

# Paladin Service Evaluation

# 2016

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An evaluation of the service was carried out from January to September 2016. Client surveys and case files were analysed to measure client numbers, assess outcomes and provide clearer data on client profiles. 97% of clients felt safer after using Paladin's service and 100% felt supported by Paladin.

**Understanding  
the real needs  
of victims of  
stalking.**

## Definitions;

### *Stalking*

“A constellation of behaviours which one individual inflicts on another repeated unwanted intrusions and communications.” Pathe and Mullen (1997)

“One or more of a constellation of behaviours that (a) are directed repeatedly towards a specific individual (the target), (b) are experienced by the target as unwelcome and intrusive, and (c) are reported to trigger fear or concern in the target. Westrup (1998)

### *Domestic Violence (DV)*

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners of family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes issues of concern to Black and other Minority Ethnic communities such as ‘honour killings’.” The Home Office’s definition of Domestic Violence, 2010

### *Intimate partner violence*

“Any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship” Heise & Garcia-Moreno (2005)

The United Nations defines *violence against women* as “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” World Health Organisation (WHO) 2007

### *Sexual Violence (SV)*

“any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or act to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm of physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.” Jewkes et al (2002), WHO, 2007

## Background

Stalking is a crime that has continuously been misunderstood by society, the media and the criminal justice system. Legislation against stalking refers to a build-up, or pattern of behaviours defined as a course of conduct which involves a number of actions that constitute stalking. In 2012 an Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Stalking Law Reform was carried out. The panel found that, based on the experience of front line practitioners and victims, the Protection From Harassment Act 1997, needed significant revision. They also found that victims had a deep lack of confidence in the criminal justice system because the number of prosecutions under the Act was so low and very little psychiatric treatment was available to perpetrators. The Protection From Harassment Act created two new offences; “stalking” and “stalking involving fear of violence or serious alarm and distress”. These are outlined under sections 2A and 4A of the 1997 Act. The amendments also set out new police powers to enter and search premises (on provision of a warrant - section 2B) in relation to the 2A offence. There is also focus on intent by the perpetrator; specifically on intent to cause fear.

The majority of the cases that Paladin receives (over 70%) are female ex-intimate partner victims. We have known for years that the point of separation is the most dangerous time for victims of domestic violence as the risk of serious harm or homicide significantly increases. It is common that a perpetrator becomes even more determined to assert power and control over their victim at a point where they face losing access to the victim. Lees (2000) found that women are at greatest risk of homicide at the point when they leave or after they have left the perpetrator.

According to Stark (2007) stalking is the most dramatic form of tracking, and the most common behavioural component of coercive control next to assault. McKenzie et al (2009) found that ex-intimate partners are most likely to be violent; 1 in 2 will make a threat and act on it. Ex-intimate stalkers are more likely to act on threats which increases risk with this type of perpetrator and patterns of coercive behaviour are often present.

Whilst the law has changed there is still a gap in knowledge, awareness and training around stalking. The nature of stalking and the actual risk versus the perceived levels of risk are often deeply misunderstood and in some cases this can reduce effective interventions that could prevent homicide.

## Identifying risk

ISACs work with clients to reduce risk and will ensure that a safety plan is in place. This involves working with the police to make them aware of the risks and discuss ways to reduce them.

It is important to note the changes a client may have to make to their own lives for no fault of their own. They often have to think about changing their environment, their routine and the way they interact with other people to reduce risk. We often have to work with clients to explore what is achievable without changing their lifestyles dramatically. Stalkers want to administer control over their victims and clients often report feeling closed down and experience a loss of freedom to respond to this threat. We want to help clients recover some sense of freedom by taking measures that will allow them to live their lives with reduced risk and fear.

Sheridan and Davies (2001) found that domestic violence ex-intimate stalkers were the most aggressive and dangerous of all stalkers. They have knowledge and access to victims, there is heightened danger at the point of separation, particularly where domestic violence has occurred and 1 in 2 domestic violence stalkers who make a threat to kill will act on it. With this group finality thinking is often a key concern and risk factor. Finality thinking is where the perpetrator makes a decision to end their life, the victim's life, their children's lives or all of the above. Homicide may be viewed by the perpetrator as the ultimate act of control so thoughts of ending it all and taking the victim with them may come at a point when the stalker feels they have no control or are out of options. This has to be taken into consideration working with this group. There is an urgent need to reduce risk, work with the police and the Criminal Justice System to secure prosecution and to carefully consider and monitor safety planning.

## Evidence of need

According to Coleman (2007) in the period they had surveyed over the previous 12 months, stalking was the most commonly experienced type of intimate violence with 9% of women and 7% of men having reported the crime. They also found that 23% of women reported having experienced stalking since they were 16. The most common types of stalking behaviour experienced were unwanted or threatening communications. 26% of women who had been the victim of domestic violence also reported experiencing stalking. Humphreys and Thiara (2002) carried out a study of 200 women who had experienced domestic violence. They found that of the women who had separated from the perpetrator, 76% continued to receive verbal and emotional abuse, 41% received serious threats towards themselves or their children, 23% experienced physical violence, 6% reported sexual violence and 36% said this violence was on-going.

The Office for National Statistics (2013) estimated that 1 in 6 women and 1 in 12 men will experience stalking at some time in their lives. However, we at Paladin believe these figures are grossly underestimated. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (2011/12) revealed that up to 700,000 women will be a victim of stalking, whilst the British Crime Survey of 2006 estimated that 5 million people experience stalking. There are no official figures on cyber stalking. We know that stalking is under reported and that many victims tell us about the barriers to reporting and that many people do not identify behaviour as stalking.

In 2013/14 Crown Prosecution Service figures reveal that 743 stalking offences were prosecuted, whereas 9,792 were prosecuted for harassment out of the 61,175 allegations recorded by police. Therefore only 1% of cases of stalking and 16% of cases of harassment recorded by the police resulted in a charge and prosecution by the CPS (Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service, 2015). In 2015 we undertook a review of our cases for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013, and found only 11% of stalkers received an immediate custodial sentence for Section 2a stalking and 9% for a Section 4a stalking offence.

## Issues faced by clients

Our clients describe receiving high volumes of communication from the perpetrator. These may be phone calls, letters, graffiti, emails, texts, WhatsApp messages, Facebook and other social network sites. They are also likely to experience unwanted contacts when a perpetrator may loiter near the victim's home or place of work, spy on them, follow them, approach or confront the victim in private or public, enter the victim's home or workplace. Associated behaviours may include sending gifts or other items that are intended to intimidate such as dead animals or faeces, ordering or cancelling goods or services, making vexatious complaints, making threats, damaging property and being physically violent. A barrier for victims is often that agencies or authorities may view such behaviours in isolation to be unremarkable. However, the circumstance and repetition are linked to levels of threat and risk.

Many victims may lose their job, partners, friends and support networks. These types of loss will also have financial, social and psychological implications for victims that can become life changing and long standing if, for example, they are unable to find another job or become depressed about the end of a relationship. Many of our younger clients feel they are unable to think about ever having a family of their own as they would be unable to protect them. The physical, psychological and emotional effects of stalking include anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, anger, frustration, distrust, eating disorders, PTSD, self harm, alcohol and substance misuse. The effects, even if the stalking stops, can be extremely severe and long lasting. Clients may report feeling hypersensitive and hyper vigilant. They feel that they are always looking over their shoulder and living on adrenaline. There can be a huge impact on a victim's family, particularly if children or elderly parents are targeted. A victim may have several dependents who also experience threats of violence and abuse, which not only results in their own distress but immense frustration and anger from the victim.

50% of stalking victims reduce or stop work as a direct result of being stalked (Mullen et al 2006). The victim and third parties may suffer from psychological or physical harm and are unable to attend work due to sick leave for short or extended periods of time. They report feeling too frightened to leave the house and if the stalker is a work colleague may not want to go back to work at all. Being unable to concentrate at work, having trouble catching up after taking time off and tension in the workplace where the victim feels they are to blame, or are actually blamed, by colleagues are all devastating effects that can significantly impact on the victim.

## Client survey

Our survey was conducted from June – September 2016.

The list of questions is as follows;

1. How did you access Paladin's services?
2. What were your expectations at the point of contacting Paladin?
3. What was your experience of the service you received from Paladin?
4. How do you think Paladin assisted you?
5. Did Paladin help you feel safer and help you manage the risk the stalker presented to you?
6. What would you like us to do more of, or do differently?
7. Do you feel Paladin's intervention led to a better outcome with the police and/ or courts?
8. Was the stalking affecting your health and did you need to see a Dr or any other professional as a result?
9. What is your occupation?
10. Do you have children?
11. Any additional comments?

### (1) How did you access Paladin's services?

Table 10.1

	%
Online	17
Third person	13
Newspaper	7
Police	7
National Stalking Helpline	7
Safer Places	7
Victim Support	7
GP	7
Don't remember	7
House of Lords	3
Women's Aid	3
National Centre for Domestic Violence	3
Occupational Health	3
Probation	3

Social Services	3
IDVA	3

(2) What were your expectations at the point of contacting Paladin?

Table 10.2

	%
Advice	13
Help	3
Support	3
No expectations	60
Reassurance	3
Hoped you would just listen	3
To be believed	3
Don't know	3
To punish stalker	3
To feel safe	3

(3) What was your experience of the service you received from Paladin?

90% of clients said they were very pleased with their experience of the service. Several cited the ISACs they had spoken to by name and talked about their calm and patient approach. Being non-judgmental, taking time to listen and offer emotional support were often mentioned as crucial aspects of the service. Clients also referred to the ability of ISACs to move things forward in some cases where other agencies had not and to their legal knowledge and approach towards the police. Respondents were very pleased that Paladin understood the kinds of issues they were facing day-to-day where other agencies may not have appreciated the significance of certain patterns of behaviour displayed by the perpetrator nor the impact that stalking had on the client. Clients used words like amazing, brilliant and fantastic to describe the service and one client noted that the service is "like oxygen to me, so valuable, hard to put into words."

(4) How do you think Paladin assisted you?

Clients mentioned the following with regards to emotional support; listened to me, gave me confidence, made me feel validated, very reassuring, supported me through things I didn't know how to deal with, I stopped blaming myself, reassured me that I wasn't crazy, really supportive and

made me see how serious the stalking was, I felt like Paladin was on my side. With regards to practical support and taking further action they made comments such as; education for me and police, got the police to make progress, followed up with police, helped me change police officer, safety planning and risk assessments based on meetings with professionals, experience, knowledge and practical support were all helpful.

(5) Did Paladin help you feel safer and help you manage the risk the stalker presented to you?

Table 10.3

	%
Strongly agree	67
Agree	27
Don't know	0
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	0
No response	3

(6) What would you like us to do more of, or do differently?

53% said they could not think of anything more that Paladin could do, or felt that there was nothing more that the service could do. Of those who had suggestions for development 7% wanted to see the service promoted more widely and 7% wanted to see more funding put into the service to increase numbers of staff and opening hours. Other comments included; more legal advice, more discussion about outcomes and expectations, less paperwork, offer practical help, more ongoing contact from the ISAC, more follow up with the council and one client just said they were generally hoping for a more successful outcome.

(7) Do you feel Paladin's intervention led to a better outcome with the police and/ or courts?

43% said that they did feel that Paladin's intervention had led to a better outcome with the police and/or the courts. It is important to note that whilst these cases had been closed, clients may still be at different stages in the judicial process or dealing with the police. Several stated that they had not gone to court yet and were still waiting on this while others were still going through the courts.

Table 10.4

	%
Strongly agree	43
Agree	0
Don't know	17
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	0
No response	0
Ongoing	23
It didn't go that far	3
Contacted service after courts	3

(8) Was the stalking affecting your health and did you need to see a Dr or any other professional as a result?

10% reported that they did not feel the stalking had an effect on their health. Clients who did report an effect on their health described a number of health problems including; stress, alopecia, sight loss, suicidal ideation, low mood, paranoia, insomnia, PTSD, panic attacks, too frightened to leave the house and anxiety. 10% mentioned taking some form of medication and 17% mentioned counselling. Of those who said they did not feel the stalking had affected their health one did say they had been told they may be experiencing PTSD and another said they were considering visiting their GP.

Please note: Some clients reported feeling more than one type of ill effect and some referred to anxiety rather than stress and vice versa, whilst others reported suicidal ideation for example but did not mention low mood or anxiety when these were also likely to be present.

Table 10.5

	%
Stress	17
Alopecia	7
Sight loss	7
Suicidal ideation	3
Low mood	10
Paranoia	7
Insomnia	7
PTSD	7
Panic attacks	7
Too frightened to leave the house	10
Taking medication	10
Having counselling	17
Did not feel that stalking had an	10

effect on health	
Did not feel that stalking had an effect on health but went on to mention ill effects	7

(9) What is your occupation?

Table 10.6

	%
Clinical/caring profession	27
Private sector	23
Public sector	13
Self employed	3
Other	33

(10) Do you have children?

50% of the respondents had children. Of those who had children 74% were directly targeted by the stalker and/or threatened. Impact on children included being very fearful, reducing contact with victim, being home schooled and custody disputes.

(11) Additional comments?

Table 10.7

	%
Thank you	20
More funding needed	10
Poor police response	10
Surprised Paladin is not statutory	3
Worried for the future	7
No other service like Paladin	3
Glad to have opportunity to give feedback	3
More police training needed	3
No comment	40

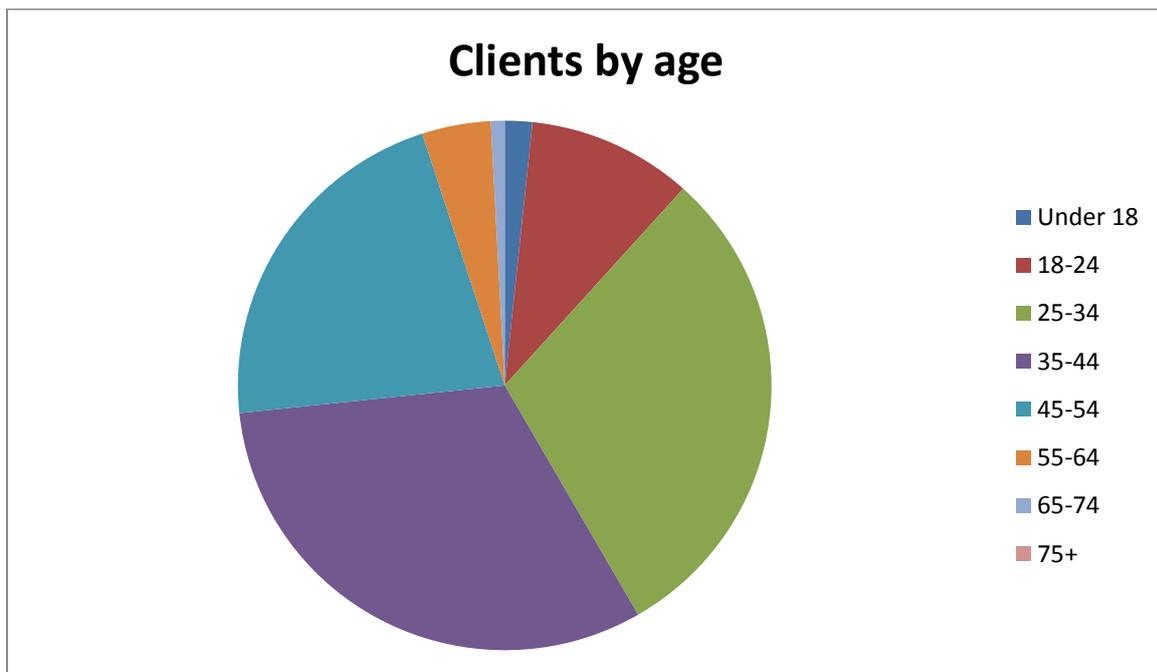
## Closed cases data

From 1<sup>st</sup> January – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 ISACs collected data on closed cases. This data was taken at the point that a case was closed by an ISAC. The data captured from this includes client profile, actions taken and outcomes.

### Client profile

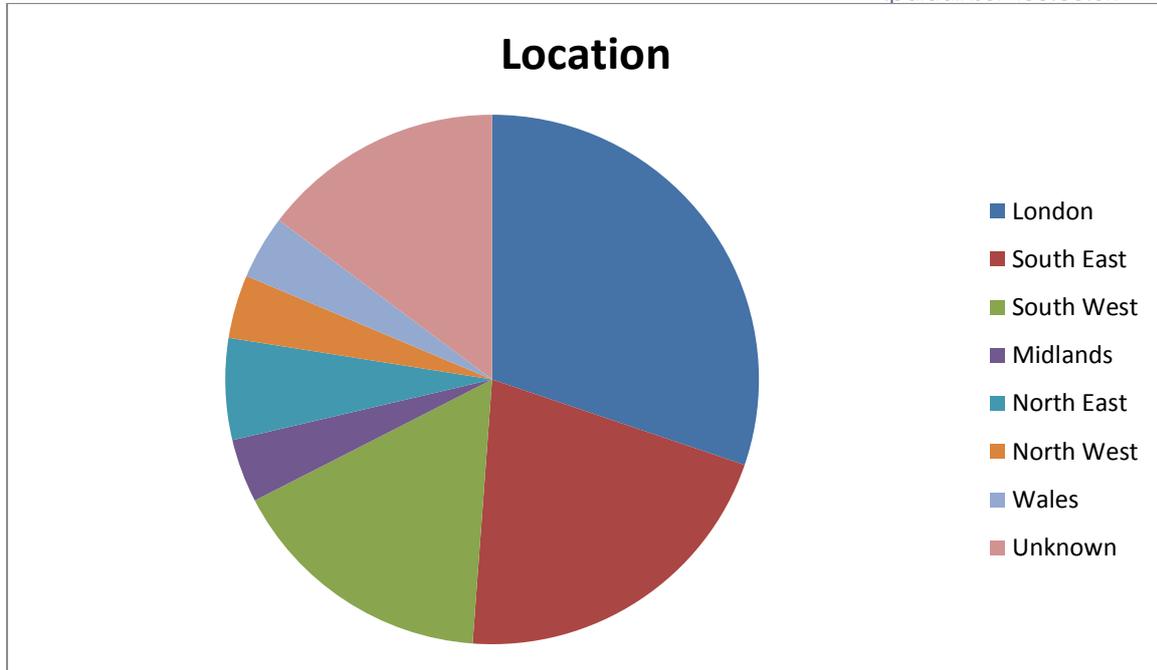
#### Age

The majority of our clients (60%) are aged 25-44. We had two clients aged under-18 who were both 17. 10% of clients were 18-24, 30% were 25-34, 30% were 35-44, 22% were 45-54, 4% were 55-64 and one client was 69. *Graphic 10.8*



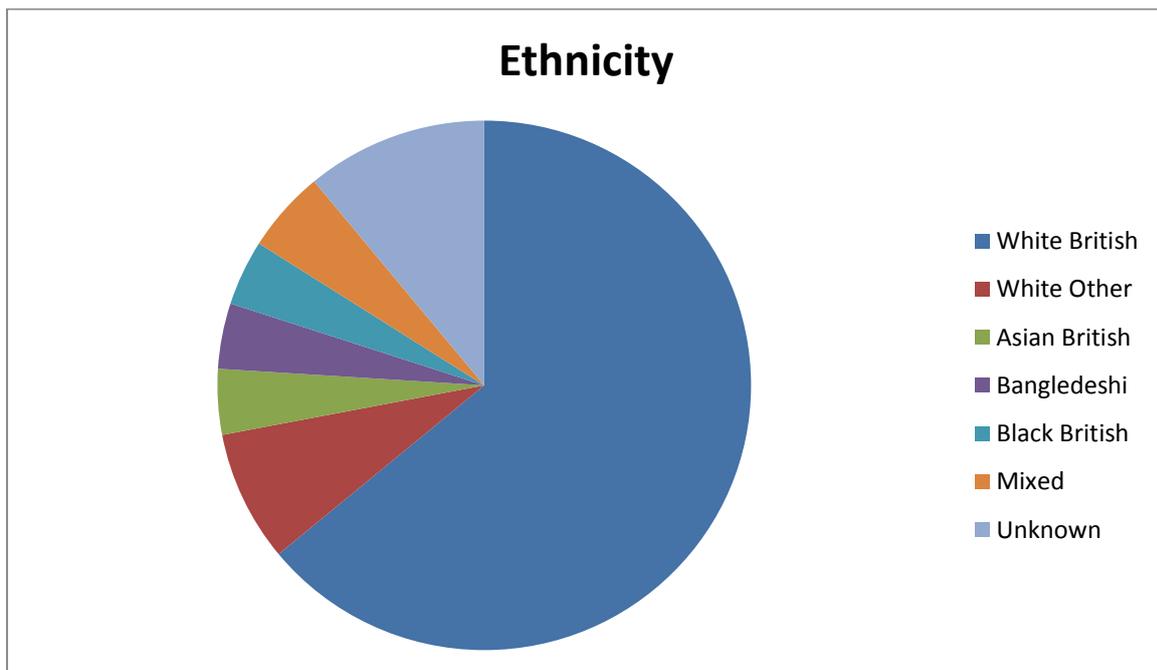
### Geographical location

Paladin's geographical remit covers England and Wales. At present, just under a third of our clients; 30% are from London. The next highest proportion; 20% are from the South East of England. 16% are from the South West, 4% from the Midlands, 6% from the North East, 4% from the North West and 4% are from Wales. The remaining 15% are unknown. *Graphic 11.1*



### Ethnicity

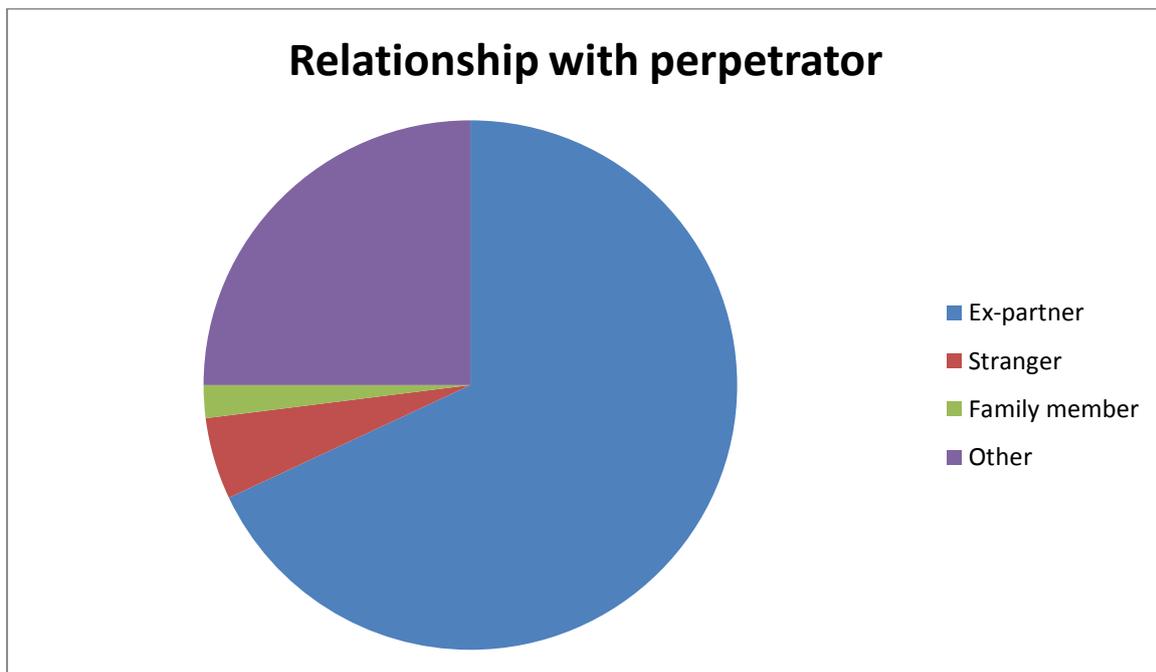
Our clients identified their ethnicity as the following; 64% White British, 8% White Other, 4% Asian British, 4% Bangladeshi, 4% Black British, 5% Mixed Ethnicity and the remaining 11% did not identify their ethnicity. *Graphic 11.2*



### Relationship with perpetrator

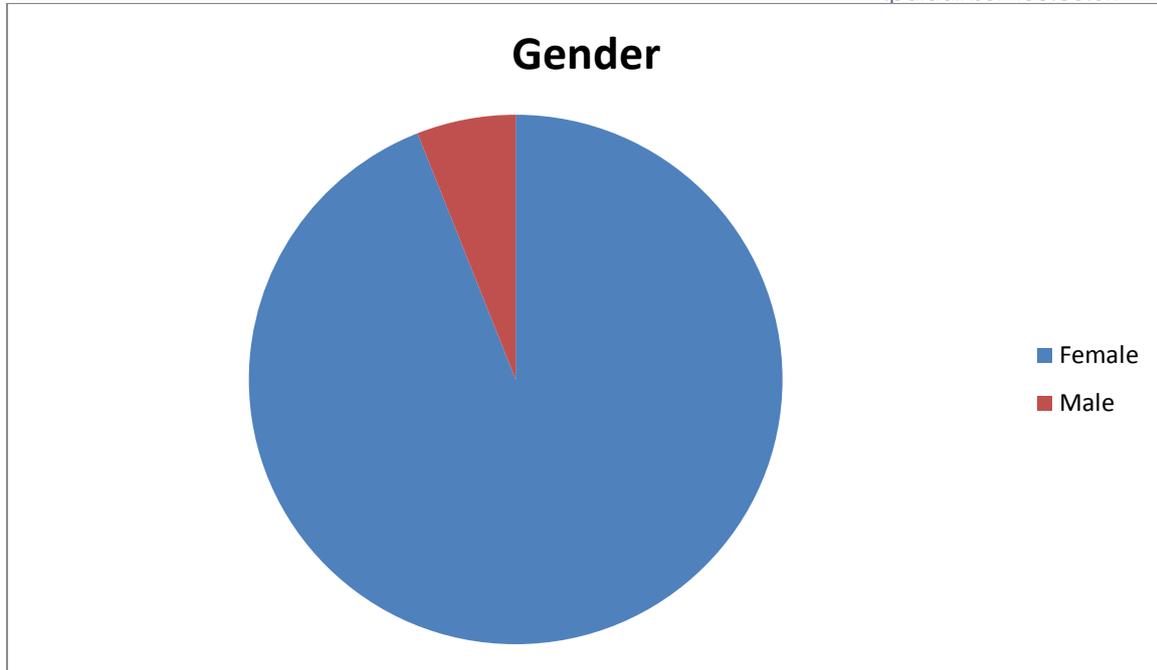
Most clients (68%) classified their relationship with the perpetrator as an ex-partner or ex-intimate. 5% were being stalked by a stranger, whilst the remainder were targeted by a family member (2%), and other (25%) including ex-colleagues, friends, acquaintances, flatmates, clients, and neighbours.

*Graphic 11.3*



### Gender

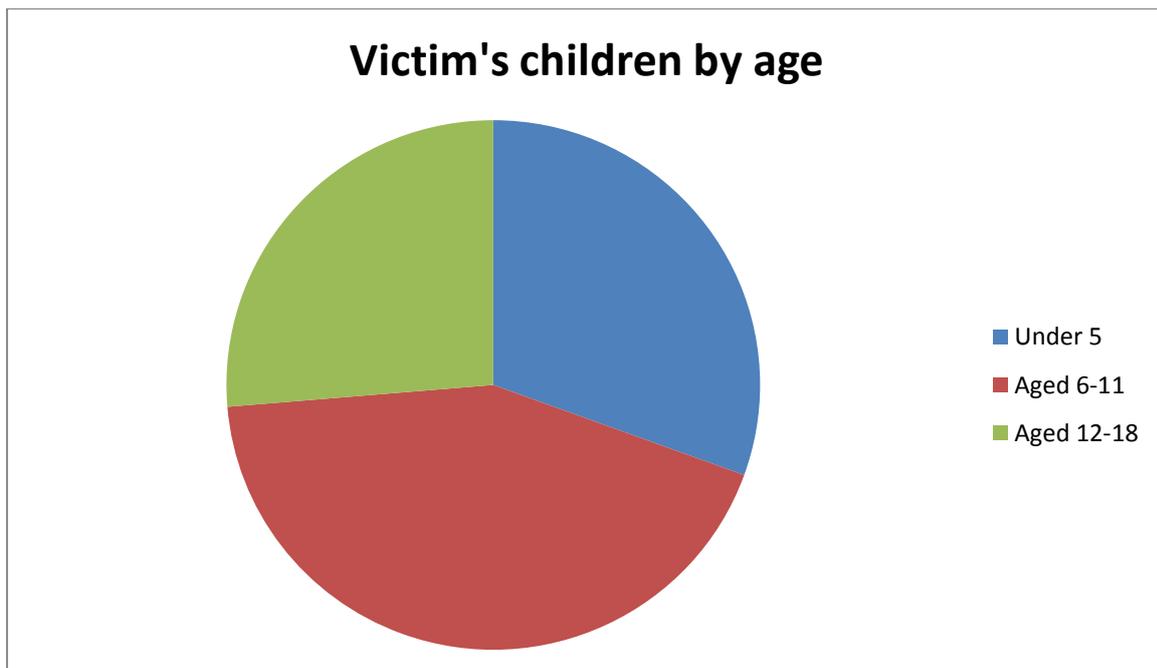
The vast majority of our clients are females at 94% the remaining 6% are male. No clients identified as transgender or other. *Graphic 11.4*



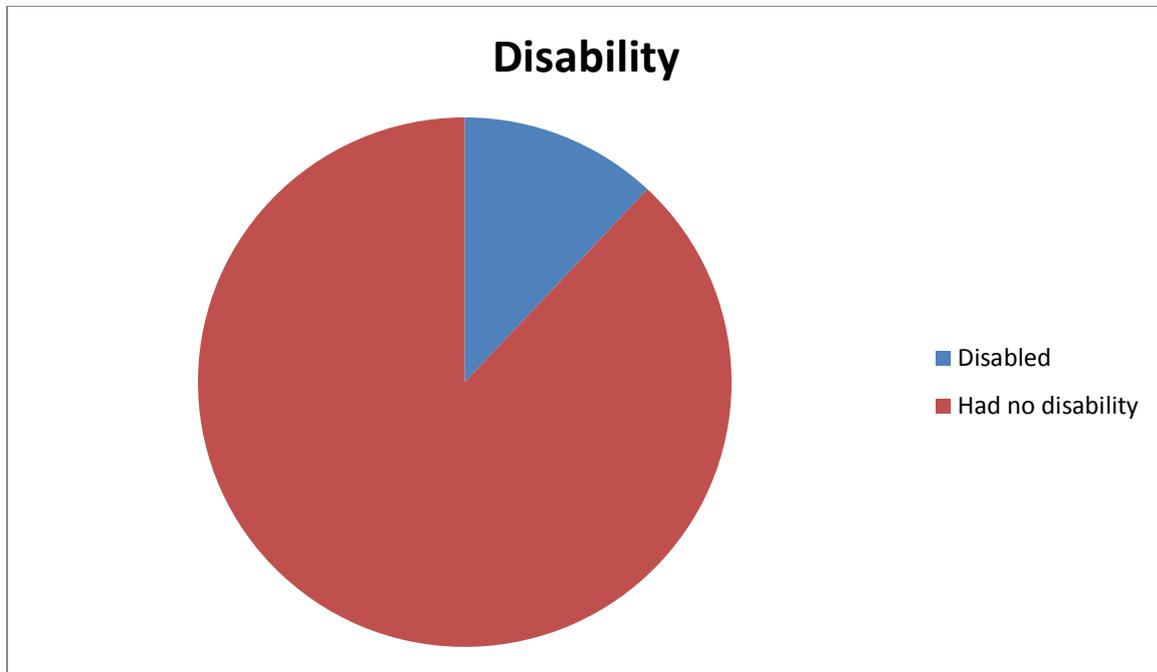
#### Victim's children by age

Where victims stated they had children 29% had one or more children under 5, 46% had one or more children aged 6-12 and 25% had one or more child aged 12-18.

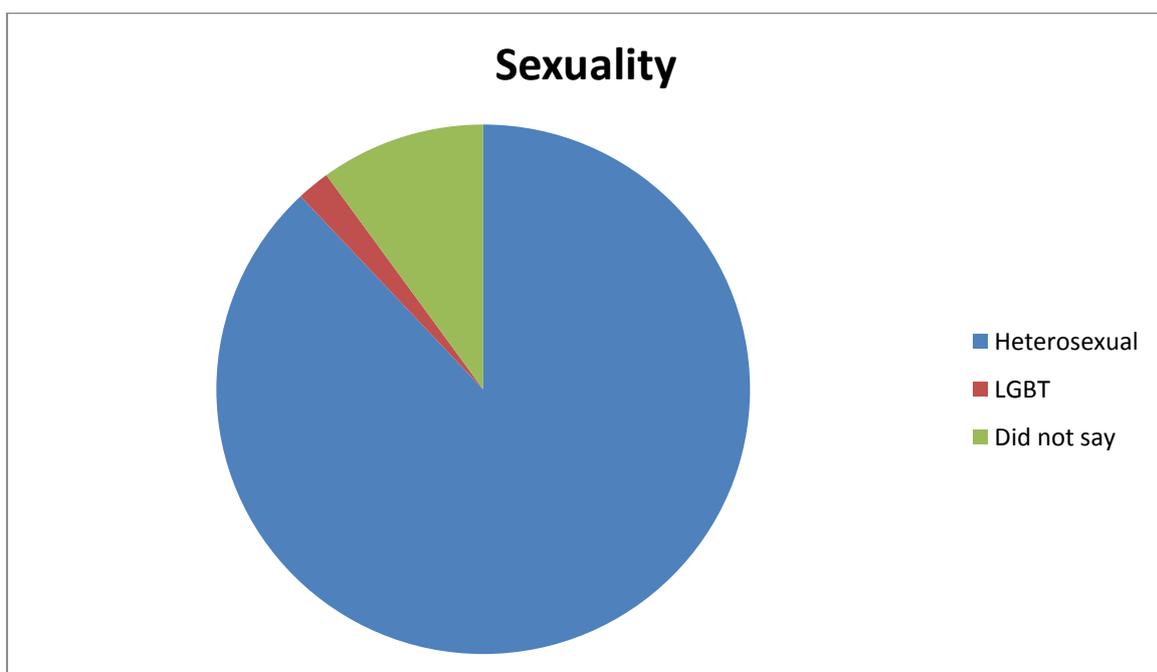
Graphic 11.5



12% of clients stated they had a disability. *Graphic 11.6*

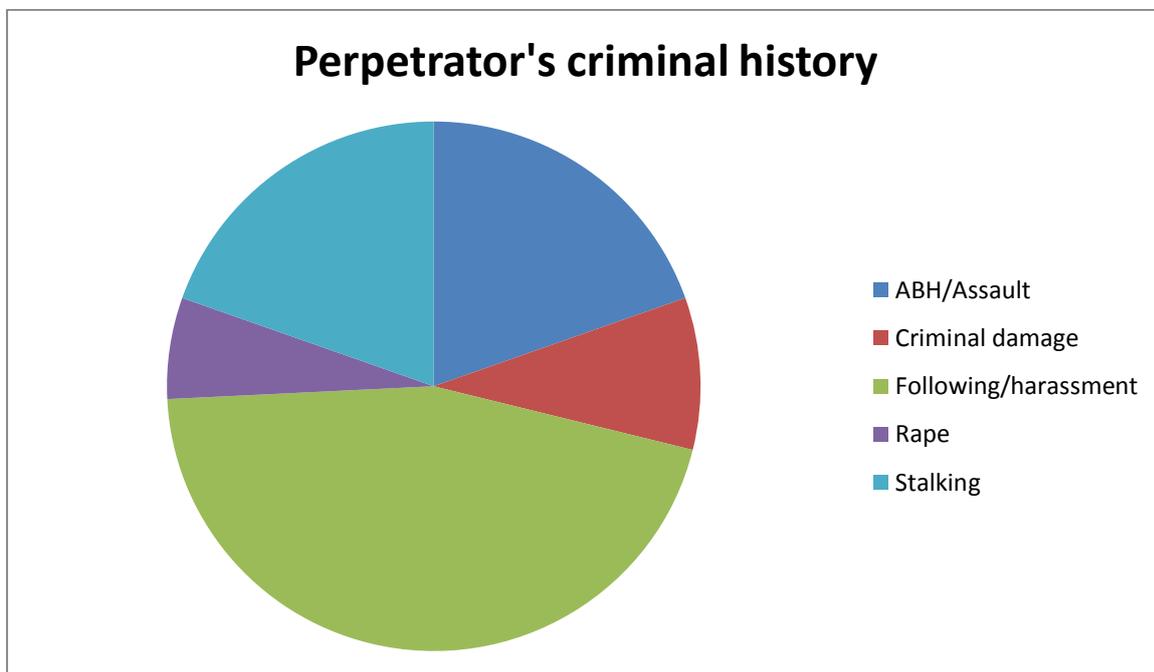


88% identified their sexuality as heterosexual, whilst 2% identified as LGBT, the remaining 10% did not disclose their sexuality. *Graphic 11.7*



## Perpetrator profile

Perpetrators have often had contact with the police prior to the point when the victim comes into contact with Paladin. 25% stated they knew of further criminal activity committed by their perpetrator. Of these, 19% had previously committed a violent offence, 9% had caused criminal damage, 44% had been charged with following/harassment, 6% had committed rape and 19% had committed stalking offences, the remainder included offences such as possession of weapons. 71% of our clients had experienced 30 or more stalking incidents at the point of contact. *Graphic 11.8*



Every client stated that their perpetrator had harassed them and turned up unannounced at some stage. 74% had received threats of a physical and/or sexual nature, 49% had experienced damage to their property or vandalism, 54% had experienced cyber stalking and 34% were aware of their stalking having a previous history of stalking other people.

## Number of agencies and professionals Paladin referred to

In some cases ISACs had referred to up to 7 other agencies. Whilst this had occurred in 4 cases, in most cases ISACS had referred to between 2 and 5 agencies per case. In 2 cases, Paladin had involved up to 9 other professionals, however, again in most cases ISACs involved between 3 and 6 other professionals on each case.

## Actions and Outcomes

100% of clients received a safety plan, were encouraged to report their situation to the police as stalking, were advised to gather evidence of stalking behaviours and to keep a diary. In 92% of cases additional target hardening was advised by the ISAC, in 64% a personal panic alarm was suggested and in 36% an alarm on the client's property was advised. The SPOC was contacted in 60% of cases.

In 57% of cases the ISAC recommended the use of section 4a stalking legislation. In 11% of cases the perpetrator was charged with a section 4a offence, 6% were charged with a section 2a. 7% of cases resulted in a section 4a stalking conviction, whilst 4% resulted in a section 2s. A custodial sentence under 12 months was awarded in 9% of cases and a sentence of over 12 months was found in only 3% of cases.

71% gave responses to outcomes on their cases. Of those 97% stated they felt safer on last contact with Paladin. 98% said they felt more confident accessing other services and one said they did not. Again, 98% said they felt more able to make plans and manage risk and they had experienced a reduction in risk. 91% said they experienced reductions in isolation and 96% felt Paladin's interventions led to a better response from professionals.

100% of clients said they felt supported by Paladin.

## Achievements

Paladin has achieved a huge amount for such a young organisation. We have trained over 1000 professionals on stalking and supported over 2000 victims. We have forged strong links with a variety of agencies including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, The Sentencing Council, Victim Support, IDVAs, Karma Nirvana, Women's Aid, Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Protection Against Stalking, Standing Together, Changing Pathways and many more. We have a strong media presence and are often the prominent organisation to refer to on all issues regarding stalking. We have trained professionals from a huge number of frontline services and organisations from the police to IDVAs and social workers we are known to be the experts in the field. However, more people need to know about us and as more people know about us, we need to grow to meet demand.

Paladin has the expertise to work with agencies in the violence against women sector as it understands the real level of risk associated with stalking and ex-intimate partner violence. We can work within the framework of violence against women strategy and DV law to protect clients who are being stalked by their ex-partner. Crucially, we are also able to apply the same level of understanding to cases where the perpetrator is not an ex-partner or a family member as there are no statutory mechanisms in place such as the MARAC or support from IDVAs and yet the level of risk may still be high.

We have campaigned to change the law and sentencing guidelines on stalking whilst also shining a light on the real life experiences of victims whose nightmare goes on and on. Working with amazing survivors like John and Penny Clough, Zoe Dronfield and Dr Eleanor Aston has brought the reality of stalking to numerous supporters, clients and professionals who may not otherwise have considered how serious a crime stalking is.

100% of our clients feel supported by Paladin, whilst 97% felt safer after using our services. Without our interventions, 2000 clients would have been worse off if they had not contacted us.

## Testimonials

### What was your experience of the service you received from Paladin?

*"Like oxygen to me, so valuable, hard to put into words."*

*"Excellent, they really fight for what they believe in. Police were clueless and understanding of my circumstances."*

*"Exceeded all expectations."*

*"Amazing, couldn't have asked for more, ISAC was very patient and reassuring."*

*"Absolutely brilliant, I don't think I would have survived the last few months without Paladin."*

*"Don't know where to begin. My ISAC is amazing and an understanding professional. The first few words she said that she said she believed what I was saying."*

*"They listened and did not judge me. They were a great liaison with the police and forced issues where necessary. The service was exceptional and my lifeline. They were supportive and pragmatic, able to provide and produce results to show progress. Having not had that before I really appreciated access to a service like that."*

*"They were brilliant, Paladin wrote a supporting letter and had the RO (restraining order) extended by a year."*

### How do you think Paladin assisted you?

*"Gave confidence to challenge the CPS, gave knowledge and information, incredibly supportive."*

*"Listened to, ISAC gave comprehensive advice, communicated relevant things to the police to make sure the case was taken seriously as it should have been. She did the work we were too exhausted to do, a real help."*

*"Made me feel validated. Police ignored me and I wanted to them take notice."*

*"What I found was that Paladin was on my side and understood how I felt."*

*"Support, contact with the police. I couldn't have got through it without Paladin."*

*"Emotional support and I would say blanket support covering the legal aspect. Got other people involved and writing supporting letters to the CPS and other services. When you're being stalked you want to give up and you need someone to take it all from you and only then you get the strength."*

**Did Paladin help you feel safer and help you manage the risk the stalker presented to you?**

*"Yes, I would not have survived mentally ...without Paladin. I was so low."*

*"The risks from myself really, I was quite suicidal and ISAC really helped me."*

*"Yes, 100%."*

**Do you feel Paladin's involvement led to a better outcome with the courts/police?**

*"Yes definitely more than I would have managed previously."*

*"Yes, an added voice to support me in the police and court system. For something like Paladin to come in was invaluable."*

*"Paladin made police take the case seriously, the difference they're making is brilliant. I have confidence the outcome will be better."*

*"I don't think it would have reached court without Paladin's help. I felt she joined all the dots. Making communication happen was invaluable for me and pieced everything together."*

*"Yes, definitely. I felt I was not being taken seriously before Paladin became involved."*

**Additional comments**

*"I think Paladin are doing a great job. There's no one that really understands it unless they've been through. I couldn't get the experience anywhere else."*

*"Basically, without Paladin I wouldn't have got through. I felt there was no future, the turnaround has been unbelievable."*

*"For me, there's so much work but Paladin deserves the funding. In this day and age somebody who is being stalked who hasn't been through this before doesn't necessarily know these services exist. The more people know about the service the better."*

*"I think Paladin were brilliant. I would like to see more police training with stalking."*

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