

Stalker Register

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Laura Richards from *Paladin*, on the urgent need for a register to be put into place

Currently there is no existing framework which can track or monitor serial stalkers. Stalking is about fixation and obsession and some of the most serious cases end in rape and murder. *Paladin's* cases highlight that stalkers stalk multiple victims and may escalate their behaviour. Stalkers steal lives and take lives. Many of the two women that are murdered each week by their ex-partner were stalked prior to their murder. Analysis of the Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) reveal that when domestic violence, stalking and coercive control co-occur, these are the most dangerous of cases, where women and children are more likely to be killed. Analysis of DHRs also show that many of the perpetrators who have a history of abuse, including stalking, have damaged multiple victims across their life course and breached conditions and orders put in place.

Cases include: Jane Clough who warned police her violent ex, Jonathan Vass, was going to kill her when she ended an abusive relationship with him. Vass also had a history of abusing other women. Jane took her baby and stayed at her parent's house once she heard Vass had been bailed and did not leave there for the next three months, such was her fear. Vass waited for her to go back to work, having been stalking her on Facebook, and stabbed her 71 times in the hospital car park. Tracey Morgan was stalked by a work colleague, Anthony Burstow.

He was stalking another woman simultaneously and then attempted to kill her; Ryan Ingham who murdered Caroline Finegan. He had 23 convictions for violence, mostly towards partners; Jayden Parkinson was brutally murdered and her ex-partner, Ben Blakeley, who is on trial for her murder. He has a history of abuse during past relationships.

We know that rather than the perpetrator being managed, oftentimes it is the victims who are forced to modify and change their behaviour and even flee their homes to stay safe. This is the reason why refuges are in demand and victims continue to be moved around the country. We track victims through Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences but not the perpetrator. *Paladin* have analysed all current civil and criminal remedies available. No order currently exists that manages all aspects of serial perpetration of domestic violence or stalking regarding:

- i. All stalking perpetrators (those who have had an intimate relationship and those who have not) as well as domestic violence offenders who meet the criteria.
- ii. Protection for potential future victims, through tracking, monitoring/supervision.
- iii. Imposing positive obligations on the serial perpetrator

Paladin recommend that to meet the objectives there would need to be primary legislation to permit the regulation and tracking of serial perpetrators. Notification requirements and prohibitions placed would be akin to that of a Registered Sex Offender. Offenders would be placed on the Violent and Sexual Offenders Register (ViSOR) and be subjected to robust and proactive supervision, monitoring and management through the Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements. Registration and tracking will also inform and facilitate the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), helping to identify patterns of serial abuse and offending behaviour and coercive control.

Criteria for a Serial Perpetrator Order (SPO) and Registration

Paladin recommends the consideration of a specific Serial Perpetrator Order (SPO) and Risk of Harm Order (RHO) which encompasses a similar framework to that of a Violent Offender Order and Sexual Offences Protection Order; following a conviction, and on application by the Crown, in certain circumstances a suspected serial perpetrator will be required to register relevant addresses, changes of identity, new relationships etc. Circumstances in which the Crown would make an application to the convicting or sentencing court – as a result of convictions or allegations made by other, unconnected female victims, whether leading to a prosecution or not – the convicting or sentencing court adjudges that the offender is a serial perpetrator and should be subject to a regime akin to that of a sexual offender.

Even now with the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, although this will assist the process of identifying such individuals after they have come to attention in respect of a further crime or incident, but will not permit the proactive approach necessary to keep potential victims informed and safer. The register and new orders for serial stalkers and domestic violence offenders will ensure protection to primary, secondary and potential future victims. This will ultimately save lives and money.

Paladin, Women's Aid and Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation are spearheading a campaign in partnership regarding closing the criminalization gap in relation to a pattern of behaviour and coercive control. For more info please see <http://paladinservice.co.uk/harassment-legislation/domestic-violence-cam...>

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