makes a park feel safe or unsafe, since 2022 this scheme for parks has produced supplementary guidance specifically aimed at making parks more accessible for women and girls (including by making them safer).<sup>90</sup> Examples include guidance that park staff should receive active bystander training to help them challenge inappropriate behaviour (bystander training is discussed in Chapter 5, and in this context relates to programmes designed to give people the confidence to step in if they see a predatory man intimidating or harassing a woman in public).
  - Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (Licensing SAVI): At the request of the Home Office, along with the nighttime economy (with 1,200 registered venues). This includes a self-assessment tool to help licensed premises "provide a safer and more secure environment for their managers, staff, customers, and local communities",<sup>91</sup> information about training on bystander interventions, an examination of bar/venue layouts and inputs on crime scene preservation.<sup>92</sup> Information published on the Licensing SAVI website cites South Wales Police as reporting a 30 per cent reduction (over 12 months) in sexual assaults at venues registered with Licensing SAVI.<sup>93</sup>
  - **Park Mark:** For car parks (managed by the British Parking Association) on behalf of Police Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd, a subsidiary of the (London) Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). Pesigning Out Crime Officers (see paragraphs 3.54 to 3.65) were involved in some of this work, and the Inquiry saw evidence of them scrutinising crime statistics which showed that in one force area (Cleveland), 88 per cent of violence against women and girls crimes in parking facilities took place in non-Park Mark venues. In another force area, the British Parking Association was working to digitally map car parks to help direct women and girls to safe parking facilities, which will include help points and display telephone numbers to call if assistance is needed.

<sup>87 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>88 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>89</sup> The Green Flag Award scheme has been owned by the Government since its launch in 1997.

<sup>90 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>91 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>92 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>93 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>94 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>95 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- Safeguarding on Rail Scheme (developed by the Department for Transport and British Transport Police):<sup>96</sup> The scheme's requirements include Disclosure and Barring Service checks on all staff, and a safeguarding session as part of its induction for all new recruits, "ensuring the message is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and encouraging active bystanders".<sup>97</sup>
- 3.53 These accredited safe spaces often overlap with the provision of safe havens and safe routes for women, particularly around the nighttime economy (discussed in Chapter 5). The Inquiry considers there to be opportunity for further coordination of these schemes, to ensure consistency in their standards and geographical coverage.

# **Designing Out Crime Officers – an opportunity not fully exploited**

"There should be a mandatory set of standards, such as surveillance and lights [...] We talk about VAWG [violence against women and girls] but there is a real lack of knowledge about it."

Evidence to the Inquiry<sup>98</sup>

- 3.54 Every police force has a Designing Out Crime Officer. These civilian officers are responsible for engaging with local authority planning departments and local architects to undertake environmental visual audits and offer advice on the use of Secured by Design products<sup>99</sup> to make the built environment as safe as possible. They tend to provide detailed crime prevention advice very often within the design and build phases of new developments or to improve existing infrastructure.
- 3.55 The role of Designing Out Crime Officer has been professionalised within the last three years. The College of Policing has produced and updated a role profile, and there has been new accreditation, as well as regular formal network meetings, 100 aimed at ensuring greater standardisation and a clear understanding of the expectations of the role. There is also a Chief Constable lead for Designing Out Crime Officers, who sits on the National Police Chiefs' Council's prevention committee. Given their role in minimising crime in the built environment, 101 the Inquiry considers that Designing Out Crime Officers represent a key opportunity to implement and monitor measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in those spaces by influencing the design of safer public spaces, through considering the needs of women.

<sup>96 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>97 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>98 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>99</sup> Secured by Design is an official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit. It provides guides and services to "build-in proven crime prevention techniques at the planning stage to new buildings and major refurbishments". [\*\*\*]

<sup>100 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>101 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 3.56 HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) confirmed to the Inquiry that all forces should, as part of their violence against women and girls plans, 102 have specific points related to deploying Designing Out Crime Officers to undertake environmental visual audits and offer advice on the use of Secured by Design products. 103
- During evidence-gathering with the fieldwork forces, the Inquiry heard evidence from Designing Out Crime Officers, 104 all of whom were aware of their forces' (and the national policing) focus on tackling violence against women and girls.
- 3.58 Some Designing Out Crime Officers mentioned that they had been tasked specifically with preventing crime in the nighttime economy. 105 One witness referred to the focus on making spaces (in this case, transport networks) a hostile environment for perpetrators. 106 They were frequently involved in working with local authorities around lighting, parks and CCTV<sup>107</sup> – all the things which women have said that they want in order to feel safe. 108 The Inquiry considers that these examples show the value in making tackling violence against women and girls a key part of the Designing Out Crime Officer role.
- 3.59 It was encouraging to see Designing Out Crime Officers discussing violence against women and girls in recent national meetings. 109
- The Inquiry saw some good examples of Designing Out Crime Officers who were involved in preventative activities aimed specifically at preventing violence against women. These included:
  - In the Metropolitan Police Service, in the violence against women and girls crime prevention strategy, there are proactive environmental visual audits in areas where women and girls feel unsafe.110
  - In the Merseyside Police, there was a clear focus on working with local authorities and architects, as well as with neighbourhood teams across the force, to help prevent violence against women in public spaces. 111

<sup>102</sup> These are force-level action plans on how each force will respond to violence against women and girls in their areas, and in particular, "to increase action against dangerous perpetrators, build women's trust and confidence and help make spaces safer for all women". [\*\*\*]

<sup>103 [\*\*\*]</sup> 104 [\*\*\*]

<sup>105</sup> For instance, Avon and Somerset Police were involved in Licensing SAVI, environmental visual audits and giving out panic alarms. [\*\*\*]

<sup>106 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>107 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>108 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>109 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>110 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>111 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 3.61 HMICFRS provided evidence<sup>112</sup> of many examples of Designing Out Crime Officers delivering interventions with partners to improve natural surveillance (i.e. by designing spaces with improved visibility and ensuring areas are properly maintained) to address some of the physical factors which can improve the feeling of safety for women in some public areas.
- 3.62 HMICFRS also provided the case study of Devon and Cornwall Police activity in Exeter city centre. 113 Following the murder of a woman, an analysis showing a spike in reports of sexual assault and rape, increased public concerns about drink and needle spiking, and antisocial behaviour in the nighttime economy, Designing Out Crime Officers worked with partner agencies in November 2023 to introduce 226 CCTV cameras in 154 locations in Exeter. Designing Out Crime Officers also advised on the introduction of improved street lighting for instance, changing lights to brighter bulbs and trimming back trees.
- 3.63 Designing Out Crime Officers can represent a key opportunity to influence a wide range of organisations (including architects, local authorities and universities)<sup>114</sup> and raise their awareness of violence against women and girls, and how to help prevent it. For instance, they can advise on the design of building complexes, or carry out visual audits of sites to suggest ways to prevent crime from happening (or from happening again). They report that preventing terrorism was the priority for companies and local authorities not the prevention of violence against women and girls:

"In a recent meeting we raised the issue of crime in open spaces and a representative from one company admitted that they concentrate on counter-terrorism, they don't focus on public realm safety. There needs to be some work done with these larger companies to raise awareness of VAWG."115

3.64 In addition, the Inquiry was told that there are few enforcement or compliance teeth available to Designing Out Crime Officers. Most Designing Out Crime Officers with whom the Inquiry spoke had examples of giving advice which was then ignored. There was, however, an example from Wales of one area where Designing Out Crime Officers had more power:

"[I]n Wales, Social Housing, if it's grant funded, has to meet Secured by Design standards [...] So, we're very lucky in Wales because the only people that can sign them off is the Designing Out Crime Officers so they have to engage with us if it's grant-funded Social Housing." 118

3.65 When asked about recommendations, some Designing Out Crime Officers wanted planning legislation to be changed so that they would become statutory consultees, and to compel people to act on their advice:

"They're obliged to ask for our

<sup>112 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>113 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>114 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>115 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>116 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>117 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>118 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

opinion, they're not obliged to take it."120 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, however, told the Inquiry that there is currently a moratorium on the introduction of new statutory consultees while a review into the system is being undertaken and, once complete, the bar for introducing them is expected to be high. In particular, the Inquiry was told that there will need to be a clear demonstration that the outcomes cannot be achieved through other means, such as engagement in the local plan-making process, and influencing decision-making on design matters relating to public safety in design policies, guidance and design codes.<sup>121</sup>

Recommendation 18: Increased use of police Designing Out Crime Officers in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

By November 2026, the Government should explore how to improve the impact that the safety advice provided by police Designing Out Crime Officers could have on the prevention of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, including by amendments to policies and by changing their status within relevant planning legislation.

## Conclusion

- 3.66 Preventing crimes from happening in the first place is clearly the holy grail. Measures to educate children and young people on consent and healthy relationships are critical levers, in the longer term, to preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and it is positive to see the consistency of the national curriculum although the Inquiry notes the evidence provided about the need for proper resourcing to implement this curriculum. It is also positive to see the range of inputs in school (although this runs the risk of efforts being uncoordinated).
- 3.67 Designing places to minimise the risks of sexually motivated crimes against women should not be negotiable. As set out in Chapter 2, it is not 'just' a women's issue, it is a human rights issue: "foreclosure of public spaces, and frustration of routine freedoms" means there is "a constant tension between safety and freedom that women have to consider. To be safer, women need to restrict some aspects of their [...] freedom." 124
- 3.68 The Inquiry has found that mechanisms are in place for designing, planning and improving public spaces in a way that can help prevent sexually motivated crimes against women taking place within them. This is through a combination of the role of the Designing Out Crime Officer and the availability of expert advice. What are missing are ways to enforce compliance, so that those who seek Designing Out Crime Officer advice would be compelled to listen to and implement the advice that Designing Out Crime Officers provide.

<sup>120 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>121 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>122 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>123 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>124 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

3.69 The Inquiry considers that there is more opportunity for Designing Out Crime Officers to be used in preventing violence against women and girls, and specifically to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. While some of the forces visited had identified this link, and were fully using Designing Out Crime Officers, in others this was less apparent. Designing Out Crime Officers have recently been professionalised and are now accredited. The Inquiry considers that they should be a central part of the whole-force approach to violence against women and girls.

# Chapter 4. Cross-cutting prevention measures: Public messaging and awareness campaigns

This chapter sets out a summary of evidence on:

- primary prevention, including public awareness campaigns to promote acceptable behaviour and positive male role models;
- secondary prevention, such as encouraging bystander interventions, messaging to women about safety, and campaigns aimed at perpetrators; and
- tertiary prevention, including campaigns to encourage the reporting of sexual offences and the publicisation of charges and convictions.
- 4.1 The Inquiry saw evidence of public information campaigns across all three levels of prevention activity (see Figure 2 in Chapter 2 for information on these levels). These were often specifically targeted at raising awareness of and preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. The three levels were defined as follows:
  - **Primary:** Campaigns which raised awareness of what is acceptable and what is illegal behaviour, and of women's experiences of sexually motivated crimes.
  - **Secondary:** Campaigns which encouraged bystander interventions, or provided safety messaging to women.
  - **Tertiary:** Campaigns which encouraged reporting of sexually motivated crimes, or publicised when sexual offenders are charged and convicted.
- 4.2 The Inquiry received evidence about some of the campaigns referenced in this chapter and identified more through open-source research. Those included have been selected as typical within their categories. Where evaluations of campaigns were available, the Inquiry examined the metrics used and the outcome data provided. This included consideration of how far the campaigns aimed to prevent crimes directly, to impact on attitudes and/or behaviours, and to reach particular audiences.

- 4.3 There have been multiple public information campaigns since 2021. This aligns with the increased focus on tackling violence against women and girls more widely over this period. However, campaigns may also be popular because they are relatively cheap. This makes them particularly attractive when cash budgets need to be spent in a particular year.<sup>1</sup>
- 4.4 The College of Policing has assessed some campaign approaches and concluded that there is no evidence that they reduce crime per se. However, the assessments identified that campaigns are effective in gathering valuable evidence about violence against women in order to identify hot spots. This outcome identifying hot spots is a relevant metric in evaluating the extent to which these measures contribute to preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.<sup>2</sup>

## **Primary prevention**

#### Public awareness campaigns on acceptable behaviour

- 4.5 Many of the public information campaigns reviewed by the Inquiry aim to increase understanding of acceptable behaviour and attitudes towards women. This is either through:
  - giving examples of unacceptable behaviour (aimed either at men to prompt them to recognise the behaviour in themselves, or at the population at large); for instance, sexual harassment awareness: Zero Tolerance (on the transport network); 'No place for it' (Trafford, Manchester); 'No excuse' (Liverpool);<sup>3</sup> or
  - encouraging men to consider situations from a woman's viewpoint; for instance, 'Through her eyes' (Southwark).
- 4.6 Some of the campaigns examined by the Inquiry are national, and some local. Some are multi-year, and others shorter. Despite these differences, many of these campaigns are similar, and witnesses at an evidence-gathering session held by the Inquiry referred to the issue of campaign confusion:
  - "[T]here's a lot [of campaigns] nationally and locally [...] all com[ing] from different angles. [It's] better to have something than nothing but [they're all coming from] their own lens [sic]."4
- 4.7 For many campaigns, the messaging is very similar. The target audiences are often identical (men aged 18–35), and even some of the images are remarkably similar (see Figure 3 for examples).

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*].</sup> This is even more evident when considering the bystander intervention campaigns: see paragraph 4.17.

Figure 3: Three poster campaigns against sexual violence which have similar designs



Sources: Isle of Wight Council and Portsmouth City Council, Step Up for Women's Safety; Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council, Safer Streets for Women & Girls; Merseyside Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Safer Streets Merseyside, Our Streets, Our Safety.

4.8 Noting these similarities is not a criticism of any of these campaigns, or their designs. It does, however, suggest that variation in design across England and Wales is not necessary, and so a more unified response could be implemented. One wider campaign could be more cost-effective, but more importantly, could present a more consistent, sustained and clear set of messages to the public.

#### Recommendation 19: Targeted and consistent public messaging

By March 2026, the Home Office, as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls, should agree funding for a multi-year series of public information campaigns centred around the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. These campaigns should be managed and funded centrally by the UK Government, but rolled out regionally and locally in a sustainable and consistent way. They should all have the same central purpose and messaging, and should include evaluation metrics based on behavioural and attitudinal change, as well as communications reach and engagement.

This recommendation should not be seen to supersede any progress made against Recommendation 5 from the Part 1 Report (the Home Office should launch a public information campaign on indecent exposure). Instead, any activity to implement Recommendation 5 from the Part 1 Report should seek to incorporate any relevant learning from this subsequent recommendation as part of the response (despite the passage of time and nine-month delay in implementation; see Chapter 1 on the implementation of recommendations from the Part 1 Report for further details on this).

- 4.9 Another similarity is that, although the campaign evaluations seen by the Inquiry generally judged their respective campaigns to be successful, this is frequently based mostly on measurement of the communications reach i.e. how many times posters or adverts have been seen, or how many people remember seeing them rather than whether there was a resulting change in behaviour or attitude.<sup>5</sup>
- 4.10 It is undeniably difficult to link awareness campaigns with prevention outcomes. But without any link to crime reduction, attitudinal or behavioural change, these measures are less obviously preventative in nature. The Inquiry considers the most effective campaigns to be those run as part of wider programmes of work (for example, in Liverpool see the case study in Chapter 5), and those linked to bystander campaigns (see paragraph 4.17 onwards).
- 4.11 The evaluations of awareness campaigns do, however, provide some interesting insights. For instance, for one bystander campaign (Speak Up, Interrupt, discussed at paragraph 4.19), women tended to have a more positive sentiment about the adverts than men despite not being the primary audience.<sup>6</sup>
- 4.12 British Transport Police provided the Inquiry with a full evaluation of not just the communications reach of one of its campaigns, but the impact on attitudes and behaviours as a result of people seeing it.<sup>7</sup> This type of evaluation is positive. It is particularly striking that for men, perceptions of safety on trains increased significantly after the campaign, but for women, perceptions of safety stayed stable.

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>7 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Campaigns promoting positive male behaviour

4.13 There are examples of public awareness campaigns aimed at providing positive male role models as prevention measures.<sup>8</sup> The Inquiry heard evidence that this was seen as particularly important in helping combat the effect of negative (for instance, misogynistic) influences.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the messaging about 'do not stare' and other guidance around what 'not' to do, these campaigns offer an alternative image of masculinity. This is reflected in the former Government's *Changing Gender Norms* report, with one interviewee stating: "Much greater effort is needed to insert alternatives to dominant ideas of masculinity." The report noted a need for men (particularly men in power) to "model different, healthier ways of being a man, and speak out about gender inequality and violence against women and girls".<sup>10</sup>

#### Case study: Sound campaign

4.14 Sound is a Welsh Government campaign encouraging men aged 18–34 in Wales to learn about gender-based violence. It seeks to achieve this through three mechanisms:

#### "1. Sound It Out

Have conversations with male peers in safe spaces, sounding out problematic behaviours and concerns.

#### 2. Sound Advice

Get trusted insights on what a healthy relationship looks and feels like, and ask for support if you're struggling.

#### 3. Be Sound As

Encourage friends to open up, support them, challenge them, be a role model, emulate the figures in your life who you consider 'sound as.'

The ultimate aim of the project is to create a sound Welsh society in which we can all thrive."11

4.15 This is clearly an extremely successful campaign in terms of reach. The Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, provided the Inquiry with information that: "380,000 men and boys – that's over 95% – of the target age across Wales have seen the [S]ound campaign." There are similarities with the successful 'Don't be that guy' campaign in Scotland, which also emphasises the importance of "talk[ing] openly to our male friends and colleagues about behaviour that's damaging to women and puts men at risk of offending" as a means of reducing rape, sexual assault and harassment.

<sup>8 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>9 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>10 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>13 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

4.16 The Inquiry considers that there is an opportunity to bring some of the types of campaign outlined in this chapter together in a more coordinated fashion. Given the identical audiences, there could be efficiencies in unifying approaches. Bigger, coordinated campaigns, with consistent central messaging adapted as necessary for the local audience, would also allow the collection of better data on the success of these campaigns, which would, in turn, provide better evidence on their effectiveness.

## Secondary prevention

#### **Encouraging bystander interventions**

- 4.17 The Inquiry saw evidence of campaigns to encourage active bystander interventions; for example, communications which provide information to train people to identify the signs of a man, or men, intimidating a woman, or women, and then give them mechanisms by which to intervene.
- 4.18 The evidence base on the efficacy of bystander intervention programmes is extensive. The College of Policing concluded that such programmes have been shown to reduce acceptance of rape myths, and increase confidence in both identifying situations where intervention is appropriate, and in intervening. However, the College of Policing points out there is no evidence to suggest that bystander programmes affected incidences of sexual assault, at least when using the measure of self-reporting by perpetrators. The Australian Human Rights Commission has called bystander intervention and important form of primary prevention and [...] an increasingly prominent strategy. The Scottish Government suggests that there is evidence that some bystander programmes are "promising interventions" in the prevention of violence against women and girls in general (although notes that most programmes aim at attitudinal as opposed to behavioural change). Programmes are widely used internationally, including across England and Wales.
- 4.19 The Inquiry considered a selection of information campaigns designed to encourage bystander intervention, for illustrative purposes (see Figure 4). These included: 'Have a word' (London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, coverage in London);<sup>19</sup> Enough (Home Office, coverage in England and Wales);<sup>20</sup> Speak Up, Interrupt (British Transport Police, coverage in London and on train networks);<sup>21</sup> 'That guy' (Police Scotland, coverage in Scotland);<sup>22</sup> and #SafeToSay (Wales Violence Prevention Unit, coverage in Wales).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>15 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>19 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 23 [\*\*\*]

Figure 4: Posters from a selection of information campaigns intended to encourage bystander intervention<sup>24</sup>





Sources: British Transport Police, Speak Up, Interrupt campaign; Home Office, Enough campaign; Violence Prevention Unit Wales, #SafeToSay, More Voices, More Power.

4.20 Again, the messaging of these campaigns is very similar. This is another example of analogous campaigns which are being designed and distributed to different groups by different providers, but with little discernible difference in appearance or content. There may be efficiencies in bringing such campaigns together in the future.

#### Messaging to women about safety

- 4.21 The Inquiry saw evidence of a conscious move away from campaign messaging aimed solely at telling women they needed to protect themselves. This move was related to dismantling myths about victims particularly rape myths which could imply the offence was caused by the behaviour or choices of women.
- 4.22 For instance, an NHS poster from 2006 depicted a distressed young woman accompanied with the wording, "One in three reported rapes happens when the victim has been drinking". The Department of Health and Social Care and the Home Office both told the Inquiry that this campaign does not align with current government policy, and later campaigns do show a change in approach.
- 4.23 In more recent campaigns, communications were instead focused on more general advice about how to enjoy a 'good night out'.<sup>27</sup> This was frequently framed more broadly as how people could stay safe from all crimes.
- 4.24 This reflects a purposeful overall shift to focusing on the perpetrators' behaviour. This is discussed further in the next section.

#### Campaigns aimed directly at perpetrators

4.25 There is some evidence of communications aimed directly at potential perpetrators. For instance, as part of Operation Lester (a national police campaign to tackle the problem of individuals spiking people's drinks, in order to drug them and sexually assault them), posters were placed in bars stating: "You can be anything you want to be – not when you're on the sex offenders register" (produced by Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (Licensing SAVI), in collaboration with the Enough campaign: see Figure 5).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

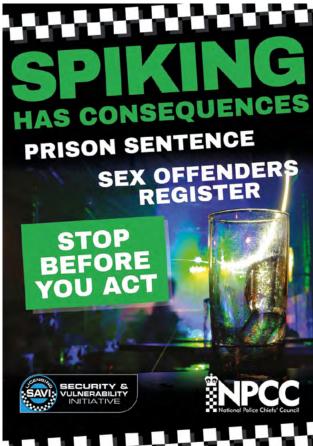
<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>28 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Figure 5: Two posters warning people about the consequences of spiking drinks, produced as part of Operation Lester





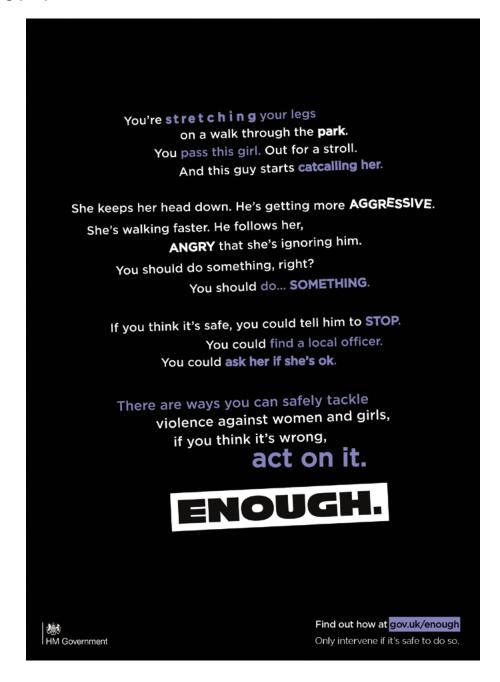
Source: Licensing SAVI, drink spiking posters.

- 4.26 The problems of evaluating prevention activity are perhaps particularly complex when considering campaigns in this category, given the difficulties in getting information from perpetrators about what prevents their behaviour. However, the messaging in these campaigns seems well grounded in research published in 2023, which found that being labelled a sex offender is a key concern for offenders.<sup>29</sup>
- 4.27 While the spiking posters address potential perpetrators directly, other campaigns aimed at changing perpetrator behaviour did so indirectly. For instance, one phase of the Enough campaign aimed to change attitudes in behaviours in men aged 18–35 who had "problematic views" of women. But it did so indirectly, in what the evaluation company referred to as "the Trojan horse" approach (i.e. it was not explicitly messaging the people whose behaviour it aimed to change, but instead had messages about taking action if a 'guy' showed these behaviours; see Figure 6).<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>30 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Figure 6: Poster from the Enough campaign, demonstrating ways to act upon witnessing perpetrator behaviour



Source: Home Office, Enough campaign.

4.28 Evaluation of the Enough campaign, however, found that it was men who did not hold problematic views of women to start with who were most aware of the campaign.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## **Tertiary prevention**

### Communications campaigns aimed at increasing reporting

- 4.29 Communications campaigns aimed at encouraging reporting are needed. The Inquiry's public survey found that women were significantly less likely than men to have reported an incident where they felt unsafe (even though they were more likely to have experienced one). Of those women who did not report an incident, three in ten women had not reported because they did not think that anything would happen as a result of the report (29 per cent), or they did not think that a report would be taken seriously (28 per cent).
- 4.30 Respondents who said that they were aware of activity aimed at preventing sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, and had experienced an incident, were significantly more likely to have reported an incident (or incidents) (40 per cent) than those who were not aware of activity (13 per cent).
- 4.31 Examples of campaigns aimed at encouraging women and others to report include 'It's not that deep' in Lambeth<sup>32</sup> and Your Piece of the Puzzle from British Transport Police (evaluated by measuring awareness that people can report direct to the force, prompted campaign recall, saving the text number for making a report and downloading the Railway Guardian app).<sup>33</sup> See Figures 7a and 7b for examples.

Figure 7a: Poster urging travellers to report harassment to British Transport Police



Source: British Transport Police, Speak Up, Interrupt campaign.

<sup>32 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>33 [\*\*\*].</sup> To note, the Railway Guardian app went out of service during the period of writing this Report [\*\*\*].

Figure 7b: Poster urging people in Merseyside to report violence against women and girls to the police



Source: Merseyside Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, #TakingAction.

4.32 There are also examples of some organisations using innovative communication mechanisms as part of these campaigns. These include: sensible tie-ins with sports clubs and celebrities/influencers; events such as concerts;<sup>34</sup> use of Facebook and Instagram;<sup>35</sup> and focused advertising around locations and events. The Inquiry notes British Transport Police's evaluation of its activities around the Taylor Swift concerts in London in 2024, which included giving out friendship bracelets with emergency numbers wound into the design (at a total cost of £500 to the force). This evaluation looked at reports of sexual offences made to the force over the period of the engagement, and concluded that there was a "realistic possibility [that] BTP [British Transport Police]'s campaigns have led to increased reporting" of sexual offences.<sup>36</sup>

#### Publicising arrests and convictions

4.33 Some forces provided evidence of targeted communications plans aimed at publicising successful arrests and convictions of perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This was seen as contributing to increasing women's confidence in going out and their confidence in the police.

<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Conclusion

- 4.34 Public information campaigns are being used specifically as a preventative measure to reduce sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces a fairly rare example of such targeted activity (i.e. targeted specifically at these types of crime) from the Inquiry's review of measures. Communications are being used at every prevention level, and there is some evaluation in place. However, most of this evaluation looks at communications reach and recall, with more limited examples that follow through to examine any resulting changes to attitudes or behaviours (as would be expected, given the challenges with such evaluation).
- 4.35 Raising awareness of acceptable behaviours and safety advice, and empowering people to intervene, are all valuable measures that contribute to reducing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and which form a crucial call for action to society to work together to prevent these crimes. These campaigns are all effective. However, the Inquiry sees neither the benefit nor the value for money to the taxpayer in having almost identical campaigns running at slightly different times and in different places. It considers the recommendation on communications<sup>37</sup> from the *Making Smoking Obsolete* review (2022)<sup>38</sup> to be applicable here: a single, multiyear, centrally funded campaign, with localised templates provided as needed for example, allowing for regional accents.
- 4.36 This would provide a consistent message, save money, and crucially provide a much bigger evidence base against which to test the efficacy of the messaging.
- 4.37 The Inquiry asked witnesses who they thought should coordinate such a campaign. There was no clear consensus. In the public survey, respondents were asked who they trusted to implement measures designed to prevent sexually motivated offending against women in public. Again, there was no agreement. The Inquiry has seen successful public awareness campaigns run by the police (in Scotland), by joint policing, company and public sector organisations (Zero Tolerance), by charities (Rape Crisis Scotland), by Police and Crime Commissioners/mayoral offices, and by governments (in Wales and England). The Inquiry therefore concludes that the owner is unimportant, so long as they have the funding, excellent designers, an evaluation mechanism and the right connections with regional and local partners.

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> Recommendation 10. "Invest £15 million per year in a well-designed national mass media campaign, supported by targeted regional media. This should be nationwide, direct smokers to support and dismantle myths about smoking and vaping."

#### Recommendation 20: Empowering and engaging citizens to take action

The public has a pivotal role to play in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. In recognition of that:

- a. By April 2026, the Home Office, as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls, should agree funding for (and later implement) a multi-year series of active bystander public information campaigns centred around the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. Campaigns should be launched by no later than December 2026. These should be managed and funded centrally by the UK Government, but rolled out regionally and locally in a sustainable and consistent way. They should all have the same central purpose and messaging, and include evaluation metrics based on behaviour and attitudinal change, as well as communications reach and engagement.
- By July 2026, the Home Office should agree which agencies should have ownership of the coordination standards and messaging around active bystander training.
- c. By July 2026, the Government should consider the arguments for the introduction of a wider Good Samaritan law, as is being championed by Farah Naz, Zara Aleena's aunt and campaigner; and in particular consider the potential impact that introducing such a law could have on the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

# Chapter 5. Secondary prevention: Identifying potential perpetrators and targeting activity

This chapter sets out a summary of evidence on:

- how the police identify areas of high risk for sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, so that they can target preventative work there;
- what place-based interventions are used to prevent offending when areas have been identified as high risk (including outside bars and clubs (the 'nighttime economy'), as well as on public transport networks);
- measures aimed at safeguarding women, including provision of safe spaces or street guardians, safety apps and mechanisms by which they can discreetly ask for help;
- measures aimed at disrupting potential perpetrators, including reviewing how police officers identify these men and what tools they can use to prevent them offending (such as preventative or protective orders);
- Project Vigilant, the policing approach aimed directly at preventing sexually motivated offending against women in public spaces;
- interventions available to the police when a predatory man is identified;
- · options to seek help for men who want to stop their own behaviour; and
- targeting prevention measures in areas of risk: transport and the nighttime economy.
- 5.1 Secondary prevention measures aim to prevent an identified problem from spreading. In health terms, this means quickly isolating and treating confirmed cases. The National Police Chiefs' Council Prevention Strategy defines it as "[targeting] those individuals at high risk of offending, to divert them from involvement e.g. an early intervention approach".1

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

# Identifying problem areas for crimes against women in public spaces

- 5.2 The Inquiry considered how well equipped the police are to identify the public spaces where sexually motivated crimes against women are taking place, in order to inform prevention measures.
- 5.3 Much police work in this area is linked to problem-oriented policing² and hotspotting, both established policing tactics. At the most basic level, this involves identifying where a problem is, through analysis of data (such as recorded crime and incidents) and intelligence, and then putting in place solutions to tackle that problem. The Inquiry considered policing's use of these tactics as an approach to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in all public spaces.

#### **Data**

- 5.4 There is good evidence that hot-spot policing and problem-oriented policing are approaches that can deliver significant and sometimes large reductions in crime and disorder across a number of crime types, including violent and sexual crime.<sup>3</sup> The Chief Executive Officer of the College of Policing, Chief Constable Andy Marsh QPM, strongly advocated use of the 'problem-solving' approach at both a local and national level to identify the highest-risk offenders and locations in order to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. However, to achieve this, there needs to be access to real-time data to determine what interventions are likely to have the most impact.<sup>4</sup>
- 5.5 The National Police Chiefs' Council's *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment* identified problem areas for sexual offending against women in public spaces as being related to the nighttime economy<sup>5</sup> that is, coming home or moving between nightclubs and bars, as well as public transport hubs.
- 5.6 Crime and incident data gives a good indication of where crimes have happened before, when and of what nature (see paragraphs 2.36 to 2.39 on data on where offences take place). However, there are clearly some limitations to this data:
  - Not all crimes and incidents are reported (see paragraph 2.11), and so the data is incomplete.
  - It does not pick up on 'near misses' (e.g. where an offence would likely have occurred, but the woman took a different route because she felt concerned, or because more people arrived).

<sup>2</sup> Problem-oriented policing (POP) – also known as problem-solving policing – is an approach to tackling crime and disorder that involves identification of a specific problem; thorough analysis to understand the problem; development of a tailored response; and assessment of the effects of the response. [\*\*\*]

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

5.7 The Inquiry found clear evidence of attempts to improve the data picture on where sexually motivated crimes against women occur. This took the form of partnerships (in particular, police and councils working together to target hot-spot areas)<sup>6</sup> and a plethora of new mechanisms to gather information from women regarding where crimes and incidents have taken place and not been reported, or where they feel unsafe. This information is gathered via surveys, apps, and walk and talk sessions.

#### Surveys

- 5.8 The Inquiry examined several surveys which ask women about their experiences of crime, or of feeling unsafe. These surveys ask questions about women's experiences across the range of what Professor Liz Kelly, Director of the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University, refers to as the "continuum of sexual violence", and aim to collect information picking up on not just where crimes occur, but where women feel they might do. The Inquiry sees this as positive in recognising that "women are experts in their own safety".
- 5.9 Surveys include: those asking women about their experiences and/or feelings of safety in their park (e.g. Safer Parks research by the University of Leeds<sup>9</sup>) or their borough, or particular places identified as crime hot spots within them (Trafford<sup>10</sup>); those seeking to understand the issue of sexual harassment on the rail network;<sup>11</sup> and those researching violence against women and girls more generally across England and Wales (violence against women and girls strategy<sup>12</sup>).

#### **Apps**

"[There are] lots of reporting tools [...] Everyone wants to use funding to create an app, [but it's] not always the most helpful [...] It's a way of spending money quickly but [they] don't have the impact they need."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>13</sup>

5.10 Perhaps the greatest increase in the use of a data-gathering tool since 2021 has been in apps. These allow women to log places where they do not feel safe and/or where incidents have occurred, and they can do so anonymously (i.e. when they do not wish to make a report to the police). The College of Policing assesses apps as providing valuable intelligence for hot-spot work – but found limited evidence that they reduce crime in themselves.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>7 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>8 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>9 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>10 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 13 [\*\*\*]

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 5.11 Again, there is a range of owners of these apps, and of locations covered for instance, Railway Guardian, <sup>15</sup> Flare <sup>16</sup> and the Waltham Forest Safe Streets app. <sup>17</sup>
- 5.12 In addition, the StreetSafe app was a major release from the Home Office (i.e. the Home Office funded its delivery and issued guidance to support its launch) which allows users to anonymously pinpoint locations on a map where they felt unsafe. It was funded from the £25 million Safer Streets Fund (see paragraph 5.26). Between its launch on 1 September 2021 and 7 July 2025, there were 40,515 reports of 139,989 concerns on the app (some reports were of multiple concerns). Users categorise their concern(s) into environmental (for instance, evidence of drug or alcohol use, or poor lighting) or behavioural (such as feeling as if you were followed). The most common environmental reports were of drug or alcohol use; the most common behavioural reports were of being followed, and verbal harassment by a group. He home Office's evaluation of the pilot noted inconsistent use of it between forces.
- 5.13 What happens to the data from these apps is discussed further in paragraphs 5.16 to 5.20.

#### Walk and talk

- 5.14 Particularly since Sarah Everard's murder, many forces have initiated walk and talk sessions.<sup>21</sup> In these, forces publicise opportunities for women to walk with officers through local areas and point out places or situations which made them feel unsafe. Some of the advertising for these sessions reviewed by the Inquiry was explicit about outcomes. For instance: "We're inviting you to tell us your experiences and concerns [...] tell us so we can work with partners to improve safety on our streets."<sup>22</sup> As well as gathering this information, these events are also designed to build or rebuild trust and confidence in the police.<sup>23</sup>
- 5.15 The Inquiry did not see any formal evaluation of these sessions. Concerns were raised early on that they would not be welcomed by some communities (in which, for instance, trust in policing is low, and officers are perceived as a potential threat), and would be seen as a public relations exercise.<sup>24</sup> The Inquiry notes that some forces (including Merseyside Police and the Metropolitan Police Service) have rebranded their 'walk and talk' sessions as 'walk, talk and do'. This seems a positive step in emphasising a commitment that action will be taken.

<sup>15</sup> To note, the Railway Guardian app went out of service during the period of writing this Report. [\*\*\*]

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>19 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>24 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### What happens to the information

- 5.16 Surveys, apps, and walk and talks all seem sensible approaches to increasing understanding and knowledge of areas where women do not feel safe. They also allow women to provide details of incidents and crimes when they do not (for whatever reason) want to take a criminal justice route. It is critical that this information is then used. If this does not happen, it is a missed opportunity to help prevent sexually motivated crimes against women.
- 5.17 Overall, the Inquiry did not find evidence of a consistent approach to analysing and responding to information and intelligence provided via surveys, apps, and walk and talk sessions. For instance, the StreetSafe app relies on forces to collect data and then act on this. The Inquiry saw evidence of some forces clearly working effectively (including with partners) to act on the information. However, there is no mechanism for ensuring or encouraging consistency in following up on what is done with these reports (so that all forces reach this standard), or for sharing lessons learned or good practice. It is also striking that there is no mention of prevention in the model of potential service benefits for StreetSafe. This seems a missed opportunity.
- 5.18 While offering women channels to provide information is a positive, the Inquiry also notes some risks associated with the growth in the number of apps and surveys available:
  - The Inquiry heard that analytical resource was difficult to come by. Sir Andy Cooke QPM DL, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, referenced the problem of keeping talented people, citing losing staff to the private sector, where wages were higher than in policing.<sup>25</sup> One police staff member told the Inquiry that analysts were "like hens' teeth".<sup>26</sup> Chief Constable Sarah Crew also reiterated the need for more analysts.<sup>27</sup> This means there is a risk that if more data becomes available, the analysts needed to interpret and combine it will not be. The Inquiry considers the scarcity in analytical resource a barrier to the success of measures designed to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces (see paragraph 5.74 for more details).
  - This raises the risk that when women report feeling unsafe, no action is taken. These measures are sources of data, the use of which has the potential to prevent sexually motivated crimes in public spaces. If the data is collected but not acted upon, this will undermine the potential effectiveness of the measures.
- 5.19 More widely, the Inquiry considers that the multiple small collections of information via the different surveys and apps build a picture of the risks in a certain area, but simultaneously make it more fragmented. Broadly, if it is not coordinated centrally, it is not shared clearly. This is particularly the case given the well-documented problems associated with forces sharing information and intelligence with each other.

<sup>25 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

5.20 The Inquiry considers that the choice of which app to use may also cause confusion. A woman who feels unsafe in Waterloo station in London, for instance, has the options of reporting this to British Transport Police (directly<sup>28</sup> or via the Railway Guardian app), StreetSafe<sup>29</sup> or on the Lambeth Council Safer Streets site.<sup>30</sup> While some women may welcome such choice, this underlines the duplicated efforts in these preventative measures, and the many places in which this potentially useful data is stored.<sup>31</sup>

#### Place-based secondary prevention measures

- 5.21 When hot spots are identified, what preventative measures are deployed to those places? The Inquiry heard about a range of measures, which can be broadly grouped as follows:
  - increasing surveillance of the area (through increased or enhanced CCTV and/or measures to increase the number of people in a place); and
  - capable guardians (described below in further detail).
- 5.22 Most of the evidence on the use of these measures was focused on the nighttime economy (i.e. in the streets and other public spaces around bars and clubs, and on how women get to and from those venues). Some of these measures were also in other high-risk locations and situations (such as Freshers' Week<sup>32</sup> and New Year's Eve<sup>33</sup>).

#### Increasing surveillance

#### **CCTV**

- 5.23 The Inquiry examined CCTV as a form of secondary prevention (discussed here) and also tertiary (see Chapter 6), insofar as it is used to identify and help locate perpetrators when an offence has taken place.
- 5.24 The College of Policing considers CCTV to be effective as a preventative measure if there is formal surveillance of it<sup>34</sup> (although it should be noted that its assessment was not looking at prevention of violence against women and girls, specifically, but rather all crime). However, there was disagreement at the Inquiry's evidence-gathering sessions as to whether CCTV is a preventative measure at all (this is discussed further in Chapter 6).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>28 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>30 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>31</sup> The issue of multiple apps is returned to in paragraphs 5.50 to 5.57.

<sup>32 [\*\*\*]</sup> Sussex Police: run patrols for the purposes of tackling violence against women and girls related incidents, Friday–Saturday, from 17:00 to 04:00, as well as other significant dates, such as Freshers' Week; [\*\*\*] Durham Constabulary: safety hub opened up for vulnerable people (prioritising females), on Fridays and Saturdays; student nights; and Freshers' Week.

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### **Increasing footfall**

- 5.25 Once a hot spot is identified, actively increasing the presence of people in that area can act as a second type of surveillance. The Inquiry was informed of several methods of achieving this, including:
  - · patrols by uniformed and plain-clothed police;
  - increasing the presence of taxi marshals and street pastors (also discussed in paragraph 5.30); and
  - design of areas to encourage an increase in footfall.
- 5.26 Women consistently report that the presence of uniformed police officers makes them feel safer (including in response to the Inquiry's public survey). The Inquiry notes that the Government, in its Safer Streets mission, has committed to:
  - "13,000 additional police officers, PCSOs [police community support officers] and special constables in dedicated neighbourhood policing roles demonstrably spending time on visible patrol and not taken off the beat to plug shortages elsewhere."
- 5.27 Some research suggests that random or reactive patrols of uniformed officers (i.e. patrols which are not based on crime rates in the area, or where the police are passing through an area while they respond to a call) are not successful in preventing crimes, but can be effective in reducing crime when they are targeted at crime hot spots.<sup>37</sup> The College of Policing has identified that "one of the barriers to implementing targeted patrol in the past has been the traditional view that targeting hot spots simply results in crime moving around the corner or being displaced elsewhere", but that "importantly, systematic reviews have shown that crime displacement tends not to happen with focused police activity in high-crime places".<sup>38</sup>
- 5.28 One example of design with safety in mind is the work on the IMAX cinema in Waterloo, which is surrounded by empty underpasses. Here Lambeth Council is looking to install more food and drink outlets to encourage people to stop and eat in the area (this is also an example of designing safe spaces, a primary prevention measure see Chapter 3).<sup>39</sup>

#### Capable guardians

5.29 Increasing the number of people in an area as a preventative measure links to the idea of 'capable guardians' – the addition of skilled and capable people in hot-spot areas who can offer support, safety or advice. The Inquiry obtained evidence about various models of this, including street pastors and bystander training.

<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>38 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>39 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Street pastors

5.30 As well as training door and bar staff, several forces, Police and Crime Commissioners, and local authorities invest in street pastors and street marshals, who are available in the area and can offer support, advice and practical help to anyone who is vulnerable. The Inquiry saw limited evaluation on the outcome of these schemes, but notes that they increase the amount of active surveillance in the areas they work in, and therefore may have some deterrent effects.

#### Bystander training

"One solution I would like to see is bystander intervention training, because it really helps people understand how to spot sexual harm, sexual violence and harassment when it's happening, understand how to intervene if they are able to and, importantly, how to support survivors immediately after. If every other person in the UK had been on a two-hour training session we would have a network of people in public spaces around us and we would not have to rely on police officers."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>40</sup>

- 5.31 Bystander training was identified by several of our interviewees as being part of ensuring a universal or community response to sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. It is also positive that so many such training courses are aimed specifically at those who are most likely to be present at the scene of offences (other men, and security staff, for instance). Again, having a clear owner and plan for the provision of bystander training may offer efficiencies. For example, this could help reduce the number of different organisations setting up and delivering their own individualised, hyper-localised bystander training, potentially sporadically across local and regional areas, as well as providing assurance that standards are being met. At the very least, a single authoritative evaluation of the success to help with funding bids would save time.
- 5.32 While there is evidence for the breadth of programmes in place, the evaluation of these different variations on bystander training shows a more varied picture.<sup>42</sup> For instance, one piece of research on bystander training showed that "there is a difficulty in ensuring male attendance at voluntary classes" of this nature,<sup>43</sup> with "many men who need to hear the message [...] strategically avoid[ing] these classes".<sup>44</sup> However, researchers have also advised that "this must be balanced against the resistance that may be provoked from compulsory programmes",

<sup>40 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>42 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>43 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>44 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

meaning compulsory attendance for men could start the training off on the wrong foot.<sup>45</sup> For example, "many men feel defensive and angry before presentations on violence against women even begin".<sup>46</sup>

## Prevention measures aimed at safeguarding women

- 5.33 The Inquiry examined measures that are aimed at safeguarding women when a place or situation is identified as posing risks related to sexually motivated crimes against women in public. These can be broadly grouped into measures to provide:
  - · safe spaces;
  - safe transport home; and
  - mechanisms for discreetly asking for help.
- 5.34 Tracking apps (by which women can let others know their location) and advice to potential victims on how to keep safe also fall into this category.

#### Safe spaces

- 5.35 The Inquiry saw evidence that suggests an increase in efforts to provide safe spaces. This includes the introduction of new one-off spaces (such as tents) at events like festivals or New Year's Eve, and more regular places where women are told they can always find help if they feel unsafe, including if they feel at risk of a sexually motivated crime. These areas were generally available to both women and men. For instance:
  - The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime paid for 'safe space' tents at New Year's Eve and Notting Hill Carnival.<sup>47</sup>
  - Several cities have 'safe havens' available at nighttime, with community centres open and advertised.<sup>48</sup> These can offer blankets, help and advice.
- 5.36 Some apps plot these safe places on a map (for instance, WalkSafe+ see paragraph 5.54). Overall, however, the provision of safe spaces varies across England and Wales.
- 5.37 At a national level, the National Business Crime Centre works with businesses to provide safe spaces for "anyone who is feeling vulnerable". <sup>49</sup> Although the provenance of the scheme is specifically part of the work to tackle violence against women and girls, it describes itself as a unit hosted by the City of London Police,

<sup>45 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>47 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>48 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>49 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- created "as a result of [...] Home Office Police Transformation Funding".<sup>50</sup> It has organisations trained and signed up to provide this support, including major supermarkets and fast-food chains.<sup>51</sup>
- 5.38 Women who are feeling unsafe sometimes go into shops. A coordinated method of knowing which shops offer this 'safe space' service as part of the National Business Crime Centre scheme would therefore be welcomed. Based on the evidence provided by the National Business Crime Centre and the fact that this scheme was not raised by other witnesses the Inquiry considered that more could be done to advertise the scheme and to make clear which shops are part of it. While the Inquiry did not receive detailed evidence on the training of staff accredited by the National Business Crime Centre, based on the findings of research on Ask for Angela (see paragraph 5.43), it is also crucial for there to be assurance that shop workers know their responsibilities and what actions to take should women use their shops as safe places.

#### Safe transport

- 5.39 Linked to this is an increase in the number of taxi marshals.<sup>52</sup> The Inquiry saw good examples of these being used to assist women who were vulnerable because they were separated from their friends, had no payment methods to get home, or were incapacitated by drugs or alcohol. For instance, in St Helens, bar staff are given 'safe home' cards which they can give to women. These entitle them to free taxi travel home, funded by the local authority.<sup>53</sup>
- 5.40 This is positive, as are the significant efforts made to improve safety in taxis more generally, following a series of assaults against women. However, there are concerns around a recent rise in taxi drivers asking for personal telephone numbers to send receipts. This is an instance of technological advances not fully considering the impact on women's safety. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.
- 5.41 In South Wales, there is a 'student safety bus' which has a similar purpose to the St Helens 'safe home' cards in terms of providing a safe mechanism for students to get home;<sup>54</sup> and in Avon and Somerset, a 'Street Safe' bus, in which police officers and council officers travel together, targeting hot-spot areas identified by StreetSafe reports, with the aim of carrying out high-visibility patrols and engaging with members of the public.<sup>55</sup> The Inquiry was also told of multiple schemes whereby women can ask for escorts home, across campus or between locations.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>51 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>52</sup> While taxis are outside the scope of the Inquiry, they are included here as a mechanism for helping to ensure that women can get home safely, thus preventing crimes against them in public spaces.

<sup>53 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>54 [\*\*\*],</sup> initially funded by South Wales Police and Skills and Volunteering Cymru

<sup>55 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>56 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

5.42 This is in addition to the multi-layered work across the transport network delivered by British Transport Police (see paragraphs 5.121 to 5.123).

#### Mechanisms to allow women to discreetly ask for help

- 5.43 Ask for Angela is widely used across England and Wales. Under this nationwide initiative, "anyone who is feeling vulnerable on a night out" can 'ask for Angela' in a participating venue. 57 Staff in participating venues should be trained to recognise this as a call for help, and will safeguard the woman, including by giving her a discreet exit route and arranging a safe journey home for her. The scheme, which was set up and funded by donations, 58 initially started in bars and clubs, but has since expanded. Many hotels, chemists, taxi companies, theatres, cinemas and shops have now completed the training. It has been reported that councils are increasingly making "participation in the scheme key to granting alcohol licences". 59 Ask for Angela and initiatives like it have previously been described by women as the sorts of measures that help make them feel safer. 60
- 5.44 Ask for Angela was often raised by police witnesses to the Inquiry as an example of a measure to help prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.<sup>61</sup>
- 5.45 The Inquiry also saw evidence from Merseyside Police of its community engagement teams carrying out impromptu visits to licensees, to check their knowledge of Ask for Angela. This is part of its wider work to ask people working in bars and clubs to be its 'eyes and ears' for women who look vulnerable, or men who exhibit predatory behaviours. While the venues themselves are outside the scope of the Inquiry, such precautions could conceivably help prevent crimes taking place against women when they leave. The Inquiry considers this a positive example of sensible partnership working on a wider basis.
- 5.46 However, media investigations found that staff did not always respond to the code word. 63 Venues must ensure that the training delivered by Ask for Angela is done regularly.
- 5.47 In addition, currently there are no measures in place to ensure compliance with the scheme, beyond some authorities making it mandatory as part of granting new alcohol licences. 64 This does not account for venues who already have such licences, nor does it mandate how regularly venues need to or should refresh their training. As a result, the director of the scheme in November 2024 called for stronger measures to ensure compliance. 65

<sup>57 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>58</sup> Now funded through training fee income, public donations and corporate partnerships. [\*\*\*]

<sup>59 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>62 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>63 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>64 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>65 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

5.48 The Inquiry also notes the 'Signal for help' hand gesture created by the Canadian Women's Foundation). While this was initially developed to signal violence at home, the Canadian Women's Foundation outline how it is a tool that can help those experiencing *any* gender-based violence, to communicate that they need someone to safely check in and support them. Therefore, this is another example of a method which women can use to discreetly ask for help.

Figure 8: The 'Signal for help' hand gesture



Source: Canadian Women's Foundation, Signal for Help.

5.49 All the mechanisms should help to ensure that women can ask for help, which could prevent a sexually motivated crime being committed against them in a public space. However, it is crucial to avoid the perception that *not* asking for help means it is not needed. The focus on spotting predatory behaviour and intervening (whether through bystander training or otherwise) must take precedence. And the signs that are in place must be consistently understood by us all – and action taken when they are deployed.

#### Safety apps

- 5.50 In the Inquiry's survey of 2,000 members of the public, around one in ten women responding said that they would trust "applications (for example, Strava, Find my Friends, what3words)" to deliver advice (11 per cent) and implement measures (11 per cent) to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- 5.51 In keeping with the finding about the number of apps developed by public sector organisations to help women or provide services to women to enable data capture on incidents and feelings of safety, there is a plethora of apps and functions on apps available to track women's movements and raise an alarm. This includes the items in the following non-exhaustive list (each with details on functionality from their respective manufacturers).

#### Hollie Guard<sup>67</sup>

5.52 Hollie Guard is a personal safety app:

"Every 5 seconds the platform will update your precise location based on your speed and movement activity to identify where you are once an alert has been raised. Hollie Guard is a personal alarm, deterrent, evidence catcher and more. Providing a lot more functionality than a regular keyring alarm for absolutely anyone who has safety in mind." 68

#### Emergency SOS<sup>69</sup>

5.53 There are mechanisms by which phone owners can quickly contact emergency services, without having to get past screen locks or scroll through menus. For instance, on Android phones, this is accessed by pushing the power button quickly five times.

#### WalkSafe+70

5.54 WalkSafe+ is a free map-based personal safety app that not only alerts you to your surroundings but also updates your emergency contacts with your location. The app shows recent crime figures of the areas that you are walking through and alerts you to avoid spots where crimes have been reported, helping you to choose a safer route. It also sends your location to your emergency contact if you don't make your estimated time of arrival and allows you to notify them with a tap if you're feeling unsafe.

#### Red Panic Button71

- 5.55 Red Panic Button is an emergency safety app based around one very simple feature. If you are feeling in danger, by pushing the Red Panic Button app, your emergency contacts will immediately be sent a text and an email of your GPS (Global Positioning System) Google Maps coordinates.
- 5.56 The Home Office commissioned a review of "Technology and apps for safeguarding against VAWG [violence against women and girls]".<sup>72</sup> This categorised apps into information, tracking or emergency apps:<sup>73</sup>
  - Information apps are those which use crowdsourcing technology to provide safe routes for walking alone.
  - Tracking apps usually create a personal social network, sharing users' location in real time, so trusted contacts or guardians can supervise or intervene if any request for help is needed.

<sup>67 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>68 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>69 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>70 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>71 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>72 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>73 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- Emergency apps usually have a panic button that users can press to send a request for assistance in case of an emergency.
- 5.57 The review noted that more apps are developed every year, with overlapping functionality. It concluded: "Hence it is difficult for women to decide which application to use or for organisations which to recommend."<sup>74</sup>

#### **Perpetrator-based interventions**

#### **Identifying perpetrators**

- 5.58 Secondary prevention includes measures aimed at spotting predatory behaviour and preventing it becoming a crime. The Inquiry was told about new activity in this area since 2021. Mostly, it falls into three categories:
  - · use of machine learning to identify patterns of offending;
  - facial recognition technology to identify patterns of offending; and
  - covert patrols (including Project Vigilant and its variations).
- 5.59 Each of these is explained in more detail below. It is worth noting that some could also be categorised as tertiary interventions (i.e. those which take place after an offence has happened, to minimise reoffending see Chapter 6), demonstrating again the loose boundaries between layers of intervention in public health. The Inquiry has chosen to include them as secondary, as they are also being used to identify suspicious behaviour, in addition to identifying known suspects of crimes.

#### Identifying patterns of behaviour

- 5.60 The Serious Crime Analysis Section of the National Crime Agency holds the database of serious sexual offences committed in the UK. This is analysed to identify crimes which are possibly linked. The Serious Crime Analysis Section also provides expert advice and guidance to policing more widely, and it is within its remit to create information on the profile and behaviours of sexual offenders.<sup>75</sup>
- 5.61 The Inquiry saw other innovative uses of data and offending patterns to identify perpetrator behaviour. This includes British Transport Police looking to use data from Oyster cards<sup>76</sup> and travelcards to spot patterns of movement that might be identified with offending behaviour;<sup>77</sup> and Thames Valley Police looking widely at patterns of precursor and non-contact sexual offences where the suspect is not known to the victim, in order to better identify perpetrators and understand the links between these incidents.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>75 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>76</sup> An Oyster card is a smart payment method for public transport in London and parts of the surrounding areas.

<sup>77 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>78 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### **Facial recognition**

- 5.62 Several forces are using facial recognition as part of preventing violence against women.<sup>79</sup> This is covered further in Chapter 6.
- 5.63 In live facial recognition, cameras are focused on a particular geographical area. When people pass through that area, their images are streamed directly to a system and compared with a bespoke 'watch list' of individuals. In the Metropolitan Police Service, this list comprises people who are sought by the police, and those subject to a court order that if breached would render the subject liable to arrest, and which has been imposed regarding sexual offences.<sup>80</sup> The Metropolitan Police Service provided evidence that live facial recognition has a "significant impact across VAWG-related offences", pointing to statistics that this led to more than 45 registered sexual offenders being arrested for breaching conditions, and more than 45 additional registered sexual offenders being interviewed under caution.<sup>81</sup>

#### Covert patrols and Project Vigilant

- 5.64 Forces are using covert patrols specifically to identify and crucially to take action to disrupt predatory behaviour. Several forces use covert (i.e. plain-clothed) patrols for this. The Inquiry considers the best example to be Project Vigilant.<sup>82</sup>
- 5.65 Project Vigilant was launched by Thames Valley Police in 2019.<sup>83</sup> Following a string of burglaries and sexually motivated attacks, plain-clothed officers were deployed to try and identify the perpetrator. They did so but in the 11 weeks of the operation, they also identified more than 40 men who were acting in a predatory way towards women in the town centre where they were operating.<sup>84</sup> These men were all spoken to, and an intelligence report was written for each one. When these reports were run against existing police records, 19 of the men were known to the police for sexual offences.<sup>85</sup> Critically, the predatory behaviour which led to these interactions had not been spotted and actioned as part of the regular patrols of the nighttime economy that were already in existence.
- 5.66 Project Vigilant developed from this insight and experience.<sup>86</sup> It consists of the following elements:
  - Officers must attend a training day on identifying signs of predatory behaviour.
    These are as identified by the National Crime Agency's Serious Crime Analysis
    Section (see paragraph 5.60). Officers are also trained in the interventions
    available to them if they identify an individual displaying these behaviours.
  - On a Vigilant deployment, plain-clothed officers patrol and observe in public areas. When they spot men displaying signs of predatory behaviour, they provide

<sup>79 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>80 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>81 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>85 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>86 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- information to uniformed colleagues (unless there is an immediate risk). These officers then intervene and have a toolkit of methods they can use.
- Every man spoken to has an intelligence report written about him, which is then
  discussed in the force the next day, with information searches on any other
  intelligence held. Identified risks are shared with other forces.<sup>87</sup>
- 5.67 Figures provided by Thames Valley Police show that between July 2021 and September 2023, 71 per cent of those stopped had already been logged on the Police National Database; and 35 per cent had a recorded history of violence against women and girls. 9
- 5.68 The requirements for Vigilant are: uniformed patrols; community engagement; robust intervention; plain-clothed hot-spot patrols; intelligence development; intelligence submission; and threat assessment.<sup>90</sup> The Inquiry considers that the public can reasonably expect police to have these skills.
- 5.69 The Inquiry saw evidence of effective co-running of Vigilant with patrols of uniformed officers. For instance, the Metropolitan Police Service uses Operation Verona (uniformed patrols) alongside Vigilant, and reported that since it started:
  - 243 new officers had been trained.
  - 259 Vigilant and Verona deployments had been held.
  - 219 stop and searches had been made during those deployments, resulting in:
    - 75 arrests; and
    - 137 disruptions of individuals subject to orders.
  - 5,566 'reassurance engagements' had taken place (i.e. opportunities to engage positively with women and others out for the night).<sup>91</sup>
- 5.70 When the Inquiry asked witnesses about measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, Vigilant was the most cited response. It has been reviewed by academics, 92 and evaluated by the College of Policing as 'smarter practice' (which means the College of Policing, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, the National Police Chiefs' Council and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) consider it "suitable for further testing"). 93 It is relatively swift to implement, and is squarely aimed at disrupting predatory perpetrators.

<sup>87 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>88</sup> A database of criminal records held by the police in England and Wales.

<sup>89 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>90 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>91 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>92 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>93 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 5.71 Despite this, it has not been rolled out nationally across England and Wales. Instead, about half of forces have adopted it over time, and there are multiple variations of the operation running in different forces. Small evaluations of these variations show fairly similar results, in terms of identifying men acting in a predatory way, disrupting them and creating intelligence records. However, there is concern (as with bystander training) that Vigilant is being watered down mostly to make it cheaper to run (thus risking diluting the evaluated effectiveness of it). Even when operations were due to be run, there were examples of it being pulled because of a lack of resource (typically because the officers were abstracted to work on other cases).
- 5.72 In September 2025, the Home Office confirmed to the Inquiry its intention to invest £200,000 to 'strengthen' Project Vigilant in 2025/26.98 This is positive, and further evidence of the support for this work.
- 5.73 The Inquiry considers Project Vigilant to be a good case study of activity to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces for the following reasons:
  - It is squarely aimed at immediate and longer-term disruption of perpetrators, and building knowledge of their offending patterns both key tenets of strategies and plans to tackle violence against women and girls.
  - It has been evaluated<sup>99</sup> and accredited as smarter practice,<sup>100</sup> and the data shown to the Inquiry suggests it is resulting in predatory men being stopped.<sup>101</sup>
  - There are huge opportunities to extend it. For instance, the Inquiry was told about work the Project Vigilant teams have been doing to establish 'Vigilant' taxis, by training them on the principles of prevention.<sup>102</sup> Training is also being delivered to those who work in the nighttime economy, such as hospitality workers and volunteers with Street Angels.<sup>103</sup>

#### 5.74 However:

Vigilant has been in place since 2019 and has mainly grown due to the efforts
of a few champions in Thames Valley Police. They referred to excellent support
from their senior officers – but also stated that this work was "on top of their
day job".<sup>104</sup>

<sup>94 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>95 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>96 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>97 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>98</sup> The Home Office confirmed, "This funding will be used to support additional deployments in three police forces; trial the addition of spiking dogs to generate intelligence on use of spiking drugs in predatory behaviour; and analyse 'stop and accounts' to better understand what information is being gathered through Project Vigilant deployments." [\*\*\*]
99 [\*\*\*]

<sup>100 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>101 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>102 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>103</sup> Local community volunteer patrols working in the nighttime economy to support the vulnerable. [\*\*\*]

<sup>104 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- In the absence of a national push, forces are setting up their own variations on it, which will not benefit from the rigour (and experience) of the Vigilant model.
- One witness raised concerns about the sustainability of Project Vigilant without permanent champions in place.<sup>105</sup>
- 5.75 This illustrates a major barrier to improving the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces: the lack of appropriate mechanisms in policing to quickly identify, test and then roll out measures that work, consistently and to the same standard. The Inquiry has been told frequently that prevention initiatives are hard to implement because of a lack of evaluation, or that there are difficulties in proving they work, or that they needed a long time to embed. Vigilant is none of these things, yet still has not been fully adopted by all 43 forces.
- 5.76 For the reasons given in paragraph 5.73, the Inquiry considers Vigilant to be among the best measures available to help prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and to help increase understanding and knowledge of the perpetrators of these crimes.

#### **Recommendation 21: National roll-out of Project Vigilant**

By April 2026, the Home Office, the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, and the National Police Chiefs' Council should roll out Project Vigilant nationally and consistently across all forces in England and Wales. This should be introduced primarily across nighttime economy spaces but should then be expanded to other suitable environments in which Project Vigilant could help prevent and interrupt perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. In addition, Police and Crime Commissioners should specifically liaise with Chief Constables on the implementation of Project Vigilant in their areas, to understand its impact on the delivery of the force's Police and Crime Plan, and its contribution to national policing capabilities aimed at tackling violence against women and girls.

## Interventions available when a predatory man is identified

5.77 The police have a toolkit of options available to them when they identify a predatory man (including through Vigilant deployments). The Inquiry saw evidence of some of these options being used in the case files reviewed.

#### **Orders (pre-conviction)**

5.78 Civil orders provide options for placing restrictions on and monitoring both at-risk offenders and perpetrators in the community, deterring them from escalating their behaviour and committing an offence (or committing further offences). When applied

- effectively, and at the right time, there is evidence, especially in orders relating to domestic abuse, that they can reduce and break the cycle of reoffending and help the victim and public feel safer.<sup>106</sup>
- 5.79 The Inquiry saw some excellent applications of orders, where they were appropriate to the circumstances and imposed sensible conditions which were focused on preventing offences.<sup>107</sup> However, witnesses pointed frequently to problems with enforcing orders when they were breached. This is covered more in paragraph 5.82.
- 5.80 The civil orders most applicable for preventing or reducing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces include: (i) Sexual Harm Prevention Orders; (ii) Sexual Risk Orders; and (iii) Stalking Protection Orders. They can act as deterrents as well as place restrictions on the perpetrator. For example, this might be achieved through restricting contact with the victim or any lone female, specifying the locations that the perpetrator is prevented from entering, or introducing further restrictions including around social media usage.
- 5.81 Whenever a civil order is put in place, police forces should work with other agencies where appropriate to ensure that offenders understand the requirements and provisions to which they are being made subject. Once a civil order is obtained, the Managing Sexual or Violent Offenders Unit should be responsible for updating all local and national policing databases. Systems should also be in place to ensure that police officers and staff for example, those within neighbourhood policing teams have appropriate information. Other agencies should also be informed about civil orders and any contributions they can make in terms of monitoring and enforcement. 108
- 5.82 While these are extremely useful tools if applied effectively, the Inquiry heard evidence that there is no consistency (or a "lottery" 109) across the 43 forces in how these orders are, in practice, dealt with, monitored or actioned if there is a breach. Unless it becomes mandatory to improve consistency among police forces in how they respond to breaches, the orders will not have the overall desired effect. The Inquiry understands a National Police Chiefs' Council oversight group was established to look at the challenges with the aim of supporting forces to take a more consistent approach. The group is now located within the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection and includes representation from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice. The Inquiry has been informed that the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection will be delivering a programme of work on improving the forces' use of civil orders, including exploring opportunities for developing an automatic link between police and court systems. 110
- 5.83 The Inquiry was encouraged to see examples of applications for orders being approved and actioned within our case file reviews. 111 The Inquiry was also told of good practice regarding the use of orders during evidence-gathering with fieldwork

<sup>106 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>107 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>108 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>109 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>110 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>111 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

forces. For example, Operation Trinity at Durham Constabulary uses civil orders to manage offenders who, although they are known as a risk to women, have not met the evidential threshold for arrest, but need management to prevent any escalation of harm in the community. This has been rolled out to neighbourhood policing inspectors and chief inspectors to ensure that their teams have operational awareness of the orders and how to secure future orders.<sup>112</sup>

5.84 There is limited data available on civil orders currently, as there is no consistency in data collection at a national level. The Inquiry considers this inhibits the ability to assess the preventative impact of these orders.

#### Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders

- 5.85 Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders were introduced in 2015 through amendments under sections 103A and 103K of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- 5.86 Sexual Harm Prevention Orders can be made in relation to a person who has been convicted of an offence under either Schedule 3 or Schedule 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 committed either in the UK or overseas. However, an individual does not need to have been cautioned or convicted of an offence, or had a previous conviction for a sexual offence (or any offence), to be made a subject of a Sexual Risk Order.
- 5.87 A Sexual Risk Order can be made where an individual has "done an act of a sexual nature" and as a result there is reasonable cause to believe that it is necessary for a Sexual Risk Order to be made. "Act of a sexual nature" is not defined in legislation. The guidance states:

"This term intentionally covers a broad range of behaviour. Such behaviour may, in other circumstances and contexts, have innocent intentions. It also covers acts that may not in themselves be sexual but have a sexual motive and/or are intended to allow the perpetrator to move on to sexual abuse." 114

5.88 A Sexual Risk Order may prohibit the defendant from doing something or require the defendant to do something as described in the Sexual Risk Order. The order will have specific conditions: prohibitions and/or positive obligations to mandate aspects of the offender's risk management plan. Additionally, it will require the defendant to become subject to full notification requirements for the duration of the order. A Chief Constable (including British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police) or the Director General of the National Crime Agency can apply for a Sexual Risk Order by way of complaint to a magistrates' court.

<sup>112 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>113 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>114 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>114 [ ]</sup> 

<sup>116 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>117 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 5.89 The test applied is whether the defendant has done an act of a sexual nature because of which it is necessary to make an order to protect the public from harm. The decision is made on the balance of probability. The order must be imposed for a minimum of two years, or until a further order is imposed (which in effect means it could last indefinitely). Sexual Risk Orders can impose a number of restrictions or obligations on an individual who has not been convicted of a sexual offence. Breach of any prohibition or failure to comply with an obligation imposed in a full or interim order is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of five years in prison.
- 5.90 Sexual Risk Orders have the potential to be very strict and have broad requirements associated with them which limit the offender's ability to access public spaces and have contact with lone females. Restrictions can also include not approaching or trying to approach a lone female stranger in a public space; not touching them (unless invited to do so by that female); and not signalling or calling out to a female they do not know, indicating to them to come over. The Inquiry saw evidence of such restrictions being imposed in the case file review. Where a perpetrator does not comply with the order, including the notification requirements, they will be committing an offence for which they can be sent to prison. The Inquiry considers that imposing such orders would offer protection and so help prevent offences, provided they are enforced effectively.

#### **Stalking Protection Orders**

- 5.91 The Stalking Protection Act 2019 introduced Stalking Protection Orders. A Stalking Protection Order is a civil order which can be made by the magistrates' court following application by a chief officer of police. Applications for Stalking Protection Orders can be made in a domestic abuse context (for example, stalking by a former partner), as well as in cases of "stranger stalking". Stalking Protection Orders can be applied for where an investigation has not yet commenced, if a prosecution will not be pursued or even if the alleged stalker is acquitted.
- 5.92 If granted, a Stalking Protection Order can place restrictions on the perpetrator, including in relation to entering certain locations, access to social media and other online spaces, and preventing any further contact with the victim. This can then prevent someone's ability to commit further stalking within public spaces, protecting both the person they have stalked previously and the wider public. This means that, if granted, it can be used to help protect victims at pace, offering a level of protection without even requiring an arrest, to help ensure safety and that no further crimes can be committed and if they are, the police can act swiftly to arrest the suspect. A person who breaches a Stalking Protection Order without a reasonable excuse/ rationale commits a criminal offence and the criminal standard of proof will apply. 121 The breach can be punishable upon conviction with imprisonment for up to five

<sup>118 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>119 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>120 [\*\*\*]</sup> The Stalking Protection Act 2019 defines a stranger as anyone who has not been in an intimate relationship with their stalker. A Stalking Protection Order therefore helps those targeted by strangers, acquaintances or colleagues, as well as professionals such as doctors, who may be targeted by patients.

121 [\*\*\*]

- years, or a fine, or both. In some instances, the alleged perpetrator is offered therapy (which can also be seen as a tertiary prevention measure and can stop criminal behaviour from escalating further).<sup>122</sup>
- 5.93 Published data shows that between February 2020 and December 2021 (but excluding January 2021), there were 812 applications for Stalking Protection Orders made and 400 issued. 123 No more recent data seems to be available on the use of Stalking Protection Orders. The Office for National Statistics estimates that one in five women aged 16 years and above have been victims of stalking since the age of 16.124 While obviously the time periods are different, and not all women report (nor would a Stalking Protection Order be appropriate in all cases), this suggests that these orders are underused.
- 5.94 The Inquiry was told by the Ministry of Justice that the Home Office is strengthening Stalking Protection Orders through the Crime and Policing Bill by introducing provisions which, once implemented, would allow courts to impose these orders upon conviction and acquittal for another criminal offence. This aims to make these orders more readily available to victims where there is already a criminal case under way. 125

#### Pre-charge bail

- 5.95 There is also the option of pre-charge bail, which can help to prevent further offending while investigations are ongoing by virtue of the conditions imposed. The requirement to 'answer bail' may also act as a deterrent against further offending.<sup>126</sup>
- 5.96 Pre-charge bail could be used, for example, in a case of alleged indecent exposure in a public space, where the police need further time to gather evidence and complete their investigation. 127 A condition not to enter the area where they are alleged to have offended could be imposed, which could in turn prevent the suspect from committing further acts of indecent exposure.
- 5.97 An officer can also arrest an individual where they have reasonable grounds for believing that there has been a breach of pre-charge bail conditions. It is not in itself a criminal offence to breach pre-charge bail conditions; however, it is possible that the act resulting in a breach may amount to a separate offence, such as assault or harassment.<sup>128</sup>
- 5.98 The Inquiry saw examples of pre-charge bail being used as part of our case file reviews in, for example, sexual assault cases. <sup>129</sup> Conditions included not to attend locations at certain times, not to contact victims and to remove themselves from a situation if a chance meeting with the victim occurred. There were also examples of subjects being rearrested because of breach of bail conditions. <sup>130</sup>

<sup>122 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>123 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>124 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>125 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>126 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>127 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>128 [\*\*\*]</sup> 129 [\*\*\*]

<sup>130 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Innovative use of other orders

- 5.99 During the Inquiry's evidence-gathering sessions, attendees commented that there are "a load of orders and measures out there" and that by "thinking creatively, we can use them in a different way" to prevent sexually motivated crimes in public spaces. <sup>131</sup> Following on from this, the Inquiry considered what existing measures could be used more effectively to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- 5.100 One example is Public Space Protection Orders. These are intended to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a specific area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life by imposing conditions which apply to everyone on the use of an area. While Public Space Protection Orders cannot be used to prevent sexually motivated crimes in public spaces directly (these orders were not intended to prevent criminal acts, which are already prohibited by law), a Public Space Protection Order could theoretically be used, for example, to prohibit alcohol consumption in public spaces, which might help women in that local community feel less intimidated and safer.
- 5.101 Looking across the orders, there are also examples of sensible conditions, such as withdrawal of implied permission (banning from stations, for instance), community protection warnings or notices and acceptable behaviour contracts.<sup>133</sup>

#### **Options for self-referral**

- 5.102 The Inquiry examined the options for men to self-refer for support or advice, if they are aware they are exhibiting signs of harmful behaviour towards women that may not have escalated to the point of committing an offence.
- 5.103 The Inquiry found limited evidence of the availability of this type of pathway. While there are more schemes and programmes available for men having sexual thoughts about children (with some examples set out below), this is a complex area of work to navigate. The Inquiry heard that many doctors still do not see sexual offending through a medical lens. The Inquiry heard evidence that described how some doctors believe "it is the equivalent to saying the offender is not responsible for his behaviour [...] This is, of course, not true [...] the fact that the offender is requesting treatment is an indication that he is accepting responsibility and wants to do something about it."<sup>134</sup>
- 5.104 Some communications campaigns have links through which men can find out how to help with their behaviours. For instance, on the Enough website there is a section entitled 'Worried about your behaviour?' This gives a run-through of the types of behaviour which should be a worry, and within this distinguishes between behaviour exhibited towards 'strangers' in public and outside the home, compared to 'with your partner'. In relation to the former, it asks:

<sup>131 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>132 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>133 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>134 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>135 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### "[H]ave you ever:

- Made sexual comments about a woman to your mates?
- Made suggestive comments to a woman when they were clearly unwelcome?
- Followed or tracked where someone is going?
- Pressured a woman for sex until she gave in, even though she'd said no?
- Made a woman at work feel uncomfortable, upset or afraid of being alone with you?
- Acted unprofessionally towards a woman at work, such as repeatedly commenting on how she looks or making sexual innuendos?"<sup>136</sup>
- 5.105 However, the information for men worried about their behaviour towards women outside the home on 'How you can change' is limited to a shortlist of advice, whereas men concerned about their behaviour towards a partner are signposted to a professional helpline provided by Respect, the charity which provides support for domestic violence perpetrators.
- 5.106 The Sound campaign developed by the Welsh Government has a series of questions on the website<sup>137</sup> to help men consider their attitudes and behaviours in a relationship for instance:
  - "• Am I being too full on with her?
  - Why do I get so jealous when she goes out?
  - Am I messaging her too much?
  - Why am I tempted to check her DMs [direct messages]?"
- 5.107 These questions are all oriented towards a partner relationship, as opposed to offering advice about behaviours in public spaces and/or towards women whom they do not know. There is also a link to helplines (such as Live Fear Free<sup>138</sup>) but once more, the information available at first pass on these links is very limited, and mostly points towards support for victims. There is, however, mention of being able to use the helpline if you are worried about someone else's behaviour.
- 5.108 The Inquiry heard evidence from StopSO, a private therapy service available to men having harmful thoughts or who have been convicted of offences; the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, which focuses on men with paedophilia; and Circles UK, which runs a range of interventions and behaviour change programmes for sexual offences (including those as part of sentencing conditions, covered in Chapter 6).

<sup>136 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>137 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>138 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 5.109 The Inquiry also heard from Professor Don Grubin, Emeritus Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, University of Newcastle, and an Honorary Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist in the National Health Service, on medical interventions for men at an early stage of their offending pathway.<sup>139</sup>
- 5.110 It is consistently mentioned in evidence from these witnesses that the demand for these services cannot be met with current funding. One witness described how "[t]here's too little funding for victim and survivor services and there's even less funding for interventions for perpetrators to stop sexual abuse". While there was evidence that interventions can prevent further or any offending, to was extremely difficult to be referred to these services, and private routes are frequently the only ones available. Services were described as being underfunded.
- 5.111 Finally, there was strong evidence from some witnesses that there needed to be a focus on intervening with teenage and young men. 144 Antounette Philippides, Chair of StopSO, described how "when I first started working with sexual offenders, you could generalise and say it was men of a certain age who were often isolated, with limited social skills [...] this is not necessarily the case today [...] within the last few years we have noticed the average age of those contacting us getting younger and younger". 145
- 5.112 Positively, the Department of Health and Social Care provided evidence that GPs will play a role in the 'Intervene early' pillar of the Government's new violence against women and girls strategy. The rationale for this is the understanding that "GPs may be the first to hear from those who are beginning to exhibit harmful behaviours before they encounter the criminal justice system". This is a key insight, and developing this referral route may offer an important new way to identify and intervene before behaviour becomes criminal, although the Inquiry was told by the Department of Health and Social Care that future activity is subject to evaluation and ministerial spending decisions, including determining how health can best contribute to the first phase of delivering the commitment to tackling violence against women and girls. The Department of Health and Social Care that future activity is subject to evaluation and ministerial spending decisions, including determining how health can best contribute to the first phase of delivering the commitment to tackling violence against women and girls.
- 5.113 Overall, the number of interventions available to those who are having harmful thoughts or exhibiting harmful behaviours (which, however, are not yet 'criminal' in nature) seem the weakest across all of the continuum and public health levels. This is a gap especially when there is an increase in measures aimed at getting women to report, the police to spot predatory behaviour, bystanders to intervene, and boys and men to be educated on acceptable behaviour, both within and beyond the classroom setting. A reasonable outcome from these strands of activity could be that more men recognise or are recognised earlier on in their offending. However, the Inquiry found limited evidence of any properly embedded interventions aimed at

<sup>139 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>141 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>142 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>143 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>144 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>145 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>146 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

changing their behaviours and attitudes to prevent them escalating to committing a sexually motivated crime against a woman in a public space, as opposed to disrupting them (important as this is).

5.114 The Inquiry considers that this needs urgent attention. This cohort of predatory men, who wish to commit sexually motivated crimes against women as they go about their everyday lives, exists. To ignore them increases the risk to women.

### Recommendation 22: Information and early intervention for men and boys to create a culture of positive masculinity

By September 2026, the Home Office (as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls), working closely with the Department for Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the Department of Health and Social Care, should increase and improve the information, support and programmes available to men and boys that create a culture of positive masculinity, to help prevent them from committing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This work should include:

- a. implementing the recommendation from Creating a Safer World The Challenge of Regulating Online Pornography (the 2025 Independent Pornography Review conducted by Baroness Bertin) that "resources and funding should be focused on school and community programmes specifically for boys and young men in order to encourage healthy discussions about positive masculinity and relationships, and to counter misogynistic culture":<sup>148</sup>
- b. creating a comprehensive and easy-to-access online space that provides support to intervene and prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces by providing information directly to perpetrators and their families; this could take a similar form to information available on the Enough website aimed at domestic abuse perpetrators, and should be designed in collaboration with specialist organisations who support perpetrators;
- c. increasing the availability of early interventions available via GPs, self-referral, social workers for individuals who have not yet committed a sexual offence but have concerns about their thoughts or behaviours, as well as the availability of interventions via probation officers where the individual is already within the criminal justice system; and
- d. reviewing the availability, use and effectiveness of behaviour change programmes for these men and boys (whether self-referred, GP-referred or provided as part of a condition on a criminal justice order), with actions to increase the availability of these programmes as necessary.

# Targeting prevention measures in areas of risk: Transport and the nighttime economy

- 5.115 Transport networks and hubs, and the nighttime economy, were identified by policing in the *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment* as problem areas for sexual offending in public spaces (see Chapter 2).
- 5.116 The Inquiry saw good examples of multi-layered prevention initiatives in these areas being deployed by forces. In particular, all the fieldwork forces described approaches to addressing the risk of crimes posed by the nighttime economy involving a mixture of surveillance (CCTV and patrols, for instance), good communications with the public, bystander training, working with licensing authorities, employing taxi marshals and providing safe spaces. As is a common theme across prevention, there is, however, a lack of evidence to show which of these measures or which combination is the most effective at preventing sexually motivated crimes against women.
- 5.117 In addition, the Inquiry's case file analysis provided some examples of predatory behaviour in the nighttime economy setting, which, when reported to the police (and especially in cases of indecent exposure and sexual assault), often resulted in no or little action being taken. For instance, such cases were too frequently responded to with words of advice. This is a clear example of how patrols, footfall and victim confidence in reporting will not be enough if police officers do not recognise and respond appropriately to the crime in front of them.

#### Case study: #SaferStreetsLiverpool

- 5.118 The Inquiry was provided with information on a 2022 campaign which was funded by the Home Office through Safer Streets funding and developed and delivered by a partnership comprising Merseyside Police, the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Council, RASA Merseyside (a counselling service for victims of sexual offences), Merseytravel and local schools.<sup>150</sup>
- 5.119 Based on survey findings, police data and consultations, the partnership concluded that some girls and young women felt they could not travel on public transport at night particularly alone. In response, the partnership put in place a suite of actions. These included:
  - bystander training for bus drivers and other transport staff;
  - an education programme, comprising training for primary school teachers on age-appropriate activities and lessons around concepts of misogyny, sexual harassment and peer-on-peer abuse; and lesson plans and resources for older children in a programme called 'Send me a selfie', designed to explore issues of consent and practising how to say no to requests to share images online;
  - increasing the number and coverage of CCTV systems;

<sup>149 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>150 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- a communications campaign, challenging the behaviours of perpetrators of sexual harassment and violence:
- a pilot of a scheme to allow the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment on buses by text message; and
- community engagement days.
- 5.120 The Inquiry considers this to be a good example of local partnership working, with prevention activity at primary, secondary and tertiary levels; a data-based approach; and clearly integrated work to make places safer, target perpetrators, encourage reporting, and engage with women and wider communities.
- 5.121 At a national level, several witnesses pointed to the influence and leadership of Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi CVO QPM as spearheading a new focus in British Transport Police on the prevention of violence against women and girls on transport networks. 151 Again, there is evidence of a multi-strand approach to this, cutting across prevention levels. This includes the following initiatives:
  - **Strategy:** A violence and intimidation against women and girls strategy was introduced. 152
  - Use of powers: Use of powers was improved across the force, such as an operation looking at the use of civil orders (Operation Streamline). 153
  - **Communications campaigns:** The force set up a range of communications campaigns, including: Speak Up, Interrupt; 154 Your Piece of the Puzzle; 155 partnering with influencers;156 and using friendship bracelets at Taylor Swift gigs to provide British Transport Police's number. 157
  - Data initiatives: These included plans for creation of a new database of 'Highharm offenders on the railway' (2024). This aimed to enable proactive management of offenders, 158 with the high-harm offenders (across sexual offences and robberies) being assigned a specific officer to manage them. 159
  - Resources: The force focused its resources on tackling sexual offences. 160
  - Accreditation: The force received accreditation from the White Ribbon charity. 161

<sup>151 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>152 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>153 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>154 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>155 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>156 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>157 [\*\*\*]</sup> 158 [\*\*\*]

<sup>159 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>160 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>161</sup> White Ribbon is a UK charity engaging "men and boys to help prevent violence against women and girls". [\*\*\*]

- Focused operations: An operation was carried out that focused specifically on sexual offences.<sup>162</sup>
- A range of patrols: The force ran both covert and overt patrols. 163
- Additional roles: A specific violence and intimidation against women and girls role was funded to coordinate activity.<sup>164</sup>
- Technology: CCTV was used to identify sexual offenders, linking systems to streamline the process (noting that, for instance, across London Underground there are 15,000+ cameras across ten types of systems), and CCTV quality was improved across high-risk stations.<sup>165</sup>
- Technology: Project SSTIPRAD<sup>166</sup> allowed authorised users to remotely download CCTV footage across London Underground stations.<sup>167</sup>
- Creative management of offenders: The force provided information for officers on pre-conviction management options for sexual offenders, which included consideration of applications for a curfew, requiring the individual to use registered Oyster/bank cards for travel and police applying for a ban from the network or specific stations.<sup>168</sup> In addition, the force reviews "each upcoming prison release of their managed cohorts and will look to whether [they can apply] for orders to enable officers to escort those of highest risks to the railway network".<sup>169</sup>
- **Finding innovative solutions to data problems:** The force was scanning all offences and manually flagging those relating to sexual harassment, providing its own dedicated crime data.<sup>170</sup>
- 5.122 A review of this (comprehensive) work also highlighted some of the common challenges for policing in working to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces:
  - **Funding:** In the work on the new database, for instance, there was no specific budget identified.<sup>171</sup>
  - Abstraction (i.e. officers and staff pulled off prevention work to do other work): "Unfortunately, other operational demands around robbery prevented the operation from meeting its aims and objectives." 172

<sup>162 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>163 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>164 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>165 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>166</sup> Station Security Technology Integration Programme – Request and Download Project.

<sup>167 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>168 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>169 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>170 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>171 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>172 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- **Sustainability:** Funding for a dedicated violence and intimidation against women and girls role was removed at the end of March 2024.<sup>173</sup>
- Lack of evaluation: Operation Cerium<sup>174</sup> was hampered because there was "little opportunity to evaluate".<sup>175</sup>
- **Barriers to communication:** There were funding barriers to communications in terms of researching and engaging with audiences, the cost of advertising, and the timelines for budget confirmation.<sup>176</sup>
- 5.123 The Inquiry notes the extent of this activity in British Transport Police, and concludes that the clear leadership of the Chief Constable is a key enabler of this, and an example of what it means to truly prioritise tackling violence against women. It recommends actions for all Chief Constables to ensure this prioritisation is similarly clear in their forces.

### Recommendation 23: Police prioritisation of the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

Immediately, Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners should ensure that the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is an essential part of: (i) their violence against women and girls plans; and (ii) the Police and Crime Plans. This should include:

- a. circulating consistent and sustained leadership communications across the force, with Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners making very clear the priority placed on these offences;
- b. senior officers reviewing and taking appropriate action on metrics around these crimes, as part of standard and regular force performance management;
- c. formal reviews by the senior officer team in every force to ensure that all relevant force functional areas have clear roles and responsibilities regarding the prevention of these crimes, with mechanisms in place to test officer and staff understanding; and
- d. in addition to Recommendation 18 increased use of police Designing Out Crime Officers in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces – taking sustained action to train, empower and embed these roles in forces.

<sup>173 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>174</sup> This British Transport Police operation "sees proactive patrols from BTP officers across the underground and rail network in London to reduce the number of sexual offences and identify offenders swiftly" [\*\*\*].

<sup>175 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>176 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

### Chapter 6. Tertiary prevention: Responding after a crime has been committed to prevent further offending

This chapter sets out a summary of the evidence on:

- the initial investigation after a sexually motivated crime has been reported, including use within this of CCTV;
- the outcomes seen in these initial investigations;
- the role of Operation Soteria (as a 'game changer' in this space), and identifying the most harmful violence against women and girls perpetrators;
- conviction;
- risk management from prisons to probation;
- perpetrator/behaviour change programmes and perpetrator intervention;
- · clinical interventions and limitations; and
- sexual offender management in the community.
- 6.1 Tertiary prevention measures are used when an offender has committed a crime, or series of crimes, to try to prevent them from committing future offences. The National Police Chiefs' Council Prevention Strategy defines tertiary prevention as including measures to "[r]educe or prevent existing reoccurring problems by tackling the vulnerability of the victim or location, or reducing the motivation of the offender to readdress the situation e.g. problem solving and community engagement".1

#### Investigation – including initial response

6.2 Robust, effective and timely investigations are key to building successful cases, securing convictions and setting the foundations of preventing reoffending. Ministry of Justice figures indicate that reoffending rates (based on subsequent convictions) among sexual offenders are low, relative to other crime types.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Justice's statistical publication on proven reoffending statistics, January to March 2023, stated: "The lowest rate of reoffending (11.7%) was observed among those with a sexual offence as their index [i.e. previous recorded] offence." [\*\*\*]

- 6.3 Part 1 of this Inquiry was clear that Wayne Couzens' terrible crimes in abducting. raping and murdering Sarah Everard "were not committed in isolation but were the culmination of a trajectory of sexually motivated behaviour and offending".3 The Inquiry was critical of the poor level of investigation of those offences which came to the attention of the police, seeing this as a missed opportunity to stop Couzens and prevent his further offending.
- The Inquiry saw evidence of some focused work by policing to help improve the 6.4 response to indecent exposure crimes (as per recommendations made in the Part 1 Report). The College of Policing has produced a focused guidance document to assist forces in implementing their own policies regarding non-contact sexual offences. As detailed in Chapter 1 of this Report, as of September 2025, 74 per cent of forces have reported implementing a specialist policy on investigating sexual offences, including non-contact sexual offences. 5 Additionally, the College of Policing has designed new training to address non-contact sexual offences.<sup>6</sup> which emphasises the need to take reports seriously, establish information on patterns of offending and respond to victims in a trauma-informed way.7 The creation of this training is a positive step. As also detailed in Chapter 1, as of September 2025, 66,332 officers have completed this training.8
- 6.5 As set out below, the Inquiry's case file reviews found evidence of mixed practice in forces. There were some strong investigations, and there was sensitive and empathetic victim care in places. However, there was also some poor practice in all forces, with examples of delays in investigations and cases closed without all lines of investigation being properly followed. The Inquiry will draw further on evidence from these case files in future reports.

#### Importance of good CCTV images

- 6.6 The presence of CCTV can be critical in investigations of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces. It plays an important role in identifying: (i) potential witnesses; (ii) suspects (and/or eliminating them from enquiries); and (iii) other lines of enquiry for investigations9 – when the technology is good enough and used effectively.
- 6.7 In the Inquiry's case file reviews, there are examples of CCTV being deployed effectively as part of good, evidence-led investigations. This led to cases progressing to charges and prosecutions effectively and efficiently, with outcomes appropriate to the severity of the offence (for instance, in cases reviewed in the Metropolitan Police Service and Merseyside Police). 10 The Inquiry saw examples of where victims were able to submit an online form about sexual assault on public transport, giving a description of the perpetrator and where the crime had taken place (British Transport Police). 11 In one case, this was followed up by British Transport Police, who promptly recovered CCTV footage and Oyster card

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 5 [\*\*\*]

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>7 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>8 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>10 [\*\*\*].</sup> See Appendix A for details of the case file sample.

information to enable them to observe, identify and, based on this evidence, arrest the perpetrator. The case took just under six months from the point of arrest to prosecution. The perpetrator pleaded guilty, had to sign the sex offenders' register and pay compensation, and was ordered to do rehabilitation work.

- 6.8 However, there were also cases where CCTV was not available (because it was faulty<sup>12</sup>), or was not able to give good enough images to identify the suspect.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the Inquiry learned of major problems with the quality of CCTV recordings<sup>14</sup> and the length of time they were stored before being deleted.<sup>15</sup> These were all examples seen in British Transport Police cases, although the Inquiry notes that the force is not responsible for the quality or storage of CCTV, and who 'owns' the CCTV images and recordings is a complex picture, particularly on transport networks, with no single body responsible for the totality of CCTV. However, the issues with CCTV meant that the cases were generally closed due to evidential difficulties, and no further action, or other lines of enquiry, taken.
- 6.9 The Department for Transport told the Inquiry that it has worked in collaboration with British Transport Police over the past 12 months to develop options to improve the use of CCTV in investigations. The Inquiry was informed that, having secured funding through the Spending Review 2025, the Department for Transport is setting up a project to be delivered through Network Rail, which aims to connect the existing CCTV image feeds from the stations with the highest footfall directly to British Transport Police. This will overcome retention issues by providing British Transport Police with rapid access to CCTV images, and enhance real-time responses in active incidents.<sup>16</sup>

#### Outcome codes<sup>17</sup>

- 6.10 When an investigation is completed, the case gets an outcome code under Home Office counting rules. 18 These rules are a national standard for recording and counting notifiable offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales (known as police-recorded crime).
- 6.11 Outcome codes record the reasons that crime investigations have been finalised. In its 2021 inspection report *Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls*, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reported concerns about variations among forces in their use of outcome codes, and an "unacceptably high" level of cases closed due to evidential difficulties (where the suspect was identified and the victim supported prosecution, and where the victim did not support prosecution).<sup>19</sup> The Inquiry considered published crime data on

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>13 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>15 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>16 [\*\*\*&</sup>lt;sup>:</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The following definitions are used here to align with available official statistics: Rape: rape of a female aged 16 and over; Sexual assault: sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over; Assault with injury: used here as a non-sexual comparator (data for this offence type includes both male and female victims, as the offence descriptions in the official statistics do not distinguish).

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>19 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

outcomes used to close cases of rape and sexual assault for the year ending March 2024, together with the same information for cases of assault with injury (for comparative purposes).

Table 2: Outcomes for offences recorded in financial year 2023/24<sup>20</sup>

Outcomes for offences recorded in financial year 23/24	Rape (of a female aged 16 and over)	Sexual assault (on a female aged 13 and over)	Assault with injury
Charged/summonsed	5%	7%	7%
Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)	19%	24%	19%
Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	54%	39%	43%
Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest – police decision	0%	0%	1%
Investigation complete – no suspect identified	8%	18%	17%
Out-of-court (formal)	0%	0%	1%
Out-of-court (informal)	0%	0%	3%
Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	1%	2%	2%
Responsibility for further investigation transferred to another body	0%	2%	3%
Taken into consideration	0%	0%	0%
Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action	0%	0%	1%
Not yet assigned an outcome	14%	7%	4%
Base size	45,977	49,977	499,855

Source: Police-recorded crime and outcomes open data tables from the Home Office.

#### Rape cases

- 6.12 As Table 2 shows, over seven in ten rape cases in 2023/24 were closed due to evidential difficulties (73 per cent). Within this, over half the cases were logged as closed due to the victim not supporting action (54 per cent); this is markedly higher than for other sexual assault cases (39 per cent) and assault with injury (non-sexual) cases (43 per cent). A further 19 per cent were logged as closed due to 'Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)', lower than the rates for sexual assault (24 per cent) and assault with injury (19 per cent).
- 6.13 The outcome code with the next-highest percentage for rape cases was 'Not yet assigned an outcome' (14 per cent). This could reflect the length of time that rape case investigations tend to take, which is a trend the Inquiry noticed in the fieldwork forces some rape case investigations reviewed had taken more than three years to reach an outcome (see Table 1 in Chapter 2).

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Sexual assault cases

- 6.14 The most common outcome code used for sexual assault cases was 'Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)' (39 per cent), though this percentage is lower than that for rape (54 per cent) or assault with injury (43 per cent).
- 6.15 As shown in Table 2, almost one in four sexual assault cases were closed due to evidential difficulties, despite a suspect being identified and the victim supporting action (24 per cent). This is a higher percentage than for rape cases (19 per cent) and assault with injury cases (19 per cent). A further 18 per cent of sexual assault cases in 2023/24 were logged with an outcome code of 'Investigation complete no suspect identified'. This was comparable to the percentage for assault with injury cases (17 per cent).
- 6.16 Overall, these figures show the continuing low rate of charges for rape and sexual assault cases.
- 6.17 Policing needs to assure itself that the best possible evidence is gathered in initial investigations, and that the right lines of enquiry are in place. This should be seen as a crucial part of prevention work. This is because conviction is clearly relevant to prevention, and effective investigations may also be seen to disrupt offending and therefore form part of the prevention picture.

# Policing programmes aimed at improving investigation and prosecution rates

- 6.18 The issues with crime reporting and investigation of violence against women and girls crimes more widely are well known.<sup>21</sup> Given the relevance to and scope of its Terms of Reference, the Inquiry examined two policing programmes which aim to prevent further offending by those who commit sexual offences against women in public spaces. These are:
  - Operation Soteria, a new approach to improving the investigation and prosecution of rape and serious sexual offences, including those committed in public spaces; and
  - the focus across forces on identifying and actively managing the risk from the most serious violence against women and girls offenders in a force area, driven by the National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against Women and Girls Taskforce.

#### **Operation Soteria**

6.19 Operation Soteria aims to improve every aspect of the investigation and prosecution of rape and serious sexual offences by ensuring that investigations are perpetratorfocused, victim-centred and evidence-led. Its foundation was Project Bluestone, which was piloted by Avon and Somerset Police in 2019, based on intensive academic research on the data held on rape and serious sexual offences cases.<sup>22</sup> This became Operation Soteria, which was then extended to a further four forces and reviewed. Key findings from that first review included the following:

- Investigators lack specialist knowledge about sexual offending; there is a need for specialism and research-informed specialist investigative practice.
- Learning and development offered to officers lacks specialist knowledge about offending.
- Disproportionate effort is put into testing victim credibility; investigations should be rebalanced to focus on suspects and offending behaviours.
- There are significant levels of officer burnout, associated with under-resourcing and lack of learning and development.
- There are weaknesses in data systems and quality, and there is a lack of analytical capability.
- It is important to challenge police culture to achieve transformation.<sup>23</sup>
- 6.20 The Soteria approach is designed to focus on the patterns of behaviour that are a significant feature of rape and sexual offences. It aims to make sure that an early and robust assessment of suspect behaviour and offending patterns takes place, and that decision-making is based on evidence. This deliberately rebalances the investigative effort away from testing the credibility of the victim's account and towards ensuring a thorough investigation of suspects' offending behaviours. It explicitly has an aim of preventing (further) offending. The Inquiry welcomes this approach.
- 6.21 The National Operating Model (which the Home Office wanted all forces to have implemented by November 2024<sup>24</sup>) sets out how policing should change its approach to investigating rape and serious sexual offences, and is based on the six pillars of Soteria. These are:
  - Pillar 1 having a suspect-focused investigation;
  - Pillar 2 targeting and disrupting repeat suspects;
  - Pillar 3 supporting victims;
  - Pillar 4 improving investigators' knowledge, learning and well-being;

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>24 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- Pillar 5 using data and analysis effectively; and
- Pillar 6 improving rape and serious sexual offences investigations through effective use of digital forensics.<sup>25</sup>
- 6.22 The Soteria approach stresses that these pillars are linked. If forces put them in place properly, there should be system-wide changes, and improvements should continue in the long term because there are new structures in place too.<sup>26</sup> But it also means that forces must improve across all six pillars to get the full benefits of Soteria.
- 6.23 Pillar 2 (targeting and disrupting repeat suspects) has resulted in some interesting data on the profile of these offenders. For instance, in a 2022 report looking at data on all sex offences between January 2018 and December 2021 from five forces, Soteria academics found that the number of named suspects linked to more than one sex offence was high, ranging from 19.5 per cent to 45.6 per cent. One suspect had committed 173 sex offences. When researchers looked at previous offending history including any type of crime, the numbers went up, with between 41.4 per cent and 63.9 per cent linked to more than one crime. In all but one force, "less than half of the named suspects had never come to police attention before, demonstrating the scope and breadth of the repeat suspects within the sample obtained here". This information should be shared widely, and used to inform perpetrator profiling (see paragraphs 6.37 to 6.40).
- 6.24 The Inquiry saw evidence, in some but not all of the case files of Soteria forces<sup>28</sup> that provided evidence, of an improved response to victims and focus on perpetrators.<sup>29</sup> The Inquiry was also told about an increase in charge rates for rape among Soteria forces.<sup>30</sup>
- 6.25 On the basis of this evidence, the Inquiry considers that Operation Soteria presents a key opportunity to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. However, forces must adopt it fully, and assure themselves that it is being run to the high standards set out in the National Operating Model.
- 6.26 This is important: the Inquiry was told that the roll-out of the programme is on schedule, with Home Office investment in training and a joint unit in place which aims to ensure that uptake is consistent.<sup>31</sup> However, the Inquiry saw evidence that Soteria was not being implemented fully in some forces.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>25 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>26 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>28</sup> Soteria forces are those forces that had, at the time of review, adopted the Operation Soteria model.

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>30</sup> For example, Chief Constable Sarah Crew credited it with leading to a fourfold increase in charges for rape in Avon and Somerset: [\*\*\*].

<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>32 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### **Recommendation 24: Implementation of Operation Soteria**

By March 2026, the Home Office, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council, and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, should agree plans for the full, consistent and sustainable implementation of Operation Soteria across all forces in England and Wales.

This should include agreement of multi-year funding, covering the period until Operation Soteria has been both fully implemented and evaluated in all forces, with any issues arising from each evaluation being addressed. In addition, Police and Crime Commissioners should specifically liaise with Chief Constables on the implementation of Operation Soteria in their areas, to understand its impact on the delivery of the force's Police and Crime Plan, and its contribution to national policing capabilities aimed at tackling violence against women and girls.

- 6.27 Similarly, the Inquiry received evidence collated by the College of Policing which found that "[s]pecialist RASSO [rape and serious sexual offence] teams in Soteria forces tended to be under-resourced", and that "[m]onitoring and evaluation will be required to assess the effectiveness of the National Operating Model produced by Soteria, including how well forces implement the model".<sup>33</sup> The Inquiry considers it evident that insufficient officers and staff will be damaging to the quality of investigations. This was reported by HMICFRS in its inspection of the investigation and prosecution of rape in 2021: "The investigation of rape is often complex, and victims deserve that those investigators responsible for their case have the skills and are given the time to investigate effectively."<sup>34</sup>
- 6.28 The Inquiry understands that between 2022 and 2025, Operation Soteria was supported by multi-year grant agreements to develop the National Operating Model, which launched in summer 2023 and established the Joint Soteria Unit. In line with this funding mechanism, at the start of each financial year, the indicative funding outlined in a multi-year grant agreement is confirmed to the relevant grant recipient, usually once departmental spending decisions are agreed.<sup>35</sup> The Inquiry also heard that in effect this felt like the funding for the central Soteria unit was given on a year-by-year basis.<sup>36</sup> Although it is positive that the unit is now being moved into the central National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection,<sup>37</sup> the Inquiry considers that funding should be assured until Soteria has been fully implemented, evaluated and adjusted as needed in all forces, if it is to have the best chance of fulfilling its preventative potential. This funding would also send a clear message about the priority of the approach.
- 6.29 In conclusion, Soteria has been shown to work. It is positive that it has been adopted nationally, which is testament to both its data-driven approach, underpinned by robust academic research, and the commitment of Chief Constable Sarah Crew

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

(which the Inquiry considers to be evidence of the importance of a senior policing champion in establishing new national ways of working<sup>38</sup>). Soteria now needs to be implemented sustainably, fully and consistently.

## Identifying and managing the most harmful violence against women and girls offenders

6.30 The Inquiry found that many forces are now identifying their most dangerous violence against women and girls offenders, in order to actively manage the risk they pose.

### Processes used to identify perpetrators of violence against women and girls

"[While] [a]nalysis of subsequent force VAWG [violence against women and girls] action plans has identified some progress in the development of offender identification, prioritisation and management [...] inconsistencies across forces remains [sic] and there is very little practice which is evaluated."

Evidence to the Inquiry<sup>39</sup>

- 6.31 The Inquiry found that there are different algorithms used across forces in England and Wales as to the harm criteria used to identify offenders. The two most common methods used are the Cambridge Crime Harm Index and the Recency, Frequency, Gravity, Victims algorithm. Neither of these was designed to assess the risk posed by sexually motivated offending in public spaces.
- 6.32 The Cambridge Crime Harm Index measures the seriousness of crime based on the harm caused to victims. 40 It uses sentencing guidelines to assign a harm score to each type of crime. The Metropolitan Police Service's Violence Against Women and Girls 100 (V100) programme (see paragraph 6.34) uses the Cambridge Crime Harm Index to compile and prioritise its list of most dangerous offenders by "summing each person's score". 41 However, one witness queried whether this was appropriate for violence against women and girls offending, because it grades non-contact crimes (such as indecent exposure, breach of orders and spiking) as relatively low harm. 42
- 6.33 The Recency, Frequency, Gravity, Victims algorithm, which was examined in detail by the College of Policing and is used by several forces,<sup>43</sup> was initially developed by Northumbria Police to identify repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse only. This algorithm itself was based on an existing algorithm developed by Police Scotland for *general* offending, which was derived in turn from an algorithm developed in the commercial sector for examining retail expenditure.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>39 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>40 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>42 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>43</sup> Including Northumbria, West Midlands and (previously) the Metropolitan Police Service. [\*\*\*]

<sup>44 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Case study: The Metropolitan Police Service's V100 list

- 6.34 One example of this activity is the high-profile work the Metropolitan Police Service has done on the V100 list. This is a list of the 100 individuals within the Metropolitan Police Service's jurisdiction who are assessed as being the most dangerous to women and girls.<sup>45</sup> It is refreshed every month (with an average of between 15 and 22 new subjects identified in each refresh).<sup>46</sup> The force then prioritises activities to prevent these men from committing further harm using, for example, conviction, charge, arrest or remand.
- 6.35 The Metropolitan Police Service provided data to the Inquiry demonstrating the success of this approach.<sup>47</sup> From the beginning of the programme, in July 2023, to September 2025, its data showed that:
  - 210 arrests were made;
  - 177 charges were brought;
  - 124 subjects were held on remand (i.e. held in custody awaiting a trial);
  - 125 civil orders were issued (see paragraphs 5.78 to 5.94);
  - 166 convictions were secured; and
  - 212 victim support interventions took place.<sup>48</sup>
- 6.36 The National Police Chiefs' Council has approved this model, to the extent that it intends to use it to develop a targeted policing approach against the most dangerous offenders. However, funding for the V100 programme is not ring-fenced, meaning that there is no specific allocation of set funds to support this work. Instead, "local/corporate funding streams will need to be used". Similarly, there is no protected resource for this work; instead, "all operational activity is sought within local capacity and capabilities". Prevention activity with an evidence base, but without allocated and sustainable funding, is a recurrent theme in the Inquiry's review of preventative measures. The Inquiry, however, notes that in September 2024, the Government announced the development of a new national approach to the use of data-driven tools to target the "top perpetrators of violence against women and girls". The Inquiry was also told that this work is being delivered through the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection.

<sup>45 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4/ [^^^</sup> 

<sup>48 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>49 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>50 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>51 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>52 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### Inconsistencies in the use of tools to identify perpetrators

"[U]ntil you've got that evaluation to say, actually yes, this is working really well, it's difficult to get everybody to adopt these tools."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>53</sup>

- 6.37 Even when different forces were using the same tools (such as the Recency, Frequency, Gravity, Victims algorithm mentioned above), a Home Office commissioned evaluation found inconsistencies in how these tools were used.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the National Police Chiefs' Council, in its 2023 Violence Against Women and Girls National Strategic Threat Risk Assessment, found that, while forces have identified some progress in this area, "inconsistency across forces remains and there is very little practice which has been evaluated".<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, "[s]everal forces did not outline their processes to identify repeat offenders or stated that it was a current intelligence gap".<sup>56</sup> As a result, the Inquiry finds that different forces are using different tools to differing degrees to address the perpetrators of different types of violence against women and girls crimes.
- 6.38 This can result in various profiles of offenders being identified. For instance:
  - A focus on high harm may mean that offenders with frequent low-level offences are not identified as the top predators.
  - The Inquiry heard evidence from one witness who stated that the risk factors associated with identifying high-harm perpetrators are "primarily around factors linked to domestic abuse [...] forces have started looking at domestic abuse offending as opposed to wider VAWG [violence against women and girls] offending".<sup>57</sup>
  - The Inquiry heard evidence to suggest that other forces might be adopting local approaches when identifying the most harmful offenders. For instance, one force is using nine additional factors when it produces a list of offenders, including strangulation, substance abuse, recent separation, stalking and coercive control.<sup>58</sup>
- 6.39 Given what is known and, crucially, what is not known about the profile of men who commit sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, this at best risks inconsistency in how different forces identify the most harmful offenders.
- 6.40 It is also another example of an area where there seems to be no reason for different forces to take different approaches. There is also not a clear, dynamic link between the information gathered on perpetrator profiles from Soteria and the assessment of risk in 'top 10/top 100' programmes such as the Metropolitan Police Service's V100 programme.

<sup>53 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>54 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>55 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>56 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>57 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>58 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 6.41 The Inquiry gathered evidence from policing witnesses on this too. One member of the policing community reflected that while "there's some great work taking place, [and] lots of forces are looking to rank their cohort of offenders, [...] there's some work to do to standardise that approach, and also make sure that it's evidence based and evaluated as we move forward".<sup>59</sup>
- 6.42 It is positive that forces are working to identify and manage the offenders who cause the most harm to women. However, the Inquiry can see no reason why algorithms should be different across England and Wales, when the offending behaviour of these men is not different. A single approach would allow evaluation (which witnesses thought was frequently lacking in the current approaches, with "lots of forces [...] doing their own work in this area, but with very little evaluation of what they're doing"60), and a focused look at how the harms associated with sexually motivated offending in public spaces should be measured and identified.
- 6.43 These problems of inconsistency have been recognised, and in September 2024, the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Yvette Cooper MP, announced that, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing, she would oversee the development of a new national approach to the use of data-driven tools and data analysis to identify the most dangerous perpetrators of violence against women and girls (including those who commit sexual offences), to better protect women and girls. It was further confirmed that technology would assist in building risk profiles for both perpetrators and victims, "enabling law enforcement and partner agencies to implement robust management plans that disrupt offenders' behaviour and enhance victim safety". The same data tools will be used to create perpetrator and offender profiles. This is part of the Government's Safer Streets mission commitment to halve violence against women and girls in ten years. The Inquiry welcomes this.

## Opportunity: Comparison with the domestic abuse perpetrator strategy

- 6.44 A requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was for the Home Secretary to prepare and publish a perpetrator strategy within one year of Royal Assent.<sup>63</sup> The purpose of the strategy is for the Government to set out its approach to:
  - detecting, investigating and prosecuting offences involving domestic abuse;
  - assessing and managing the risks posed by individuals who commit offences involving domestic abuse, including domestic abuse related stalking; and
  - reducing the risk of such individuals committing further offences involving domestic abuse.
- 6.45 The Inquiry notes this focus on perpetrator behaviour in relation to domestic abuse to reduce reoffending and protect victims from any future risks and harm. It appears to provide a sound structure for a strategy for perpetrators of sexually motivated

<sup>59 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>62 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>63</sup> Part 7 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

- crimes against women in public spaces. Such a strategy would help to focus attention on these crimes; bring together what is known about their perpetrators, identifying gaps to be filled; and allow more targeted work to prevent these offences.
- 6.46 This approach should also consider the current capabilities the police have, and include consultation with the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection to consider any operational elements and guidance that need to be issued to policing as a result.

## Conviction

- 6.47 Once criminal investigations into a perpetrator have been completed, if he has been charged and convicted, this should signal to the system, and the public, the following:
  - The perpetrator, and his offending, is known, appropriately recorded and shared across the criminal justice system.
  - The consequences of his crimes will be actioned through the relevant organisations, including through prison and probation, and relevant punishment, support and behaviour change programmes administered.
  - The risk he holds to the public, and women in particular, is fully known, recorded and mitigated to the best possible standards at the point of release from the secure estate.
- 6.48 As a result, a range of prevention measures should follow.
- 6.49 However, any such measures cannot be implemented successfully without a fully funded, well-structured, connected and well-informed system behind them. Missed opportunities, lack of resources and mistakes in the system have had very real consequences in failing to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. Since the launch of this Inquiry in November 2021, several high-profile cases have made headlines (see, for example, paragraphs 6.78 to 6.83); individuals already known to the system have committed violent, sometimes fatal, 64 crimes in public spaces. This has highlighted the impacts of getting these measures right. 65

## Prisons and probation

6.50 The public should be able to trust that harmful individuals and perpetrators are being processed properly through the prison and probation system. They should expect that perpetrators have become known to the system; have had their actions

<sup>64 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>65 &</sup>quot;[W]e were concerned that the risk to the public from those released was not being managed sufficiently well." [\*\*\*] "[T]he level of risk posed by [the perpetrator] was inaccurate given information that was known regarding past offending, behaviour in custody and patterns of behaviour." [\*\*\*]

investigated; have been deemed harmful/at-risk enough to warrant prison and/or probation intervention; and will be supervised and supported upon leaving the secure estate.

## Imprisonment as a preventative measure

- 6.51 A sentence of imprisonment removes perpetrators from the community, and in doing so both acts as punishment and prevents those perpetrators from committing crimes against women in public spaces. This is a primary purpose of prisons, in the public's view: in November 2024, the Sentencing Academy<sup>66</sup> published findings of a survey which asked individuals for their view on the purpose of imprisonment, as well as the effectiveness of punishment and rehabilitation. Of the respondents, 42 per cent considered that "protecting the public by removing offenders from society" was the most important reason to imprison an individual.67
- 6.52 In the case of sexually motivated crimes, the sentencing range varies, 68 but all sexual offences detailed under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 include the possibility of custodial sentences. 69 According to a joint bulletin released by the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office and the Office for National Statistics, addressing an overview of sexual offending in England and Wales in 2011, "nearly every convicted rapist received a custodial sentence" and "those in prison for sexual offences tend to spend more time in prison than other offence groups".70

## Data on sexual offenders in prison or under probation supervision

6.53 The number of registered sexual offenders (both within the prison system and in the community) is rising. As of 31 March 2024, there are 70,05271 Category 1 offenders, 72 up from 64,325 as of March 2021.73 This has been described as being in part a result of an increasing number of people being convicted of sexual offences, coupled with the fact that there is a requirement for many of those convicted to be registered as a sexual offender for long periods of time.74

<sup>66</sup> The Sentencing Academy is a charitable research organisation dedicated to developing understanding of sentencing in England and Wales. It promotes an evidence-based approach to sentencing and encourages effective sentencing practices that reduce reoffending, provide justice to victims and promote public confidence.

<sup>67 [\*\*\*]</sup> 68 [\*\*\*]

<sup>69</sup> The Sentencing Council describes the range of sentencing lengths for the following offences, as detailed in the Sexual Offences Act 2003: Rape: 4–19 years' custody with maximum life imprisonment; Assault by penetration: community order - 19 years' custody with maximum life imprisonment; Sexual assault: community order - 7 years' custody, with maximum 10 years' custody; Exposure: fine – 1 year's custody with maximum 2 years' custody; Voyeurism: fine - 18 months' custody, with maximum 2 years' custody. [\*\*\*] 70 [\*\*\*]

<sup>71</sup> This, however, does not cover the totality of offenders eligible for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements as of March 2024; a small number of sexual offenders are grouped into Category 2, where they do not qualify for the notification requirements that apply to Category 1 offenders. [\*\*\*]

<sup>72</sup> Offenders who are subject to notification requirements and who have been convicted of a specified sexual offence and/or to whom the notification requirement under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 applies.

<sup>73 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>74 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Preventing reoffending on release from prison

- 6.54 The Ministry of Justice defines the preventative role of prison as being not solely about the length of service, but instead to "ensure good order and discipline; work to prevent future victims of crime by tackling the underlying causes of offending; and promote rehabilitation and reform to reduce reoffending".<sup>75</sup>
- 6.55 HM Prison and Probation Service states that its role is "to prevent victims by changing lives".<sup>76</sup> It administers this goal in a range of ways. In practical terms, it runs prison and probation services, but it also fundamentally provides support with the aim of stopping people from reoffending.<sup>77</sup>
- 6.56 With a focus on the preventative (as opposed to the punitive) role of prison sentences, the Inquiry has found limited evidence that incarceration alone reduces the risk of sexual offending on release. Research conducted in Canada found that "incarceration has little, if any, impact on recidivism", while "there is evidence that recent treatment programs for sexual offenders are effective at reducing sexual recidivism".<sup>78</sup>
- 6.57 A Criminal Justice Joint Inspection of the management and supervision of men convicted of sex offending in 2019 emphasised the importance of work in prison to reduce the risk of reoffending on release (noting that this covered male sexual offenders convicted of any sexual offence i.e. not just those in public spaces, or against women): "In too many cases in prisons, we found that little, if anything, was done to reduce the likelihood of reoffending."
- 6.58 These findings are useful when considering the role of prisons and probation broadly, but particularly in relation to the cohorts relevant to this Inquiry, namely sexual offenders, who are much more likely to receive a custodial sentence for their offences, and spend longer in prison and on probation.
- 6.59 That said, rarely does the criminal justice system keep an individual imprisoned for their entire life, and so protecting the public by keeping individuals locked away, without any other intervention, is finite.
- 6.60 It appears to the Inquiry that prison alone is preventing these crimes, but only insofar as it removes sexual offenders from the community for a period of time. Upon leaving prison, from the evidence heard, there is no longer-term effect in terms of prevention of reoffending.

<sup>75 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>76 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>77 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>78 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>79 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## Management of sexual offenders in the community: Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

- 6.61 One of the main measures in place for preventing sexual offenders from reoffending is Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. These have been in place since 2003 and are "designed to protect the public, including previous victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders. They require the local criminal justice agencies and other bodies dealing with offenders to work together in partnership in dealing with these offenders" when the offender is released from the secure estate, or at the commencement of a community order or suspended sentence. This includes risk assessment and implementing a risk management plan.
- 6.62 HM Prison and Probation Service is the lead agency for any Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement offender over the age of 18, and is expected to supervise Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and high-risk offenders released into the community. The management of these offenders is done in partnership with courts, prisons, police, healthcare services, local authorities, and private and voluntary sector partners.<sup>81</sup>

## **Capacity**

6.63 Prison and probation services have been subject to several, often repeated, recommendations to improve performance, capability and risk management<sup>82</sup> – but against a backdrop of increased demand. There has been a growing population of sexual offenders being managed through the system, often for years at a time. The *Violence Against Women and Girls National Policing Statement 2024* noted:

"The probation service is experiencing significant resourcing challenges – staff shortages and high caseloads, whilst for example their caseload for registered sex offenders (RSOs) managed under category 1 of MAPPA [Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements] has increased 111% since 2006/2007 [...] with persistent year-on-year growth between 3–8%."83

6.64 The Chief Probation Officer for England and Wales, Kim Thornden-Edwards, has outlined the existing pressures on the system, and confirmed that HM Prison and Probation Service is working on this. She stated (with reference to a question about the system's capacity to deal with increased demand related to the early release scheme – the scheme under which some offenders left prison early in order to free up prison places):

<sup>80 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>81 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>82 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>83 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

"We have been consistently clear that the probation service is not currently in a position to absorb lots of additional demand without us taking a serious look at what we deliver, the way we deliver it and what kinds of resources would be needed."84

## Management and supervision

6.65 In January 2019, HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons conducted a thematic inspection of the management and supervision of men convicted of sexual offences. At the time of writing, this is the most up-to-date report of this kind published by the inspectorates. The report described how the number of men convicted of sexual offences has increased significantly since their previous inspection in 2010. The report also described a similar increase in the number of registered sexual offenders (at the time, exceeding 58,000). Yet, the inspectorates were clear that insufficient progress had been made in the nine-year period since their previous inspection. This included, specifically, their assessment of the work being delivered to sexual offenders in custody.

#### 6.66 They found that:

- The overall assessment of sexual offenders was inadequate in a third of cases and had not always considered the needs of victims and children.
- Some staff lacked the appropriate degree of professional curiosity when dealing with these men.
- Work inside prison was poor and the risk to the community from those released was not managed well (this is acutely apparent in the 2022 case study detailed below).
- Accredited programmes for sexual offenders in the community were underused.
- Probation officers did not review progress or risk levels regularly enough.<sup>86</sup>
- 6.67 Evidence gathered in the course of the Inquiry's work identified the importance of seeking to develop a clearer understanding of perpetrators and perpetrator behaviour across the system, in order to deliver effective and sustainable models of intervention, and improve the extent to which measures prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.<sup>87</sup> This is not just the case when designing primary and secondary measures to prevent harmful behaviour in the first place. It is also the case for individuals and perpetrators who are already within the criminal justice system, namely those who have already been convicted of crimes, including, but not limited to, sexually motivated crimes against women.

<sup>84 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>85 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>86 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>87 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 6.68 However, insufficient progress, and a lack of significant system response across HM Prison and Probation Service, remains apparent. An increasing number of offenders to manage, both within the secure estate and the community, with significant capacity problems, 88 not only does a disservice to the victims who experience these crimes, but also puts the wider community, particularly women, at increasing risk.
- 6.69 HM Prison and Probation Service continues to work to address some of these issues. In oral evidence provided in January 2024, in response to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry addressing the escalation of violence against women and girls, Ms Thornden-Edwards outlined a growth programme that has been in operation since 2020:

"[W]e have recruited record levels of trainee probation officers into the system – 4,000 over the last three years. To put that into some context, our best estimates of the usual trajectory of trainee probation officer recruitment pre that time was about 600 a year [...] Due to our focus, we have also seen growth across all our practitioner grades."<sup>89</sup>

- 6.70 However, she did confirm that they are still "not yet where we want to be in terms of staffing [...] we still have staffing gaps in our probation officer grade" at a level of 30 per cent. 90 She was not asked if this programme has been geared towards addressing the growth in numbers of sexual offenders entering and remaining in the system.
- 6.71 When asked how many "real, established, experienced" staff were in place, "who will see through some of the BS [bullshit] you are going to hear from [violence against women or domestic violence] perpetrators", Ms Thornden-Edwards confirmed "we are alive to those issues". While there are more newer staff than ever, "the majority of staff have between five and nine years' experience" and HM Prison and Probation Service as an employer offers training programmes, learning products, mentoring and buddy programmes. 92
- 6.72 The Inquiry was also told by the Ministry of Justice that recruitment and training of staff remains a high priority and, after exceeding its 2024/25 trainee target (onboarding 1,057 against a target of 1,000), it has committed to onboarding a further 1,300 trainees in 2025/26.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>88 [\*\*\*].</sup> In September 2024, Channel 4 found that the probation service for England and Wales "has been working over capacity every month since January 2023" following a data release as a result of a Freedom of Information request. [\*\*\*]

<sup>89 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>90 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>91 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>92 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>93 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

# Risk management from prison to communities: Serious Further Offences

- 6.73 As noted in paragraph 6.66, the 2019 inspection report found that the overall assessment of the risk posed by sexual offenders was insufficient in a third of cases. 94 This has potentially catastrophic consequences once the individual leaves prison and is allowed back into community settings.
- 6.74 HM Inspectorate of Probation has repeatedly emphasised this issue through its work to conduct Serious Further Offence reviews, to understand what happened and identify lessons learned for the system.<sup>95</sup> In its 2022 annual report, the Inspectorate noted that "practitioners are underestimating the nature and level of risk of serious harm posed", and raised further issues about workloads and the frequency and quality of management oversight.<sup>96</sup>
- 6.75 In the 2024 annual report on Serious Further Offences, 97 HM Inspectorate of Probation highlighted a 33 per cent increase in the number of individuals subject to probation supervision who are charged with Serious Further Offences going from around 500 individuals a year previously to 770. It describes how, "[o]f those charged, between fifty and sixty per cent are likely to be convicted of the SFO [Serious Further Offence], with the remaining cases either being convicted of a less serious offence, acquitted or the charges are dropped". Nevertheless, the Inspectorate was clear: "The impact on the victims and their families affected by the SFO cannot be underestimated." In the annual report from 2022, it had gone further still, stating that while "this represents a small proportion of the total probation caseload, each incident will have a devastating impact on all those involved". 100
- 6.76 In response to concerns regarding risk monitoring and potential escalation in offences, Ms Thornden-Edwards was asked to explain to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into the escalation of violence against women and girls what HM Prison and Probation Service was doing to monitor cases where escalation could become fatal.<sup>101</sup>
- 6.77 She said: "Certainly, in terms of VAWG [violence against women and girls] and MAPPA [Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements] [...] we have looked to strengthen MAPPA arrangements." However, while domestic abuse and stalking have been included within the statutory guidance, as well as more guidance on

<sup>94 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>98 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>100 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>101</sup> She explained that how to spot signs of escalating risk is provided as part of guidance and training, with advice on things you would put in place to respond to that, which includes increasing the protection measures and restrictive measures available, particularly for licensed cases; and diverting the individual into a different intervention. [\*\*\*]
102 [\*\*\*]

thresholding, including guiding people on referrals, 103 it is unclear how, if at all, this update affects those who commit sexual offences outside of a domestic/interpersonal context.

## Case study: What happens when use of orders/surveillance/ supervision fails

- 6.78 The consequences of failing to understand the perpetrator and the risk he poses to the public have been realised too many times. In June 2022, a convicted offender, released from prison nine days earlier, followed, sexually assaulted and murdered Zara Aleena as she walked home from a night out. Earlier in the evening, he had followed several other women. At the time, the perpetrator was being supervised by the Probation Service London region.
- 6.79 On 14 December 2022, the perpetrator was sentenced to life imprisonment<sup>104</sup> with a minimum term of 38 years, after he pleaded guilty to the murder and sexual assault of Zara.
- 6.80 Typically, in cases where an individual is subject to probation supervision and goes on to commit a serious or violent sexual offence, the Probation Service will conduct a Serious Further Offence review. However, in this case, the Secretary of State for Justice requested an independent Serious Further Offence review to be conducted by HM Inspectorate of Probation, to understand the Probation Service's management of the perpetrator.
- 6.81 This was published in January 2023. HM Inspectorate of Probation had reviewed the quality of the work undertaken by the Barking, Dagenham and Havering Probation Delivery Unit within the London probation region. Practice and policy in HMP Belmarsh were also explored by colleagues from HM Inspectorate of Prisons. The review made a number of findings, set against a backdrop of excessive workloads and challenges in respect of staffing vacancies in the London region. The review made and challenges in respect of staffing vacancies in the London region.
  - The assessment of the level of risk posed by the perpetrator was inaccurate, given what was known regarding past offending, behaviour in custody and general patterns of behaviour. Subsequently, this affected the way his case was managed and levels of oversight.<sup>107</sup>
  - Had the correct assessment of risk of harm been undertaken, actions taken in terms of pre-release planning, plans for accommodation on release, and speed

<sup>103 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>104 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>105 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>106 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>107 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- of response to non-attendance after release could have been "significantly different" and "potentially more urgent". 108
- In April 2022, there were significant delays in the perpetrator's case being correctly allocated to a probation officer in the community. This had an impact on the time available to update his risk assessment and plan for his release on 17 June 2022.<sup>109</sup>
- After his release, successive probation appointments were missed. The
  Probation Service failed to take prompt action in respect of recalling him to
  custody. The recall process was initiated on 22 June, but not signed off until
  24 June (outside the 24-hour turnaround time set out in the guidance).<sup>110</sup>
- 6.82 The findings from this review present issues with an individual case, but the delays, failures in assessment, and reference to "excessive workloads and [...] vacancies" across probation and prisons summarise the issues identified by the Inquiry in the management of sexual offenders more widely. This is therefore relevant to the Inquiry's examination of the extent to which probation measures are effective at preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- 6.83 There are significant gaps in understanding the perpetrator, meaning that there is not enough work being done to understand and address the motivations and patterns of offending among those who commit these types of crimes (see also paragraphs 5.58 to 5.61). This is evident across the system, and is the case for probation, where the main aim is to reduce the risk and likelihood of an individual reoffending. Therefore, the Inquiry is concerned about the extent to which probation, including the evidence base and structure it is built upon to manage risk, is an effective measure to prevent further sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

## Intervention and treatment – including perpetrator/ behaviour change programmes and measures beyond prison

6.84 There is a general lack of understanding on what works most effectively to reduce sexual offender recidivism. This "has been the subject of research for over 70 years", and yet there remain "[m]yths, misconceptions, and erroneous conclusions" which impede the development of evidence-based policies aimed at preventing sexual offences. The literature exploring this was described as "rich but uneven", littered with "methodological issues, challenges, and shortcomings". 113

<sup>108 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>109 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>110 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>111 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>112 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>113 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

In other words, the threat a perpetrator is assessed to pose is based on an imperfect understanding of sexual offender recidivism. This means that any matrices developed to calculate risk and prevent reoffending may be flawed, and that when offenders are released back into the community, their risk of reoffending is not clearly calculated.

## Holistic approaches to crime reduction and prevention

- 6.85 In 2024, the College of Policing provided an evidence briefing on "identifying and managing prolific and harmful perpetrators of VAWG [violence against women and girls]".<sup>114</sup> This paper outlined the importance of "[I]arge-scale, multi-agency interventions [which use] a *combination* of assistance to change abusive behaviour and/or enforcement and disruption", saying that they "have shown promising results".<sup>115</sup> Separately, a range of interventions have been evaluated by the College of Policing's crime reduction toolkit.<sup>116</sup> This work identified the following measures as showing an impact on reducing reoffending:
  - Electronic tagging for sex offences: This can be used at any time, from pre-trial to post-prison release.
  - Psychosocial treatment for sexual offenders.<sup>117</sup> This includes:
    - Behavioural therapy: A therapy that describes a range of techniques used to change maladaptive behaviours, to reinforce desirable behaviours and to eliminate unwanted ones.<sup>118</sup>
    - Cognitive behavioural therapy: A talking therapy used to challenge and change offenders' cognitive distortions and behaviours.
    - Insight-oriented therapy: A therapy that helps people understand how past experiences can affect their current behaviour. Having this insight can help them make changes to problematic or limited behaviours, thereby improving their outcomes.<sup>119</sup>
    - Multisystemic therapy: An intensive, home-based therapy for families with young people who have social, emotional and behavioural problems.
    - Therapeutic communities: A group-based approach to treating the effects of mental illness and substance abuse.
- 6.86 Further details on psychosocial treatment provided in prisons and communities to individuals convicted of sexual offences is given below (with a particular focus on accredited programmes).

<sup>114 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>115 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>116 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>117 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>118 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>119 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## A potential opportunity: Intensive Supervision Courts

- 6.87 In 2023, the Ministry of Justice launched Intensive Supervision Courts designed to divert "offenders away from short custodial sentences into robust, rehabilitative community sentences aiming to address the underlying needs of offenders and target the root cause of offending". Three courts focus on those whose offending behaviour is linked to substance misuse, with one other court focused on female offenders with multiple complex needs. 121
- 6.88 The Ministry of Justice describes how the offender is supported under Intensive Supervision Courts:

"Offenders sentenced under ISCs [Intensive Supervision Courts] are intensively supervised by a probation practitioner, who works with existing local services to deliver individualised sentence plans which include punitive and rehabilitative requirements. Key partners include judiciary, court staff, probation, treatment providers, police, local authority, and women's services." 122

- 6.89 Crucially, offenders are also "required to engage with treatment interventions and rehabilitation support to address complex needs holistically". 123
- 6.90 Following evaluation of the pilot, "consideration may be given to rolling the approach out more widely, which could consider suitability of other cohorts". 124 This sounds like a step forwards. However, the only wider cohort currently identified for further consideration is domestic abuse perpetrators, not sexual offenders (although these groups are not mutually exclusive). 125 The Ministry of Justice explains how "[d]ecisions from the previous government excluded offenders convicted of a sexual offence from being eligible for the pilot". 126 This means that, as it stands, Intensive Supervision Courts are not available to sexual offenders.
- 6.91 Overall, therefore, while Intensive Supervision Courts sound like a positive step forwards, the current limitations in the pilot roll-out remove an opportunity for Intensive Supervision Courts to be applied to sexual offenders, particularly those who offend in public spaces.

## Addressing the needs of the perpetrator

6.92 Several witnesses to the Inquiry mentioned that there was an uneasiness at the idea of spending limited criminal justice budgets on prevention programmes and interventions for convicted perpetrators, when funding for victim services is widely seen as inadequate. However, several witnesses spoke of the importance of not being afraid to acknowledge and fund the support frequently needed in multiple areas of life to prevent convicted perpetrators from reoffending.

<sup>120 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>121 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>122 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>123 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>124 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>125 [\*\*\*]</sup> 126 [\*\*\*]

<sup>127 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 6.93 Platfform (a mental health and social change charity)<sup>128</sup> provided evidence addressing this issue to the Equality and Social Justice Committee in July 2023, describing how a public health approach should be taken to ensure a sustainable reduction in gender-based violence. Platfform was clear: "[T]his does not mean avoiding accountability for behaviour, but it does mean recognising that what is effective at building relationships, and at offering (particularly) men who cause harm an alternative identity to explore, is not always the same as what *feels* right."<sup>129</sup>
- 6.94 Fowler, Brown and Bickley summarised this in their 2024 research, 130 which analysed the experiences of men convicted of sexual offences who have also completed the Horizon treatment programme (which aims to equip men with a conviction for a sexual offence with the skills they need to avoid reoffending). 131 They describe how "[f]ocusing on what makes citizenship, rather than problematic behaviour can move us to a deeper understanding of what shapes the experiences of men with sexual convictions" 132 and how, for this cohort of offenders, there needs to be a range of mechanisms in place to support their ability to avoid reoffending. This aligns with other evidence reviewed by the Inquiry for instance (from Catch22, a not-for-profit business which "design[ed] and deliver[ed] services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities" 133):

"Without strong support systems in place, as well as basic necessities like housing and mental health support, we are setting prison-leavers up to fail, and at the same time risking public safety [...] As soon as people fall through the gaps of support, it is inevitable they will be recalled back to prison or rearrested for further offences." 134

- 6.95 This point is furthered in research specifically exploring the role of rehabilitation with sexual offenders: "personal rehabilitation is not enough" to encourage desistance, but housing, employment and relationships also play an important role in reducing reoffending.
- 6.96 This point has been echoed by evidence provided to the Inquiry. A witness to the Inquiry, Antounette Philippides, Chair of StopSO, was clear: there should be no barrier to punishment. However, she warned of the limitations of positioning criminal justice responses to address punishment of the offender alone. Echoing the points outlined by Platfform, Ms Philippides suggests that the shame and blame of the current system means: "These individuals then go underground [...] and keep it secret without receiving sustainable intervention." 136

<sup>128 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>129 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>130 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>131 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>132 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>133 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>134 [\*\*\*]</sup> 135 [\*\*\*]

<sup>136 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 6.97 Platfform describes the risk of individuals not coming forward or refusing to cooperate: when "professionals engage with people who cause harm, often the responses to the professional can be to obstruct, obfuscate, or object[,] [making] it harder for professionals to see the real behaviour dynamics at play". 137 However, the charity is clear that "[t]his does not mean 'befriending' someone who causes harm": "creating a practice relationship with people who cause harm [...] can create a space for engagement and potential change". 138 These contexts offer opportunities to gather rich, helpful data to inform risk management strategies.
- 6.98 The Inquiry notes work that has been done by policing organisations to consider complexities in risk management plans, and how interventions and treatments play a part in reducing reoffending. The College of Policing details the use of the Active Risk Management System as a tool "commonly used by the police" to manage and reduce the risk of offenders on release into the community. To assist with the development of such a risk management plan, the College of Policing details four elements, or 'pillars', to help "offenders to lead law-abiding lives". The third pillar details intervention and treatment, designed to "focus more on developing the offender's own ability to avoid and manage risk situations and to build strengths and protective factors that enable desistance from offending. They may be mandatory, such as complying with a civil order prohibition, or voluntary. This may include, but will not be limited to, accredited programmes, which are discussed in further detail below.
- 6.99 Information relating to the use of the Active Risk Management System is detailed in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice on 'Identifying, assessing and managing risk'. Currently, 38 out of 43 Home Office forces are licensed to deliver this product.<sup>143</sup>

## Background to accredited programmes: A changing landscape

6.100 Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes, also known as sexual offender treatment programmes, have been run by prison and probation services since the early 1990s in various forms, although with limited evaluation showing success over that period. The Inquiry has not found evidence of any programmes specifically targeted at men who commit sexual offences against women in public spaces, and therefore it has not been able to assess the effectiveness of programmes specifically targeted at this type of offender. The rest of this section instead sets out a review of programmes for sexual offenders more widely, to consider whether such targeted programmes may carry a benefit as prevention activities in the future for perpetrators of sexually motivated offences against women in public spaces.

<sup>137 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>138 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>141 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>142 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>143 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 6.101 In 2019, the report by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (discussed in paragraph 6.65) found that "little, if anything, was done to reduce the likelihood of reoffending", with "current accredited programmes for sexual offenders [being] underused in the community and in prisons". 145 Overall, the offender's transition from prison to the community, in the case of sexual offenders, was described as "too little, too late", with accredited programmes being a part of the structural support framework that was not being utilised enough. 146
- 6.102 In 2021, due to "problems with the contracts and the quality of services delivered", the Probation Service reverted back to a "reunified" approach seen before 2014–15.<sup>147</sup> Ms Thornden-Edwards described this, in her evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee, as another "major organisational change for probation [...] and we inherited significant staffing shortfalls from the community rehabilitation companies", which was further exacerbated by "a major change programme" during "the middle of a pandemic". 148
- 6.103 The impacts of COVID-19 were felt across the criminal justice system: "[m]uch of the [criminal justice system] is dependent on people interacting in person, which [was] necessarily [...] severely curtailed" during this time period, 149 resulting in some significant backlogs in services, especially those that needed to be delivered face to face, which included accredited programmes. 150
- 6.104 Finally, it has been noted that, in the last few years, there has been a move away from the concept of deficits<sup>151</sup> seen in earlier programmes of this nature (i.e. the individuals are seen in terms of their shortcomings, which need to be fixed), to focus more on strengths and positive language associated with improvement.

#### A note on accreditation

6.105 Currently, the Ministry of Justice describes 'accreditation' in this context as meaning "a system for ensuring that treatment programmes offered to offenders, which aim to reduce offending, have a proper theoretical basis, and are designed in accordance with the 'What Works' literature". HM Prison and Probation Service works with independent experts, including via the Correctional Services Advice and Accreditation Panel, which features leading experts in the field, who advise both on accrediting and evaluating programmes. The Correctional Services Advice and Accreditation Panel provides advice and recommendations on all aspects of a

<sup>145 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>146 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>147 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>148 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>149 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>150 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>151 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>152 [\*\*\*]</sup> 153 [\*\*\*]

programme, including but not limited to targeting, design, implementation and evaluation.<sup>154</sup> These programmes are seen as a rehabilitative requirement on a community order and can be part of a restrictive package on licence.<sup>155</sup>

## **Current accredited programmes**

- 6.106 As of January 2024, sexual offender behaviour programmes were being delivered in 72 prisons across England and Wales. This means that at least 59 per cent of the 122 prisons in England and Wales are delivering offender behaviour programmes. According to a leader within the prison system, the balance of delivery across prisons is assessed every year, due to "population changes". This includes, as an example, where a prison previously did not have a large sex offender population, but it does now", 158 to support changes to delivery needs.
- 6.107 As of 31 January 2025, the Inquiry understands that HM Prison and Probation Service offers seven accredited programmes designed by HM Prison and Probation Service interventions services.<sup>159</sup> Five of these are described in Table 3; the Ministry of Justice confirmed that all of these (with the exception of the Healthy Sex Programme, which will be retained) are intended to be replaced by the Building Choices programme (see paragraph 6.124).<sup>160</sup> The iHorizon programme is specifically for adult men with offences related to child abuse imagery, and so is out of scope for this Inquiry.<sup>161</sup> These programmes are available across England and Wales for those convicted of sexual offences.
- 6.108 The Ministry of Justice described how "[t]he needs and suitability criteria for each of these programmes varies depending on the risk, need and responsivity factors for each individual" and how these programmes "are strengths-based, future focused programmes". 162

<sup>154 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>155 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>156 [\*\*\*].</sup> This includes the women's estate.

<sup>157 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>158 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>159 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>160 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>161 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>162 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

**Table 3: HM Prison and Probation Service accredited programmes** 

Accredited programme	Description	Evaluation
Horizon	This is a medium-intensity programme designed for adult males (18+ years) with a sexual or sexually motivated offence who are assessed as posing a medium or above risk of reoffending.	Ministry of Justice, Horizon and iHorizon: An uncontrolled before- after study of clinical
	This is available in custody and the community.	outcomes (2023) <sup>163</sup>
Kaizen	This is a high-intensity programme designed for adult males (18+ years) assessed as posing a high or very high risk of reoffending with a high level of criminogenic need. 164 It is typically targeted at those with convictions for sexual offences, generally violent offences or intimate partner violence offences.  Kaizen is only available in custody.	Ministry of Justice, Kaizen – An accredited offending behaviour programme: An uncontrolled before- after evaluation of clinical outcomes (2024) <sup>165</sup>
Becoming New Me Plus	This is a high-intensity programme designed for adult males (18+ years) assessed as posing a high or very high risk of reoffending, and with a high level of criminogenic need. It is typically targeted at those with convictions for sexual offences, generally violent offences or intimate partner violence offences. It is the equivalent of the Kaizen programme for people with a learning disability.  Becoming New Me Plus is only available in custody.	Ministry of Justice, The Learning Disabilities and Challenges (LDC) suite of accredited offending behaviour programmes: An uncontrolled before- after evaluation of clinical outcomes (2024) <sup>166</sup>
New Me Strengths	This programme is a medium-intensity programme designed for adult males (18+ years) with a sexual or sexually motivated offence who are assessed as posing a medium or above risk of reoffending. It is the equivalent of the Horizon programme for people with a learning disability.  New Me Strengths is available in custody and community for	Ministry of Justice, The Learning Disabilities and Challenges (LDC) suite of accredited offending behaviour programmes:
	people with sexual or sexually motivated offences.	An uncontrolled before- after evaluation of clinical outcomes (2024) <sup>167</sup>
Healthy Sex Programme	This is a 1:1 programme designed for adult males (18+ years) classified as posing a medium or above risk of reoffending who have sexual convictions and a clear and persistent offence-related sexual interest. It aims to help participants to understand their sexual interests, and to increase sexual self-regulation skills to manage their lives safely.	HM Prison and Probation Service, The Healthy Sex Programme: An exploration of pre-to- post pyschological test change (2023) <sup>168</sup>
	The Healthy Sex Programme is only available in custody.	

<sup>163 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>164 [\*\*\*\*].</sup> There are "eight criminogenic needs" that are measured in OASys and which are linked to offending behaviour. These are: accommodation; employability; relationships; lifestyle; drug misuse; alcohol misuse; thinking and behaviour; and attitudes.

<sup>165 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>166 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>167 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>168 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

## **Evaluation of programmes**

- 6.109 Overall, evaluation of programmes has been inconsistent in terms of how the evaluation has been conducted, and has utilised different methodologies, levels of investigation and comparisons. The following paragraphs give examples of this.
- 6.110 HM Inspectorate of Probation describes sexual offender treatment programmes as having "a moderate beneficial effect on sexual reoffending and [the programmes] work best in community and hospital settings". This includes programmes based on cognitive behavioural therapy, which "have been found to be effective in reducing sexual and violent (but not general) reoffending". They state, however, that there is "a pressing need for formal evaluations of the latest strengths-based programmes such as Horizon and Kaizen in England and Wales".

#### Horizon and iHorizon

- 6.111 The Horizon treatment programme was introduced in 2017 following a review of the existing suite of probation programmes. An evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Justice in 2023 found "promising evidence that participation in Horizon and iHorizon [programmes] is associated with positive change in programme participants" while noting that because of the lack of a no-treatment comparison group, these positive changes cannot be directly attributed to the programmes. The positive change discussed included change which "was consistently observed across all treatment targets, particularly for problem solving, sexual interests, and purpose (e.g., structure and routine)". The positive change in programmes are provided to the programmes.
- 6.112 An independent study of Horizon was completed by Fowler, Brown and Bickley in 2024. They analysed the experiences of men convicted of sexual offences who had completed the Horizon treatment programme in the community, and their integration into the community. They described how the Horizon programme moved "away from a programme that elicited shame" but said that this contrasts with "the impact of prevailing punitive policies and prioritisation of the risk model". In other words, the study highlighted the difficult relationship between punishment and rehabilitation in the prison and probation space. It did, however, outline the importance of social and moral rehabilitation as well as personal rehabilitation, and how the strengths-based model is required to address this.

<sup>169 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>170 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>171 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>172 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>174 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>175 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### **Becoming New Me Plus**

6.113 The Lucy Faithfull Foundation website rated the Becoming New Me Plus programme as "promising" (from 2017). The However, it acknowledges the seemingly pervasive issues with this area of work, not least the lack of understanding of the cohort in question. It states that, "[a]lthough sex offender treatment in general has received a lot of research attention over the last 20 years, relatively little is known about the assessment and treatment of intellectually disabled sexual offenders (IDSOs)", despite the fact that they "are likely to constitute approximately 30% of the offender population (Mottram, 2007)". Whereas the applicability of cognitive behaviour approaches for intellectually disabled sexual offenders has been subject to reviews, and these appear to show promise, "evaluation studies to date have been quite limited due to methodological shortcomings" and "there are no controlled treatment trials in this field". This being said, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation was clear that a process evaluation concluded that generally the treatment provided was responsive to need.

#### The Healthy Sex Programme

6.114 The lack of substantial evaluation studies is a pervasive issue in this area of prevention. In 2023, HM Prison and Probation Service published *The Healthy Sex Programme: An exploration of pre-to-post psychological test change*. This was "to measure short-term change against HSP [Healthy Sex Programme] treatment targets" and considered "a series of psychological tests [which] were administered to the HSP sample before and after programme completion". 180 However, this report was clear: there were limitations to this research and the pre-post methodology used. These included the relatively small sample size, the fact that the study design did not include a control group and the fact that the research relied on the use of self-report psychological tests, which are prone to socially desirable responding. Therefore, while the study suggested that "there are some positive and statistically significant trends emerging from the psychological test data for HSP [...] the findings from this study are not conclusive, and repeating the study using a control group would be helpful". 181

#### General

6.115 In November 2023, the then Head of External Affairs at Women's Aid, Sophie Francis-Cansfield, gave evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry addressing the escalation of violence against women and girls. In particular, she discussed the use of perpetrator programmes, and described how "the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes really does vary". Crucially, she also explained how "[t]here is sometimes too much of a focus on high-harm perpetrators, which lacks a bit of an understanding around risk in terms of survivors' experiences, so we very much advocate for the need for all types of models". However, the discussion

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<sup>182 [\*\*\*]</sup> 183 [\*\*\*]

- appears to be focused primarily on domestic abuse (which does, of course, include sexual abuse), but not directed explicitly at sexual offenders who commit offences against women outside of a domestic/interpersonal context.
- 6.116 Furthermore, the Inquiry heard from several witnesses<sup>184</sup> who outlined the difficulties in identifying 'what works' in this space. Indeed, the research community has outlined that the "recruitment of people convicted of sexual offences for research is difficult".<sup>185</sup>
- 6.117 The Inquiry is sympathetic to this assertion, to a certain extent; it is impossible to know what future offences could be avoided through individuals participating in programmes such as the above. However, at the same time, previous concerns have also been raised about the length of time certain programmes have been in operation without evaluation to understand whether they work or not. For example, in 2023, the Women and Equalities Committee identified that the Building Better Relationships programme, introduced in 2013, had never been evaluated even though it had been running for ten years. <sup>186</sup> Elsewhere, while studies have been conducted on some of the wider accredited programmes, findings are limited and often cannot be considered as full evaluations, particularly in relation to understanding what impact the programme may have on reoffending rates. The study on the Horizon and iHorizon programmes <sup>187</sup> "does not aim to examine if pre-to-post change is associated with likelihood of future reoffending". <sup>188</sup>
- 6.118 There is a further, practical, difficulty with ensuring that the delivery of effective accredited programmes works: evidence was given to the Women and Equalities Committee in January 2024 which identified that, currently, "one of [the] challenges is that we offer certain things in certain prisons", 189 which implies an inconsistency in service.
- 6.119 It is currently not clear how accessible the programmes are once or if the individual who requires it is in the right place, especially in the case of sexual offenders. Dame Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner, who gave evidence in November 2023 to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry on the escalation of violence against women and girls, described how, in her understanding, there was "currently a long waiting list for Building Better Relationships". This was clarified in the second round of oral evidence-gathering: Alice Adamson, Deputy Director, Rehabilitation Strategy and Interventions at HM Prison and Probation Service, confirmed that there was "about a one to five month wait for access to programmes", with the barriers identified as being due to "recovering from [C]ovid" and "because some people are not ready to do a programme immediately at the start of their sentence. It is not just about our availability." 191

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- 6.120 Furthermore, the 2023/24 HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales annual report stated: "Men in prisons [...] convicted of sexual offences were the least likely in our survey to report having completed an offending behaviour [programme] (36%) or other programme (29%)." This is despite many prisoners' sentence plans recommending participation in accredited programmes designed specifically to reduce their risk of future harm. The same report found that "jails often did not run courses or have enough spaces, leading to long waiting lists". The report identified examples of this lack of access, which included:
  - **HMP Stoke Heath:** In 2023/24, of the over 1,000 prisoners received, only 35 were due to complete accredited programmes.<sup>194</sup>
  - HMP Lowdham Grange: Around 40 per cent of the prison population with indeterminate sentences were likely to wait years for places on programmes to address violent behaviour.<sup>195</sup>
  - HMP Dartmoor and HMP Moorland: Despite both holding significant numbers of men convicted of sexual offences, no accredited programmes were being delivered at all. One prisoner at Dartmoor had been waiting for four years.<sup>196</sup>
- 6.121 The Ministry of Justice described how, for some people convicted of violence against women and girls related offences, "specialist psychologically informed approaches are required. For those assessed as higher-risk, higher-harm [...] a diagnosis of 'personality disorder' may be relevant." To address this cohort of individuals, HM Prison and Probation Service delivers the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway jointly with NHS England. The Inquiry was told that this pathway uses evidence-based approaches to reduce risk associated with serious reoffending and improve mental health. For those offenders in scope, services are delivered in prisons, by adult secure mental health providers and in the community. 198

## Accredited programmes as part of the package of support

6.122 HM Inspectorate of Prisons describes how, "in custody, accredited programmes are often seen as the only way of working with men convicted of sexual offences". 199 And, yet, leaders within prisons and probation are clear that accredited programmes should not be relied on as the *only* answer to reducing reoffending risks:

"They are right for a certain group of people – the most high-risk, high-harm offenders – but there is a whole range of things we need to do to support people while they are under our care in HMPPS [HM Prison and Probation Service]."<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198 [\*\*\*]</sup> 199 [\*\*\*]

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# The next generation of accredited programmes and wider support

- 6.123 The Inquiry looked at programmes if they successfully change behaviour as a way in which to help prevent sexually motivated offending (and reoffending) against women in public spaces. However, none was identified that focused solely on the crimes of interest. There are, however, some which look to change sexual behaviour more generally. Given findings from Soteria and others about the cross-over between different types of crime, the Inquiry therefore considered these wider sexual offending behaviour change programmes.
- 6.124 In January 2024, HM Prison and Probation Service confirmed that it was working on "the next generation of accredited programmes", which was reaffirmed by the Ministry of Justice in January 2025: all of the programmes detailed in Table 3, with the exception of the Healthy Sex Programme, will be replaced by the Building Choices programme. This is due to be rolled out by the end of 2026.<sup>201</sup>
- 6.125 In March 2025, the Government addressed progress on community-based interventions specifically for domestic abuse, including Building Choices, as part of its response to Recommendation 10 of the *Shifting the Scales: Transforming the criminal justice response to domestic abuse* report published by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. It outlined that Building Choices "provides a new approach to programming. Moving away from individual programmes which focus exclusively on one type of offending, Building Choices facilitates the exploration of complex offending histories."<sup>202</sup> While detailing this programme as part of the Government's work to address domestic abuse, Building Choices appears to offer wider application, including "healthy thinking (including healthy sexual thinking as relevant)".<sup>203</sup> While the programme is seemingly still in its infancy, this, combined with the fact that the Government is replacing Horizon with Building Choices, suggests that the latter has much wider application and can include perpetrators of sexual offences.
- 6.126 The Ministry of Justice confirmed that Building Choices "has a robust evaluation strategy integrated into its implementation plan". This programme is being developed to "meet more of the criminogenic needs, partly to deal with some of the challenges [such as] more hidden offence types". This is promising, particularly where, as outlined by the Government, this may "better optimise resources whilst keeping a focus on quality of delivery". The support of the confirmed that Building Choices "has a robust evaluation strategy integrated into its implementation plan". This programme is being developed to "meet more of the criminogenic needs, partly to deal with some of the challenges [such as] more hidden offence types". This is promising, particularly where, as outlined by the Government, this may "better optimise resources whilst keeping a focus on quality of delivery".
- 6.127 Beyond accredited programmes, the Inquiry heard evidence from a range of organisations and individuals about the importance of support, as introduced in paragraph 6.92. The Ministry of Justice told the Inquiry that HM Prison and Probation Service works with a variety of other agencies on rehabilitation activities

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to manage the risks perpetrators pose.<sup>207</sup> Accredited programmes play a role in this, but wider community support has also been raised as a vital step to ensure that individuals do not go on to reoffend once in the community. A key example of this work was mentioned by many witnesses: Circles UK, often referred to as 'Circles of support and accountability'. Circles began in Canada in 1994 as a one-off response "to a particularly high-risk sex offender who was about to be released from prison with no supervision or support in the community [...] the first Circle was formed by members of a Mennonite congregation who agreed to form a support group around the offender".<sup>208</sup> The group was ultimately effective at helping the man remain offence-free, and the model is now provided internationally across ten European countries<sup>209</sup> including the UK.

- 6.128 The Inquiry heard evidence about Circles UK, including that it is tailored "specifically to perpetrators of sexual abuse" and is "one of the few organisations that work entirely with perpetrators".<sup>210</sup> The Inquiry heard that "their risk of reoffending is significantly reduced in comparison to people who've not been on a Circle [programme]".<sup>211</sup>
- offenders, the benefits of Circles have been explored more broadly. Some police forces reference its work as part of intervention approaches for example, Thames Valley Police went one step further and proactively developed a relationship with Circles when developing Project Vigilant. It developed "a support pathway in partnership with Circles South East [which] enable individuals identified as displaying predatory behaviour to be referred to a bespoke intervention programme to address their behaviour".<sup>212</sup> The College of Policing described this collaboration as a success: it "has enabled the force to address sexualised predatory behaviour in the longer term" and has "helped the force to cement Project Vigilant risk management and safeguarding processes".<sup>213</sup>
- 6.130 Support for Circles goes wider than specific policing organisations. HM Inspectorate of Probation describes how "Circles of Support and Accountability have been found to reduce risk and increase compliance with registration requirements";<sup>214</sup> the Inquiry sees this as a significant finding. HM Prison and Probation Service should consider how Circles should be embedded fully.
- 6.131 Funding, however, is an issue, as the Inquiry has seen across this space. Currently Circles UK receives funding from the Ministry of Justice, but this was described to the Inquiry as "very small, you cannot deliver huge numbers through that", with the "rest of the funding com[ing] from charitable trust[s] and foundations".<sup>215</sup> However,

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- this is difficult to attain: "only very few charitable trusts and foundations are prepared to fund work with perpetrators of sexual abuse because they are worried about reputational risks".<sup>216</sup>
- 6.132 This is not a problem unique to Circles UK. Other witnesses described similar issues with funding, exacerbated by "the public purse [which] is shrinking [so] it is increasingly difficult to seek funding" in this area.<sup>217</sup> The reputational risks are echoed: "Society and vigilantes have a particular perspective on this and it's very damning and othering" and does not support the preventative nature of this work.<sup>218</sup>
- 6.133 Despite persistent funding and social barriers to developing this work nationally, research and evaluation conducted on Circles to date has shown that, overall, "costs are outweighed by benefits" of the programme (measured to different extents across the studies conducted). The College of Policing recommended that further evidence is required to test why Circles programmes may be effective and to identify the contexts in which Circles programmes work the most effectively; the Inquiry concurs.

## Clinical interventions

- 6.134 The Inquiry considered the use of clinical interventions to prevent those who have committed sexually motivated offences against women in public from reoffending.
- 6.135 Evidence provided to the Inquiry was clear on how medication should be used, and how it is used currently: it is not being suggested that medication should be prescribed to all offenders, "nor have we ever suggested that it should be prescribed on a compulsory basis. Medication is always prescribed within a medical setting and on a voluntary basis."<sup>221</sup>
- 6.136 Evidence was provided on:
  - interventions in secure hospitals in which the most dangerous sexual offenders are held; and
  - current understanding on the role of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) in managing harmful and compulsive sexual behaviours.

<sup>216 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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6.137 The Inquiry heard evidence regarding the two types of medication that can be prescribed to men to manage sexual arousal. The first is through prescribed medication:<sup>222</sup>

"These drugs lower the level of testosterone to that found in a prepubescent boy. The effect is to reduce or remove sex drive pretty much altogether [...] For men that have a very, very high and difficult to manage sex drive, however, hormonal medication can change their entire outlook on life."<sup>223</sup>

- 6.138 However, as with most medical interventions, there are side effects, which can be 'severe' and include osteoporosis, which can lead to bone thinning. Therefore, "[h]ormonal medication is [...] not prescribed lightly".<sup>224</sup>
- 6.139 The other type of medication is SSRIs, which are used to treat depression and other mental health conditions. The evidence suggests that SSRIs may have an anti-impulsivity effect, with one of the side effects being a reduction in libido. The Inquiry has heard that, for men with strong sexual preoccupation or intrusive sexual thoughts who report difficulties controlling their behaviours, SSRIs could be very effective.<sup>225</sup> Therefore, use of SSRIs may potentially help to reduce or prevent sexually motivated offending against women in public. One witness highlighted that this might provide a route to wider clinical interventions in the community that is, GPs might be able to provide medication to men who come to them because they are worried about their behaviour.
- 6.140 However, there are still barriers to implementing this across the medical community. The Inquiry was told: "[i]f a man [...] wants treatment, and goes to a doctor for help, the doctor is expected to report the individual to the police. It's not surprising that someone in that position will be reluctant to ask for help."226 Similarly, where a man's sexually harmful behaviour against women is known to medical practitioners, "many doctors are reluctant to prescribe [...] medication" which is designed to help the individual manage sexual behaviour.<sup>227</sup>
- 6.141 The Inquiry also heard that there have been very few trials of medication to manage sexual arousal, and the evidence base is weak. While it is acknowledged clinically that medication to manage arousal seems to work, the evidence is currently anecdotal. However, there is a five-year clinical trial currently in progress to evaluate the impact of SSRIs, which is due to finish in 2028. Over a six-month period, men will be prescribed either an SSRI or a placebo, and the impact on their sexual thinking will be measured and their sexual behaviour will be evaluated. Crucially, however, the trial does not address the issue of criminal intent and reoffending: "this is a health indication and not a risk reduction intervention"; however, "risk reduction [is] a side effect". 228

<sup>222</sup> This method is sometimes referred to as chemical castration.

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- 6.142 This trial will be the first large double-blind study looking at changes in these sorts of sexual indicators. However, it is not without barriers. As with any sort of treatment programme, "[m]edical intervention is voluntary [...] but in practice I've found that because it is voluntary, and because they find it of benefit, men are more likely to cooperate with the treatment". 229 Furthermore, evidence provided to the Inquiry was clear that "medication is not the real solution to the problem of sexual offending and inappropriate sexual behaviour towards women",230 but it can be a contribution to a certain proportion of perpetrators' rehabilitation.
- 6.143 Given the huge need to provide measures to manage and reduce the risk of such behaviour, limited work has been commissioned by the Government in this area. Indeed, the Inquiry heard it as follows:
  - "[It] is very difficult to get funding for the type of intervention as it is seen by health commissioners as sitting within criminal justice and by criminal justice funders as the remit of health. There appears to be little appetite for health commissioners to provide funding to treat sex offenders."231
- 6.144 Witnesses felt that this was because it was an area where officials didn't want to be seen either to be spending money, or more widely to be thinking about. Indeed, according to one witness: "I do not know why this is the case but suspect that some may be of the view that giving medication is 'cheating' and should not be done."232

## Sexual offender management in the community

- 6.145 There are various structures and processes available to manage sexual offenders in the community, with the aim of preventing further offences. The management of sexual offenders involves a combination of the police, probation and prison services working together with other agencies. The goal is to protect the public from sexual harm.
- 6.146 Using the Offender Assessment System and the Active Risk Management System,<sup>233</sup> the police and Probation Service assess the risk of reoffending and the risk to the community. Management can be via Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (see paragraphs 6.61 and 6.62).<sup>234</sup>
- 6.147 The Inquiry identified more processes in place to manage domestic abuse perpetrators than those involved in sexual offending in public. For instance, for domestic abuse, there are Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination<sup>235</sup> and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference processes<sup>236</sup> and, linked to these, Integrated Offender Management.237

<sup>229 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>236</sup> At Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, local representatives of groups including policing, health and housing discuss how to keep the victim of domestic abuse, and sometimes children, safe. 237 [\*\*\*]

6.148 This Inquiry did not find a gap in these structures. But other reports have found that the application of them is not running as intended;<sup>238</sup> and none have been designed specifically for (or have consistently focused on) sexually motivated crimes against women in public. As is shown, there is also considerable pressure on these systems and processes, due to the number of sexual offenders and some gaps in staff. The Inquiry judges these to be key barriers to their effectiveness in being able to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

## Chapter 7. Cross-cutting themes: Enablers and barriers to better prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

This chapter sets out key enablers and barriers to better prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. It is based on findings from across the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention levels. It covers:

- enablers, such as leadership and individual drive, ambition and recognition of the importance of prevention, structural factors, an increased focus on perpetrators, and consideration of the evidence base; and
- barriers of various sorts to preventing sexually motivated crimes.
- 7.1 Across every level of prevention, and in every sector, there are some consistent barriers and enablers to more effective prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. These were identified by analysis of the evidence obtained during this Inquiry, and through engagement with participants who held relevant knowledge and experience as part of our evidence-gathering sessions.

## **Enablers**

## Leadership and individual drive

- 7.2 The Inquiry saw examples of strong leaders at all levels and across many sectors, who were working with a clear focus on preventing sexually motivated crimes against women and girls. This includes police, charity and voluntary sector staff, politicians, public sector workers, academics, analysts, architects, community activists, health professionals, educators, criminal justice professionals and more.
- 7.3 The success of many measures the Inquiry reviewed has resulted from individuals driving them forward, rather than the consequence of a coordinated systematic effort. This presents a risk, as individuals are not permanently embedded within systems, so once they leave, then the ongoing success of existing measures may be affected.

## Ambition and recognition of the importance of prevention

- 7.4 Since 2021, there has been a significant increase in activity aimed at tackling violence against women and girls. This has included some major ambitions being set out. For instance:
  - Welsh Government: "Wales will be the safest place for a woman to live".1
  - Avon and Somerset summit (May 2022): "No girl born in 2021 will experience violence against women and girls".<sup>2</sup>
  - The current UK Government: "Halving violence against women and girls in ten years".3
- 7.5 Within all these ambitions is a clear recognition of the importance of prevention.
- 7.6 Many witnesses to the Inquiry mentioned this focus on violence against women and girls. In addition, when the Inquiry asked attendees at Inquiry evidence-gathering sessions (July 2024) about what they considered to be an opportunity for enabling better prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, many put forward the (then) new Government.<sup>4</sup>
- 7.7 There was, however, also concern about how sustainable that momentum is. This is returned to in paragraph 7.40.

### Structures, governance and legislation/powers/orders

- 7.8 To support these ambitions, the Inquiry considers that appropriate governance and powers are in place, for the most part. Across all the evidence gathered, there were very few suggestions for what was additionally needed in this area. Strikingly, although many witnesses were explicitly asked what would make a major difference in preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, very few suggested a new strategy or set of processes (although in other evidence sessions, one witness advocated for a sexual abuse prevention strategy).<sup>5</sup>
- 7.9 There is also evidence of successive governments utilising a range of the strategic levers available to them to tackle violence against women and girls. For example:
  - inclusion of violence against women and girls in the Strategic Policing Requirement;
  - use of statutory duties to steer cooperation between agencies in preventing violence against women and girls (Ask and Act in Wales; serious violence duty<sup>6</sup>

2 [\*\*\*]

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>6</sup> The serious violence duty was introduced by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The statutory guidance requires integrated care boards, the police, justice, fire and rescue services and local authorities within a local government area to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. The definition of serious violence can include domestic abuse and sexual violence. [\*\*\*]

to cooperate in England and Wales; and the upcoming implementation of the duty to collaborate in the commissioning of community support services for victims in England<sup>7</sup>);

- governance at national level (e.g. the Safer Streets Mission Board; the Welsh Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence governance board; the National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against Women and Girls Taskforce; the joint police/Crown Prosecution Service board); and
- legislation to ensure powers and orders are available in order to protect women and prevent offending (see Chapter 5).

### Increased focus on perpetrators

- 7.10 There has been a noticeable shift of emphasis in guidance around rape and serious sexual offences cases from investigating the victim to focusing on the perpetrator. This is clear in the Operation Soteria mantra of: "Perpetrator-focused, victim-centred, context-led".8
- 7.11 The most successful interventions, as measured by having the best evidence base for prevention, included those squarely focused on the perpetrator (Operation Soteria and Project Vigilant). As discussed in the chapter on primary prevention (Chapter 3), the increased focus on perpetrators is also evident in a significant shift in tone in communications messaging about staying safe, with a move away from messages instructing women to behave in certain ways to stay safe ('Don't leave your friends alone') to those giving more general tips on how to have a good night out.
- 7.12 Among the Inquiry witnesses, there was widespread agreement about the importance of funding more perpetrator programmes and research, with a recognition that this should be funded alongside victim care (and not, of course, to the latter's detriment).

#### Evidence base

- 7.13 There is a strong evidence base in some areas. The evidence base spans measures such as:
  - education of children and young people on consent, gender norms and healthy relationships;
  - bystander training;
  - lighting; and
  - electronic monitoring of sexual offenders (any time from pre-trial to post-release).

<sup>7</sup> Introduced by the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, and due to be implemented in 2026, this duty will require Police and Crime Commissioners, integrated care boards and local authorities to work together when commissioning services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and other sexual violence, and to publish a joint commissioning strategy. Duty holders will be required to work in partnership to enable joined-up, effective commissioning of victim services. [\*\*\*]

- 7.14 As well as these practical measures, there is also very strong and consistent evidence about the impact of sexually motivated crimes against women and of the fear of them on women's lives. For instance, there is commonality across surveys that:
  - Sexually motivated crimes in public spaces (and the fear of them) are normalised.
  - They lead to changes in behaviour, and curtailment of the freedom to be present in open spaces in the same way that men can be.
  - Women are more afraid when it is dark, on public transport and in the nighttime economy (and crime statistics show they are right to be).
- 7.15 The circumstances and context of the majority of this type of offending are therefore well rehearsed. The Inquiry considers that this provides a strong foundation for (and so enables) future preventative work.

## **Barriers**

## **Funding**

"I am kind of taking little pots of money here, there and everywhere."

A witness to the Inquiry9

"You wouldn't run a business like this."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>10</sup>

- 7.16 The Inquiry heard that existing structures in place for prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces are not sufficiently funded. The Inquiry finds this to be true across primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and that this is limiting the efficacy of prevention measures.
- 7.17 This includes insufficient funding for:
  - the criminal justice system;
  - victim services:
  - research into effective prevention of violence against women and girls; and
  - perpetrator programmes.
- 7.18 The Inquiry is acutely aware that funding issues are not limited to the focus of this Report alone. Pervasive fiscal restraints have become commonplace across the public sector, and beyond. However, this is not an excuse. This Report outlines

<sup>9 [\*\*\*]</sup> 10 [\*\*\*]

throughout the need for smarter, more sustained funding, with increased consideration for national, streamlined investment, as opposed to limited, hyper-localised and short-term funding cycles. This should be interrogated: not only because it can be improved, but also because it is the right thing to do in order to prevent sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces.

- 7.19 The cumulative impact of this was felt across all elements of prevention work. The Inquiry was told of preventative operations cut or cut short, 11 major projects delayed (for instance, around replacement of the Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) database with an improved way of sharing information across agencies to better manage the risk from the most dangerous sexual offenders, which has been delayed by years 12); and relevant posts not extended. 13 It is, however, perhaps felt most severely in victim services as is recognised in the previous Government's Victim Funding Strategy (2002), 14 which "sets the vision for how to fund the victim support sector more sustainably". 15
- 7.20 The funding that is available is split across multiple (often relatively small) pots offered to prevention initiatives. Across the evidence, the Inquiry found initiatives funded from:
  - ring-fenced government funding;
  - ad hoc departmental uplifts (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors; Spiking Intensification Week);
  - specific government funds from across departments (Safety of Women at Night; Safer Streets Fund rounds; the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Community Cohesion and Resilience Programme; Science, Technology, Analysis and Research projects; Youth Endowment Fund; Cabinet Office Evaluation Accelerator Fund);
  - local authority budgets;
  - Police and Crime Commissioner budgets;
  - police budgets (mainstream and specific, e.g. the Metropolitan Police Service's Violence Against Women and Girls grassroots fund);
  - charitable fundraising;
  - academic grants; and
  - Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 funds.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, preventative work in schools has been cut [\*\*\*], while funding for a dedicated violence and intimidation against women and girls post ended [\*\*\*]: "Funding was removed at the end of March 2024. If funding had [been] allowed we would have retained the DI post without question [...] given the drive and activity."

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>13 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>14 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>15</sup> In 2024, the current Government published 'Victim services commissioning guidance', to support the 2022 strategy. [\*\*\*]

- 7.21 In addition to the issue of insufficient funding, witnesses described to the Inquiry consistent problems with accessing funding. These included:
  - the short-term nature of some funds, against the long-term need for prevention (covered further below);
  - very short funding rounds, with the requirement to bid for and spend money within a financial year creating major problems;
  - related to this, cliff edges of funding, with no certainty given of funding even for some very major projects beyond the start of the financial year;
  - complicated and slow application processes, with some requirements very difficult for prevention projects to meet (e.g. showing results within a year); and
  - a complex ecosystem of grants, funds and application processes.

#### **Demand**

"The scale of need needs to be matched with a scale of funding and that's something that we've never seen."

Women's sector representative, evidence-gathering session<sup>16</sup>

7.22 Linked to funding is the problem of the very high demand put on those resources that are in place. For instance, see the findings elsewhere in this Report on the capacity problems in probation services, regarding investigators and in therapeutic services – all of which are against the backdrop of increased reporting of all sexual offences. Again, this is evident in victim services:

"Services are reporting being at crisis point, juggling expectations from local and national strategies, increasing demands for services, financial strain, and a lack of capacity to focus on prevention." <sup>17</sup>

- 7.23 However, funding is also a critical issue in tertiary prevention (i.e. the investigation and prosecution of offenders to prevent further reoffending). For example:
  - In terms of Operation Soteria, there is a risk related to the small number of trained investigators, and gaps in rape and serious sexual offence teams across England and Wales, with evaluation showing that specialist rape and serious sexual offences teams in Soteria forces tended to be under-resourced and inexperienced.<sup>18</sup>
  - Court delays for rape cases in particular frequently last for years.
  - Sexual offender managers (in policing and probation) are often carrying very high caseloads.

<sup>16 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- Prisons are overcrowded.
- Rehabilitation programmes in the secure estate are being reduced in number, to allow a focus on the offenders who pose the greatest risk.
- 7.24 The focus on violence against women and girls since 2021 has increased this demand, with more requests for information and updates from the Government and other accountable organisations. However, the introduction in 2023 of tackling violence against women and girls as part of the Strategic Policing Requirement did not bring with it the extra funding and resourcing afforded to other crimes listed within the Strategic Policing Requirement, such as counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime. <sup>20</sup>
- 7.25 The Inquiry heard how primary and secondary prevention activity could also be deprioritised by policing in the face of the demands of investigating cases. Evaluations of several of the positive measures outlined in this Report were delayed or watered down because staff were redeployed elsewhere this was particularly the case in policing. This reflects an HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) frequent finding around the abstraction of neighbourhood officers from prevention activities for all types of crimes.<sup>21</sup>
- 7.26 While redeployment of policing resource to respond to crimes which have been reported may be understandable, it is a major risk to preventing crimes from happening in the first place. This is especially the case given that it could be predicted that demand in the form of crime reports to be investigated may increase, as a positive result of the major work under way to raise awareness and encourage reporting.
- 7.27 It is universally agreed that prevention work should lead to decreased demand in future. Pending the publication of the 2025 violence against women and girls strategy (which, at the time of finalising this Report, has not been published), the Inquiry did not see any evidence of plans to resource prevention to the degree required to meet the current areas that the Inquiry has been told are underfunded (which, as set out in paragraph 7.17, include criminal justice agencies, victim services, and research into, and programmes for, behaviour change for sexual offenders).

## Difficulty of making the case for prevention work

7.28 One of the reasons why staff are abstracted from prevention work, and why funding is difficult, is the perception that the value of prevention work is hard to prove. The Inquiry heard frequently that the difficulty of measuring success made prevention hard to make business cases for, especially in the absence of an agreed way of evaluating prevention's return on investment.<sup>22</sup> The Inquiry considers that this is one of the reasons why there are so many communications campaigns in the primary

<sup>19 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- and secondary prevention space: these are easy to measure in terms of communications outreach. But there were more limited examples of evaluation of attitudes and behaviour change resulting from these campaigns.
- 7.29 Evidence-based evaluation of prevention work undoubtedly has its challenges. Several witnesses cited this as a major barrier to more effective prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. <sup>23</sup> However, the Inquiry considers there to be a risk that this barrier effectively paralyses work in this area. Persuasive evidence was given by Temporary Chief Constable Maggie Blyth, the former National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, about the differences here from work in counter-terrorism prevention activity, for instance, and the need for "bolder [...] preventative measures and strategies [...] put in place as a society" in response to patterns of predatory behaviour. <sup>24</sup>
- 7.30 The Department of Health and Social Care also makes this point clearly and well:
  - "Whilst evaluation is vital to evaluate the success of new ideas, the Department is clear that a move to prevention requires bold, strategic choices to try new approaches accompanied by a commitment to test and learn."<sup>25</sup>
- 7.31 The Inquiry, however, also heard that the College of Policing has developed a system to identify, prioritise and support promising innovations by combining its practice bank of 250+ innovations, research and evaluation expertise, and the implementation capability of the Centre for Police Productivity. The practice bank is the repository where all forces and crime reduction partners can share innovative or promising practices they are implementing locally. These are scored against several criteria, including whether the practice is a priority area for policing (which violence against women and girls is). Since 2023, the College of Policing has chaired a board to review and prioritise which innovations the College will evaluate and support. The board agrees which practices will be selected for evaluation, but the number is dependent on funds available. In July 2024, the board was renamed the Productivity and What Works Board and its remit was extended to include the Centre for Police Productivity. There is representation from HMICFRS, the National Police Chiefs' Council including the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Adviser, the Home Office and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners on the board.<sup>27</sup>
- 7.32 Before the introduction of this process, the Inquiry heard an example of how the College of Policing selected violence against women and girls interventions to evaluate through the Cabinet Office's Evaluation Accelerator Fund. The Inquiry was told that since 2024 the innovations team at the Centre for Police Productivity has identified over 900 innovations, shortlisted the most promising from a productivity perspective and presented them to the Productivity and What Works Board for decisions on support. The Inquiry understands that since 2023 the board has convened ten times, and five evaluations have been delivered following board decisions. The Inquiry was told that, following evaluation, the findings are taken to the board with a recommendation for scaling (or not), and a blueprint will be

<sup>23 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>27 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

produced to ensure that forces replicating the intervention have a guide to implementation. However, barriers identified to the Inquiry included funding, evaluation and implementation support, and clear ownership. Witnesses commented that the establishment of the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection should help with issues relating to ownership, national roll-out and consistency.<sup>28</sup>

7.33 The Inquiry also received evidence on the development of a service-wide innovation pipeline. It was told that this pipeline should provide the route to national adoption for policing innovation and for any requests for national funding to the Home Office. This work is led by the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Adviser coordinated with the National Police Chiefs' Council's Science and Innovation Committee and its Digital, Data and Technology Coordination Committee, with the College of Policing contributing to the work.<sup>29</sup>

# Lack of coordination of prevention activity related to sexually motivated crimes against women in public

"Prevention does not work by spraying efforts everywhere; you need to be specific."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>30</sup>

- 7.34 Despite the strategies and structures in place, the Inquiry found that to date there has been a lack of coordination of prevention activity in England and Wales. This results in:
  - replication of effort and very similar measures most obviously, in bystander training and education campaigns (where one witness described a "proliferation" of campaigns),<sup>31</sup> which is inefficient, and not a good use of scarce funding;
  - inconsistency across England and Wales in terms of which measures are available, resulting in a postcode lottery of protections for women<sup>32</sup> – for instance, the Inquiry saw some forces with multiple preventative initiatives, pilots, approaches and plans, and some with very few;
  - difficulties in establishing a consistent evidence base, because of these inconsistencies; and
  - missed opportunities to learn from each other.
- 7.35 A lack of coordination has also resulted in an uneven picture of activity across the three levels of prevention: primary (aimed at stopping crimes happening in the first place, targeting whole communities); secondary (aimed at tackling an identified problem before it spreads); and tertiary (responding after a crime has taken place, to prevent reoffending). The Inquiry noted that in respect of the interventions that

<sup>28 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>29 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>31 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>32 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

related to violence against women and girls and were relevant to the issue of preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, there was a predominance of primary and tertiary interventions. This is exacerbated by a lack of clarity on which organisations or departments are responsible for some initiatives. As a result, a multitude of types of organisations are running educational initiatives in schools (Crown Prosecution Service, police, charities), for instance, but there is no clear owner of bystander programmes (as discussed in Chapter 5).

### Recommendation 25: A truly whole-system approach to preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

By June 2026, building on the wider violence against women and girls strategy, the Government should publish a comprehensive, multi-year and whole-system prevention strategy, which specifically targets the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This strategy should:

- a. coordinate activity and measures aimed at: (i) preventing these crimes happening in the first place; and (ii) reducing the risk of perpetrators reoffending;
- b. coordinate and direct work to encourage reporting of these crimes;
- c. be based on: (i) a clear expectation of how and why the planned actions aim to contribute to prevention of crimes (informed by the research commissioned under Recommendation 17(b)); and (ii) comprehensive and meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including charity and voluntary sector groups who represent victims and perpetrators;
- d. adopt a public health approach, with prevention activity across primary, secondary and tertiary levels;
- e. provide absolute clarity on the roles and responsibilities of essential and accountable sectors, agencies and departments to help avoid duplication in efforts and strengthen joint working this should include: (i) following liaison with the National Police Chiefs' Council, clarity on the extent of the role of policing in primary prevention (i.e. tackling the underlying roots of violence against women and girls); and (ii) where appropriate, introducing statutory duties where this is assessed as most needed;
- f. have secure multi-year funding, aligning with at least the ten-year period specified for halving violence against women and girls; and
- g. include the establishment of a robust evaluation mechanism in order to measure the success of the prevention strategy which should be aligned with the recommendations of the Home Affairs Committee's 2025 report *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls: Funding* and include a set of common metrics to allow for assessment of activity across all levels, and to measure progress.

If an assessment is made that new statutory duties or obligations are required to support the implementation of this prevention strategy and avoid duplication in efforts and strengthen joint working, steps should be taken without delay to secure the introduction of the relevant legislation.

# Limited mechanisms to translate good innovation into consistent practice

- 7.36 There are knowledge-sharing networks and/or hubs in place for most sectors (for instance, between local authorities and policing<sup>33</sup>). These can be used to share good practice or promising innovation. However, there is then too often a gap in the mechanisms by which this knowledge can be nationally badged, rolled out and funded. Without this, some organisations pick up some bits of knowledge and adapt them locally. While local operational knowledge is, of course, important, this is sometimes at risk of watering down initiatives and compromising core components of the theories underpinning them.
- 7.37 The Inquiry heard evidence of this in relation to many of the initiatives identified in this Report as particularly successful. For instance:

"[Soteria] looks like it works [...] However, the speed at which forces have implemented this approach, without the pressure to do so, has been very slow. We also see forces [dissent] where they meddle around the edges."34

- 7.38 The Inquiry considers Project Vigilant (see Chapter 5) to be the clearest example of the failure of mechanisms to pick up and share effective practice. It is meeting a particular and identified need preventing offences before they happen. It feeds into all strands of the National Police Chiefs' Council's violence against women and girls strategy by addressing public spaces, pursuing perpetrators and helping to build trust among women and girls in policing. It is squarely in the prevention area that is identified as critical to all strategies, and a good example of secondary prevention for policing. It has been evaluated (academically and by the College of Policing) and found promising in an area where little else is available for policing. It is also evidently helping to keep women safe. Even in the very first stages of the initiative, more than 40 men were identified as acting in a predatory way.<sup>35</sup>
- 7.39 Despite this, Project Vigilant has not been rolled out nationally, and its spread across around 20 forces has been largely down to the efforts of a small number of Thames Valley Police staff, for whom this is in addition to the day job. Those staff members act as a hub to push it out to other forces and have put in place stringent standards before an operation can be branded as Vigilant,<sup>36</sup> to prevent it being watered down and becoming less impactful.

<sup>33 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>36 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 7.40 Project Vigilant was the most frequently cited preventative measure that has a positive impact on the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. Yet there were concerns raised that a relatively small change in personnel (the senior lead moving away from Thames Valley Police) would mean it was not sustainable: "Just a sense if [they're] not there driving some of these things through, other people coming up behind haven't got the same interests." 37
- 7.41 This is a risk. Prevention requires long-term commitment (and funding) but currently, neither of these are assured in relation to the roll-out of Project Vigilant.
- 7.42 The Inquiry recognises the difficulties of allocating resource to preventative activity when demand is high, evaluation is hard and fiscal restraints are in place. But this cannot be used as an excuse. There is an urgent need to push forward with activity to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

# Recommendation 26: Improved mechanism for converting a promising policing initiative from local to national practice

By March 2026, the College of Policing, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council including the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Adviser, the Home Office, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, should ensure that there are improved mechanisms in place to identify, test and roll out promising initiatives designed to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This should include:

- a. continuing to encourage local innovation, but with an improved, standard mechanism in place by which local innovations can be tested, rolled out and evaluated nationally, learning from Operation Soteria; and
- b. working with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners on an approach that encourages Police and Crime Commissioners (and their successors) and mayoral offices to liaise with Chief Constables about the implementation of rolled-out measures, the impact they can have on delivery of forces' Police and Crime Plans, and their contribution to national policing capabilities in prevention of violence against women and girls; this work should include obtaining an understanding of the rationale behind any decision **not to** implement any measure, and recording those reasons.

# Immediate need to understand perpetrator behaviours and have more interventions to change them

"Our work completely correlates with the need to protect women, but to do that, we need to understand men."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>38</sup>

- 7.43 The focus on perpetrators, and on the need for them to change, is welcome (see Chapter 6). However, the Inquiry heard that this new focus has not resulted in the pace that is needed in research or behaviour change programmes. In particular, there are limited options for a man who has self-identified or who has been identified by somebody else as exhibiting predatory behaviour. Information about the profile and offending patterns of those who commit sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces is also in its infancy.
- 7.44 Lack of data has been identified as a barrier to understanding perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, which could inform the use and development of perpetrator programmes as a prevention measure. There is a huge opportunity in this respect from the extra data on offence history gathered through Operation Soteria, Project Vigilant and the work forces are doing in identifying their most harmful offenders. This should allow much better profiles, which then need to be followed up by a whole range of interventions from across the public sector. These could include, for instance, help with substance abuse or mental health, as well as criminal justice interventions.
- 7.45 Work to develop more informed profiles of perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women should exploit the opportunities provided by artificial intelligence and technology to identify patterns in offending or behaviour while not expecting or waiting for technology to provide a silver bullet.

#### **Recommendation 27: Perpetrator focus and interventions**

The Home Office, as the lead department for the response to violence against women and girls, in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Transport, and national and local policing organisations, should immediately prioritise prevention activity targeting the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This should include the following actions:

- a. Immediately, the Home Office should commission research to draw together and analyse information on the perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public, in order to help target preventative activity. This should include analysis of:
  - i. information from behaviour change programmes on perpetrators' patterns of behaviour; their motivations for behaviour change; and what is most effective at preventing this behaviour; and

- ii. information from academic and operational knowledge produced by Project Vigilant, Operation Soteria, the Metropolitan Police Service's Violence Against Women and Girls 100 (V100) programme and similar programmes of perpetrator-focused work.
- b. By November 2026, the College of Policing and, within it, the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, in collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council, should use this research to develop training and guidance on how to identify and target policing activity against potential perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This should include an interventions toolkit for use in forces. The training and guidance should be rolled out to forces by April 2027. It should then be updated annually, based on priorities identified in the *Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat Risk Assessment* (which the National Police Chiefs' Council should update in light of the research in Recommendation 17(a)).
- c. By December 2027, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary should complete an inspection of the implementation of the new training and guidance in Recommendation 17(b), and of the efficiency and effectiveness of forces in adopting a perpetrator focus. This should include assessment of how successfully forces are balancing this focus with an appropriate and effective response to victims.
- d. Immediately, and while acknowledging the fact that many sexual offences are never reported to the police, the Home Office should include, as a metric within its evaluation of the success of the Government's commitment to halve violence against women and girls in ten years, the number of perpetrators of these crimes who are prevented from further sexual offending. As a minimum, this should include: the number of perpetrators who are (i) arrested; (ii) prosecuted; and (iii) convicted of these crimes; and in addition (iv) information on reoffending rates for these categories; and (v) data on the number of individuals interrupted through Project Vigilant patrols.

#### The effect of pornography and social media

"The sexual behaviour of young men, often teenagers, is informed by their consumption of violent behaviour online."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>39</sup>

"Mainstream pornography normalises violent and abusive attitudes, usually directed towards women in sexual contexts and shaping adolescents' perceptions of sexuality and consent."

Evidence to the Inquiry<sup>40</sup>

- 7.46 Many witnesses reported research and concerns about the impact of pornography<sup>41</sup> and the manosphere<sup>42</sup> on men's views of consent, women and acceptable behaviour. Professor Fiona Vera-Gray, Co-Director at the Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit at London Metropolitan University, directed us to compelling evidence about the number of videos available on pornography sites that are labelled as "without her consent", or involve upskirting, for instance. 43 The Inquiry also heard about the 'sexual scripting'44 associated with this, and the effect on men's expectations of acceptable behaviour, as well as the evidence linking regular access to online pornography with coercive or violent sexual behaviour, negative attitudes to gender equality<sup>45</sup> and harassment of women and girls.<sup>46</sup>
- More widely, several witnesses spoke about the influence of harmful social media content, and the Inquiry saw research concluding that there was a direct correlation between harmful social media content and unhealthy attitudes towards relationships. particularly around coercive control – as well as the influence of positive social media.47
- 7.48 The Inquiry's definition of public spaces does not include online activity. In so far as the Inquiry has received information about the relevance of online activity to perpetrating crimes such as sexual assault and rape against women, it appears that the impact of this activity poses a risk of an increase in sexually motivated crimes against women, including in public spaces.
- The Inquiry received evidence that showed it was unhelpful to consider measures designed to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces in isolation, because there needs to be recognition of the link between perpetrators' online behaviours and their behaviours in the physical world. Witnesses spoke of

<sup>39 [\*\*\*]</sup> 40 [\*\*\*]

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>42</sup> An umbrella term sometimes used for a network of misogynistic online forums and communities.

<sup>43 [\*\*\*].</sup> Research concluded: "Far from being represented as aberrant, sexual practices involving coercion, deception, non-consent and criminal activity are described in mainstream online pornography in ways that position them as permissible." [\*\*\*]

<sup>44</sup> Broadly, sexual scripting refers to the socially constructed behaviours that individuals understand are expected in sexual contexts. Individuals develop these based on a range of personal, cultural and historical factors.

<sup>45 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>47 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

the connections between online and 'real' life, both for women and for those who would commit crimes against them. The Inquiry is keenly aware of these, and of the need for a united response to online, public and private space violence against women and girls. For this reason, the findings of *Creating a Safer World – The Challenge of Regulating Online Pornography* (the Independent Pornography Review)<sup>48</sup> should be read alongside this Report and the Inquiry calls for action in response to those recommendations of the review that are relevant to its work. As well as this, the Inquiry considers that the Home Office, working with and alongside the tech industry, should explore options for interventions where there is evidence that an individual is viewing, searching or otherwise consuming extreme content related to sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

#### The lack of data

"Accurate data is essential to truly understand the nature and prevalence of VAWG [violence against women and girls] and to identify appropriate responses."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>49</sup>

- 7.50 It is unacceptable that there is no national and reliable information on how many reports there are of sexually motivated crimes against women in public areas across England and Wales. The response to and prevention of stranger rapes in public, for instance, needs to be different in material ways to that applied to rapes in a domestic setting (while recognising that some perpetrators may commit offences in both environments); but there are few forces who could easily confirm how many of these crimes are taking place. This, combined with the well-established underreporting of these offences, is a major barrier to effective prevention, and prevents the full building of profiles of perpetrators, which may pose risks to areas where they are needed.
- 7.51 The 2024 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment reported that many forces were not able to use problem profiles (analytical tools which pull together police data and other information) to assess the nature of violence against women and girls within public, private and online spaces to identify the greatest harm, either because it was not possible to extract this data from their crime recording system, or because there were issues with accuracy of the data or inconsistencies in how it was captured.<sup>50</sup> One of our eight fieldwork forces (South Wales Police) provided the Inquiry with data which showed the proportion of sexual offences (specifically rape, sexual assault and exposure) that had taken place in a public space.<sup>51</sup>
- 7.52 A data-driven approach to prevention is important to ensure that: (i) the entirety of the problem is understood; (ii) the most suitable local partner can take action to reduce the threat; and (iii) the impact of the intervention and/or action taken can be assessed.

<sup>48 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>51</sup> Other forces may also collect this data, which did not form part of the Inquiry's data request. [\*\*\*]

- 7.53 The key barriers to this, as summarised from the Inquiry's evidence, are:
  - lack of analytical capability within forces<sup>52</sup> (for instance, to develop real-time data to identify risks including 'hot spot/high-risk' locations);
  - lack of cooperation between investigations, prevention and neighbourhood policing to learn from case files, which could inform a good response to protection and prevention, as well as monitoring of the impact this is having; and<sup>53</sup>
  - inconsistency in how data is collected and the need for standard definitions for data – for example, there is no standard definition for someone being classified as a repeat offender (i.e. over what length of time).<sup>54</sup>
- 7.54 The National Police Chiefs' Council has been advocating for a National Data Office<sup>55</sup> to be the centre of policing. The Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, told the Inquiry that the pace of crime and threats to members of the public is changing, in part because of the proportion of offences committed online.<sup>56</sup> He said that, because of this, the police need to be more agile and quicker at responding to those threats, and that the very devolved local policing model is not a good structure for achieving this.<sup>57</sup> He believed that a National Data Office will help create standards and consistency about how data is collected and exchanged.<sup>58</sup> Sir Andy Cooke QPM DL, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary,<sup>59</sup> as well as participants at one of our evidence-gathering sessions,<sup>60</sup> agreed that a national standard for data would be a good step forwards for policing.
- 7.55 The Inquiry notes that there is a power under section 53A of the Police Act 1996 to make regulations in order to apply practices or procedures in all forces. HMICFRS's inspection report, *Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls*, recommended that the College of Policing should develop violence against women and girls minimum standards, creating a consistent and clear standard for police investigations, and recommended that the Home Secretary and the College of Policing consider the use of section 53A powers to require forces to adopt the procedures and practices the College of Policing sets out.<sup>61</sup> This could also apply to ensuring that there is a more standardised way of collecting data to support activity to prevent sexually motivated crimes in public spaces.

<sup>52 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>56 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>57 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>58 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>59 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

# Recommendation 28: Improvement of the investigation of sexually motivated crimes against women and girls in public spaces

By March 2026, the College of Policing and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Crown Prosecution Service, should create a consistent and clear standard for police investigations in this area, explicitly addressing the detection of predatory perpetrators. The Home Secretary should give consideration to using her powers under section 53A of the Police Act 1996, which enables her to issue regulations that mandate police forces to follow particular procedures and practices.

7.56 When data is gathered, analysis needs to take place consistently and well. The Inquiry welcomes the focus on data within the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, building on the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme.<sup>62</sup> This centre should work on gathering consistent data and providing forces with the reliable tools and intelligence to identify high-harm perpetrators, hot spots and other potentially useful information.

# Chapter 8. Opportunities to raise the priority of prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

This chapter considers the opportunities available to raise the priority of prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and to help ensure that this priority is acted upon. It looks at:

- national levers;
- the policing system;
- funding;
- · local partnership working; and
- comparison with work to prevent serious and organised crime and terrorism.
- 8.1 A key finding from the Inquiry is that sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces do not receive sufficient coordinated scrutiny or activity to enable fully effective prevention. This is evidenced by (among other things): the lack of data on prevalence or perpetrators (see Chapter 7); the relative absence of specific programmes aimed at tackling this kind of offending (compared, for instance, with domestic abuse Chapter 6); and the limited funding and capability allocated to initiatives in this area (Chapter 7).
- 8.2 In order to address this, the Inquiry has made a series of recommendations. All of these will be enabled by national and local leaders, showing clearly that these crimes, and the prevention of them, are a priority.
- 8.3 The Inquiry also acknowledges that preventing sexually motivated crimes in public spaces cannot be tackled by policing alone. This chapter therefore considers how well partnerships are set up to create a whole-system approach to ensure that the local response to preventing serious sexual offences in public spaces is sustainable and moves beyond the conventional enforcement 'pursue' tactics. Table 4 provides examples of the organisations within those contributing categories, and Table 5 explores the difference between various levers for violence against women and girls, compared to serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism. Finally, the chapter considers other crime types to see if there is any opportunity for learning or looking across activity to get a better understanding of the entirety of the threat to locations, individuals and communities.

Table 4: Examples of organisations identified as having a role or involvement in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

Level	Organisation			
International	UN Women Individual country strategies for tackling violence against women and girls			
UK Government	Home Office Ministry of Justice Department for Transport Department of Health and Social Care Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Department for Education			
Welsh Government	National advisers for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence			
National	National policing organisations (National Police Chiefs' Council, Independent Office for Police Conduct, College of Policing, National Crime Agency, National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection)  NHS England  NHS Wales  National charities  National retail organisations  National campaigns (media, public sector funded, charity and voluntary sector)			
Local	Police Police and Crime Commissioners Community safety partnerships Prison Courts Probation Prosecution Transport services Health services Education services Victim/survivor services Local authorities Local charities Transport network operators			
Hyper local	Parks Schools Universities Shops, bars, restaurants			
Individuals	Street Pastors/Angels Active bystanders Staff in shops, bars, restaurants			

Level	Organisation
Evaluation, regulations, inspection	HMICFRS, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Probation, Cabinet Office, National Audit Office, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), Estyn, Care Quality Commission, Care Inspectorate Wales
Research and evaluation	Academia, professional bodies, analysts in central Government and national/local organisations

#### **National levers**

- 8.4 Most of the levers described in this chapter are not specific to the prevention of sexually motivated crimes in public spaces. The focus is on how adaptable the system is to allow the right interventions to be prioritised and developed; and whether existing levers are sufficient and can be adapted for use in preventing sexually motivated crimes in a way that reduces demand on the overall system.
- 8.5 While preventing sexually motivated crimes in public spaces cannot be tackled by policing alone, the Home Office remains the lead department for tackling violence against women and girls in England and Wales. This means that many of the strategic levers in place for delivering this prevention activity, and which have been reviewed by the Inquiry, do relate to policing. One example of a lever deployed since 2023 is the inclusion of violence against women and girls within the Strategic Policing Requirement.

#### **Strategic Policing Requirement**

"I think VAWG [violence against women and girls] is a really good example of an area where you have the engagement of 43 Home Office Chief Constables and 100% commitment in relation to VAWG across Policing. Putting VAWG into the Strategic Policing Requirement as a National Priority has elevated it to such status. I think the work that Maggie Blyth has led nationally around plans, pillars and strategy has been very effective."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>1</sup>

8.6 The Police Act 1996 is a key piece of primary legislation, which outlines the structure and administration of police forces in England and Wales. It focuses on the organisation and governance of those forces. In 2012, section 37A of the Police Act 1996 was enacted, introducing a requirement for the Home Secretary to "issue a document (the 'strategic policing requirement')". The first Strategic Policing Requirement publication was in 2012. With this document, the Home Secretary fulfils their statutory duty to set out the national threats, and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter these threats.

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 8.7 The aim of the Strategic Policing Requirement is to enable the Home Secretary to set the direction, in terms of what are the biggest threats to public safety, and to ensure that the police have the right capabilities to deliver an appropriately robust, national response. The Strategic Policing Requirement is intended to support Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners to plan, prepare and respond to the national threats set out, and to ensure that the individual forces' national responsibilities are fulfilled.4
- 8.8 The Strategic Policing Requirement includes mentions of prevention throughout – for example, the importance of serious crime prevention orders, and the Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare (4P) framework for tackling counter-terrorism and serious organised crime. It is therefore an important lever for preventative measures. Provisions in the Police Act 1996 require that the Home Secretary must, from "timeto-time", issue a Strategic Policing Requirement, and, in so doing, obtain the advice of such persons as appear to the Home Secretary to represent the views of chief officers of police and local policing bodies.5 The most recent update was in 2023 under the former Government (the update before that was in 2015). According to the 2023 Strategic Policing Requirement, at the time of publication the Home Office had committed to revisiting the Strategic Policing Requirement again within two years of publication to ensure that it remained in step with any key changes or shifting threats and priorities in the policing landscape – and to review it at least every two vears thereafter.6
- 8.9 Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners should be supported to "plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national". Police and Crime Commissioners are required to have regard to this Strategic Policing Requirement when issuing or varying their Police and Crime Plans. They must keep the Police and Crime Plan under review in light of any changes made to the Strategic Policing Requirement by the Home Secretary. Chief Constables must have regard to both the Police and Crime Plan and the Strategic Policing Requirement when exercising their functions. Police and Crime Commissioners are responsible for holding them to account for doing so.8 Six of the seven threats in the most recent update of the Strategic Policing Requirement have been included for some time and are not new to policing. They comprise: terrorism, serious and organised crime, national cyber event, child sexual abuse, public disorder and civil emergencies.9
- 8.10 Violence against women and girls was included in the Strategic Policing Requirement for the first time in 2023. 10 This followed a recommendation within the 2021 inspection report from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls. Recommendation 1.2 stated:

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<sup>10 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

"To increase the prioritisation of VAWG [violence against women and girls] offences in policing, we recommend [...] Immediately, the Home Office should add the policing of violence against women and girls to the Strategic Policing Requirement."<sup>11</sup>

8.11 The former Government accepted these recommendations in full, and added violence against women and girls to the 2023 update of the Strategic Policing Requirement. The then Home Secretary said in the Foreword:

"I also want to ensure we deliver justice and high-quality outcomes for women and children who are victims of rape, sexual offences and domestic abuse. I have therefore included VAWG [violence against women and girls] as an additional national threat." 12

The aim of the inclusion, as described in the document, is to ensure that forces can maximise the capabilities required, including seizing the opportunities presented by Operation Soteria (as described in Chapter 6 of this Report), to prevent and pursue violence against women and girls offending.<sup>13</sup>

8.12 Some witnesses acknowledged that the inclusion of violence against women and girls was a positive<sup>14</sup> step forwards, placing it as a priority alongside other crime types and national threats, especially counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime. However, one witness to the Inquiry felt that the inclusion of violence against women and girls had limited impact in terms of how forces approached it,<sup>15</sup> explaining that violence against women and girls was already a priority in all their Police and Crime Plans. Others acknowledged the importance of its inclusion in ensuring it was seen as a priority, but felt that the priority was not matched with funding or with the regional and national capabilities afforded to counter-terrorism.<sup>16</sup> This last point is covered in further detail in paragraphs 8.13 to 8.18.

# How the policing system can prioritise prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

#### Role of the National Police Chiefs' Council

8.13 The National Police Chiefs' Council is a membership body that operates under a collaboration agreement pursuant to section 22A of the Police Act 1996. The National Police Chiefs' Council currently has 103 members and operates 13 different committees. It covers all UK police interests both in the UK and overseas. The National Police Chiefs' Council hosts national programmes of change on behalf of policing. Key examples are the National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against

<sup>11 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>12 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>17 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Women and Girls Taskforce, which was set up to support the National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls in her role; and Operation Soteria, the programme to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape and serious sexual offences, which is discussed in Chapter 6.<sup>18</sup> The National Police Chiefs' Council has no powers of direction to ensure that forces take a consistent approach to policing activity.<sup>19</sup>

- 8.14 The National Police Chiefs' Council receives funding from the Home Office to deliver its national response related to violence against women and girls, including the taskforce. The Home Office reported to the Inquiry that, for the 2024/25 financial year, £1.42 million was allocated to the National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against Women and Girls Taskforce, £6.8 million to the Operation Soteria programme and £3 million to the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme.<sup>20</sup> Chief Constables also receive funding to address issues arising from violence against women and girls related crime. This includes the core victims grant from the Ministry of Justice to commission services for all victims of crime, and ring-fenced Ministry of Justice funding specifically to provide services for victims of violence against women and girls.
- Police and Crime Commissioners may also receive other funding from the Ministry of Justice or Home Office for ring-fenced activity aimed at tackling violence against women and girls, including for delivery of perpetrator programmes – and these grants must be spent on the purposes for which they were intended.<sup>21</sup> However, these funds are not utilised by all Police and Crime Commissioners (the Inquiry received evidence suggesting that only 27 areas received funding for preventative and diversionary services from the Home Office's Domestic Abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Intervention Fund).<sup>22</sup> Police and Crime Commissioners are also given a total funding package for policing in their force area from the Home Office and must decide on their priorities, including the level of focus on violence against women and girls. In determining allocation of funds, Police and Crime Commissioners must be guided by their local Police and Crime Plans, which are developed in consultation with their local communities and scrutinised by their Police and Crime Panel, and also have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirements set by the Home Secretary. While this should result in some funds being allocated to violence against women and girls related crime (given that violence against women and girls has been a Strategic Policing Requirement since 2023), this funding is not ring-fenced, unlike that provided for counter-terrorism. The Inquiry notes that the lack of ring-fencing for violence against women and girls can result in Police and Crime Commissioners making decisions to fund other areas as a priority, meaning that some forces have more resources than others with which to tackle violence against women and girls. As the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners said in April 2025, in its written submission to the Home Affairs Committee's inquiry on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls: "Funding can feel like a postcode lottery due to the inconsistent and short-term nature of some of the allocations."23

<sup>18 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>19 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>20 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>21 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>22 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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- 8.16 The then National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls (Temporary Chief Constable Maggie Blyth) was complimented throughout our evidence-gathering for her focus, determination and effectiveness in raising the priority of, and making continuous and sustainable improvements to, the policing approach to violence against women and girls.<sup>24</sup> The positive impact of this motivation and challenge to the sector should not be underestimated, and it is work the National Police Chiefs' Council should strive to continue wherever possible to ensure that forces are well equipped to continue this level of ambition, especially in the space of prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- 8.17 In December 2021, the National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls launched a national framework for delivery, which laid out the immediate actions required for policing to commit to build trust and confidence, relentlessly pursue perpetrators and create safer spaces. As part of this, and to make progress on consistency, the National Policing Lead requested that all forces carry out a self-assessment. Witnesses agreed that this had a significant impact in both raising the profile of violence against women and girls and starting to drive forward a consistent approach across all 43 forces in a way that had not been achieved previously. A consistent approach to identifying and supporting forces to make improvements in how they prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, linked to the policing activity organised under the 4P framework (Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare; see paragraph 8.8) and the public health approach, will help to increase the priority of the issue and make further progress on consistency across forces.
- 8.18 There needs to be continued support for prevention of violence against women and girls to ensure that it remains a priority. The National Police Chiefs' Council Prevention Coordination Committee considers issues where there is a shared interest between public health and policing, including how to attract more investment to help with the prevention of crime. <sup>26</sup> Continued collaboration between these areas of focus will help policing collectively tackle issues that have an impact on all aspects of policing in terms of prevention, including getting the right national and local buy-in from government departments and local partnerships, so that prevention is not seen as primarily a policing role.

# Role of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

8.19 Inspection is an essential national lever for the Government, Police and Crime Commissioners and the public to hold Chief Constables to account and drive forward continuous improvements. HMICFRS independently inspects and reports on the efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of individual forces' performance through its PEEL programme<sup>27</sup> and through its thematic inspections.

<sup>24 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>26 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>27</sup> The police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) programme is the assessment framework used by HMICFRS. It sets out the characteristics of good performance against a set of questions to assist inspectors in making consistent assessments across police forces, and to enable forces to see what they are being graded against.

8.20 HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Andy Cooke QPM DL, told the Inquiry that HMICFRS has completed several inspections on violence against women and girls, including the 2021 *Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls* report.<sup>28</sup> Since 2021, HMICFRS has published a further 18 reports on thematic inspections linked to this Inquiry's area of focus. The Inspectorate works closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council, College of Policing and commissioned and noncommissioned service providers to use insights gained from their inspections on the effectiveness of forces in protecting vulnerable people. This includes work to develop the national strategic threat assessment and the violence against women and girls national framework for delivery, with their input used to shape the self-assessment tool used by forces.<sup>29</sup>

#### Role of the College of Policing

- 8.21 The College of Policing's mission focuses on three key areas: leadership, standards and performance to "boost professionalism".<sup>30</sup> The College of Policing sets the training curriculum in policing across England and Wales, and sets standards through the Authorised Professional Practice (and, occasionally, through Codes of Practice). It is also the centre for 'what works' in reducing crime<sup>31</sup> and it leads a board to identify innovations and promising practice that should be evaluated and scaled, on which sits the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council and the HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary.<sup>32</sup>
- 8.22 The Chief Executive Officer of the College of Policing also acknowledged that there are now strong working practices and systems in place that encourage cohesive working between the College of Policing, HMICFRS and the National Police Chiefs' Council. This is positive, provided that the necessary amount of challenge exists within the system to elicit the change needed.<sup>33</sup>
- 8.23 The College of Policing should also take advantage of the launch of the national programme for neighbourhood police officers across England and Wales to ensure that a clear focus is set and maintained in order to identify, respond to and prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This must be part of the job description, training and guidance.

#### The national policing system

8.24 During our strategic interviews, we heard from the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens,<sup>34</sup> the HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Andy Cooke QPM DL,<sup>35</sup> and the Chief Executive Officer of the College of Policing, Chief Constable Andy Marsh QPM<sup>36</sup> about their collective efforts to tackle violence against women and girls and promote prevention. They were

<sup>28 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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<sup>34 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>35 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

confident that the national system was now set up in a better way to support forces to address the improvements needed in relation to violence against women and girls. They said that they were also better equipped than they had been previously to adapt and flex to a national priority, as was the case for homicide prevention, as described in paragraph 8.25.

#### How priorities are identified and then taken forwards

- 8.25 HMICFRS and the College of Policing agreed that the approach they used for homicide prevention demonstrates that a 'smarter systems approach' across the National Police Chiefs' Council, HMICFRS and College of Policing can have an impact on addressing a priority.<sup>37</sup> This included a homicide prevention framework that brought together the best available evidence to support police forces to: (i) analyse and understand problems; (ii) develop and implement effective interventions and tactics; and (iii) identify where partnership support was needed. The framework was developed jointly between the National Police Chiefs' Council, HMICFRS and the College of Policing, and formed part of the national policing homicide prevention strategy,<sup>38</sup> which aimed to develop better partnership working to support and evolve the public health approach, offering further wide-ranging interventions and prevention methodology. HMICFRS also undertook a thematic inspection to check progress within forces and make recommendations for further improvements.<sup>39</sup>
- 8.26 While the Inquiry did not evaluate the success of the homicide work (as it is not within scope), it considers that the approach taken on homicide prevention is likely to align with the public health approach that would support improvements in prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. It is important to ensure that there is consistency across forces and that, where best practice is being identified, it is being shared in the best possible way. A thematic inspection in this area will help to raise it as a priority within police forces and to drive forward the improvements necessary, supported by robust evaluation. It will also be important to support policing and wider partnerships to understand how best to translate national priorities into tangible operational delivery.
- 8.27 Given the extent of the threat, as identified in Chapter 2, we would urge the Government to support the national bodies to take a similar approach to that for preventing homicide and apply it to improvements in the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces as a priority.

<sup>37 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>38 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>39 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

#### **Funding**

"[H]ealth can say what the benefits of doing a hip replacement are at a certain age, but we (policing) are not that sophisticated [in terms of understanding the impact of prevention]."

A witness to the Inquiry<sup>40</sup>

- 8.28 Funding is a strong national lever to be able to ensure that resources are being directed against the right priorities in the prevention and tackling of crime. The overall sum of government funding for policing is set at Spending Reviews (where the Government determines how it will fund public services over several years), while the detail is outlined and agreed annually. Most of the public funding for police forces in England and Wales is provided by the Home Office and is agreed by the House of Commons on an annual basis at the police funding settlement. The Home Office then expects individual Chief Constables to allocate funding and resources appropriately in response to national threats, as part of their requirement to have due regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement. Analysis by the National Audit Office, in its 2025 report on violence against women and girls, found that between 2021/22 and 2023/24 the Home Office underspent by £22 million against its total £149 million budget (15 per cent).<sup>41</sup> The National Audit Office also noted that underspends reduce the potential for the Home Office to achieve impact.
- 8.29 In addition to central government funding, Police and Crime Commissioners decide the figure for a local police precept, which is part of the council tax total. Police precept (i.e. the amount people pay for the police through their council tax) accounts for around 34 per cent of the funding that the Police and Crime Commissioners receive via the settlement and is paid directly by local taxpayers.<sup>42</sup>
- 8.30 The Government also provides several bespoke grants, such as Safer Streets, to help local areas tackle priority areas (see funding section in Chapter 7). These are often undertaken with a requirement for evaluation attached to them and usually managed either by the Police and Crime Commissioner or the relevant governance body, such as the Community Safety Partnership. This can create a very complex funding landscape across the various policing and partnership priorities. Projects usually take years to get short-term funding, and this can create problems. This is especially the case when trying to get involvement from charities and other voluntary organisations, who need much longer-term commitments to make staff available.<sup>43</sup> Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners want instant results, but a prevention action engaging with preschool children would not show benefits for over ten years, making it difficult to measure outcomes which in turn makes it difficult to secure sustained funding.<sup>44</sup>
- 8.31 Several attendees at an Inquiry evidence-gathering session highlighted that you cannot do meaningful prevention activity without necessary funding models and resources, as well as innovative thinking to reframe the problem and deliver

<sup>40 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>41 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>42 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>43 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>44 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

pragmatic solutions.<sup>45</sup> The National Audit Office reported that the Home Office acknowledged it had not previously prioritised funding for prevention despite it being one of the main pillars of the *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls* strategy (2021) and the *Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan* (2022).<sup>46</sup> In fact, a quarter of the commitments allocated to prevention were allotted to the Department for Education, which has spent £0.52 million on all activities linked to the violence against women and girls strategy. The report does, however, acknowledge that the mission approach taken by the current Government aims to address this with more focus on prevention.<sup>47</sup>

- 8.32 Police forces have received short-term funding from the Home Office linked to, for example, Safer Streets, Violence Reduction Networks/Units/Partnerships and county lines<sup>48</sup> work (Project ADDER).<sup>49</sup> The Inquiry also heard examples where Chief Constables had been supportive of investment in some areas for example, funding Project Vigilant.<sup>50</sup> However, the short-term funding models have an impact on the progress that areas can make, and on the recruitment and retention of staff (especially those from the charity and voluntary sector), both in terms of planning and of evaluation. This means that projects are often stopped and their full benefits not realised, including in terms of national roll-outs.
- 8.33 As an example, Safer Streets funding was passed to Police and Crime Commissioners to deliver lots of local initiatives.<sup>51</sup> This was a positive, practical decision, but there was no pathway in place to take those initiatives that were successful locally further and develop them into national initiatives, and from there to business-as-normal approaches. The Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, agreed that it would be beneficial to consider, through Spending Reviews, a shared fund for activities that cut across different government departments and other service delivery models where there is commonality. This would enable issues to be tackled collectively, achieving a better impact and a more cohesive approach.<sup>52</sup>
- 8.34 Police forces also need to get better at evaluation in order to secure sustained funding for the future. Research commissioned by the National Police Chiefs' Council conducted a systematic review of the number of studies that have been carried out by policing on the economic analysis of investing in prevention. This showed that policing had carried out around 270 academic studies into this issue, whereas education as a comparison had carried out around 20,000, and health around 200,000.<sup>53</sup> Evaluation of the effectiveness of measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces will be pivotal in helping to secure the longer-term, cross-party investment needed to have an impact in this area. The

<sup>45 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>46 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>47 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>48</sup> County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the UK. These gangs often exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and/or store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

<sup>49 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>50 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>51 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>52 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>53 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- ability to demonstrate the benefits of prevention to secure funding is also an issue. This is something at which policing could improve and should be informed by evidence.<sup>54</sup>
- 8.35 However, as noted earlier in this Report (see Chapter 5), prevention is not just the responsibility of the police it involves partnership working. If it is all short-term, funding can be a barrier to achieving the partnership working needed, making it difficult for partners to commit to activity in a way that will have an impact.

#### Local partnership working on prevention

- 8.36 The current Government is moving in the right direction in terms of prioritising and improving local partnership working on prevention, but progress is still too slow. The former National Policing Lead for Prevention<sup>55</sup> described how one of the biggest challenges faced by policing in terms of prevention is getting traction from government departments other than the Home Office for their work. This includes, but is not limited to, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Care. Sometimes policies and initiatives do not get traction at a local level because governance arrangements go through the Home Office. This enables some local partners to deprioritise initiatives tackling violence against women and girls by saying that it is a 'community safety' and therefore policing responsibility. As violence against women and girls is sometimes not seen as having an impact on growth and the economy, for example, it is assumed that there is no need for other authorities, such as health and education, to get involved or take the policy seriously.
- 8.37 There are a range of different governance models at the local level to deliver a partnership approach to reducing crime, enhancing justice and achieving safeguarding priorities. It is down to local areas to decide on the most appropriate governance model for the crime type and challenge they are trying to address. Often each governance model will have responsibility for funding associated with tackling a particular crime type or priority.
- 8.38 Community Safety Partnerships are the key governance model covering issues around public safety.<sup>56</sup> They were introduced by section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and bring together local partners to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in their communities. The responsible authorities that make up a Community Safety Partnership are: (i) the police; (ii) fire and rescue authorities; (iii) local authorities; (iv) health partners; and (v) the Probation Service. They operate on the basis that no single agency can address or prevent all the drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour, and that effective partnership working is vital to ensuring safer communities. There are over 300 Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales. Given that some partners, such as health, operate across different boundaries from policing

<sup>54 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>55 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>56 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- jurisdictions, often police forces have to attend more than one Community Safety Partnership to discuss similar or related issues, and often areas of focus are not easily prioritised without additional funding.<sup>57</sup>
- 8.39 Some witnesses recognised that there was a need for local areas to decide local priorities, but also that consistency was required where it made sense for example, in relation to evaluation and data collection. Others commented that the effectiveness of local activity was linked to the amount of funding available to support partnership working across the various priorities. Many respondents in the former Government's 2023 review into Community Safety Partnerships also requested that the relationship, responsibility and accountability structures between Community Safety Partnerships and Police and Crime Commissioners should be clearly defined for example, through updated guidance or legislation. Many responses underlined that Police and Crime Commissioners should communicate more clearly with Community Safety Partnerships about funding and strategy, and ensure that they understand the issues Community Safety Partnerships are facing in their local areas. Some respondents from Community Safety Partnerships flagged that they did not feel they had the resources to tackle the most significant risks affecting their locality.<sup>58</sup>
- 8.40 The Inquiry heard from the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, the Rt Hon. Jess Phillips MP, that the current Government helped to resolve this challenge locally by getting the national, cross-Government governance in place to support the right partnership arrangements at the local level. <sup>59</sup> The Prime Minister has made tackling violence against women and girls a key priority. <sup>60</sup> As set out in Chapter 2, this aims to halve violence against women and girls in a decade and restore confidence in policing.

#### A statutory duty for tackling violence against women and girls

- 8.41 In Wales, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities and local health boards to prepare local strategies to support the national strategies on these issues. The Act outlines the matters to which they must have regard in preparing and reviewing them. There is a similar duty on these bodies to implement their local strategies.<sup>61</sup>
- 8.42 In their inspection report, *Police Response to Violence against Women and Girls*, HMICFRS recommended that the Home Office should consider whether there needs to be a statutory duty placed on local partners to collaborate on tackling violence against women and girls. This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Several witnesses agreed that a specific statutory duty for preventing violence against women and girls would have limited impact, without being accompanied by significant funding and resources alongside it.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>58 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>59 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>60 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>61 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>62 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

# Comparison with work to prevent serious and organised crime and terrorism

"Unlike CT [counter-terrorism] and SOC [serious and organised crime] which emphasise proactive approaches to suspects, the current VAWG [violence against women and girls] strategy is predominantly reactive, focusing on responses to incidents after they occur."

Evidence to the Inquiry<sup>63</sup>

- 8.43 Throughout our evidence-gathering we heard about the difference between the priority placed on prevention of violence against women and girls and that placed on prevention of serious and organised crime, and counter-terrorism. Evidence reviewed by the Inquiry suggests that more needs to be done to better align the provisions available to the police to tackle violence against women and girls with those for the other two crime types.<sup>64</sup>
- 8.44 The Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, the Rt Hon. Jess Phillips MP, provided her view, reflecting on society's perception:

"I don't think that [the] level of harm is acknowledged in the same way for VAWG [violence against women and girls] as it is for terrorism. When a woman is murdered, you will hear 'this is an isolated incident, the public doesn't need to be frightened', suggesting that there is no need to worry because they have found the person, and he was only a threat to her. It ignores the notion that this is a systemic wrong in society that has a breeding ground, like terrorism."

8.45 Some of the differences in the approach taken to the three crime types, based on various levers at a national and local level, are given in Table 5. The table illustrates the differences, as well as the relative funding positions.

<sup>63 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>64 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Table 5: Differences between various levers for violence against women and girls, serious and organised crime, and counter-terrorism

	Violence against women and girls	Serious and organised crime	Counter-terrorism
Inclusion in the Strategic Policing Requirement <sup>65</sup>	Yes (added into the latest Strategic Policing Requirement 2023)	Yes (added into the first Strategic Policing Requirement 2012)	Yes (added into the first Strategic Policing Requirement 2012)
Cost estimate (to society)	Cost estimate is not published. Estimates, based on 2021 Home Office estimated figures, are at least £5.5 billion in relation to rape, and £74 billion in relation to domestic abuse <sup>66</sup>	At least £47 billion annually <sup>67</sup>	As an example, the five terrorist attacks which took place across the UK in 2017 are estimated to have cost up to £172 million in direct costs <sup>68</sup>
Overarching legislative framework	Police Act 1996 <sup>69</sup> Sexual Offences Act 2003 <sup>70</sup>	Police Act 1996 <sup>71</sup> Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 <sup>72</sup>	Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 <sup>73</sup>
Government strategy	Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls strategy <sup>74</sup> (2021; new one due to be published in 2025)	Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023– 2028 <sup>75</sup>	CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2023 <sup>76</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Section 37A of the Police Act 1996 requires the Home Secretary to issue a Strategic Policing Requirement document to set out the national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities needed to counter these threats. [\*\*\*]

<sup>66 [\*\*\*]</sup> 67 [\*\*\*] 68 [\*\*\*] 69 [\*\*\*]

<sup>70 [\*\*\*]</sup> 71 [\*\*\*]

<sup>72 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>73 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

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	Violence against women and girls	Serious and	Counter-terrorism
	- Profession against women and gins	organised crime	
Funding position	Unknown. However, as of summer 2025, the Government had announced the following funding commitments for violence against women and girls related activity:  • £27.6 million (this includes £2.2 million to roll out domestic abuse specialists in 999 control rooms under Raneem's Law <sup>77</sup> and £13.1 million for the new National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection <sup>78</sup> • £19 million to Police and Crime Commissioners to commission domestic abuse and stalking perpetrator interventions in 2025–2026 <sup>79</sup> • £53 million in the Drive Project across England and Wales between 2025 and 2029 for pursuit of domestic abuse perpetrators to tackle the highest harm cohort to reduce reoffending <sup>80</sup> • £17.5 million in victim services  • £3.1 million on prevention and early intervention to help stop violence against women and girls happening in the first place, identify what works to prevent it, and improve multi-agency working	£2.9 billion is the Government's estimate of total expenditure on tackling serious and organised crime in 2015/16, including frontline spending to tackle crime (£2.2 billion) and spending on backoffice functions (£0.7 billion)	Ring-fenced
National capability	No	Yes (National Crime Agency <sup>81</sup> plus Regional Organised Crime Units <sup>82</sup> )	Yes (Counter Terrorism Policing) <sup>83</sup>
Full-time National Police Chiefs' Council Lead role	No (Lead changed to a 'programme director' role)	Yes (National Policing Lead for Serious and Organised Crime)	Yes (National Policing Lead for Counter-terrorism)
'4P' approach	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local profile	No	Yes	Yes
Local governance model	Down to local decision-making	Down to local decision-making	Local Prevent delivery groups

<sup>77 [\*\*\*]
78 [\*\*\*]
79 [\*\*\*]
80 [\*\*\*]
81 [\*\*\*]
82 [\*\*\*]
83 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- 8.46 The gaps in the response, in terms of how policing approaches violence against women and girls, in comparison with the response to serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism, was a key finding in the 2021 HMICFRS inspection report, *Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls.*<sup>84</sup> The report recommended some key factors in increasing the prioritisation of violence against women and girls offences in policing to a level similar to those relating to counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime. These included:
  - a full-time National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against Women and Girls National Policing Lead;
  - the addition of violence against women and girls as a threat to the Strategic Policing Requirement;
  - having the right governance through the then Crime and Policing Board;
  - considering the establishment of an annual strategic assessment of violence against women and girls; and
  - putting in place the Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare (4P) framework<sup>85</sup> for forces to work in partnerships to implement the annual strategic assessment.<sup>86</sup>
- 8.47 One witness raised<sup>87</sup> a particular point about the funding and focus given to violence against women and girls, and to the National Policing Lead role at the National Police Chiefs' Council in comparison with the National Policing Leads for other Strategic Policing Requirement crimes.<sup>88</sup>

# National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection

8.48 Unlike for serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism, there are not the same regional and national capabilities for violence against women and girls, which provide forces with the enhanced specialist capacity needed. The previous Home Secretary, however, announced in February 2025 the establishment of the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection. This has received money from the Government to support its development, and has a focus on improving standards and practice. It will build on the work by the National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against Women and Girls Taskforce (under Temporary Chief Constable Maggie Blyth). The Inquiry heard evidence that one ambition of the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection is

<sup>84 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>85</sup> The 4Ps are: **Prevent** people from taking part in criminal or terrorist activities; **Pursue** offenders involved in criminal or terrorist activities to disrupt and prosecute them; **Protect** people, organisations and systems from criminal or terrorist activities; and **Prepare** for criminal or terrorist activities to reduce their impact.

<sup>86 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>87 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>88 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>89 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>90 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

to streamline and simplify self-assessments to improve quality, effectiveness and the practicality of implementation across these areas of policing, rather than add to the already quite cluttered landscape.<sup>91</sup>

- 8.49 The Government has developed the idea of having a national centre after learning from counter-terrorism, where policing has established a national structure. The benefits include the ability to keep up to date with technology and data advances, including those to track and identify offenders, as well as overt and covert action to keep track of repeat offenders. For counter-terrorism, this approach has had a positive impact on improving consistency across policing. While some forces are better than others, "you don't see the same level of fracture across the country" as is seen for violence against women and girls. 92
- 8.50 The Inquiry sees the establishment of a national centre as a positive step forwards, in developing measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, provided that the centre has a data-driven focus on 'prevent', as well as 'pursue', activity. The Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, agreed that it was a positive step forwards and saw it as a major part of the overall police reform programme:

"The National Centre for VAWG [violence against women and girls] will be a focal point for ensuring strong standards by having a body of experts that can work with academics and researchers to make sure strong practices are being developed and implemented to all forces."93

- 8.51 This focus on evidence will help with the evaluation mechanisms for prevention activity, provided that there is good coordination with other relevant bodies across the sector that also have a responsibility for prevention within the public health approach.
- 8.52 The Government has also announced that it will take a greater leadership role on policing and crime. This includes through raising performance and standards across every police force in England and Wales to deliver better consistency across police forces. To achieve this, the Home Office has announced a new, internal Police and Performance Unit. The intention is for this to provide higher-quality data to spot trends and drive up standards and consistency through a national police framework. The Home Office recognises that one of the key challenges with this is how progress is measured and monitored for the reasons described in Chapter 7.
- 8.53 It appears to the Inquiry that the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls is a positive step forwards, and the long-term nature of the strategy and ambition should provide a better focus on prevention of violence against women and girls generally given that this requires longer-term resources, including those invested to deliver effective outcomes. However, without clarity on what specific data the Home Office will be requesting in relation to preventing sexually motivated crimes in public spaces, it is hard to determine the potential impact in this area. The

<sup>91 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>92 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>93 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Government also needs to ensure that their national priorities are linked to measurable goals at the local level and that there is the right accountability to measure the impact of any activity undertaken.

## Recommendation 29: Government prioritisation of the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces

Immediately, the Government should take action to make it clearer that preventing sexually motivated offences against women in public is an essential part of tackling violence against women and girls. This should include the following:

- a. The Government should ensure that this Report, the detail of the violence against women and girls strategy, and the prevention strategy at Recommendation 25 (and the evaluation of its success, if available) are before the Secretary of State to inform her view on how to update future versions of the Strategic Policing Requirement. This is so that the Secretary of State can use this information to assess the level of importance and prominence to give to the threat of violence against women and girls (compared with the other identified national threats); and specifically to the prioritisation of the prevention of sexual offences against women in public spaces.
- b. The Government should commit to and pursue a positive ambition that generally these crimes are preventable, not inevitable, with a clear focus on prevention being key to meeting the target of halving violence against women and girls over ten years.
- c. The Government should ensure that there is a clear focus on identifying, responding to and preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces in the job descriptions, training and guidance for the remodelled neighbourhood policing roles.
- d. The Government has, previously, provided an initial response to *Creating a Safer World The Challenge of Regulating Online Pornography*, the 2025 Independent Pornography Review conducted by Baroness Bertin. This included recognising the need to act urgently to tackle the harms from illegal and harmful pornography online, and the link between attitudes and behaviours in the online and offline world. The Government also recognised that this is crucial in order to deliver the mission to halve violence against women and girls in ten years. It is deeply worrying that harmful content that would be illegal offline remains unrestrained online. Therefore, the Government should provide a full response to each of the recommendations in the Review by February 2026, to enable cross-cutting prevention activity alongside the recommendations in this Report.

#### Appendix A. Methodology

This appendix describes how the Angiolini Inquiry carried out its work to produce this Report. It covers the following:

- establishing the Inquiry, including defining the Terms of Reference for Part 2 of the Inquiry, and in particular paragraph 3 to which this Report relates;
- evidence-gathering and investigation; and
- Maxwellisation.

#### **Establishing the Inquiry**

#### **Background**

- A.1 On 30 September 2021, Wayne Couzens, a serving officer with the Metropolitan Police Service, was sentenced to life imprisonment with a whole-life order for the abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard. In his sentencing remarks, Lord Justice Fulford stated that Couzens "used his position as a police officer to enable this to happen" and described how Couzens' crimes have "very considerably added to the sense of insecurity that many have living in our cities, perhaps particularly women, when travelling by themselves and especially at night".1
- A.2 On 22 November 2021, the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Priti Patel MP, addressed Couzens' crimes and sentencing, announcing to Parliament that she was "launching an independent inquiry" and confirming "that the Right Honourable Dame Elish Angiolini QC has agreed to be the Chair of that inquiry". This was the first announcement confirming that the Angiolini Inquiry would be established.
- A.3 In her announcement on 22 November 2021, the then Home Secretary also confirmed that the Inquiry would be made up of two parts: Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 was to establish "a definitive account of the career and conduct of Sarah Everard's murderer, and identify any opportunities missed" and Part 2 was to "consider the broader implications for policing arising from part 1". The then Home Secretary described how she would "set out the terms of reference for part 2" once the report

<sup>1 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>2 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

addressing Part 1 was published.<sup>5</sup> However, in June 2022, the Chair wrote to the then Home Secretary to explain that she was prevented from finalising and submitting the Part 1 Report until the then ongoing proceedings against Couzens, and other relevant criminal and misconduct proceedings, were concluded. In the same letter, the Chair proposed to commence preparations for Part 2 ahead of the Part 1 Report being published. In July 2022, the then Home Secretary agreed that Part 2 should proceed as soon as practically possible, without waiting for Part 1 to conclude.

A.4 In February 2023, the Inquiry was further commissioned to conduct Part 3, which is to consider the case of David Carrick, a former officer with the Metropolitan Police Service convicted of 49 offences committed against women, most of them rape or serious sexual assault.

#### Scope

- A.5 The Angiolini Inquiry was commissioned as an independent, non-statutory inquiry. However, the then Home Secretary also explained that she would not rule out converting the Inquiry to a statutory footing if required.
- A.6 The Inquiry was able to fulfil the Terms of Reference for Part 1 without the need to convert to a statutory footing.
- A.7 The Part 1 Report was published on 29 February 2024. The Chair outlined 16 recommendations "designed to ensure that everything possible is being done to prevent those entrusted with the power of the office of constable from abusing that power".<sup>6</sup>
- A.8 On 25 March 2024, it was announced that the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing accepted all the recommendations made in the Part 1 Report.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Defining the Terms of Reference for Part 2**

- A.9 The Terms of Reference for Part 2 of the Inquiry were drafted by the Home Office, in consultation with the Chair of the Inquiry, Sarah Everard's parents and relevant policing organisations. The Terms of Reference outline the focus of Part 2, for the Inquiry to examine, provide recommendations on improvement and, where appropriate, highlight examples of good practice in three areas, across three paragraphs:
  - paragraph 1 the extent to which systems, policies and processes for the recruitment, vetting and transfer of police officers are fit for purpose and help to identify those who display misogynistic and/or predatory attitudes and behaviours;

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>7 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- paragraph 2 the extent to which aspects of police culture observed across police forces enable misogynistic and/or predatory attitudes and behaviours, and what the role of standards is; and
- paragraph 3 the extent to which existing measures prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

#### Consultation

- A.10 The draft Terms of Reference were published by the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon. Suella Braverman MP, on 18 January 2023 and were subject to public consultation, to ensure the Inquiry heard from those with an interest in the subject matters the Inquiry would be exploring. In particular, the consultation sought stakeholders' views on the importance of each of the three areas of focus for Part 2, as well as their respective sub-areas. It offered the opportunity for stakeholders to identify anything they felt was missing from the draft Terms of Reference.
- A.11 This consultation took the form of a survey, which was opened online<sup>8</sup> on 27 January 2023 and closed on 24 February 2023. On 13 March 2023, the Chair of the Inquiry wrote to the then Home Secretary to outline the analysis and findings from the survey: 780 individuals and 60 charities/organisations responded to the survey overall. Details of the consultation response were discussed in the Chair's letter to the then Home Secretary on 13 March 2023.<sup>9</sup>
- A.12 In line with consultation feedback, the Chair of the Inquiry advised the then Home Secretary that the Terms of Reference, as drafted, were largely fit for purpose and met stakeholders' expectations, subject to some minor amendments to reflect the feedback received.
- A.13 The Terms of Reference for Part 2 were announced by the then Home Secretary on 11 May 2023, and this Report relates to Part 2, paragraph 3. The Terms of Reference for Part 2, paragraph 3 include that the Inquiry produce "a summary of existing measures to prevent sexually motivated violence against women in public spaces, for example, police and wider public safety/justice activity to protect women in public and measures to encourage individual and collective citizens action to improve women's safety in public spaces".<sup>10</sup>
- A.14 In preparing this Report on Part 2, paragraph 3, the Inquiry has been able to fulfil this element of the Terms of Reference, again without the need to convert the Inquiry to a statutory footing.

#### **Data privacy**

A.15 Due to the nature of the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry expected to receive personal data, including sensitive personal data. Therefore, a necessary framework for receiving and processing this data was put in place, which included a clear Privacy Policy and Disclosure Protocol.

<sup>8</sup> Paper copies were available where needed. However, the Inquiry received no requests for the survey to be sent to individuals in this format.

<sup>9 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>10 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

A.16 A copy of both the Privacy Policy and Disclosure Protocol were published on the Inquiry's website and updated to reflect the Part 2 Terms of Reference (www.angiolini.independent-inquiry.uk).

#### The Inquiry team and support

#### **Inquiry Secretariat**

A.17 The Inquiry comprises a Secretariat of civil servants, as well as legal investigators.

#### **External support**

- A.18 The Inquiry is provided with legal support by a team of solicitors from Eversheds Sutherland. Eversheds Sutherland's Technology Team also contributes by providing bespoke, secure technology platforms to store and analyse the Inquiry's evidence.
- A.19 During Part 1 of the Inquiry, a group of expert individuals was also appointed to provide advice to the Inquiry, referred to as the Inquiry's 'Reference Group'. To maintain the independent nature of the Inquiry, each person was selected on the basis that they had expertise relevant to the Terms of Reference, with the knowledge that they had never worked for any of the police forces disclosing evidence to the Inquiry or the sponsoring department, the Home Office. The Reference Group has been retained and expanded to provide advice in relation to Part 2, and its members are:
  - Zoë Billingham CBE, formerly HM Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services:
  - Baroness Ruth Hunt, co-founder and co-director of Deeds and Words;
  - Sir Stephen Lander KCB, formerly Director General of MI5 and Chair of the Serious Organised Crime Agency;<sup>11</sup>
  - Sir lain Livingstone QPM, former Chief Constable of Police Scotland;
  - Nóirín O'Sullivan, formerly the first female Garda Commissioner;
  - Andrea Simon, Director, End Violence Against Women Coalition; and
  - Charlotte Triggs, OBE, former Senior Police Adviser and lawyer with the Crown Prosecution Service, contributor to the 'Police complaints handling, investigations and misconduct issues: independent review' and former lead investigator to the Inquiry.
- A.20 Finally, the Inquiry was supported by media monitoring and communications specialists.

<sup>11</sup> The Serious Organised Crime Agency was replaced by the National Crime Agency in 2013.

- A.21 All third-party providers to the Inquiry were procured via the appropriate government processes and evaluated by members of the Inquiry Secretariat and independent civil servants.
- A.22 During the Inquiry, information has been shared with the public via the Inquiry's website, which contains information about the Inquiry team, the background to the Inquiry's work, and copies of the Terms of Reference and other key policies and protocols.

#### **Evidence-gathering and investigation**

- A.23 To establish a sound evidence base, the Inquiry wrote to a number of organisations to request documents relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference for Part 2, paragraph 3. This included requesting and analysing documentation held electronically and in hard copy, such as:
  - statements;
  - · email communications;
  - · memoranda;
  - · policy documents;
  - reports;
  - social media communications and data;
  - spreadsheets; and
  - crime reporting data.
- A.24 The requested documentation was disclosed to the Inquiry via a secure, online file-sharing platform.

#### Disclosing organisations

- A.25 For the purposes of Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry requested and received disclosure from the following organisations:
  - Bawso;
  - Cabinet Office;
  - City of London Police (National Business Crime Centre);
  - College of Policing;
  - Crown Prosecution Service;
  - Department for Education;

- Department for Transport;
- · Department of Health and Social Care;
- Estyn;
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS);
- HM Prison and Probation Service;
- Home Office;
- Lancashire Police;
- · Local Government Association;
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- Ministry of Justice;
- National Crime Agency;
- National Police Chiefs' Council;
- · NHS England;
- Ofsted;
- Thames Valley Police;
- UK Health Security Agency;
- Welsh Government;
- Welsh Local Government Association; and
- White Ribbon.
- A.26 Part 1 of the Angiolini Inquiry investigated how an off-duty police officer was able to abduct, rape and murder a member of the public, Sarah Everard. The second stage of the Inquiry, Part 2, outlined how the Inquiry was:
  - to establish if there is a risk of recurrence across policing;
  - · to investigate police culture; and
  - to address the broader concerns surrounding women's safety in public spaces that were highlighted by Sarah's death.

A.27 To assess wider policing practice and culture relevant to the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry needed to engage with multiple forces across England and Wales face to face, as well as via disclosure of information requests. This was to ensure the Inquiry operated fairly, and to address, understand and accurately articulate the issues nationally, while balancing the level of resource and costs associated with addressing policing nationally. The approach taken to this is described below, in which the Inquiry sought evidence from eight fieldwork forces.

#### Fieldwork forces

- A.28 As described in this Report, there are 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, with a further three national special forces, 12 namely British Transport Police, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence Police, which have different funding and accountability arrangements. The time and costs needed to investigate this number of forces was not a pragmatic use of resource or Inquiry time. Therefore, the Inquiry sought the participation of a nationally representative sample of police forces for the Inquiry to receive disclosure from, and conduct fieldwork with, in order to ensure sufficient evidence was collected, while avoiding unnecessary costs and delays. The core criteria for the sample force selection considered:
  - geographical placement, including a range of:
    - urban- and rural-based forces; and
    - coverage of regions across England and Wales;
  - the size of population the force covered, the number of its officers and the funding received; and
  - the gender breakdown in each force, both across the leadership team, across the senior operation staff, and beyond.
- A.29 Using this criteria, the Inquiry identified and invited the following forces to participate in the sample:
  - Avon and Somerset Police;
  - British Transport Police;
  - Durham Constabulary;
  - Merseyside Police;
  - Metropolitan Police Service;
  - Northamptonshire Police;

- South Wales Police; and
- Sussex Police.
- A.30 The Inquiry provided opportunities to other bodies and individuals, but they declined to provide information. The Inquiry is satisfied that it has obtained a broad range of information to inform its conclusions and has been able to meet the Terms of Reference for Part 2, paragraph 3.
- A.31 The disclosing organisations were overwhelmingly supportive of the Inquiry's aims, disclosing over 5,600 pages of key policy documents, witness statements, and other documentation to inform the Inquiry's findings.
- A.32 The Inquiry was, and continues to be, grateful to disclosing organisations for their support to the Inquiry by disclosing relevant and necessary documentation as part of the evidence-gathering process.

#### Case file review

- A.33 The Inquiry asked the fieldwork forces to provide a sample number of files relating to sexually motivated crimes committed against women in public spaces (i.e. rape, sexual assault and indecent exposure). For the purposes of this Report, the information has been used in particular to inform the Inquiry's understanding of each force's ability to:
  - prioritise and investigate reports of sexually motivated crimes committed against women by strangers in public spaces;
  - comply with standards/guidance, including the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales, concerning the handling and investigation of sexually motivated crimes; and
  - learn from and respond to the experiences of those reporting sexually motivated crimes, and understand the reasons why they may disengage from the policing process before the outcome.
- A.34 The Inquiry looked at the end-to-end process from receipt of the report to the outcome, against an agreed methodology, to understand, for each fieldwork force, to what extent they fulfil the points above.
- A.35 Separately, as detailed above, the Inquiry also requested disclosure of evidence relevant to the Terms of Reference prior to, and as a result of, the fieldwork force visits.

#### Witness evidence

A.36 As well as reviewing publicly available information and seeking further disclosure of evidence via information requests to organisations, over the course of Part 2, paragraph 3 activity, the Inquiry engaged with a range of witnesses through the following evidence-gathering methods.

- A.37 In every aspect of the Inquiry's evidence-gathering process where we have heard from individuals, it has been critical that they felt able to give open and transparent evidence. Therefore, unless individual witnesses held, or hold, positions where there is, or was, an expectation of public accountability, which would particularly be the case for those in senior and/or leadership positions, they have been anonymised, as outlined in the Privacy Notice.<sup>13</sup> This has been true for every fieldwork force interview, the evidence-gathering sessions and the public survey.
- A.38 The following witnesses, with expertise in areas relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, also provided evidence to the Inquiry:
  - Professor Don Grubin, Emeritus Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, University of Newcastle, and an Honorary Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist in the NHS;
  - Professor Fiona Vera-Gray, Co-Director at the Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit at London Metropolitan University;
  - Dr Ellie Cosgrave, academic expert in public safety design, Director of Publica's Campaign for Inclusive Cities and Associate Professor in Urban Innovation at University College London; and
  - Antounette Philippides, psychotherapist and Chair of the charity StopSO (Specialist Treatment Organisation for Perpetrators and Survivors of Sexual Offending), with a background in criminal justice.

#### Fieldwork visits

- A.39 The fieldwork sought to gather evidence in key areas of interest to the Inquiry, primarily recruitment, vetting and transfers, and police culture and standards, as well as further detail on measures to prevent sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces, being relevant to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference.
- A.40 This evidence was collected using a range of different methods, including:
  - in-person visits by Inquiry secretariat to each of the police forces' headquarters;
  - · interviews;
  - focus groups with a range of witnesses, including those in key leadership positions and a range of other job roles, as well as female-only and mixed groups; and
  - a review of relevant case files.
- A.41 At the time of this Report's publication, the Inquiry had gathered evidence from hundreds of witnesses during the course of Part 2 of the Inquiry. In relation to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry also heard, in a great level of detail, about the work being conducted by forces and with wider statutory and non-statutory organisations to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in

- public spaces. This frontline insight was invaluable to the Inquiry's understanding of the subject matter, and gave further colour and shape to the activity going on in this space.
- A.42 The Inquiry was greatly supported by those who provided information relevant to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, significantly adding to the material provided via the disclosure process. The Inquiry was, and continues to be, deeply grateful to the witnesses who took the time to provide key information, and sometimes further documents, to the Inquiry.

#### Strategic interviews

- A.43 In order to consolidate a national understanding of prevention measures and supplement the evidence gathered via the fieldwork forces, the Inquiry also sought insight from a range of national and strategic leaders in areas relevant to the Terms of Reference.
- A.44 For the purposes of Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry met and interviewed 18 individuals identified for their strategic leadership positions or for their relevant expertise. This included current and former police officers, individuals employed by policing organisations, current senior leaders of police forces, academics, practitioners and other witnesses with expertise, representatives from charity and voluntary sector organisations, and relevant political leaders.

#### **Evidence-gathering sessions**

- A.45 The Inquiry hosted a series of seminars, referred to as evidence-gathering sessions, to obtain evidence relevant to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference. These were designed to bring together additional groups of key stakeholders which, again, included current and former police officers, individuals employed by policing organisations, current senior leaders of police forces, academics and practitioners with expertise, and representatives from charity and voluntary sector organisations, to examine the key issues and themes that the Inquiry was exploring.
- A.46 The sessions asked attendees to offer their insights on the subject matter, and attendees were asked to provide examples and views on current measures to prevent sexually motivated offending against women in public spaces. Attendees were also asked for their opinions on the current barriers to, and opportunities for, the success of measures in this space, and what (if anything) should change or improve to ensure that greater, and more successful, prevention activity is implemented.
- A.47 Across all evidence-gathering sessions for Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry heard evidence from over 40 witnesses. This greatly facilitated the Inquiry's task.

#### Online evidence-gathering sessions

- A.48 The Inquiry held five online sessions to gather evidence in relation to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference. The first three sought the views and experiences of strategic and operational leaders, as well as experts in particular fields, on measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.
- A.49 The Inquiry recognises the need to hear directly from women's groups that work with victims of sexually motivated crimes, and violence against women and girls more broadly. Therefore, two further sessions were arranged with crucial relevance to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, to hear the experiences and views of women's groups in this space. These sessions gained insight from a range of organisations and expert representatives, with the aim of ensuring that the diverse range of voices, with an emphasis on hearing from representatives of those who have been victimised, were heard, recorded and incorporated into the Inquiry's work.

#### In-person evidence-gathering session

A.50 The Inquiry also conducted an in-person evidence-gathering session to hear evidence and views from strategic and national leaders on topics relevant to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference. In particular, the Inquiry sought to gather evidence from attendees about what works to address and prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and further examine the barriers and opportunities to delivery.

## **Public survey**

- A.51 As well as seeking insight from those with expertise into topics relevant to Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry also recognised the importance of understanding the wider public's views and experiences relating to the prevention of sexually motivated crime against women in public spaces.
- A.52 The Inquiry developed a survey for the general public, to gather views on:
  - perceptions and experiences of safety in public spaces;
  - awareness and evaluation of pre-existing measures to improve the safety of women and prevent sexually motivated crimes in public spaces; and
  - insights into public support for measures in future, including types of measures
    that they believe would make women feel safer and less at risk from sexually
    motivated crimes in public spaces, and which sectors/organisations they would
    trust to deliver preventative measures.
- A.53 The survey opened for a five-day period and received responses from 2,000 individuals. The Inquiry utilised the services of an independent organisation that specialises in the delivery of public opinion polling to manage the survey launch and record responses for review and analysis conducted by the Inquiry secretariat. This included the use of a pre-existing, opt-in panel for the sample.

A.54 The Inquiry does not take for granted the time, effort and emotional input asked of every individual who participated in this survey. Each response has contributed to building greater insight into public opinion about the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, and has fundamentally informed this Report.

## Availability of contextual data

A.55 The Inquiry faced a number of analytical challenges. This included the data availability, quality, consistency and subsequent reliable interpretation, as well as difficulty obtaining evidence specific to sexually motivated crimes against women in public. For example, there were inconsistencies in the way certain data was captured and recorded by individual forces, which impacts the reliability of conclusions from that data when the Inquiry is making necessary comparisons. Therefore, the Inquiry has considered information relating to violence against women and girls more broadly where available.

#### Previous reviews and surveys

- A.56 As well as requesting, and receiving, a great number of documents as part of the disclosure request process, the Terms of Reference stated that the Inquiry would also draw upon evidence from recent relevant reports to inform its work. For the purposes of Part 2, paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, this included research and findings published by:
  - central and local government;
  - previous inquiries and government-commissioned reviews;
  - · strategic and senior leaders from across policing organisations; and
  - charities and non-profit organisations.
- A.57 In addition, to support the Inquiry's findings, the team conducted desk-based research, using publicly available information as part of evidence-collection methods to identify relevant existing measures. As well as this, data sets, including surveys and insights from the general public, were taken from:
  - College of Policing and Crown Prosecution Service data summaries;
  - GOV.UK;
  - Office for National Statistics;
  - YouGov; and
  - other publicly available sources.

#### Published strategies, plans and commitments

- A.58 The Inquiry also reviewed publicly available strategies, frameworks and/or plans addressing violence against women and girls, and, where possible, documents that address the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This included gathering information published by:
  - Police and Crime Commissioners;
  - 43 forces across England and Wales;
  - central government departments (as outlined in the disclosing organisations above);
  - local governments in areas across England and Wales; and
  - · charities and non-profit organisations.

#### Academic and expert research

A.59 The Inquiry also conducted a review of available research and academic literature in areas relevant to the Terms of Reference, to develop a wider contextual understanding of the current landscape and theories on preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

## Media and communications analysis

- A.60 The Inquiry was also provided with research and analysis conducted by media monitoring and communications specialists. This was carried out using a wide range of public media outlets and social media channels.
- A.61 The purpose of this research and analysis was to support the Inquiry in providing possible lines of enquiry that were explored with witnesses. Furthermore, it provided additional context that the Inquiry considered while making its recommendations.

## **Maxwellisation**

- A.62 Maxwellisation is the process by which an individual or organisation is notified of potential criticism(s) that the Inquiry is minded to make in its report(s), in order to provide them with a fair and reasonable opportunity to respond in advance of the report being finalised and published. It is a legal process that the Inquiry is required to follow.
- A.63 For this Report, as part of the Maxwellisation process, 21 organisations and 4 individuals were notified of potential criticisms that the Inquiry was proposing to make, with 25 responses received. All responses were considered carefully and taken into account by the Inquiry when finalising its conclusions and this Report.

# **Appendix B. Summary of measures**

- B.1 The Inquiry examined more than 250 existing measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces (n=253). These were identified through all the evidence-gathering methods set out in the methodology (Appendix A), and included measures disclosed to the Inquiry (either as documents, or in interviews or evidence-gathering sessions), as well as those identified through open-source research. The resulting list was not exhaustive but intended to illustrate the scale and type of measures in place, and was large enough to ensure that the evidence reviewed provided a fair representation of the existing picture to enable the Terms of Reference to be fulfilled.
- B.2 Individual examples from the list of measures are included in the chapters of this Report. This appendix provides a summary of the type and scope of these measures overall.

### Focus of the measures

B.3 While the questions posed to witnesses focused on measures to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, the majority of measures in the list were not specifically targeted to these crimes in those circumstances, but rather were broader in scope. They are nonetheless relevant to the prevention of such crimes, and important to consider. The Inquiry categorised 112 as being related to broader prevention activity (for example, police patrols or use of CCTV); 72 as relating to prevention of violence against women and girls more generally (for example, healthy relationship education sessions, and inclusion of violence against women and girls in the strategic policing requirement); and 71 as focused on prevention of sexual offending against women (for example, sexual offender programmes and management, and improvements to the investigation and prosecution of rape cases).

# Primary, secondary, tertiary and cross-cutting measures

B.4 In line with the Inquiry's focus on the public health approach (see Chapter 2), measures were categorised as primary, secondary, tertiary or cross-cutting. Cross-cutting refers to measures which cut across two or more of the three main primary, secondary and tertiary public health prevention levels. For definitions of all categories, see Chapter 2.

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

Table 6: Total number of measures reviewed, categorised as primary, secondary, tertiary or cross-cutting<sup>2</sup>

Category of measure	Number
Primary	27
Secondary	80
Tertiary	57
Cross-cutting	89

B.5 When the small number of international measures are excluded, the Inquiry notes that tertiary-level measures were more likely to be national in application (across England and Wales, n=44) than regional or local (across a smaller geography, n=12). Cross-cutting measures (i.e. those which span public health prevention levels) were more common at regional or local levels (n=58) than national levels (n=29). Both primary and secondary measures were evenly spread across national and local/regional areas.<sup>3</sup>

# Most common types of measures

- B.6 When seeking evidence from witnesses and disclosing organisations, the Inquiry did not define what constituted a measure to prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces. This was to ascertain (and not constrain) the breadth of evidence that was received about activity that was seen by witnesses and disclosing organisations as falling into this category.
- B.7 Measures were then grouped by category. Categories were identified through open coding (i.e. reviewing the measures and identifying common themes, as opposed to using a predetermined list of categories). Each measure was then assigned to a single category.<sup>4</sup> The most commonly identified categories<sup>5</sup> were as follows:
  - Strategies and plans (n=56): This included national strategies and frameworks, as well as local-level plans. Many of these related to tackling violence against women and girls more broadly; some to preventing this in particular circumstances (for example, Women's Night Safety Charter,<sup>6</sup> or plans to help encourage women to stay active by making parks safer).
  - **Public information campaigns** (n=27): These comprised national and local campaigns.
  - Sexual offender management (n=26): These included sex offender behaviour change programmes, as well as information on the structures and processes in place to manage sexual offenders in the community.

<sup>2 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>3 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>5</sup> Defined as those with 10 or more measures.

<sup>6 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

- Measures to increase safety in identified hot spots for sexually motivated crimes (n=24): Many of these related to the safety of women in the nighttime economy.
- **Education** (n=17): This primarily comprised measures aimed at educating children in schools, young men in higher and further education, and communities.
- Safe space design measures (n=14): These included planning frameworks and guidance for the design of spaces.
- Policing measures to improve the investigation of sexual offences (n=10):
   These included initiatives like Operation Soteria, with the aim of "transforming the investigation of rape".
- B.8 Categories with between five and nine measures were:
  - apps (n=9);
  - criminal justice preventative and protective orders (n=7);
  - bystander interventions, including bystander programmes (n=6);
  - services for victims (n=6, including those aimed at particular groups of victims, such as sex workers); and
  - details of roles identified as having a particular focus on preventing sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces (n=5), such as police Designing Out Crime Officers, and transport champions for tackling violence against women and girls.
- B.9 Other categories had four or fewer measures.
- B.10 To note however, some measures could have been categorised in more than one group, and/or had multiple measures contained within them. For example, the Inquiry reviewed examples of cross-cutting campaigns and programmes run by local authorities. Some of these included academic research, public campaigns, use of an app, education, safe space design measures and community engagement.

# **Conclusions**

- B.11 Further details of individual measures are given in the chapters of this Report, together with information on evaluation of their effectiveness, where available. While noting that the list of measures is illustrative and not exhaustive, the Inquiry concludes the following:
  - Multiple measures were put forward as contributing to the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces, although few focused specifically on these circumstances.

- These included measures from policing, probation, prisons, wider criminal justice, local authorities, governments, academia, charities, education, health, and housing and transport sectors, among others.
- Measures spanned the three public health levels of prevention (primary, secondary and tertiary), although many were cross-cutting.

# Appendix C. Glossary of terms

**Abstraction of staff:** This involves taking officers away from their core roles to cover other duties.

**Appropriate authority:** As defined by the Independent Office for Police Conduct, the appropriate authority for a person serving with the police is, for a chief officer or an acting chief officer, the local policing body for the area of the police force of which that officer is a member; or, in any other case, the chief officer with direction and control over the person serving with the police. In relation to complaints not concerning the conduct of a person serving with the police, the appropriate authority is the chief officer of the police force with which dissatisfaction is expressed by the complainant.

**Ask for Angela:** This is a national scheme operating in pubs, clubs and other venues, designed to discreetly help anyone who is feeling vulnerable on a night out to get the support they need.

**Authorised Professional Practice:** This guidance outlines the actions that everyone involved in policing needs to take to ensure that a consistent level of service is provided to the public. It is developed and owned by the College of Policing, and is subject to public consultations and quality assurance processes. The Authorised Professional Practice guidelines are the strongest guidance that the College issues. However, they are not mandated, and officers and staff are expected to use professional discretion when applying them.

**Bystander training:** These are training programmes designed to educate and support individuals on how to intervene safely and effectively in situations where they witness inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

**Cambridge Crime Harm Index:** This is a measure of the seriousness of crime based on the harm caused to victims. It uses sentencing guidelines to assign a harm score to each type of crime.

**Community Safety Partnerships:** These were introduced as part of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and work on the principle that no single agency can address all drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour. They bring together local partners to address crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in their communities. The partners involved are: police, fire and rescue authorities, local authorities, health partners and the probation service.<sup>1</sup>

**Continuous Integrity Screening:** This is a national vetting process that continuously checks the integrity of police officers, staff, volunteers and contractors.

<sup>1 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

**Counter-terrorism:** This is a government-led policy and strategy which focuses on preventing individuals becoming terrorists, protecting against attacks and mitigating the impact of attacks.

**Criminal justice system:** This is the collective term for public bodies, such as the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and HM Prison and Probation Service, that work to uphold the law, take action against people who commit crimes, and protect the public.

**Data washing:** As used in this Report, data washing refers to a process where existing data is cross-checked against different systems to identify errors or inconsistencies. The term can also be used to describe a process where data is reviewed, analysed and cleansed.

**Fieldwork force(s):** This term is used to describe the sample of eight forces from different areas of England and Wales (Avon and Somerset Police, British Transport Police, Durham Constabulary, Merseyside Police, Metropolitan Police Service, Northamptonshire Police, South Wales Police, Sussex Police). The Inquiry identified these forces to act as a nationally representative sample, as far as possible, in order for the Inquiry to collect evidence via disclosure and fieldwork with each force.

**Gender-based violence:** This is violence directed against a person because of that person's gender, or violence that affects those of a particular gender disproportionately. This term is often used in relation to, or as a synonym for, violence against women and girls. Types of violence experienced by victims can include physical harm, sexual harm, economic harm and psychological harm.

**Home Office forces:** As described in this Report, Home Office forces are the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales (as opposed to the national police forces, namely British Transport Police, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence Police, which have different funding and accountability arrangements).

**Intensive Supervision Courts:** The Intensive Supervision Courts are a form of problem-solving court which seek to address the root cause of offending behaviour, with the goal of reducing reoffending and supporting offenders to turn their lives around for the good.<sup>2</sup> They are an alternative to custody and use enhanced community-based sentences to divert individuals who are at risk of receiving custodial sentences of 2 years in the Crown Court, and 12 months in the Magistrates' Court.

**Manosphere:** This is an umbrella term used for a network of online anti-feminist, misogynistic, pro-men communities.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements are a set of statutory arrangements to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements were established by sections 325 to 327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. They bring together the police, probation and prison services to form the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements Responsible Authority. The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements areas align with the police force areas.

**Nighttime economy:** This is an umbrella term for commercial and leisure activities that take place during the evening and nighttime hours – generally considered to be 6pm–6am. These can include everything from nightclubs, bars and restaurants, to late night shopping and 24-hour services.

**Offender Assessment System:** Commonly referred to as OASys, the Offender Assessment System is a risk and needs assessment tool used by HM Prison and Probation Service to manage offenders and identify programmes to reduce the risk of further offences.

**Operation Soteria:** This is a programme designed to transform how the police handle the investigation of rape and other serious sexual offences.

**PEEL:** PEEL stands for Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy, and it is the assessment framework used by the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary. The PEEL programme sets out the characteristics of good performance against a set of questions, to assist inspectors to make consistent assessments across police forces, and for forces to see what they are being graded against.

**Peelian principles:** The Peelian principles are a set of nine principles for policing. They originate from Sir Robert Peel's founding principles and were distilled into the nine principles of policing by Charles Reith in 1948. They are seen as underpinning how policing operates in England and Wales.

**Perpetrator profile:** A perpetrator profile consists of detailed descriptions and/or characteristics of individuals who engage in harmful or criminal behaviour. These profiles are often created for investigative purposes, risk assessment and targeted intervention.

**Police and Crime Commissioners:** These are elected officials in areas of England and Wales to make sure that local police forces meet the needs of the community. They are responsible for police budgets, the appointment of Chief Constables, and setting local policing priorities. In some areas the role is delegated to a Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. Some Police and Crime Commissioners are also responsible for local fire and rescue services.

**Police National Computer:** This is a national policing information system. It is the main database of criminal records in the UK and is used by frontline police officers and other UK law enforcement organisations to access real-time information of national and local significance.

**Police National Database:** This is a national intelligence-sharing system used for the purpose of preventing and detecting crime. It makes police intelligence available to licensed users in police forces and other organisations.

**Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare (4P) approach:** The 4Ps are an approach to tackling serious organised crime and counter-terrorism. The 4P framework aims to: prevent people from taking part in criminal or terrorist activities; pursue offenders involved in criminal or terrorist activities to disrupt and prosecute them; protect people, organisations and systems from criminal or terrorist activities; and prepare for criminal or terrorist activities to reduce their impact.

**Primary prevention:** This is a category of intervention or measure often used as part of a public health prevention model, designed to prevent the emergence of a problem. It may include tackling the root causes of the issue and is typically aimed at population-level change, to stop the issue before it has a chance to develop.

**Project Vigilant:** This is a policing approach aimed at identifying predatory men in the nighttime economy, and preventing them from offending.

**Public health approach:** The NHS describes public health as "helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from threats to their health". This can include activities which involve helping individuals, but often also involves "dealing with wider factors that have an impact on the health and wellbeing of many people". In terms of what this means in relation to preventing sexually motivated crimes, public health in this context looks behind the issue to understand what is driving it, with a focus on the principle that prevention is better than cure. Often, public health approaches use primary, secondary and tertiary interventions to try and address every side of the issue, from root causes all the way to reducing the impact of crimes after they have occurred (including reducing the risk of reoffending).

**Public spaces:** For the purposes of the Inquiry's work, public spaces are registered common land, streets, open public spaces, unregulated outside spaces such as publicly accessible sports groups, public areas outside buildings and public transport.

**Rape myth:** These can be described as beliefs and attitudes people may have about the perpetrator or victim of rape and sexual violence that are commonly and persistently held and accepted, despite being factually inaccurate or completely false.<sup>5</sup>

**Recency, Frequency, Gravity, Victims (RFGV) algorithm:** This is a harm scoring matrix that has been developed for identifying perpetrators of domestic abuse who pose the greatest risk.

**Recidivism:** This term is used by and across the criminal justice system to refer to perpetrators who reoffend. This is often described as 'the recidivism rate', which refers to the number of individuals who have already committed at least one offence who then go on to commit further offence(s).

**Safer Streets mission:** This is a government-led initiative to improve public confidence in neighbourhood policing. It focuses on strategies to address violence against women and girls, knife crime, and reduce antisocial behaviour and shoplifting.

**Secondary prevention/intervention:** This is a category of intervention or measure often used as part of a public health prevention model, designed to confront and address those at risk of offending. In health terms, this means quickly isolating and treating confirmed cases. In relation to sexually motivated crimes, this Report considers secondary interventions to address those at high risk of offending, with the aim of diverting them.

<sup>3 [\*\*\*</sup> 

<sup>4 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

<sup>5 [\*\*\*]</sup> 

**Serious and organised crime:** The government describes these crimes as involving individuals planning, coordinating and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks. The main categories of serious offences covered are child sexual exploitation and abuse, illegal drugs, illegal firearms, fraud, money laundering and other economic crime, bribery and corruption, organised immigration crime, modern slavery and human trafficking, and cybercrime.

**Sexually motivated crime:** This refers to the types of offences defined by the Sexual Offence Act 2003, and also any other crime that is sexually motivated but not defined as a sexual offence.

**Strategic Policing Requirement:** This is the Home Secretary's assessment of the current national threats, and the policing capability required to respond to them. This is in accordance with section 77 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Police and Crime Commissioners, as well as Chief Constables, must consider the Strategic Policing Requirement when carrying out their functions. As of 2023, the national threats set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement are violence against women and girls, terrorism, serious and organised crime, a national cyber incident, child sexual abuse, public disorder and civil emergencies.

**Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment:** This is an assessment of the influences and levers that contribute to an issue being a national threat (for example, violence against women and girls). It prioritises threats and provides an analysis of policing's future capability and capacity to respond, which in turn provides insights to help equip policing leaders and local forces to inform planning and decision making. It also highlights gaps in existing knowledge to allow policing and its partners to focus activity to improve their understanding.

**Street Angels/Street Pastors:** This refers to a network of trained volunteers who operate in their local community, usually at night, to offer practical assistance to the vulnerable, including those under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the homeless, the lonely, and those suffering from poor mental or physical well-being.

**Tertiary prevention/intervention:** This is a type of intervention or measure often used as part of a public health prevention model, which aims to prevent an established issue from worsening. This means activities focused on responding to, or treating the problem, minimising the impact of violence, restoring health and safety, and preventing further victimisation and perpetration.

**Victim Personal Statement:** Victims, or their bereaved close relatives, have the right to explain in their own words how a crime has affected them, whether that is physically, emotionally or in any other way. This explanation, called a Victim Personal Statement, is considered by the judge or magistrate when determining what sentence the defendant should receive.

**Violence against women and girls:** Violence against women and girls is an umbrella term used to describe any form of abuse directed at women and girls, whether occurring in public or in private life, that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm. Violence against women and girls is often referred to as VAWG.

**Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR):** This is a national multi-agency database for managing offenders and other persons posing a risk of harm to the public.

**Witness statement:** This is obtained by the police as part of a criminal investigation. It is the written or video-recorded account by a victim or witness of what they saw, heard or know about a crime.

# **Appendix D. List of abbreviations**

ACAS Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

CCTV closed-circuit television

GPS Global Positioning System

HMICFRS His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Licensing SAVI Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative

MOPAC (London) Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

PNC Police National Computer

PND Police National Database

SSRI Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor

UN United Nations

ViSOR Violent and Sex Offender Register



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