



## Response to Stalking Super Complaint

Introduction		
<p>In November 2022, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and senior representatives from the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC), and the College of Policing received a super-complaint submitted by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust (SLT), on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium.</p> <p>The super-complaint made by the SLT, entitled 'The police response to stalking' details 29 recommendations, fourteen of which are to be addressed by Police Chief Constables.</p> <p>As per recommendation 28, it is incumbent on forces to publish their response to the recommendations and plans of action within 56 days of receiving the recommendations. Below is the force initial response to the police specific recommendations. These actions are in progress and an update will be placed on the website by 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to summarise the progress made.</p>		
Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Force Update
7	<p>By 27 March 2025, where required, seek changes to their crime recording systems to enable staff and officers to document and search for crimes not recorded as the principal crime, as included classifications on crime records.</p> <p>Processes should be put in place to make sure this system capability is effectively used by officers and staff.</p> <p>While any necessary system changes are pending, chief constables should put alternative measures in place to make sure stalking and related offences are fully searchable. This could, for example, be the submission of intelligence reports.</p>	<p>Cleveland Police use crime closing codes that allow us to identify crimes where stalking and harassment is involved but does not form the principal (most serious graded) crime.</p> <p>A number of reviews take place to check the correct codes have been entered to ensure stalking and harassment has been recognised and recorded. Officers are provided with training with regards to this and are given feedback if codes have not been entered correctly.</p> <p>The designers of the crime recording system we use are looking to improve the recording capability of their system, by adding an 'included class' category, this will formalise the process we are using in its absence.</p>
10	<p>By 27 March 2025, review and update their learning and training provision relating to stalking so it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets the learning outcomes on stalking within the public protection national policing curriculum.</li> <li>• Makes appropriate use of the stalking or harassment e-learning product developed by the College of Policing.</li> <li>• Uses the skills and knowledge of local victim advocates or others from outside policing with relevant expertise.</li> <li>• Includes information on relevant local policies and practice where necessary</li> <li>• Is provided to the officers and staff who will most benefit from the learning.</li> </ul> <p>Chief constables should also make sure that their policies and practice are reviewed and updated in accordance with the findings in the super-complaint investigation report.</p>	<p>The Force has benefitted from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust delivering face to face training and providing an e-learning modular package to over 1,000 officers and staff. Other in-force training is being reviewed and updated against the public protection national policing curriculum.</p> <p>Suzy Lamplugh advocates are embedded in the Force and advising across all commands in addition to providing victim support. In addition, other support agencies within the domestic abuse arena provide us with stalking specialists.</p> <p>The Force has published stalking and harassment, and domestic abuse policies. These policies will be reviewed to ensure they are compliant with the findings raised by this SuperComplaint. The review will also be extended to the corresponding specialist sites on the Force's intranet system.</p>



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11	<p>By 27 March 2025, make sure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to fully understand the scale and types of stalking behaviour within their force and the effectiveness of their response. This should align with the VAWG national delivery framework. Mechanisms should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem profiles using police data and intelligence and other sources of information to ensure that the full extent of stalking is well understood. This could include information sharing with local victim's services and other public services, and national and local statistics.</li> <li>• Regular assurance work such as audits to better understand the force response and make improvements where appropriate, including monitoring the use of SPOs, investigation outcomes and the quality of investigations.</li> <li>• Ways to regularly receive feedback from victims, such as victim surveys.</li> <li>• Force management statements which reflect current and future demand from stalking.</li> </ul>	<p>Understanding the scale of the problem and the types of stalking behaviour in our Force area starts with staff understanding the offences and correctly recording the crimes.</p> <p>Officers' recording of crime types has improved, refresher training linked to an earlier recommendation should provide further clarity. Audits take place continuously which generate actions to be monitored through the respective governance group. Audits will be carried out to ensure all the actions have been implemented.</p> <p>The Force has previously completed a stalking and harassment profile and recently Stalking was included in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Profile, which is referenced in the Force Strategic Risk Assessment, soon to be published.</p> <p>Victim surveys take place regularly and are discussed in a number of Force governance meetings. Actions have already been generated to expand the data set of the surveys to provide more informative feedback.</p> <p>Stalking and harassment is included in the Force Management Statement. The Force has predicted that over the next few years there will be a rise in domestic abuse stalking and harassment offences and a decrease in non-domestic abuse stalking and harassment offences.</p>
12	<p>By 27 March 2025, take steps to make sure that risk identification, assessment and management is effective in all stalking and breaches of orders cases, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering implementing the stalking screening tool to support the identification of stalking and the risks associated with stalking.</li> <li>• Having clear policies and procedures in place for assessing and managing risk in all cases. And where appropriate, embedding recognised risk assessment tools in force systems so that it is easy for officers to access, use and document their consideration of risk and safeguarding.</li> <li>• Recognising (in policies, guidance and training) the heightened risk associated with breaches of protective orders and measures.</li> <li>• Implementing screening and checking processes to support the early identification, assessment and management of high-risk cases. This may require stalking and breach of order cases to be considered at daily management meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>Cleveland Police are part of the national working group which among other things, reviews the issues forces have identified with using the national stalking screening tool to identify the risks associated with stalking.</p> <p>Forces trialling the national tool have reported duplication between the new forms and those forces already use (DASH). Also, since September 2024 the Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) will not accept a case file relating to domestic abuse without a DASH form. Further work is required nationally to resolve this issue.</p> <p>In the interim the Force will continue to use the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment (DASH) risk assessment form to calculate risk.</p> <p>As covered previously, associated Force policies and internet pages are to be reviewed to ensure they include the relevant guidelines for all stalking and breaches of order cases.</p> <p>The Force has formal screening and checking processes in place for domestic abuse related stalking. For non-domestic abuse this is completed by Local Policing through daily management meetings which involve partners.</p>
13	<p>By 27 March 2025, take steps to make sure that force strategies, structures and processes are in place so</p>	<p>Training has been provided to officers and supervisors in relation to the completion of Stalking</p>



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	<p>that police consider an SPO in every stalking case, and apply for an SPO where relevant and appropriate to prevent harm and further offending.</p> <p>To achieve this, chief constables should review, and revise where necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local training and guidance on SPOs, including training and guidance for supervisors.</li> <li>Mechanisms for supporting investigating officers to identify cases where SPOs would be appropriate and assisting them with SPO applications. This could be through dedicated teams or roles and/or through daily management meetings considering risk and safeguarding.</li> </ul>	<p>Prevention Orders (SPOs). Guidance is also available on the Force Intranet site.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Solutions Team (DAST) are available to provide advice.</p>
14	<p>By 27 March 2025, take steps to make sure stalking victims receive the rights they are entitled to under the victims'. should make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victim needs assessments are always completed.</li> <li>Their force has appropriate processes to make sure all stalking victims are told about victims' code.</li> <li>Information about the national and specialist stalking support services available in their force area is easily available to police officers and staff, victims and the general public.</li> <li>Victims who would like to receive support are referred to an appropriate service in a timely manner.</li> <li>They monitor the number of stalking victims who are referred to specialist support services and take action when referral numbers are low.</li> </ul>	<p>The Force needs to improve the recording and quality of Victim Needs Assessments for stalking and harassment crimes. A number of Force actions have been created to improve performance in this area.</p> <p>Victims are told of their rights under the Victims' Code, although this is not always recorded. Monthly audits take place to check this, and compliance is monitored at the Victim and Witness Group.</p> <p>A number of support services are available to victims and the Force is able to make referrals. The number of referrals are monitored for non-domestic abuse stalking. Domestic abuse victims obtain other specialist support.</p>
16	<p>By 27 March 2025, work together to review commissioning arrangements and make changes as soon as possible to ensure they embed collaborative working and information sharing between policing and services providing victim support to stalking victims.</p>	<p>The Force is working with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to review commissioning arrangements. The PCC commissions a number of services related to stalking including Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs). Violence Against Women and Girls also features as a priority in the PCCs Police and Crime Plan.</p> <p>Information in relation to victims of stalking and individual cases is shared between agencies; Domestic Abuse, Victim Services and Suzy Lamplugh Trust. As the partnership work evolves this is likely to expand.</p>
17	<p>By 27 March 2025, make sure the new College of Policing investigations APP content on case allocation is reflected in the relevant policies relating to the allocation of stalking and breach of order cases for investigation. Force policies should support the allocation of stalking cases to officers with the right skills and experience, taking into account the potential risk and complexity involved in stalking and breach of order cases.</p>	<p>The Force currently allocates stalking cases depending on the type and complexity of the offence. All domestic abuse stalking cases are allocated to specially trained officers. The majority, non-domestic abuse stalking cases, are allocated to Response officers.</p> <p>Work is required to understand the investigative demand for stalking and harassment in the allocated departments and the offence types. This information will be used to inform a decision on which departments they should be allocated to, capacity permitting, in the future.</p>



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		Following the review, the associated crime allocation policy will be amended accordingly.
18	<p>By 27 March 2025, take steps to improve the quality of stalking investigations by taking a victim centred, suspect focussed and context led approach. Chief constables should make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their workforce has the capacity and capability to undertake effective stalking investigations and can apply new and innovative investigation techniques to pursue digital lines of enquiry.</li> <li>• All reasonable lines of enquiry are pursued, supported by good supervision.</li> <li>• Arrest and search powers are used to gather evidence from and about suspects.</li> <li>• The impact on victims is evidenced in witness statements, so it can be used to inform charging decisions and improve the likelihood of successful investigation outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2023, following a 'deep dive' (review) of stalking and harassment, some gaps were identified, and actions set to rectify them. Since then, stalking training has been provided to over 1000 officers and staff.</p> <p>Further reviews have subsequently taken place including a review of demand, the results from this review identified that some processes could be streamlined to support the demand, and capacity may be an issue to support this action.</p> <p>The Force is looking to technology to better manage demand, for example, introducing software to help identify spyware on victims' phones.</p> <p>As most stalking offences come under the remit of Local Policing training is being provided to Sergeants (Supervisors) around the management of these offences. The instructions and improvements being driven through 'Achieving Investigative Excellence' will also help to improve the quality of investigations and outcomes. This is reported into and monitored by the Force's Vulnerability Tactical Group.</p> <p>The completion of victim personal statements has increased significantly over the last few years. Officers understand the importance of obtaining victim personal statements and guidance is available through Achieving Investigative Excellence.</p>
20	<p>By, 27 March 2025, take steps to improve how their force effectively recognises and responds to online elements of stalking. This should include making sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scale and nature of online stalking behaviours informs their strategic understanding of, and the response to, stalking.</li> <li>• Examples of online stalking are included in locally produced training and guidance material about stalking.</li> <li>• Clear online safety advice is available to officers and staff, drawing on the College of Policing APP on stalking or harassment when it is developed.</li> <li>• Appropriate tools, technologies and support services to digitally safeguard victims are procured and officers and staff use these resources when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>The Force has identified a gap in relation to the automated recording of online stalking; currently it relies on staff to input a qualifier to identify online stalking is present.</p> <p>A national data tool has been rolled out to Forces, by the Home Office, to help with recording issues. Some technical issues are preventing its use at the moment and some changes will also be required by staff for it to work effectively once in use. The Force is currently working to make the software compatible with our systems and raising awareness with users about how they record appropriate entries.</p> <p>Examples of online stalking are provided in a number of the Force's training courses, but currently not all. Most courses include discussions around the topic; we will look to build examples into all training.</p> <p>The Force awaits the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice on stalking or harassment and will work with our Cyber Crime team to identify any further action required.</p>



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		As mentioned previously the Force is introducing spyware and has a digital specialist appointed to Safeguarding to support the use of technology in our response to the online elements of stalking.
22	By 27 September 2025, using the information collated by the NPCC lead under recommendation 21, to consider whether and how dedicated stalking officers and staff, or other subject matter experts, can be used to add value and support the force response to stalking.	N/A at this time.
23	<p>By 27 March 2025, implement a mechanism for early screening of crimes to improve the identification, recording and management of all stalking cases.</p> <p>Forces should consider screening crimes similar to stalking or where stalking behaviours may be present as part of a course of conduct, like harassment, malicious communications and breaches of orders.</p>	<p>Most reports of stalking and harassment are made to our Force Control Room (FCR). Screening for crimes takes place as part of the call takers' questions. Checks are in place for offences being screened out to be reviewed by supervision.</p> <p>Plans are in place for Primary Crime Investigation Unit Sergeants, within the FCR to review all stalking offences, whether screened in or out, which will be monitored.</p>
25	<p>By 27 March 2025, explore opportunities to improve how their force works with partners to contribute to a multi-agency response to stalking. This should include considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the force works in partnership with healthcare, the CPS, probation services and other criminal justice partners to manage stalking perpetrators and address their behaviour.</li> <li>• Whether and how they should collaborate with other forces to effectively and efficiently contribute to multi-agency partnerships on stalking.</li> </ul> <p>How multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) are being used to effectively manage stalking offenders.</p>	<p>The Force actively works with partners. A current project is looking to create an intervention programme for stalking perpetrators.</p> <p>A number of pathways to support are already in existence, although these are standard; not specifically created around stalking perpetrators and their behaviour. For domestic abuse stalking and harassment existing perpetrator programmes are available.</p> <p>The Force collaborates nationally and regionally and will look to do more following this SuperComplaint.</p>
28	<p>By 22 November 2024 (56 days from publication), publish on their force website an action plan which explains what their force will do in response to each of the recommendations made to them and send the NPCC a link to where this action plan can be found.</p> <p>By 27 March 2025 (six months from publication) provide an update to the NPCC describing the progress they have made against their action plans.</p>	<p>Response provided to the NPCC, and the public version of the action plan added to the Force website.</p> <p>Both action plans will be updated and republished by 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.</p>