

Experiences of and responses to intimate partner stalking in the lives of young people aged 13 to 19 years

This co-designed study addresses evidence gaps in young people's intimate partner stalking, using administrative and qualitative data to examine experiences and agency responses.

Key details

Lead institution	University of Lancashire
Principal researcher(s)	Dr Kelly Bracewell, Talia Kensit, Tahreem Tahir and Jennifer Mountain KBracewell1@lancashire.ac.uk
Police region	North West
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	September 2025
Date due for completion	November 2026

Research context

- Stalking has no clear legal definition, but is commonly described as 'a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress'.
- Stalking presents risks around repeat victimisation and behaviour escalation.
- Effects are severe and long-lasting.
- 88% of victims are female: One in five women are victims, with those aged 16–19 most affected. However, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) only collects data for people aged 16 years and over.

- The 2022 super-complaint on the police response to stalking highlighted a lack of understanding of what constitutes stalking, poor investigation and unused measures to protect victims.
- There is no robust capture of victim voice.

Aim

To generate new evidence of experiences and responses to intimate partner/dating stalking for young people aged 13–19 through the creation of an original database and qualitative data from practitioners and those with lived experience. It will consider:

- prevalence
- stalking forms, typologies
- stalking experiences and impacts
- agency responses
- how police and agencies can identify and respond effectively
- specific vulnerabilities and policy gaps that distinguish their experiences from adults
- exclusions: stalking by parents/family

Objective

To improve police and wider agency practice, understandings of and responses to young people's stalking experiences by:

- collating and analysing administrative datasets across third sector support agencies (Paladin, SafeLives, stalking consortia partners) for the first time
- placing victim/survivor voice at the centre

Research methodology

This exploratory mixed methods project collates and analyses anonymised datasets from third sector support organisations, generates qualitative contextual data and emphasises the importance of survivor voice.

Key research stages include:

- UK evidence review and document gathering

- helpline and administrative data collation and analysis
- case study development
- victim/survivor and parent interviews
- focus groups with specialist staff

Expert advisory groups

Two advisory groups will be convened by the principal investigator, bringing together subject expertise across stalking, young people and policing. The advisory groups will act as a critical friend for the duration of the project, input into recommendations and will be regularly updated via email.

Additional resources

[Project website](#)