

Final Report

Standards for Stalking and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions (2nd edition)

Principles and guidelines for commissioning and delivering
interventions for perpetrators of stalking and domestic
abuse in England and Wales

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Executive Summary

This work was commissioned by the Home Office to establish overarching principles and a national standards framework for the safe and effective delivery of interventions for perpetrators of stalking and domestic abuse in England and Wales. It extends and updates - and therefore replaces - the previous Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023) (hereafter: the first edition) and has been developed through extensive consultation with both sectors.

Scope

These standards cover interventions for all types of stalking perpetrators and for domestic abuse perpetrators, including those whose behaviour does not involve stalking. They apply to organisations funded to deliver specialist perpetrator interventions aimed at reducing harm and increasing the safety and freedom of victim-survivors. The following types of intervention are covered:

- **Help-seeking** – This covers routes established for people to talk about their behaviour at an early point. This is usually a brief response that operates as a pathway into other interventions.
- **Shorter-term, early responses** – This covers work that is short, focused, and time limited, designed to increase awareness and reduce persistence. These interventions may contain elements of behaviour change and/or be part of intensive case management or diversionary approaches. They may be delivered in a one-to-one or groupwork setting and can include a range of approaches.
- **Longer-term behaviour change** – Longer-term interventions offer the possibility of embedding changes in behaviour. These interventions may be group-based or one-to-one. While they may be delivered online, they should always be delivered live rather than through a digital e-learning package. Sometimes these interventions are combined with risk and needs assessment, and/or case management. They may be part of multi-agency processes.
- **Intensive multi-agency case management** – The key characteristic here is a co-ordinated response to a specific individual. These interventions have emerged to work with ‘high-harm, high-risk’ cases identified based on persistence and/or multiple victims, but they can also cover other harm and risk levels. They can also include one-to-one behavioural change work.

Methods

As a second edition, this version built on the work completed for the first edition (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023) through a sequential mixed-method methodology that involved:

- A rapid scoping review of grey and academic literature on stalking perpetrator interventions and post-2021 evidence on domestic abuse interventions.
- A service mapping which aimed to get a broad view of current provision of stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions.
- A survey of 54 commissioners and third-sector organisation, seeking to review the first edition of the Standards and explore their applicability to stalking.
- Nine action learning set sessions attended by 34 experts from across the stalking and domestic abuse fields. The action learning sets explored how to create standards and guidance that could sit across both stalking and domestic abuse.
- Two survivor panels with seven participants where the draft Standards were presented for discussion and comment.

Full detail on the methods is provided in the technical annex.

The Standards

Through this process, the following seven overarching standards have been developed for interventions with stalking and domestic abuse perpetrators. The evidence underpinning each and their associated guidelines are documented in the full report.

1. The priority outcome for perpetrator interventions should be increasing the safety and freedom (space for action)¹ of all victim-survivors, including children.
2. Interventions should be located within a wider multi-agency response in which all agencies share the responsibility for identifying stalking and domestic abuse behaviour, enabling perpetrators to change and enhancing the safety and freedom (space for action) of victim-survivors.
3. Interventions should be perpetrator-focused to enable them to take accountability for the harm they have caused, whilst treating them with respect, and offering them opportunities to choose to change.
4. The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time.

¹ Defined in the section of this report on [Standard 1](#).

5. Interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.
6. Interventions focused on a specific form or context of perpetration should be delivered by staff who are skilled and supported in responding to that specific form or context.
7. Monitoring and evaluation of interventions should take place to improve practice and expand the knowledge base.

All seven standards should be read and implemented within the overarching approach established by Operation Soteria (Home Office, 2022a), which set out three principles for policing violence against women and girls (VAWG) offences: victim-centred, suspect-focused, and context-led. In practice, this means:

- placing victims' needs, rights and safety front and centre throughout;
- maintaining primary focus on the suspect's (or, outside a policing context, the perpetrator's) behaviour, rather than the credibility, actions or decisions of victims; and
- grounding responses — including investigations — in an understanding of the context in which the offence(s) took place.

These three principles are embedded throughout these standards and provide the broader lens through which perpetrator interventions should be commissioned and delivered.

Introduction

This piece of work was commissioned by the Home Office to develop a set of overarching principles and a national standards framework for the safe and effective provision of interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse and perpetrators of stalking in England and Wales. It extends, updates, and therefore replaces the previous Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023) – hereafter referred to as the first edition of the Standards – and has been developed through extensive consultation with both the stalking and domestic abuse sectors.

The decision to produce one standards framework sitting across both stalking and domestic abuse is partly one of necessity, given the significant overlap between the two, meaning that interventions working with individuals who use stalking in the context of domestic abuse would sit under two different frameworks. In addition, while stalking is a standalone criminal offence, the domestic abuse definition is a policy one that cuts across a broad number of criminal offences including stalking within a domestic abuse context (Westmarland, 2025). It is also a strategic decision to increase consistency across the commissioning of perpetrator interventions.

Application and scope

These standards cover interventions that work with all types of stalking perpetrators, and interventions that work with domestic abuse perpetrators including those who do not use stalking. They apply to work/organisations funded to provide specialist interventions with perpetrators to decrease harm and increase the safety and freedom of victim-survivors².

Many agencies intervene with perpetrators in their everyday work, especially those in the criminal justice and health systems (for example, through arrest or sectioning under the Mental Health Act). The Standards do not cover such agencies, however, as they apply only to specialist, dedicated interventions rather than day-to-day practice. The scope does not include most of the interventions delivered by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and its contracted sites, except where these are a specialist dedicated intervention for domestic abuse or stalking. All interventions delivered across HMPPS and its contracted sites are required to align

² These standards use the concept of victim-survivor to recognise that victims and survivors are not separate groups of people and that both are simultaneous aspects of lived experience during, and in the aftermath of, violence and abuse. This concept enables recognition of strengths and actions during and after abuse, which the term victim cannot accommodate.

with the effective interventions principles outlined in the National Framework for Interventions policy framework.

The question of what works in relation to interventions for stalking and domestic abuse perpetrators is a developing field in both research and practice. Interventions and evaluations are rapidly expanding and research in the United States (US) highlights the need for standards to be regularly updated or run the risk of not reflecting research or practice (Franchino-Olsen and Chesworth, 2024). Domestic abuse perpetrator interventions largely started as behaviour change group work with intimate partner perpetrators (known as domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs) or domestic abuse perpetrator programmes (DAPPs)). Stalking perpetrator interventions are much newer as a field, emerging largely from police-led, and more recently health-led, multi-agency partnerships. Though these standards needed to apply to both types of intervention, they also needed to remain broad to encompass emerging activities and allow space for innovation.

With these issues in mind, the term intervention here refers to a structured, purposeful activity designed to address perpetrator behaviour and reduce the risk of harm to victim-survivors. Such interventions range from brief, single-contact responses to long-term, multi-agency processes, but they share the common aim of preventing further abuse. The first edition of the Standards included work to develop a typology of four different perpetrator interventions. This edition began with that typology, amending the wording through the action learning sets with practitioners to ensure the intervention description accurately captured both stalking and domestic abuse interventions. The following types of perpetrator intervention are thus covered by these Standards:

- **Help-seeking** – This covers routes established for people to talk about their behaviour at an early point. This is usually a brief response that operates as a pathway into other interventions. For example, a dedicated helpline.
- **Shorter-term, early responses** – This covers work that is short, focused, and time limited, designed to increase awareness and reduce persistence. These interventions may contain elements of behaviour change and/or be part of intensive case management or diversionary approaches. They may be delivered in a one-to-one or groupwork setting and can include a range of approaches. For example, specialist arrest diversion schemes.
- **Longer-term behaviour change** – Longer-term interventions offer the possibility of embedding changes in behaviour. These interventions may be group-based or one-to-one. While they may be delivered online, they should always be delivered live rather than through a digital e-learning package. Sometimes these interventions are combined with risk and needs assessment, and/or case management. They may be part of multi-agency

processes. For example, perpetrator groupwork programmes, one-to-one behaviour change.

- **Intensive multi-agency case management** — The key characteristic here is a co-ordinated response to a specific individual. These interventions have emerged to work with ‘high-harm, high-risk’ cases identified based on persistence and/or multiple victims, but they can also cover other harm and risk levels. They can also include one-to-one behavioural change work. For example, dedicated multi-agency partnerships.

Importantly, these interventions are not necessarily mutually exclusive; they might take place in sequence or in parallel, such as longer-term behaviour change work within an intensive multi-agency case management setting.

Methods

The methodological approach of this project was designed through the lens of engagement. As a second edition, this version built on the work completed for the first edition (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023), which included a rapid evidence assessment, a review of 24 sets of international standards covering Wales, the UK, Australia, many US states, Canada, and some European countries, and extensive stakeholder engagement (totalling 297 practitioners and policy makers, as well as 8 victim-survivors and 7 perpetrators who had accessed interventions).

To supplement this, we completed a rapid scoping review of grey and academic literature on stalking perpetrator interventions alongside post-2021 evidence on domestic abuse interventions. We then conducted a service mapping which aimed to get a broad view of current provision of stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions. The mapping included discussions with all stalking perpetrator interventions funded through the Home Office’s Domestic abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Intervention Fund. These methods enabled us to understand the current published evidence base on specialist perpetrator interventions.

We combined an analysis of this evidence base with a survey of 54 commissioners and third-sector organisations. The survey sought to review the first edition of the Standards and explore their applicability to stalking. Concurrently we led nine action learning set sessions attended by 34 experts from across the stalking and domestic abuse fields. The action learning sets explored in-depth how to create standards and guidance that could sit across both stalking and domestic abuse. A version of the Standards drafted through this process was then shared with two survivor panels with seven participants for discussion and comment. Where we quote excerpts from these data sources, we reference the sector of the participant and the method through which the quote was gathered.

Collectively, these methods form the evidence base underpinning these standards. The technical annex in [Appendix 2](#) provides more detail about the methodological approach, as well as definitions and the context for the work.

The Standards

The seven standards for interventions with stalking and domestic abuse perpetrators are given below (see **Box 1**). The evidence that underlies them is presented in turn alongside the policy and practice guidelines which should inform decisions on commissioning. A checklist summarising the Standards is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Box 1: The seven standards for stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions

1. The priority outcome for perpetrator interventions should be increasing the safety and freedom (space for action)³ of all victim-survivors, including children.
2. Interventions should be located within a wider multi-agency response in which all agencies share the responsibility for identifying stalking and domestic abuse behaviour, enabling perpetrators to change and enhancing the safety and freedom (space for action) of victim-survivors.
3. Interventions should be perpetrator-focused to enable them to take accountability for the harm they have caused, whilst treating them with respect, and offering them opportunities to choose to change.
4. The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time.
5. Interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.
6. Interventions focused on a specific form or context of perpetration should be delivered by staff who are skilled and supported in responding to that specific form or context.
7. Monitoring and evaluation of interventions should take place to improve practice and expand the knowledge base.

³ Defined in the section of this report on [Standard 1](#).

All seven standards should be read and implemented within the overarching approach developed by Operation Soteria (Home Office, 2022a).

Soteria established the importance of adopting victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led principles for violence against women and girls (VAWG) offences. This means: placing victims' needs, rights and safety front and centre throughout; ensuring the primary focus is on the behaviour of the suspect (perpetrator outside of a policing context) rather than the credibility, actions, or decisions of victims; and building responses (including investigations) that begin from an understanding of the context in which the offence(s) took place.

These three principles are embedded in these standards for perpetrator interventions and provide a broader lens through which interventions should be commissioned and delivered. For example, Standard 1 centres the safety and freedom of victim-survivors as the priority objective of perpetrator interventions; Standard 2 establishes the broader multi-agency context which should lead interventions; Standard 3 establishes the need for interventions to be focused on perpetrator behaviour and accountability; and Standards 4, 5 and 6 underline the importance of working in ways that recognise and address specific contexts that may be related to perpetrators, victim-survivors and/or behaviours.

Standard 1: The priority outcome for perpetrator interventions should be increasing the safety and freedom (space for action) of all victim-survivors, including children.

Table 1: Standard 1

The priority outcome for perpetrator interventions should be increasing the safety and freedom (space for action) of all victim-survivors, including children. This standard represents the overarching lens through which the other standards need to be understood.	1.1 Safety and freedom for all victim-survivors (including children) should be clearly prioritised in the intervention’s rationale, structure, procedures and intended outcomes. Interventions should seek, at a minimum, to do no more harm to victim-survivors. Victim-survivors have a right to know if a specific threat is made to their safety. 1.2 Interventions should not take place without proactive, specialist support for victim-survivors being offered. This support should be victim-survivor-led in terms of the frequency and mode of support. Where possible, partnerships with ‘by and for’ organisations are good practice. The same member of staff should never work with both the victim and perpetrator. 1.3 Where direct work with perpetrators (rather than case management) is being provided, clear information describing the intervention and the expected outcomes should be provided to both perpetrators and victim-survivors in a range of formats and in languages reflecting the populations they will serve. It is imperative not to overclaim the potential benefits of the intervention and to outline any potential risks. 1.4 There should be clear and regular lines of communication between perpetrator intervention teams and victim-survivor support teams to share information and concerns. This will allow changes in risk, including threats to safety, to be rapidly
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	shared and appropriate actions taken, ensuring that victim-survivors receive timely information. The purpose of information sharing should be clear and proportionate.
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This first standard aligns with well-established global norms around safety and support for victim-survivors as a core pillar of perpetrator intervention work (see, for example, Stewart et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2019a). The first edition of the Standards (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023) and recent standards for perpetrator interventions within a multi-agency response to stalking also follow this focus (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Multi-Agency Stalking Partnership, 2026).

Having the safety and freedom of victim-survivors as the first, overarching standard was widely supported by both stalking and domestic abuse practitioners in the action learning sets, where it was also seen as supportive of the wider policing approach being encouraged for VAWG offences by Operation Soteria.

That fits quite nicely within the stalking sphere because what we know is that stalking behaviour is intrusive for the victim and it stops them from living their life in the way that they want to live their life. And that fits under that freedom doesn't it. That space for action (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

From a police point of view, in terms of investigations, that's what we keep seeing – victim-centred, suspect-focused and context led. So, standard one mirrors that, doesn't it? It takes the investigative principles, and it reinforces it (Police, Action learning set).

The survey completed for this work showed broad support for this, too, with 30 of the 33 participants who responded to the questions on applicability of existing standards (see the [Technical Annex](#) for more detail) strongly agreeing or agreeing that this standard applied across both stalking and domestic abuse sectors.

A key difference between the sectors, however, is in the use of the concept of 'space for action'. Though this concept is well known within domestic abuse organisations⁴ and featured in the first edition of the Standards (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023), it is less used in the stalking specific sector. This concept builds on Eva Lundgren's (1998) notion of 'life-space', which she used to capture how the motivations of men who are violent towards their partners are, in part, based on a desire to set limits on women's ability to exercise their freedom. 'Space for action' was a term coined by Jeffner (2000) in her exploration of young people's understandings of rape and then

⁴ See for example its use by the Women's Aid Federation of England <https://womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/change-that-lasts/>

developed by Kelly (2003) in relation to trafficking for sexual exploitation, and later for domestic abuse (Kelly, Sharp-Jeffs, and Klein, 2014). It is used here to refer to the social and structural contexts that situate human action, how these are narrowed by perpetrators, and how interventions need to focus on expanding them for victim-survivors.

As recognised in this standard, support for victim-survivors is a core part of expanding their space for action. This support needs to go beyond just making victims 'aware of' a local support organisation or making a referral (Phillips, 2015). Creating safety for all victim-survivors requires active steps to be taken. That said, the support should also be survivor-led, meaning that while the offer should be made, whether and how it is taken up or wanted by a victim-survivor should not be assumed. This came out in the action learning sets as particularly important in order not to replicate abusive dynamics.

If there is a known victim, the victim should be given a choice to have that support, but we shouldn't be imposing that support on the victim. So, I think just a little thing around language is if we know a victim, they should absolutely have that option. But we shouldn't be making those decisions for them because then we're treating them in a way that a perpetrator might treat them (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

Perpetrator interventions should also have clear processes for providing victim-survivors with information. This was discussed in the action learning sets and emphasised through the survivor panels.

I would want to see in that space that whatever was being offered to the perpetrator, that the survivor was also being offered support, but also information so they could understand what it was that their perpetrator, their stalker, was getting in treatment. What does that look like? What impact might that have on them? (Domestic abuse sector, Action learning set)

I just got a phone call about what the programme entailed, but there was no feedback loop. Their rationale was that they had to let me know because I would be at higher risk when he was on the programme, and that triggered a lot of things for me. It felt like they were just ticking a box – and my main takeaway from the call was 'your risk has increased' (Victim-survivor, Survivor panel).

Importantly, victim-survivors talked about wanting actual information about processes, not just an outline of what the intervention would entail:

What will happen if he doesn't attend? How will he be responded to if he tries to justify his actions? How will he be monitored and assessed? (Victim-survivor, Survivor panel).

There is recognition in the literature on domestic abuse perpetrator interventions that it can be difficult to support victims to understand the limitations of what work with perpetrators may achieve (Morrison et al., 2019a). This is why the Standards include a requirement not to overstate the potential benefits and to be clear on any risks (going beyond a mere statement of risk), alongside providing other safety measures, such as having separate workers supporting the victim-survivor to those delivering the perpetrator intervention.

Standard 2: Interventions should be located within a wider multi-agency response in which all agencies share the responsibility for identifying stalking and domestic abuse, enabling perpetrators to change and enhancing the safety and freedom (space for action) of victim-survivors.

Table 2: Standard 2

Interventions should be located within a wider multi-agency response in which all agencies share the responsibility for identifying stalking and domestic abuse, enabling perpetrators to change and enhancing the safety and freedom (space for action) of victim-survivors.	2.1 Interventions should have built, and be able to demonstrate, strong local partnerships. 2.2 To deliver interventions safely and effectively, all organisations in a multi-agency setting providing specialist stalking and domestic abuse work should be informed by current evidence and have a track record of responses in these areas. (The expertise of staff for perpetrator interventions is addressed in standard 6). 2.3 For perpetrator intervention staff, information sharing is expected and must be consistent with professional regulatory frameworks (e.g., Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), British Psychological Society (BPS) professional codes of ethics) and statutory safeguarding duties. 2.4 Within a multi-agency context, the victim-survivor support service is a confidential service, and information should not routinely be shared unless there is a specific safeguarding concern. 2.5 Interventions should ensure that referral to them is not used by the referring agency as a reason to close cases, as there are specific responsibilities
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	around holding and monitoring risk that remain with statutory agencies. 2.6 Where an intervention is being delivered by a non-statutory organisation on behalf of a statutory organisation, consideration should be given to relevant legal duties, including safeguarding, information sharing, equality law, data protection and risk management obligations. 2.7 Interventions should demonstrate adherence to current good practice by seeking accreditation, where available, through an appropriate route. This is in line with the National Statement of Expectations (Home Office, 2022b).
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Being embedded in a local community, and/or having built enduring connections is an important foundation for perpetrator interventions to better identify both stalking and domestic abuse, as well as be able to meet the varied needs of both victim-survivors and perpetrators (Cantos and O’Leary, 2014). Standard 2 extends beyond interventions that are multi-agency case management, to more thoroughly incorporate multi-agency work as a core part of the context through which all perpetrator interventions should be delivered.

Survey respondents showed strong support for this way of working, with 31 out of 33 question respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that a standard based on a coordinated response was integral for both sectors. A key difference that came out in the action learning sets related to whether that coordination was seen as being about communities or agencies.

The origin of many of domestic abuse perpetrator interventions was the Duluth model, in which work with men was nested within a co-ordinated community response (CCR). This model began from the principle that it was the responsibility of all agencies to hold perpetrators to account in order to enhance the safety and freedom of women and children (Pence and Paymar, 1993). The evidence base developed from this found that locating interventions within an advocacy rather than criminal justice framework has the potential to encourage victims to report abuse (Harvie and Manzie 2011). A later meta-analysis of multi-agency approaches suggested that, for domestic abuse, this location in advocacy services may facilitate an intervention to be initiated at an earlier stage (Cleaver et al., 2019).

Much of the specialist work with stalking perpetrators, similarly, has grown out of multi-agency partnerships, often led through a joint police-NHS model as

recommended in an early pilot of the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (James et al., 2010). Though these partnerships do not fully realise the CCR model, being based in coordinated agencies rather than broader communities, the multi-agency stalking partnership (MASIP) initiative – which is the first of its kind worldwide (Suzy Lamplugh Trust, 2018) – brings together a range of partners to provide a multi-disciplinary approach that has been seen to improve criminal justice outcomes, support risk management, and contribute to victim-survivors' satisfaction (Tompson, Belur and Jerath, 2020).

The importance of perpetrator interventions being connected across different systems and agencies and services is echoed in international standards work. The guidelines for Standards from the Work with Perpetrators European Network (WWP EN), covering members in 33 European countries, state that perpetrator programmes must be a part of a holistic intervention system and not be run in isolation (WWP EN, 2018). A multi-agency approach was also supported by stalking practitioners in the action learning sets.

It really needs to be that multi-agency approach, otherwise it's really difficult for that information to get shared, it just gets lost. And I think that really impacts the risk management and the support for the victim as well (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

Multi-agency needs to be the context within which all interventions are done because it's not safe to work with so much risk outside of that. To do that tricky work, we need to be contained as professionals and be able to share that risk information... for safeguarding everyone and hearing the victim's voice as well. Having that multi-agency context to any intervention work is really important (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

In multi-agency settings, it is the sharing of responsibility for identification, assessment of risk, and support - not just the sharing of information - that creates a context of meaningful accountability between and across agencies. This enables reinforcement of the same messages and expectations across the system, with statutory agencies holding their roles and powers within this (Humphreys et al., 2000; Mullender and Burton, 2001; Pattabhiraman, Kyalwazi and Shore, 2021; Rosenbaum and Geffner, 2001).

This shared responsibility for identification is particularly important in the case of stalking, with the joint investigation into the stalking super complaint finding that “the misidentification of stalking is still an issue across policing, despite increased numbers of stalking crimes recorded by police” (College of Policing, HMICFRS and IOPC, 2024: 62). An evaluation of the Cheshire Integrated Stalking Unit (Belur, 2024: 6) found that the multi-agency approach helped police to correctly identify stalking

over harassment offences, providing access to “the whole story” and thus better supporting a context-led approach.

We recognise that this collaboration across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies can be significantly harder to establish in rural contexts, where issues such as a small workforce and a large geographical distribution can limit the regularity and depth of inter-agency contact, as identified in the survivor panels.

Rurality adds layers of additional complications (Victim-survivor, Survivor panel).

Having said that, the need for a coordinated multi-agency response can be heightened in rural contexts precisely because no single agency possesses the reach or resource alone to respond effectively.

Finally, the Standards complement rather than replace existing accreditation routes for domestic abuse perpetrator work, recognising there is no current accreditation route for stalking-focused perpetrator interventions. Accreditation ensures that organisations are either meeting or working towards minimum standards throughout their work. Accreditation routes with a linked assessment process, such as the domestic abuse accreditation provided by Respect, have been shown to increase commissioning confidence (Westmarland and Zilkova, 2022). Given the newness of stalking perpetrator interventions as a field in England, routes for accreditation for stalking specific interventions were yet to be established at the time of writing.

Standard 3: Interventions should be perpetrator-focused to enable them to take accountability for the harm they have caused, whilst treating them with respect, and offering them opportunities to choose to change.

Table 3: Standard 3

Interventions should be perpetrator-focused to enable them to take accountability for the harm they have caused, whilst treating them with respect, and offering them opportunities to choose to change.	3.1 Interventions should treat perpetrators with respect while enabling them to take accountability for the harm they have caused to others and, potentially, themselves. Interventions should provide opportunities for perpetrators to behave differently and choose not to abuse or stalk. 3.2 Interventions should focus on the motivations and patterns of a perpetrator's behaviour, informed by current evidence. While interventions may include 'anger management' techniques, this should not be the overall focus of the work. 3.3 Longer-term behaviour change interventions (as defined earlier) should take into consideration the length of time needed to meet the intended outcomes: 16 one-to-one weekly sessions (or equivalent) or 22 groupwork sessions are the minimum suggested length. However, some programmes will need longer to support and embed change. 3.4 Behaviour change interventions that are delivered as groupwork should have two facilitators, and less experienced staff should be partnered with more experienced staff.
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Standard 3 echoes the ‘suspect-focused’ approach of Operation Soteria. Perpetrator accountability is an important thread in literature and practice, with some aspect of accountability or responsibility incorporated into most perpetrator interventions whatever their theoretical approach (Greal et al., 2013). In line with the first of the Principles of Effective Intervention (the prevailing evidence-based practice in offender management), it is important to approach this work in a way that offers respect to each person whilst holding perpetrators responsible for the harms they have caused (Morrison et al., 2019a).

Though there was broad support among survey respondents for the applicability of a standard based on the principles of respect and accountability to both stalking and domestic abuse (with 26 out of 32 survey participants responding to this question agreeing or strongly agreeing), some expressed hesitation about the language of holding perpetrators to account. Others thought it didn’t go far enough.

The wording of [holding to account] gives a punitive message which can be interpreted in a way that drives all sorts of unhelpful things (Government department, Survey).

I don't think interventions do hold perps to account. They are voluntary and do not go far enough (Police, Survey).

The need to get this balance right in terms of wording was, therefore, a subject of much discussion in the action learning sets.

It's important we get this part right. I think it's absolutely holding people to account... but it's about how to work in a trauma-informed way with incredibly high levels of shame that you find in this cohort: to ask the question ‘what happened to you’ and still hold people to account for the need to be responsible for their own behaviour and its impact. (Stalking sector, Action learning set)

This strengths-based and trauma-informed approach is largely embedded in the work of stalking perpetrator interventions in England and Wales (see Makinde et al., 2025; Spenser et al., 2025), as well as in the US evidence base on intimate partner violence perpetrator interventions (e.g. Bolton et al, 2022; Taft et al., 2024).

Working with the current evidence base that we've got as it develops and that changes over time suggests a pivot away from a shame-based approach to intervention to really thinking about strengths based. It's about being trauma informed in our practice given how we know that can be a real underpinning for a lot of the harmful behaviours that come out in this cohort. (Stalking sector, Action learning set)

A recent systematic review suggests that in the UK, more research is needed into trauma-informed domestic abuse perpetrator programmes (Carlisle et al., 2025). However, perpetrator interventions have always had to work with trauma before 'trauma-based' terminology was introduced, and strengths-based approaches have been in existence for decades (see Lehmann and Simmons, 2009). While models of offender behaviour change more broadly exist, such as the Principles of Effective Intervention (Bonta and Andrews, 2017) and the Good Life Model (Ward, 2002), recent research has raised questions over the quality of the underlying evidence (Fazel et al. 2024) and underlined the importance of adapting them to the domestic abuse perpetrator context (Radatz et al. 2021). In addition, how these are used in practice has tended to be guided by the needs and profiles of different groups of perpetrators (e.g., nature of criminal justice involvement, motivation to change).

Practitioners in the action learning sets discussed how to balance such an approach with the victim-centred ethos embedded in Standard 1.

Our goal is about victims. It's that whole thing that actually the person in front of you is not your primary beneficiary. I think once we're starting to look at a formulation approach and we're looking at the individual needs of the perpetrators we have to make sure that we are not inadvertently putting a survivor-centred approach and a person-centred approach in tension with each other, because they're not. It's not one or the other (Domestic abuse sector, Action learning set).

As evidenced in this quote, when used to mean a commitment to recognising and changing behaviours that harm victim-survivors, wider communities, and oneself, accountability is aligned with both a strengths-based and survivor-centered approach. It is not a punitive or inherently shaming concept, but rather when mobilised with respect, seeks a willingness to listen, communicate honestly, and engage in a values-based dialogue about how and who they want to be in the future.

The existing evidence on stalking and domestic abuse perpetrators (Maiuro et al., 2001; Thompson, 2021) and the practice-based knowledge brought to the action learning sets are clear that perpetrators of both stalking and domestic abuse are not a homogenous group; within stalking this variation is dealt with in terms of typologies. Echoing this, and as noted in the previous Home Office domestic abuse perpetrator standards, the UK has tended to take an eclectic approach to intervention design, drawing from a broad toolbox of approaches to best work with the perpetrators they are trying to engage. To be perpetrator-focused, it is important interventions are grounded in an understanding of the different and shifting motivations and patterns of perpetration and a recognition of how these manifest in any individual case.

The question of intervention length has long been debated within the domestic abuse perpetrator intervention sector. No research has been able to evidence a single

‘optimal length’, but it is widely acknowledged that behaviour change takes time. For example, based on the Prochaska and DiClemente’s (1984) transtheoretical Stages of Change framework, Begun et al. (2001) highlight the time needed to travel through these steps.

Considerable time is required to make a significant change in entrenched, habitual behaviors. The cumulative behavioral and attitudinal change demands associated with the cessation of intimate partner violence are monumental. The individual must change attitudes and behaviors that have been developed over a lifetime, and which are often reinforced by societal norms (Begun et al., 2001: 120).

This is backed up by the conclusions of Project Mirabal in the UK.

Many men, at the end of the programme, note that it takes consideration, time and reflection to understand, unpick and change embedded patterns of behaviour and habits. Many women noted that at the outset their partners thought they could attend, ‘tick a few boxes’ and carry on as usual. It is the length and depth of DVPPs which makes it possible to go beyond simple behaviour disruption to deeper changes which make a difference (Kelly and Westmarland, 2015: 46).

In a content analysis of US standards, Flasch et al. (2021) found that minimum length of ‘treatment’ (here meaning intervention programmes for intimate partner perpetrators) varied substantially, with the average number of required weeks being 27.6 and the corresponding average number of hours of ‘treatment’ being 44.2.

Less is known about the length of stalking interventions. From the research we reviewed and the practice-based knowledge within the action learning sets, it appeared that stalking interventions tended to be shorter. Partly this can be linked to the mode of delivery, which currently is as individual interventions rather than groupwork (see later in this section). In addition, some stalking interventions are not delivered through programmed sessions but instead are a series of clinical sessions, where length is flexible and determined by ongoing assessment. Given many funded stalking interventions work with ex-intimate partners, and the lack of evidence that stalking perpetrators are able to change their behaviour in less time, we retain the suggested minimum 16 weeks for one-to-one stalking behaviour change work.

For domestic abuse perpetrator behaviour change interventions, there is strong support for group delivery as the preferred format for most perpetrators, both in terms of existing standards (Austin and Dankwort, 1999) and research from programme participants (Morrison et al., 2019b). Such an approach has been found to have several clinical/behaviour change advantages, including helping perpetrators overcome not only denial (Lehmann and Simmons, 2009) but also feelings of shame, which may increase motivation to stay in the programme (Maiuro, Hagar, Lin and Olson, 2001). The importance of being engaged and encouraged by peers in groups

and having the space to process new ideas and information has also been documented (Kelly and Westmarland, 2015).

For stalking perpetrator interventions, current practice-based evidence suggests that groupwork interventions are not appropriate, though to our knowledge this has not been trialled even with similar groups (such as those who stalk ex-intimate partners). The thinking here is that a group-based programme will struggle to be relevant across the heterogeneity of stalking perpetrators with different perpetrator-victim relationship types and different motivations for offending. There is also concern from the sector that a group-based programme that includes intimate and ex-intimate partners may confirm delusional thinking in those perpetrators who assume a level of intimacy with a victim that they have never had. This latter concern may be addressed through robust intake assessment processes.

In addition, most of the existing stalking perpetrator interventions in England and Wales are delivered online. The practice of remote delivery of perpetrator interventions developed at pace through the COVID-19 pandemic. Some studies have found the online format solves some long-established issues with programme delivery of domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, including rural access while simultaneously opening up new challenges (Bellini and Westmarland, 2021). However, there have been no studies comparing the effectiveness of online versus in-person delivery and more research is needed in this area (Taft et al, 2024).

Standard 4: The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time.

Table 4: Standard 4

The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time	4.1 Organisations should have a written model of work that sets out the objectives, nature, content and intended outcomes of each intervention offered, which groups of perpetrators it is appropriate for, and how support for all victim-survivors will be integrated. 4.2 Assessments should enable identification of risks posed by the perpetrator and their responsivity to change to determine their suitability/capacity for an intervention. Interventions should recognise that risk is dynamic and have mechanisms in place to respond accordingly. Interventions should not equate engagement or completion with an automatic reduction in risk. Where additional or complex needs are identified, a plan for addressing these (and, where necessary, a referral pathway) should be identified. Assessment decisions should be clearly documented and available when needed for objective and external scrutiny. 4.3 Where adaptation is needed for a specific perpetrator population (such as where perpetrators have needs relating to neurodivergence, mental health, drug and/or alcohol misuse, immigration status) co-working with a relevant skilled practitioner should be considered. 4.4 Interventions should be mindful of the ways in which perpetrators can manipulate services and systems by presenting themselves as victims. Assessment processes should enable identification of the primary perpetrator and not deliver perpetrator-focused interventions to victim-
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	survivors who have had dual or counter-allegations made against them. 4.5 Motivation for participation should be carefully assessed throughout the intervention. Perpetrator interventions should guard against being used as a route to maintaining or reasserting control over, and/or contact with a victim-survivor through repeated or extended court or complaints proceedings, or as a method for stalking by proxy. Perpetrators who are currently (or have recently been) party to family court proceedings should be assessed for their suitability by programme staff independently of any prior assessment or recommendation by a referring agency or solicitor. 4.6 Where a perpetrator may be a victim of another crime, there should be a clear referral pathway for them to obtain support for that, whilst they engage with an appropriate perpetrator-focused intervention. 4.7 Current practice-based evidence suggests conjoint work between perpetrator and victim should not take place for stalking-focused interventions and it is rarely appropriate in cases of domestic abuse. For domestic abuse, it should only be considered once perpetrator behaviour change work has been completed, and a further suitability assessment has been conducted separately with the perpetrator and the victim-survivor. Similar caveats apply to informal or formal mediation, reconciliation, restorative justice, or religious arbitration work.
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There is a body of research on domestic abuse interventions which emphasises the importance of assessment to move away from a ‘one size fits all’ model and enable a more tailored approach (Maiuro and Eberle, 2008; Babcock et al., 2016). Similarly, the role of assessment for stalking is foregrounded in much of the research on stalking risk assessment tools (see Kelly et al., 2026).

The importance of assessment was echoed by some survey respondents. Indeed, some respondents felt the Standards should go further in this regard:

I don't agree this standard can be used without explicit explanation as to who should decide who the right people are and what the right intervention looks like (OPCC, Survey).

While this may not be an ideal position, intervention availability, development and research is not developed to an extent that we are able to specify this with any confidence. For now, the situation is one of ensuring interventions that do exist are offered to those perpetrators assessed as most likely to change their behaviour (increasing the safety and freedom for victim-survivors through the lens of Standard 1) while using Standard 7 (monitoring and evaluation) to help us move closer to this position in the future.

The action learning sets cemented the importance for practitioners that detailed and tailored assessments take place before someone is accepted onto an intervention:

I think it comes down to that really important part of a very clear contextual assessment to understand what the nature of the problem is for the person in front of you (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

I think what we've learned over 25 years is that you very much have to tailor the response to the individual. So what works for whom is the really important question, and there needs to be a really clear assessment process and triaging of suitability for whatever the intervention is, as well as an assessment of risk and responsivity and need. And I think if you've got all of that in place, then you want to have a suite of interventions that can meet that broad range of needs across the cohort (Domestic abuse sector, Action learning set).

Some domestic abuse programmes, particularly those linked to the criminal justice system, have moved towards aligning their programmes with the Principles of Effective Intervention (PEI). The PEI are backed up by a large body of international research that demonstrate general behaviour change programmes for offenders have greater reductions in recidivism when they follow these principles (Bonta and Andrews, 2017). An updated evidence synthesis however suggests the evidence base shows authorship bias, is mostly based on low-quality research and more research is required to support these claims (Fazel et al., 2024). As evidenced in the quote above, it is generally acknowledged that the first three of these principles – Risk, Need and Responsivity (known collectively as the RNR principles) are the most important. There is some evidence that the move towards a more tailored approach to interventions achieves better outcomes (Travers et al., 2021). This includes tailoring interventions to offending patterns and/or readiness to change (Arias, Arce and Vilariño, 2013; Babcock et al., 2016), but this is resource intensive.

Practice-based evidence confirms that systems may be used by perpetrators to continue to harm and harass victim-survivors, and this awareness should be built into all perpetrator interventions.

Perpetrators often attempt to manipulate and weaponise systems and services in order to abuse and control, and the service needs to have plans in place to mitigate that risk, to identify that and mitigate it (Domestic abuse sector, Action learning set).

Commissioned services need to have system processes to assess the prevailing motivation of service users and how to identify and manage skilled deception (Police, Action learning set).

For stalking, practitioners raised concerns about disguised compliance in an intervention being a way of ‘stalking by proxy’ (e.g. a continuation of unwanted and repeated contact by triggering notifications to the victim-survivor), or a method for indulging their obsessive or delusional thinking through talking at length about the victim-survivor. This also came up for victim-survivors as a broader concern about perpetrator interventions. Some worried the perpetrator would get to own the narrative and their voice would be rendered invisible.

It’s a really unfair thing for them to be offered. It’s like I’m not involved in my story and what happened to me. I worry that I can’t own my own story and that it might be weaponised against me (Victim-survivor, Survivor panel).

It is, therefore, crucial that as well as motivations for offending, assessments should be able to determine motivations for participating in an intervention and enable identification of the primary perpetrator in contexts where there are counter-allegations.

There are international debates about how safe and effective jointly working with victims and perpetrators is, as summarised in the first edition of the Standards (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023). There was clear agreement in the action learning sets that conjoint work should never take place for stalking and that it was rarely appropriate for intimate partner perpetrators. However, these standards are for all forms of domestic abuse, and there are some forms of family violence, particularly adolescent to parent violence where joint working is more commonplace. There is, therefore, no blanket prohibition for domestic abuse, but any consideration of conjoint working needs to start with being survivor-led, and having evidence of significant perpetrator behaviour change and careful protective processes in place.

Standard 5: Interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.

Table 5: Standard 5

Interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.	5.1 Interventions should recognise that people from minoritised groups may have experienced multiple structural barriers and disadvantages, and that engagement and change are more likely where these are explored, acknowledged, and addressed. 5.2 The underpinning mechanisms of abuse and stalking (e.g. entitlement, obsession, control, coercion) apply across all communities. However, how these are understood, expressed and justified is likely to vary. Variations in gender, generational and cultural norms, and how they affect these mechanisms, should be explored. 5.3. Interventions should explore the individual, familial and wider beliefs that permit, justify or minimise abuse and stalking alongside those which do not support it. In some situations, victim-survivors and/or perpetrators may frame these beliefs in narratives of culture, faith, religion and/or community values. However, it is important that practitioners do not reinforce stereotypes of entire communities. 5.4 Interventions should have processes in place so that direct work (one-to-one and group) can be made available to people for whom English is a second language.
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Perpetrators from minoritised groups may have experienced barriers and disadvantages which will interact with their choice to abuse. Historically, the literature on interventions for domestic abuse perpetrators has highlighted this, pointing to the different experiences of culture, community, and family that perpetrators may have

(Gangoli et al., 2024, Pence and Paymar, 1993; Williams and Becker, 1994; Zellerer, 2003) as well as experiences of being harmed through racism, ablism, heterosexism. Skills training for intervention staff should, therefore, include a focus on structural inequalities and how they affect access; and the ways domestic abuse is understood and experienced (Babcock, Green, and Robie, 2004; Stover, Meadows, and Kaufman, 2009, Stover and Lent, 2014).

Despite this, it has been argued that a 'one size fits all' approach has been found in domestic abuse perpetrator interventions (Cannon and Buttell, 2016; Maiuro and Eberle, 2008), suggesting "little or no special effort is being made to understand or accommodate the needs of minority populations" (Williams and Becker, 1994: 287). The knowledge and practice base on this needs building in a UK context, since most of the research is from the US. In the few cases where minoritisation has been considered in a UK context, it has usually been in relation to intimate partner violence, with family violence rarely considered, despite there being a strong knowledge base on 'honour'-based abuse and forced marriage (see Bhanbhro, Cronin, and Lusambili (2016) for a review).

The emerging evidence base on stalking perpetrator interventions is significantly limited in this area. Existing evaluations are based on small numbers of perpetrators (for example Jerath, Tompson, and Belur, 2022, Makinde et al., 2025, Spenser et al, 2025) meaning that intersectional analysis and a more realist evaluative approach (what works, for whom, under what circumstances, and by what mechanisms) is not possible. Stalking sector professionals also raised the limits of existing assessment tools in this area.

I think something for me that we're much more attuned to in our practice probably over the last 10 years is what the limitations are on the assessment tools that we use in terms of their cultural sensitivity... we haven't got that evidence base about what is and isn't culturally appropriate and tested within those (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

The data on work with neurodivergent perpetrators is sparse, but one study suggests that undiagnosed ADHD/Autism may be interpreted as belligerence and lack of engagement by practitioners (Renehan and Fitz-Gibbon, 2022), and more recent work suggests the need for more neurodiverse affirmative provision in perpetrator interventions (Renehan, 2026). A recent review examining possible links between facets of neurodiversity and stalking concluded tentatively that, neurodivergent individuals who engage in stalking have contributing factors that mirror those observed among neurotypical perpetrators (Baciu and Worthington, 2025).

Inclusive adjustments to learning approaches can help address barriers to participation, complemented by co-facilitation with highly skilled practitioners trained

in neurodivergence (Renehan and Fitz-Gibbon, 2022). Capacity assessment procedures should be undertaken where capacity is in question for victim-survivors or perpetrators.

Though some access issues are addressed through online interventions, access to interventions can be physically limited if venues are not equipped for wheelchair users. Other access limitations may be due to language – both first language (including British Sign Language) and language use in relation to neurodiversity. Practice-based knowledge from the action learning sets on this project as well as the roundtables conducted as part of the first edition of the Standards suggests that language-specific groups are preferable to the use of translators in a group, as they enhance communication, participation and understanding.

For LGB and/or T intimate partner perpetrators, generic behaviour change content may not be appropriate as it often takes heterosexual partnerships as the default (Gray et al, 2020). The first edition of the Standards also included concerns from practitioners about generic behaviour change content being used without adaptation for female perpetrators (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023). Research has shown that same sex relationships, there can be additional challenges in identifying the primary perpetrator (Gray et al., 2020), for example it may be wrongly assumed that the physically larger partner is the primary aggressor. Specific forms of abuse within LGB and/or T relationships, such as identity abuse (for example, threatening to 'out' a partner) may be overlooked and remain under-researched (Donovan and Barnes, 2019).

Here again, there are significant limits in the existing evidence base on stalking, including on female perpetrators. Thompson, Dennison, and Stewart (2013) note that most risk models for stalking have been developed through male perpetrators, and it is unclear whether they work in the same way for females. This finding is particularly concerning given a review of the literature on female stalkers finding they pose a similar level of violence risk as their male counterparts, although this risk is often perceived as nonthreatening (Brooks et al, 2021). Though a small number of studies have looked at stalking perpetration and victimisation for LGB and/or T communities (see Edwards et al, 2022 for a review), the existing perpetration evidence base focuses on intimate partner stalkers (e.g. Valerian et al, 2011).

Though there was clear support in the survey for this standard being applicable across both stalking and domestic abuse (with 30 participants agreeing or strongly agreeing with this), one respondent queried its focus.

All clients should be treated equally. Perpetrators weaponise identity and this needs to be addressed within the Standards. Abuse is abuse, there is never any justification

for it. Professionals need to deal with the issue and not play identity politics.
(Domestic abuse sector, Survey)

It is important for interventions to be clear that space to recognise and possibly even work with marginalisation, minoritisation, and barriers to engagement experienced by perpetrators is not the same as enabling these factors to be used as a legitimisation of offending. Standard 5 frames the issue as one of underpinning mechanisms, present in all social groups, that create conducive contexts for violence (Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999; Almeida, Woods, Messineo, and Font, 1998), something echoed by practitioners.

What's important here is the idea about the social structural supports for abusive behaviour and those gendered social norms... If we don't include the structural then we have a problem because we end up with an exclusively individualised narrative that I think is a bit risky (Domestic abuse sector, Action learning set).

All contexts however also contain alternative ideas and beliefs that support non-violence, and practitioners should integrate curiosity about these in their work.

Standard 6: Interventions focused on a specific form or context of perpetration should be delivered by staff who are skilled and supported in responding to that specific form or context.

Table 6: Standard 6

Interventions focused on a specific form or context of perpetration should be delivered by staff who are skilled and supported in responding to that specific form or context.	6.1 Interventions should be delivered and managed by a team that seeks to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. 6.2 Staff should have in-depth knowledge relevant to the forms and context of perpetration they are working with, as well as practical knowledge about local safeguarding and multi-agency processes and the intervention they are working within. This also applies to victim-survivor support workers. 6.3 All staff should regularly receive continuing professional development (CPD). For psychologists and psychiatrists delivering interventions, CPD requirements are set out by existing governing bodies. 6.4 All staff involved in risk assessment should be trained in relevant structured professional judgement tools and how to use them within a structured professional judgement process. 6.5 Staff delivering interventions should have access to regular internal line management supervision. All staff should also have access to funded, high-quality, regular external clinical supervision. Staff who are supporting but not delivering interventions should be offered the same support. 6.6 Workloads should not exceed the level that can be carried out safely, and delivered equitably, for specific interventions. This applies to both victim-survivor support and perpetrator work.
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	6.7 An enhanced vetting from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) should be obtained for anyone delivering perpetrator and/or victim-survivor interventions, and any previous use of domestic abuse and/or stalking or harassment should be disclosed. People currently perpetrating domestic abuse and/or stalking should not be delivering interventions. Anyone who has previously perpetrated domestic abuse or stalking needs to evidence substantive personal and behaviour change before being permitted to deliver perpetrator interventions.
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There is discussion in the literature on domestic abuse perpetrator programmes about whether facilitators should come from the same ethnic backgrounds as the men in their groups (Pattabhiraman, Kyalwazi, and Shore, 2021). This reflects broader effectiveness evidence that suggests behaviour change work with men who are minoritised by race and ethnicity is more effective in groups with shared heritages (Aymer, 2011; Parra-Cardona et al. 2013; Waller, 2016; Williams, 1992). However, research conducted for the previous domestic abuse standards suggested that diversity in group work can also be a source of insight and learning, concluding that there could be benefits in both approaches.

While these standards do not cover organisational management, the quality and sustainability of interventions depend on organisations ensuring practitioners have the required skills, knowledge and support. Research on domestic abuse has highlighted the importance in having a knowledgeable, confident, and supported team of staff (Stover and Lent, 2014; Morrison et al., 2019a). It was clear in the survey that respondents felt similarly; nine of 33 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the wording of this standard from the first edition – which referred only to domestic abuse – could be extended to stalking. While some respondents disagreed around the wording, this has been resolved by the addition of the term stalking in this standard.

The specialism required for this work, and the importance of training to support this, also came across very strongly in the action learning sets and survivor panels:

I think it can't be emphasised enough that this is highly specialised work in a very niche area of offending behaviour, and people's expertise and skills need to reflect that. (Stalking sector, Action learning set)

This is not the kind of work where a teacher stands at the front of the class with a flip chart and just teaches this stuff. This is about a deep exploration of shame and the roots of motivation for being abusive. There need to be really skilled group facilitators or one-to-one therapists or whoever those professionals are. It is difficult work. (Domestic abuse sector, Action learning set)

By being nice and caring, a practitioner might feed those [obsessional] beliefs - it needs to be in a strict, bounded way and they have to be trained. My worry is that any validation would feed their obsessions in a fixed, delusional way. (Victim-survivor, Survivor panel)

The skills needed for such work extend beyond an in-depth knowledge of stalking and/or domestic abuse, or practical knowledge about safeguarding, multi-agency processes and assessment, though these are integral. The range of skills and training includes areas such as working with neurodivergence (Renehan, 2026) and complex mental health needs (Jerath, Thomson, and Belur, 2023; Mullen et al., 2006; Purcell and McEwan, 2018; Spencer et al. 2024; Trevillion et al. 2012), as well as specific competences in relation to assessment, group and one-to-one work, and the modalities and approaches used by the intervention itself. These are to be understood as supplementing a core competency in the type of offending that the intervention addresses:

I don't want to be directive in a set of standards about what people should be trained in, but I think you need staff to understand more than just the behaviour or more than the offence... you need to have staff who are skilled in all sorts of things linked to the behaviour around stalking or someone's motivation to stalk (Stalking sector, Action learning set).

It was in support of this, that the need for high quality and, where possible, subject-matter specialist supervision came out strongly in the action learning sets:

I think that's the other part, it needs to be delivered by people with appropriate skill, appropriate qualification, but also appropriate supervision mechanisms by people who know what the problem is to be able to supervise it. (Stalking sector, Action learning set)

You have line management supervision, which is your more everyday stuff and the clinical supervision as well. So, it's making it explicit that you require both of those to an appropriate standard. (Stalking sector, Action learning set)

This is supported by the health frameworks within which many stalking-focused interventions already operate, where clinical supervision is established practice. The wider literature on effective domestic abuse perpetrator interventions also emphasises the need for external clinical supervision for all team members (Evans and Robertson, 2021).

Standard 7: Monitoring and evaluation of interventions should take place to improve practice and expand the knowledge base.

Table 7: Standard 7

Monitoring and evaluation of interventions should take place to improve practice and expand the knowledge base.	7.1 Clear and consistent records should be in place to enable safe and effective delivery of the intervention and identification of, and prompt responses to, increased risk/safeguarding concerns. 7.2 Data should be collected on interventions, in line with their model of work and aligned to their referral and funding requirements. Data should include outcomes relevant to the intervention and who is (and, importantly, who is not) currently accessing it. 7.3. The experiences of a) victim-survivors associated with perpetrator service users and b) perpetrator service users should be gathered and used as a source of learning. There should be a transparent process and timeline for gathering and reflecting on this information within teams (proportionate to the size of the organisation). 7.4. Existing interventions should seek to be externally evaluated, and interventions should always be independently evaluated when new approaches are being piloted. Evaluations should demonstrate a commitment to building the evidence base for perpetrator interventions, including plans for open access publication of results/learning.
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There is a strong thread in the academic literature on perpetrator interventions, particularly in relation to domestic abuse, about monitoring of practice as a route to ensuring minimum standards are met through attention to quality and accountability (Morrison et al., 2019a; Westmarland and Zilkova, 2022). Accreditation provides a route for ensuring that standards are being met, and that quality is maintained over time. At the same time, organisations should be using their own monitoring data as a source for reflection and learning: who is and is not taking up the intervention;

engagement and completion rates; which topics are sources of insight and challenge; the interface between perpetrator work and victim-survivor support.

Given the limited knowledge base on perpetrator interventions across VAWG, but particularly currently on stalking, ensuring this monitoring data is accurate and can be used to contribute to the evidence base should be a core requirement of any funded intervention. This was recognised in a recent report from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners on stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions (APCC, 2025) as well as by practitioners in this research.

We need to acknowledge that we still need to continue building an evidence base in terms of stalking interventions and what works and doesn't work. And I think this is almost a call to improve our data collection across the board. So, I don't think we have around stalking interventions for perpetrators as much evidence as we have potentially for domestic abuse. So, I do think it's important to acknowledge that that evidence base still needs to be built. (Stalking sector, Action learning set)

It was also strongly supported in the survey where 32 of 33 respondents saw this standard as important across both stalking and domestic abuse. Collecting accurate and complete data for interventions is thus both an administrative requirement and an important ethical aspect of the work which needs to be resourced in funding.

While monitoring data should be collected for all interventions, some may also benefit from external, independent evaluation. Independent evaluation offers the possibility of taking a fresh view of interventions and models, having external perspectives on how far the model of work is being implemented, if it is being done equitably, and where there are gaps and areas for improvement. The APCC (2025) committed to facilitating the sharing of evaluations of stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions with police and crime commissioners (PCCs). Given the government announcement that PCCs will be abolished by 2028, it is important that whatever replaces the APCC picks up on this commitment.

Saying this, not all interventions will be ready for or have the capacity to engage in an external evaluation. Given the number of gaps and areas for improvements, there does need to be space for innovative approaches. Independent evaluation and a theory of change should always be in place for new innovative approaches, with a dual emphasis on whether they are not only effective but also safe practices. Having an evaluation plan and providing results of evaluation has been highlighted as important within the Principles for Effective Intervention (Bonta and Andrews, 2017). Key to this is developing a broad understanding of what counts as 'success', such as the six measures of success for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions developed as part of [Project Mirabal](#) or the EU funded Project IMPACT which produced the [Impact Outcome toolkit](#).

Appendix 1 Standards and Guidelines Checklist

This checklist is to be used in conjunction with the Standards for Stalking and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions. It has been designed as an optional tool to enhance decision making by commissioners and service providers.

Each item could be rated in the right-hand column – 1 (not met), 2 (partly met), 3 (fully met). Any items rated 1 indicate that the service has not met the Standards. The use of this checklist is not required for the use of the Standards themselves.

Figure 1: Checklist for stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions

Standard and guidance		Score
Standard 1: The priority outcome for perpetrator interventions should be increasing the safety and freedom (space for action) of all victim-survivors, including children.		
1.1	Does the intervention's written rationale explicitly prioritise victim-survivor safety and freedom and is this supported by its structure, procedures, and intended outcomes?	
	Is there a clear, written protocol for how the intervention will determine whether a victim-survivor wants to know about a specific threat made to their safety, and if needed how this will be communicated?	
1.2	Is proactive, specialist support for victim-survivors offered that is survivor-led in terms of frequency and mode of support and provided by a different member of staff than the staff working with the perpetrator?	
	Is there evidence of partnership working with by and for victim support organisations?	
1.3	Is clear, measured information describing the intervention, its intended outcomes, and its risks provided to perpetrators and victim-survivors in a range of formats/languages? (only relevant for direct work)	
1.4	Is there a system for clear and regular lines of communication between perpetrator intervention teams and victim-survivor support teams to share information?	
	Is the purpose of information-sharing between perpetrator intervention and victim-survivor support teams clear and proportionate?	

Standard 2: Interventions should be located within a wider multi-agency response in which all agencies share the responsibility for identifying stalking and domestic abuse, enabling perpetrators to change and enhancing the safety and freedom (space for action) of victim-survivors.

2.1	Is there evidence of strong local partnerships?	
2.2	Is the intervention informed by current evidence?	
	Does the organisation delivering the intervention have a track record of responding to stalking and/or domestic abuse?	
2.3	Is there an expectation of information sharing that is consistent with relevant professional regulatory frameworks and statutory safeguarding duties?	
2.4	Is it clear that the victim-survivor support within a multi-agency context is confidential and are there clear processes for when and how a specific safeguarding concern would be shared?	
2.5	Are there processes in place to prevent referral being used by the referring agency as a reason to close cases?	
2.6	If the intervention is being delivered by a non-statutory organisation on behalf of a statutory organisation, is it clear that consideration has been given to all relevant legal duties?	
2.7	Is it clear that the intervention has considered (or, where relevant, gained) accreditation and understands the National Expectations?	

Standard 3: Interventions should be perpetrator-focused to enable them to take accountability for the harm they have caused, whilst treating them with respect, and offering them opportunities to choose to change

3.1	Does the intervention's approach, processes, and expected outcomes enable accountability for the harm they have caused while treating them respectfully as individuals?	
	Does the intervention's approach and processes provide opportunities for perpetrators to behave differently?	
3.2	Does the intervention evidence a focus on addressing the motivations and patterns of a perpetrator's behaviour as informed by current evidence?	
3.3	For longer-term behaviour change interventions, are at least 16 one-to-one weekly sessions (or equivalent) or 22 groupwork sessions offered?	

3.4	For groupwork behaviour change interventions are two facilitators used and is there evidence that less experienced staff are partnered with more experienced staff?	
Standard 4: The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time		
4.1	Does the intervention have a written model of work that sets out its objectives, nature, content, and intended outcomes, which groups of perpetrators it is appropriate for, and how support for all victim-survivors will be integrated?	
4.2	Do assessment processes used by the intervention: (a) enable identification of risks posed by the perpetrator and their responsivity to change? (b) recognise risk is dynamic and have mechanisms in place to respond to this?	
	Does the intervention have a plan for addressing additional or complex needs if identified through assessment, including through referral pathways?	
	Is there a clear process for documenting all assessment decisions and is this documentation made available when needed for objective and external scrutiny?	
4.3	Is co-working with relevant skilled practitioners considered when adaptation is needed for a specific perpetrator population?	
4.4	Do assessment processes enable identification of the primary perpetrator?	
4.5	Are there processes in place to carefully assess motivation for participation throughout an intervention?	
	Are there guards in place to prevent the intervention being used as a route to maintain control over and/or contact with a victim-survivor including, where relevant, considerations of stalking by proxy?	
	Does the intervention have a route to assess perpetrators who are currently (or have recently been) party to family court proceedings independent of any assessment or recommendation by a referring agency or solicitor?	
4.6	Is there a clear referral pathway for perpetrators who may be a victim of another crime?	
4.7	In the rare occasion where conjoint work is considered: (a) is this only for domestic abuse interventions (b) does this require the perpetrator to have completed behaviour change work and (c) is there a process in place for further suitability assessments for perpetrators and victim-survivors?	
Standard 5: Interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.		

5.1	Does the intervention recognise that people from minoritised groups may have experienced multiple structural barriers and disadvantages, and have processes to acknowledge, explore and address these?	
5.2	Does the intervention explore how variations in gender, generational, and cultural norms affect the underpinning mechanisms of stalking and domestic abuse (e.g. entitlement, obsession, control, coercion)?	
5.3	Does the intervention explore the individual, familial and wider beliefs that permit, justify or minimise abuse and stalking alongside those which do not support it?	
5.4	Are there processes in place so that direct work (one-to-one and group) can be made available to people for whom English is a second language?	
Standard 6: Interventions focused on a specific form or context of perpetration should be delivered by staff who are skilled and supported in responding to that specific form or context.		
6.1	Is the intervention delivered and managed by a team that seeks to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve?	
6.2	Is there evidence that intervention staff have in-depth knowledge relevant to the forms and context of perpetration they are working with, as well as practical knowledge about safeguarding and multi-agency processes?	
6.3	Do intervention staff regularly receive continuing professional development (CPD)?	
6.4	Are all staff involved in risk assessment trained in relevant structured professional judgement tools and how to use them within a structured professional judgement process?	
6.5	Do staff delivering interventions have access to regular internal line management supervision?	
	Do all staff have access to funded, high-quality, regular external clinical supervision, including staff who are supporting but not delivering interventions?	
6.6	Are there systems in place to ensure that workloads (for both perpetrator work and victim-survivor support) do not exceed the level that can be carried out safely, and delivered equitably, for the specific intervention?	
	Are all staff delivering interventions required to have an enhanced DBS check?	

6.7	Is the intervention clear that people currently perpetrating stalking and/or domestic abuse are not involved in delivering perpetrator and/or victim-survivor interventions?	
	If any part of the intervention is delivered by people who have previously perpetrated stalking and/or domestic abuse are there clear processes for evidencing substantive personal and behaviour change?	
Standard 7: Monitoring and evaluation of interventions should take place to improve practice and expand the knowledge base.		
7.1	Are processes in place for clear and consistent record-keeping, including in relation to increased risk/safeguarding concerns?	
7.2	Are there processes in place for consistent data collection that includes outcomes relevant to the intervention and who is and is not accessing it?	
7.3	Are the experiences of a) victim-survivors associated with perpetrator service users and b) perpetrator service users gathered and used as a source of learning?	
	Is there a transparent process and timeline for gathering and reflecting on this information within teams?	
7.4	If this is an existing intervention, has it sought external evaluation and has this evaluation openly accessible?	
	If this is a new intervention or a new approach within an intervention, are there clear plans for an openly accessible, independent evaluation?	

Appendix 2 Technical Annex

Part A. Background and context

This annex details the approach taken for this project, which was commissioned by the Home Office, to develop a set of standards for stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions in England and Wales. The Standards should be understood in the context of, or in conjunction with, other relevant government guidance including the [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#), [Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance](#), [the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#), the [Supporting Male Victims Position Statement](#), the [Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations](#), and the [Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#).

There are some key elements that have framed the thinking in developing these standards, from both practice and academic evidence. Firstly, these standards should not conflict or be in tension with those already being widely used in England and Wales (as shown in **Box 2** below). Secondly, they should be informed by the findings of the recent review of stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programmes commissioned by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in England and Wales (APCC, 2025). Thirdly, they should take lessons from the academic research on standards from other jurisdictions. Fourthly, they should move beyond intimate partner perpetrators, in relation to both stalking and domestic abuse, and include interventions beyond behaviour change group work, echoing the first edition of the Standards. Lastly, consideration should be given to what might enable the wider reach into groups that are not well served by current provision.

Box 2: Summary of the three sets of standards currently in use in England and Wales

- [Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel \(CSAAP\)](#), comprising academics and expert practitioners who provide independent accreditation advice to His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) across a range of offender types;
- [Respect Principles and Standards](#), which are specific to domestic abuse;
- [Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards](#), which are intended to apply to a range of forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including sexual violence.

There are different dimensions to consider when developing standards that address what is currently considered as ‘best’, ‘safe’ and ‘effective’ practice. Internationally, the (English language) knowledge base on domestic abuse is heavily skewed towards research and practice from the US (and to a much lesser extent Australia, Canada, the UK and New Zealand), and towards behaviour change groupwork interventions for intimate partner violence. Additionally, most study samples are made up of white, heterosexual, male perpetrators.

A particular challenge in this work has been balancing the need for standards to be evidenced rather than only having a philosophical base, whilst recognising that much of the evidence for stalking-specific interventions is still being built. ‘Stalking’ is a relatively new specific area for intervention. Internationally, the concept of stalking emerged in the 1990s (Giorgi-Guarnieri and Norko, 2007), and in England and Wales it only became a criminal offence in 2012 when the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was amended to criminalise stalking. Accordingly, stalking-specific perpetrator interventions in England and Wales are relatively recent, particularly when contrasted with domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, although they seem to be following a similar trajectory in terms of developing an evidence base.

Many of the early papers on domestic abuse perpetrator intervention standards focused on ‘making the case’ for why they were needed. This involved making best practice suggestions for developing them (involving both community workers and academics) and outlining current debates. All were based on groupwork perpetrator ‘programmes’ originating in the US. These are significantly different to stalking perpetrator interventions, which current practice-based evidence from the action learning sets suggests should only be delivered on a one-to-one basis. Much of the early domestic abuse work sought to make the case that, whilst there were benefits to having state standards, care should be taken not to make these too rigid because the knowledge base on what works was still in its infancy. Current concerns in the stalking sector are similar – that while there is a need for standards, if these are drawn too tightly, they might limit innovation and development.

The current evidence base for stalking perpetrator interventions in England and Wales is significantly limited by insufficiency in the data collected, such as uneven data capture or small sample sizes due to low take-up or attrition. Evaluations of the Compulsive Obsessive Behaviour Intervention (COBI), for example, draw on service user data comprising 11 perpetrators who completed the intervention in one study (The Centre for Public Innovation, 2025) and just one perpetrator in another (Makinde et al., 2025). A study of the MASIP pilot sites drew on evidence from six perpetrators (Jerath, Tompson, and Belur, 2022). Evidence of effectiveness has also been limited by the lack of funding for mapping long-term outcomes. For example, the MASIP pilot evaluation found that it was too early to determine the impact on

reoffending (Tompson, Belur and Jerath, 2020). At the time of writing, a newly published evaluation of the Early Assistance Stalking Intervention (EASI) in the West Midlands (Spenser et al., 2025) addresses some of these limits with a larger sample size and more medium-term measurement of outcomes. This evaluation did find a reduction in reoffending as measured by police-recorded offences. However, the authors noted that the intervention group had significantly lower rates of offending than the comparison group to begin with as the intervention is a diversionary scheme for first-time offenders who have admitted guilt. This poor comparator may limit the extent of claims that can be made about observed differences.

Though the evidence base on domestic abuse is more developed, there are still significant shortcomings. International literature on intimate partner perpetrator interventions has recognised limits including in relation to same sex relationships, female perpetrators, people with disabilities, and minority groups. The wider reach into forms of family abuse that the Standards required has not yet been addressed in any depth in academic research, though some of this gap was filled by the first edition of the Standards (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023) which sought to draw on practice-based evidence. Overall, the literature shows a consensus that research on the effectiveness of intimate partner perpetrator interventions remains vastly underdeveloped, globally, in terms of what is most useful and for whom.

It is not only that the evidence base is still being developed that creates limitations. The ‘what works’ field itself is full of contentions. An increasing number of UK-based studies have shown that domestic abuse perpetrator programmes can and do have positive impacts (Dobash et al., 1997; Kelly and Westmarland, 2015; Bloomfield and Dixon, 2015; Hester et al., 2019). The limited stalking intervention literature also shows a promising trajectory in some aspects, particularly in terms of increasing identification of stalking and charge rates (Tompson, Belur and Jerath, 2020; Belur, 2023), and improving psychosocial functioning (Spenser et al., 2025). As argued in the first edition of the Standards, to move the field forward we need to move away from the global ‘do they work’ question to a more realist understanding of how and why different interventions work, and with which groups of perpetrators. Many of the ‘do they work’ style studies have significant limitations that are not easily overcome in working with these populations, including high levels of research sample attrition and low rates of participation by victim-survivors.

It is because of the limited evidence base for stalking, as well as the sparse evidence base for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, particularly when we consider England and Wales, that it would be premature to place too stringent a set of standards upon perpetrator interventions. There must be room for innovation and development, but with a requirement that interventions seek to expand the evidence base so that future iterations of these standards can ground themselves more firmly in a published evidence base.

Part B. Defining key terms

As these standards were commissioned by the Home Office, they follow the definition of domestic abuse enshrined in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)⁵. Domestic abuse as defined in the Act is not a crime type in itself. Rather it is a context for a range of crime types (including stalking), committed by a range of perpetrators. This means that they include not only intimate partner violence, but also other violence and abuse where the victim and perpetrator are aged 16 or over and are personally connected. Hence, adolescent/adult child to parent violence or abuse (sometimes called inter-generational abuse) is included but child (under age 16) to parent abuse is not. Whilst some forms of ‘honour’ based abuse and forced marriage are also included, there is currently very little research or practice-based evidence on perpetrator interventions in this arena, including work with multiple perpetrators (Gangoli et al., 2024).

Stalking is a crime type that can take place in a range of contexts. Stalking perpetrators can be current or former intimate partners or family members, but they can also be work colleagues, students, patients, clients, customers, acquaintances, and strangers. Research suggests that at least a half of all stalking offences reported in surveys take place outside of a previous intimate relationship (see Kelly et al., 2026). It is crucial that stalking perpetrator interventions are available across the range of perpetrator-victim relationship types, and that this relationship is assessed correctly prior to both intervention referral and delivery.

The crime of stalking is covered by two offences inserted into the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (the 1997 Act) in 2012:

- Section 2A of the 1997 Act creates an offence of pursuing a course of conduct that amounts to stalking.
- Section 4A of the 1997 Act creates a more serious offence of pursuing a course of conduct which amounts to stalking and either causes the victim to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against them or causes the victim serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on their usual day-to-day activities.

As illustrated above, though recognised as a distinct crime type, there is no legal or statutory definition for what amounts to stalking. Section 2A does give examples of some common acts associated with stalking, such as following a person, contacting

⁵ Section 1 of the DA Act provides that both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged over 16. ‘Child’ is defined in s.3(4) of the Act as being a person under the age of 18 years, but this relates to when the child is a victim of domestic abuse as it is described in s.3 - the child sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse between the perpetrator (A) and the victim (B) and is related to A or B.

or attempting to contact a person by any means, but these are not acts specific only to stalking, nor are they crimes in all contexts. Definitions of stalking in the literature commonly conceptualise it as “repeated, unwanted, contact that causes the recipient distress and/or fear” (Korkodeilou, 2016; McEwan, Harder, Brandt, and de Vogel, 2020), with Belur et al (2024: 2) stating this means it is “victim-defined, context specific, and consequently, difficult to identify”.

This definitional ambiguity of stalking has created confusion between stalking and other course of conduct offences and is part of the reason behind a legislative review of stalking, due to complete in 2026 ([Home Office, 2026](#)). Given that the final review was not public at the time of writing these standards, we have not been able to incorporate its findings here.

Part C. Research methods

This project adopted a multi-method, engagement-centred approach, gathering a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform the development of standards for perpetrators of domestic abuse and perpetrators of stalking within the constraints of a short timescale. The use of mixed methods was essential to provide as comprehensive a picture as possible of the current landscape of stalking perpetrator interventions in England and Wales and address the different requirements in the research brief. These included: service mapping of existing domestic abuse perpetrator and stalking perpetrator interventions in England and Wales; exploring the current evidence base for these programmes; identifying international examples of best practice; addressing gaps in the evidence base; reviewing how the existing Home Office standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions were operating and how they could be improved.

The multi-method design was complementary, meaning different methods could fill gaps, enhance understanding or address specific elements of the research task. As far as possible within the timeframe, the research activities were organised sequentially to ensure each could build on the previous, helping to overcome gaps and limitations and shaping discussion topics. We began with a review of the academic and grey literature to identify published evidence. While the international evidence base on domestic abuse perpetrator interventions is extensive, having developed over several decades, that on stalking interventions is far more limited. Not all of it is captured in published literature, and only a small proportion of this is focused on interventions operating specifically in England and Wales. This is partly because stalking as a field is relatively new. This meant it was necessary to harness practice-based knowledge from those working directly with stalking perpetrators and victim-survivors and combine this with the published literature to expand the range of evidence available.

The literature review was, therefore, followed up with a scoping review of existing interventions in England and Wales to ensure that information on as many local interventions as possible was captured. A survey with commissioners and practitioners then explored how the existing domestic abuse standards were working, as well as gathering additional information on current interventions. Action learning sets were subsequently used to discuss and refine the emerging standards, as well as to work through key findings from the evidence, explore tensions and knowledge gaps, thereby supplementing the academic knowledge base. Finally, two survivor panels (attended by seven women) reviewed the final draft and gave input from their perspective.

In addition, we built on the evidence gathered for the previous standards on domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, which included a rapid review of the literature on interventions, standards from around the world, and extensive stakeholder engagement (totalling 297 practitioners and policy makers, eight victim-survivors and seven perpetrators who had accessed interventions). Two of our current project team led on that earlier work and were able to provide in-depth explanation of what was found, as well as any remaining gaps.

A key strength of this methodological approach was the bringing together of different data to explore similar topics, enabling triangulation of findings and a comprehensive body of evidence. As the published literature could only provide a partial picture, particularly of stalking, the insights of professionals helped ensure this was informed by up-to-date practice. Limitations include only accessing English-language literature and the dominance of US-based studies within this, as well as a short timescale for the work and limited capacity within the sector affecting some engagement, particularly for smaller and specialist third sector organisations.

The methods for each component are described below. Ethical approval was granted by London Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Review Panel covering all strands of the study.

Rapid scoping review

A rapid scoping review (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005) of academic and grey literature was carried out on the nature and effectiveness of stalking perpetrator interventions, both internationally and in England and Wales. Relevant literature was located by searching two academic databases: EBSCO (which encompasses several research databases, such as PsycINFO and PubMed) and Google Scholar to ensure grey literature was also captured. Publications were limited to those written in English language from 2010 onwards. The search terms (stalk*) + (perp* OR Offend* OR *Suspect) + (Intervention* OR program*) were used on both databases, leading to the identification of 859 sources. All searches were conducted in November 2025.

Once the returned results had been screened by two coders for relevance and duplicates removed, 47 items were deemed suitable for inclusion. An additional 26 relevant items were identified through snowballing and discussions with project leads as part of the mapping of interventions (see [Scoping current perpetrator interventions](#)).

Key information was extracted about each source and recorded in a spreadsheet, including: publication details; topic; type of material; whether the focus was on domestic abuse, stalking or both; study type; disciplinary background; sample details; main findings; and strengths and limitations of the piece. A narrative pro-forma was also completed for each piece to extract more detailed notes.

A rapid evidence assessment on domestic abuse perpetrator interventions had already been carried out in preparation of the previous edition of the Standards (Westmarland and Kelly, 2023), encompassing literature up to mid-2022. We drew on these findings and supplemented them with more recent evidence by reviewing additional academic and grey literature published from 2022 onwards. This was identified through academic databases, international practitioner networks, and a presentation at an international conference.

In addition to this, the first edition of the Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions included a review of existing standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions internationally (see Westmarland and Kelly, 2023). Through this, 24 sets of existing standards were collated covering Wales, the UK, Australia, many US states, Canada, and some European countries. This work informed the content and wording of the Standards proposed at the time, which have also informed the content and some of the wording of the current standards. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) National Framework for Interventions (NFI) Policy Framework were also reviewed and the recent report from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners on commissioned stalking and domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programmes.

Service mapping

To supplement the limited evidence base on UK-based stalking-focused perpetrator interventions identified via the literature review, we conducted a service mapping exercise to establish the broad landscape of existing stalking perpetrator interventions in England and Wales.

This was achieved by speaking with project leads from all stalking perpetrator interventions funded by the Home Office's Domestic abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Intervention Fund. These were not formal interviews, but in-depth conversations directed at understanding the scope and underpinning evidence base for the

interventions and gathering related documentation. This was combined with findings from the survey (below) to generate a list of all stalking-focused perpetrator interventions in England and Wales at the time of the research (Table 8).

Table 8: Stalking-specific perpetrator interventions by type and location

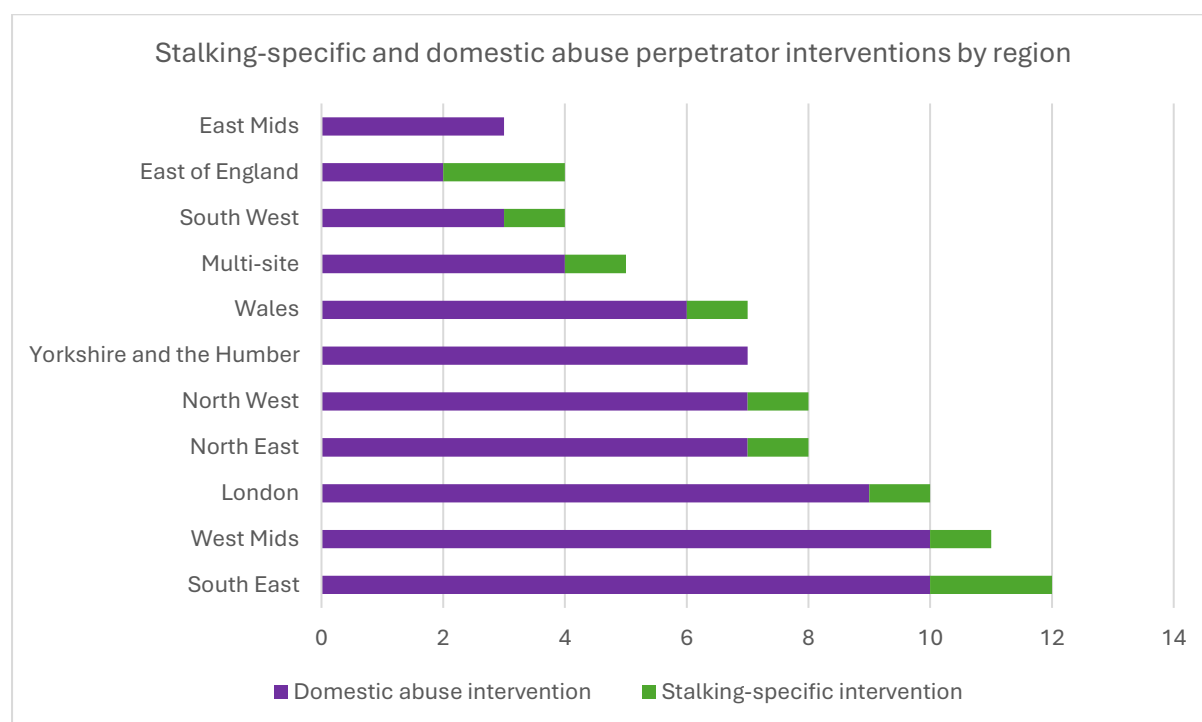
Region	Intervention type
South-East	Intensive multi-agency case management
South-East	Longer-term behaviour change
East of England	Intensive multi-agency case management
East of England	Intensive multi-agency case management
London	Intensive multi-agency case management
North-East	Intensive multi-agency case management
North-West	Intensive multi-agency case management
South-West	Shorter-term, early responses
Wales	Shorter-term, early responses
West Midlands	Shorter-term, early responses
Multi-site	Longer-term behaviour change

Some of the intensive multi-agency case management interventions included early response or behaviour change components, though the overall provision was one of case management. Where available, evaluations for all interventions were added to the items collated and reviewed as part of the rapid scoping review. Notably, two of the interventions had evaluations underway at the time of research, only one of which was seen by researchers prior to writing this report (Spenser et al., 2025).

We also wanted to ensure we had a current understanding of the provision of domestic abuse perpetrator interventions. Respect (the second-tier organisation for domestic abuse perpetrator work in the UK) provided us with information on all perpetrator intervention programmes they make referrals to through their national

helpline. This was brought together with the information on stalking perpetrator interventions to create an indicative overview of existing provision, designed to allow some comparison between stalking-specific and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, rather than to provide a systematic mapping. Table 9 below shows the results of the geographical comparison in provision.

Table 9: Regional comparison of stalking-specific and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions



As Table 9 demonstrates there is significant under-provision of both stalking-specific and domestic abuse perpetrator interventions across England and Wales. There is currently no set provision of stalking-specific perpetrator interventions in either the East Midlands (which is the fourth largest region in England) or Yorkshire and the Humber (which is the sixth largest region in England), though multi-site provision may be bought into these areas on a case-by-case basis. Whilst other regions have stalking interventions, two of these (Wales and the West Midlands) only work with stalkers in the context of domestic abuse. Provision also differs by type with most stalking-specific interventions being intensive multi-agency case management (often with a behaviour change component within it) (see Table 8), compared to the longer-term behaviour change interventions that characterise the domestic abuse perpetrator interventions represented above.

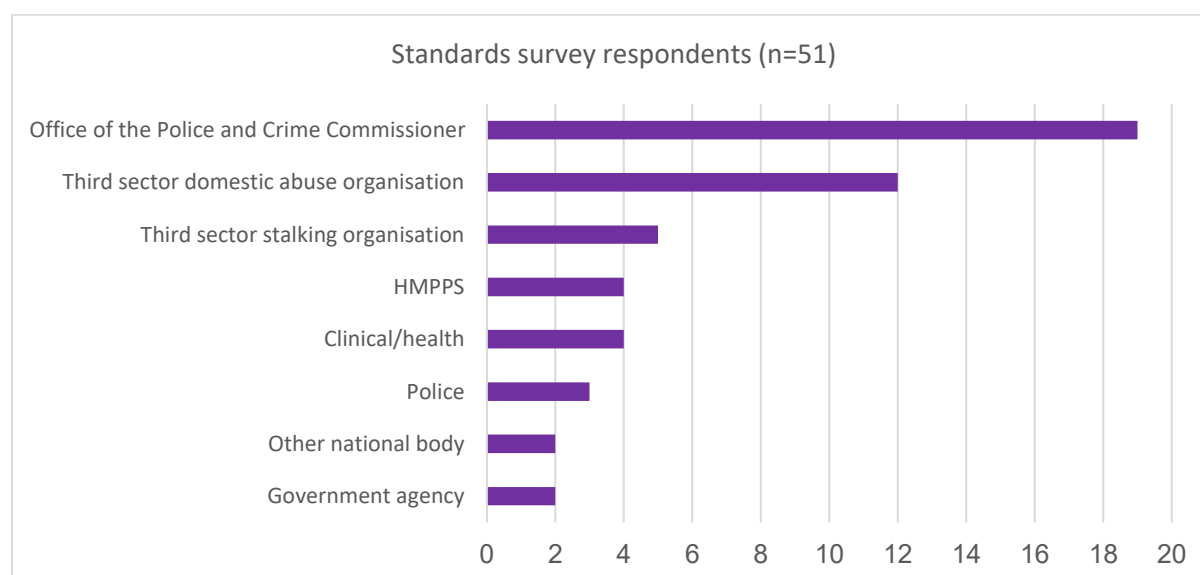
This overview is however limited in that interventions that were in their infancy or less well-known or – for domestic abuse – interventions not accredited by Respect may have been missed given the time constraints of the project.

Survey for OPCCs and third-sector organisations

An online survey was created using SurveyMonkey to: review the usefulness of the existing standards among organisations using them; explore stakeholders' perceptions of their adaptability and relevance for stalking perpetrator interventions; and collect information on existing stalking perpetrator interventions taking place across England and Wales.

Distribution was via several networks to gather responses from different sectors working across stalking and domestic abuse. The survey was sent out to all OPCCs who received funding through the Home Office Domestic abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Intervention Fund, with contact details supplied by the Home Office. The intention of this was to include those who had used the Standards and would therefore be able to provide information on their usefulness from a funding and commissioning perspective. Organisations delivering stalking and domestic abuse-focused perpetrator interventions through Respect were also invited to participate to capture views on the Standards from the service provider perspective, and the National Stalking Consortium to reach stalking perpetrator interventions directly. Table 10 shows the number of respondents by sector. There is a good representation of OPCC's but less participation from third sector stalking-specific organisations, though where interventions are police-led such as some intensive case management interventions, these may be captured under 'police'.

Table 10: Survey respondents by sector



In total, the survey was completed by 51 respondents, though not all respondents answered all questions. For example, only 33 answered the questions on applicability of Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 to stalking (with 32 answering on the applicability of Standard 3), despite these questions being open to all. No clear

patterns were evident to account for this. It is not possible to calculate a response rate as the invites were sent out through these larger networks, meaning we cannot say exactly how many it was sent to. To preserve anonymity respondents identified themselves only by sector and geographical region, not by organisation name. This is also the reason that Table 10 shows respondents by sector but not also by region as this could be identifiable. However, participants from both OPCCs and third sector organisations, the two largest groups of respondents, represented eight out of the ten regions of England and Wales.

Action learning sets

We sought to gather practice-based knowledge and project engagement through a series of action learning sets attended by experts from across the stalking and domestic abuse fields. These provided a forum in which to discuss and refine the emerging standards, ensuring they were grounded in the realities of practice in this area. They also served to work through key discussion points arising from the evidence, and explore tensions and knowledge gaps, thereby supplementing the academic knowledge base.

Those invited to take part were practitioners engaged in delivering stalking and/or domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, with representation from third-sector organisations, police, clinicians, and HMPPS. Participants were identified through organisations funded by the Home Office Stalking and domestic abuse Perpetrator Fund (2023-26), the Stalking Consortium, the Home Office, and the research team's existing networks. There was a high level of engagement across the stalking-specific and domestic abuse perpetrator sectors, with representation across the action learning sets from all but one of the stalking-specific perpetrator interventions identified in the service mapping, national domestic abuse bodies, and specialists in domestic abuse against racially minoritised women and girls. Though engagement exceeded expectations, time and resource constraints for third-sector organisations meant that not all organisations were able to be present at all of the meetings.

Three action learning sets were established organised around different perpetrator-victim relationship types to ensure the discussions reflected the range of different relationships for stalking and domestic abuse. One group focused on intimate partner perpetrators, another on known perpetrators including family members, and a final group on stranger perpetrators. Stakeholders were assigned to each group based on expertise in working with these distinct perpetrator-victim relationships. Where they had experience relevant to multiple sets, they were able to participate in more than one set or to choose which set they wanted to participate in. Each set consisted of three two-hour sessions held online via Microsoft Teams between December 2025 and March 2026. All were recorded and transcripts were produced.

The action learning sets were facilitated by members of the research team, and participants were invited to submit evidence supporting their contributions, where relevant. The first session discussed definitional issues, introduced the first edition of the Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions and examined their applicability to stalking perpetrator interventions; the second session explored in greater depth those standards where there was greater uncertainty or lack of consensus; and the final session worked through the draft revised Standards. Participants were able to provide additional feedback on the wording of the draft Standards by email following the final session.

The action learning sets generated rich material and provided a rare space for the stalking and domestic abuse sectors to engage in a joint exploration of topics, including areas of overlap and specificity in their work as well as differences in disciplinary perspectives, conceptual framings and terminology.

Consultation with victim-survivors

For the first edition of the Standards, eight victim-survivors of domestic abuse were consulted in two, one-hour online sessions. For this second edition, we consulted a further seven participants (two support workers and five victim-survivors of stalking – some within a post-separation domestic abuse context and some with no prior relationship). The panels explored participant experiences with perpetrator interventions, what they would want/need to know from such interventions, and each of the high-level standards. A limitation of this study is the low number of victim-survivors we were able to engage with in the timescale. We are grateful to the Welsh Women's Aid's Survivors Network, Paladin, and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust for enabling this consultation. Participants were compensated for their time.

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