



**HEDDLU
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NORTH WALES
POLICE**



North Wales Police Response to Stalking Super Complaint

November 2024.

INTRODUCTION

UK policing's response to stalking came under scrutiny following a "super-complaint" submitted by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium in 2022.

The complaint highlighted the inadequacy of policing responses to stalking and has led to a detailed investigation by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), and the College of Policing. Their joint report, published in September 2024, called for significant reforms in the handling of stalking cases.

The report found that while police awareness of stalking is improving, it implored forces to take reporting of stalking seriously and to conduct quality investigations consistently.

The report makes 29 recommendations aimed at enhancing support for victims and standardizing police practices across England and Wales.

Key recommendations include improving training for police officers, simplifying the use of Stalking Protection Orders, and strengthening collaborative work with partners to ensure victims receive a consistent and supportive response.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) responded by assuring ongoing efforts to improve the police approach, including implementing a national stalking screening tool, enhancing data collection, and working with the Crown Prosecution Service to improve prosecution rates for stalking offences.

In July 2024 the NPCC and the College of Policing published a national policing statement on violence against women and girls (VAWG) The statement identifies stalking and harassment as one of five high-harm and high-volume threat areas that policing will focus on

Recommendations to Policing and our response

Recommendation 7; 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.

We will seek to understand the profile of stalking and behaviour in North Wales and ensure an appropriate response through correct identification, recording, and an ability to research and analyse our data.

Our crime recording compliance was Inspected in 2024 and was graded as "outstanding." We continue to work with National projects to improve automated and technological improvements to our systems.

We have developed templates to assist in the identification of stalking within other principally reported crimes and provided training around the identification of stalking to our crime data integrity unit.

Our force crime registrar, deputy crime registrar and dedicated decision makers have received specialist stalking training from Suzy Lamplugh Trust which highlights the importance of recognising patterns of behaviour which might not be immediately obvious and includes the use of the mnemonic FOUR.

Recommendation 10; By 27 March 2025, review and update their learning and training provision relating to stalking

We have worked with The Suzy Lamplugh Trust and secured Specialist training licences for over 200 of our staff. This training has been provided to first responders, call handlers, Researchers, and investigators accredited to PIP1 & 2.

Some of our specialist investigators and police staff have attended a Stalker Risk Profile training workshop.

We deliver internal briefings around the application for Stalking Protection Order Process.

We will continue to develop training products for officers and staff across all of our teams and commit to reviewing what products are being delivered and how.

We will scope National good practise to inform our response and will use products available from the College of Policing to enhance our knowledge.

We provide information, guidance and advice on our intranet site for ease of access for all employees.

Recommendation 11; 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.

We will use police data, intelligence and other sources of information to ensure that the full extent of stalking is well understood.

We do and will continue to share information with victim services and other partners.

We recognise that policing alone cannot tackle this issue and that partners will be key in informing the picture in North Wales, including any information or data they can contribute for a fuller understanding of the nature of offending in North Wales

We will re-visit our current governance structures, review and audit processes to assess whether improvements can be made.

Recommendation 12; 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

North Wales Police will apply an early intervention and a preventative approach to stalking.

Our approach will include processes of early screening mechanisms to improve identification, recording and management of stalking cases. We will consider new and emerging tools which may assist us with risk identification and management on a daily basis.

NWP has invested in a stalking coordinator and a dedicated specialist Stalking Detective Sergeant.

This specialist resource has enabled us to review and improve our processes and enables stalking offences to be allocated to the correct officer resource with the right skills and experience based on the risk and complexity of any offending and breaches of civil orders.

Recommendation 13; By 27 March 2025, take steps to make sure that force strategies, structures and processes are in place so that police consider an SPO in every stalking case, and apply for an SPO where relevant and appropriate to prevent harm and further offending.

We will use legislation to protect victims and disrupt perpetrators, including applying for and enforcing civil orders such as Stalking Protection Orders and in a domestic abuse stalking context, the Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme, commonly known as Clare's law.

We have seen a significant and encouraging increase in Stalking Protection Order applications being granted this year.

Our internal Stalking SharePoint page -includes latest guidance and support for officers.

Our stalking coordinator and specialist DS along with our legal team are available to provide Support and guidance to officers when considering SPO application.

Our process in applying for SPO's has been reviewed and published internally with relevant process maps to assist officers and the subsequent management of any orders obtained.

Our monthly multi agency stalking panel discusses reported cases and includes consideration of SPO as part of perpetrator intervention and safeguarding for victims.

Recommendation 14; By 27 March 2025 take steps to make sure stalking victims receive the rights they are entitled to under the victims' code and have access to support services.

We conduct audits for stalking offences to assess our compliance with accurate crime recording, review the quality of investigation, and service to victims including compliance with the Victims Code of Practice and that a victim needs assessment is conducted.

We do provide training to appropriate teams such as the force control room, first responders and investigators which includes the expectations and mandatory requirements in delivering victim service.

We will work in partnership with statutory and non-statutory partners to use our multi agency practises to manage offenders and support victims.

We will work in partnership to explore opportunities in improving the service that commissioned services, local and national services can offer.

We have included our commissioned services partners in our training events and provided them with training licences secured through The Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

Recommendation 16; 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.

We have provided access to Suzy Lamplugh Trust online training to serious crime caseworkers within the Victim Support Centre, and to independent domestic violence advocates.

We hold regular meetings with our commissioned services and our stalking coordinator/Detective sergeant to identify opportunities to safeguard people at risk of stalking. The commissioned services are familiar and frequent attendees at our police stations with access to our specialist staff and facilities.

We hold a monthly multi agency stalking panel to enhance our support to victims where there is representation and commitment from commissioned services as well as statutory partners. We will continue to evolve and seek to improve the benefits that this forum can deliver.

We will work with our commissioned services and other partners such as OPCC to explore options around funding and training to our commissioned services, and to explore opportunities in enhancing the offer to victims of stalking in North Wales.

Recommendation 17; 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.

We continue to strive for excellent service delivery by looking for innovative and recognised good practise nationally, including tools to assist in identifying stalking, assessing risk and in how we deliver a service to victims of stalking.

We will ensure that there is a consistent service to victims of stalking, whether subjected to abuse through a domestic relationship or not and will work with partners such as OPCC to improve the services available to all victims of stalking.

Stalking offences within the last 24 hours are reviewed daily by a PIP 2 accredited Detective Sergeant. A Detective Sergeant provides tactical advice to our stalking investigations and determines the appropriate resource to investigate.

Primacy for the most serious and complex stalking investigations is held by PIP 2 investigators. This is reflected within the force's crime management plan.

The force is currently reviewing its stalking guidance and will update any changes to reflect our crime allocation process.

A daily secondary review by our specialist stalking DS provides further reassurance.

Recommendation 18; By 27 March 2025, take steps to improve the quality of stalking investigations by taking a victim centred, suspect focussed and context led approach

The force makes use of technology to assist in the capturing of cyber / digital stalking evidence and we are currently exploring further technology to give us advantages in reaching victims quicker and capturing evidence more efficiently.

We will continue to educate, refresh and review our performance in respect of compliance with The Victims Code of Practice, ensuring that a victim needs assessment is conducted and that victims are informed which national and local support services are available.

We will work with partners such as OPCC and CPS to enhance those services.

Our performance management forums internally, using the data and information available to us will be used to assess the areas requiring focus.

Recommendation 20; By 27 March 2025, take steps to improve how their force effectively recognises and responds to online elements of stalking

North Wales Police has dedicated cyber-crime and digital media investigators. Our teams will work to develop specific safeguarding advice in relation to online stalking.

Our digital media investigators attend the monthly multi agency stalking meetings to provide digital investigative advice for current stalking cases. Officers within the cybercrime and DMI teams are specifically trained on technologies that can assist in stalking offences. The advice and guidance provided to victims of stalking can also safeguard victims from continued exposure to the perpetrator.

We have instigated a working group incorporating our stalking co-ordinator, stalking Detective Sergeant, cybercrime officers and DMI officers. Members of the working group have completed the Suzy Lamplugh training and are passionate about reducing the risk posed by stalking.

The working group includes objectives to provide training to front-line staff and officers in relation to the risks and investigative opportunities in digital stalking investigations.

The force's Cyber Unit has a specific role as part of their service for the provision of cyber education and awareness raising across North Wales such as educational establishments the third, private and local sectors.

Recommendation 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

Our dedicated stalking Detective Sergeant and coordinator will research national good practise, training material, processes and guidance, working collaboratively with other police forces to introduce best practise to North Wales Police. This work has commenced.

Our specialist stalking resource will share learning and education with our detective and specialist resources more widely to grow the expertise and knowledge in stalking identification, investigation and victim service.

We will use the expertise of our detective sergeants to apply daily scrutiny and tactical advice to reports of stalking.

Our specialist staff and teams contribute to multi agency processes whether through victim or perpetrator programmes.

Recommendation 23; By 27 March 2025, implement a mechanism for early screening of crimes to improve the identification, recording and management of all stalking cases. 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.

The dedicated stalking detective sergeant screens stalking crimes on a daily basis to enable us to identify and record stalking appropriately, provide investigative advice.

Our intention is to develop the knowledge of our staff across all functions, including detective supervisors, call handlers and first responders so that stalking is identified at the point of first contact, and within subsequent reviews.

We intend to explore artificial intelligence opportunities to identify stalking behaviours from other crimes and will conduct audits of other crimes to determine whether stalking is present.

Our Force control room have developed training and processes to enable staff to identify stalking within other primary reporting.

We will explore emerging and developing materials and tools nationally and consider whether they should be implemented and used in North Wales Police processes.

Recommendation 25; By 27 March 2025, explore opportunities to improve how their force works with partners to contribute to a multi-agency response to stalking.

We have commenced a multi-agency stalking panel which brings together representatives from Police, H.M. Probation service, Victim Support Services, Criminal Justice Liaison Service and Crown Prosecution Service to understand the motivations for the stalking behaviour, produce risk assessments and management plans. We continue to work to improve the representation at this forum and to extend the reach of the panel beyond the pilot area which is in the central division of the force area.

Domestic Abuse scrutiny panels are held on a quarterly basis between CPS and the Police. These meeting enable both CPS and Police to discuss Domestic abuse and stalking cases to identify best practice, and opportunities to improve service to victims.

We are working in collaboration with other forces, particularly in the Northwest of England to share expertise, develop processes and understand where we can assist each other.