

News story

New VAWG strategy will leave offenders with nowhere to hide

The full power of the state will be deployed in the largest crackdown on violence against women and girls (VAWG) in British history, as part of a new strategy.

From: [Home Office \(/government/organisations/home-office\)](#), [Ministry of Justice \(/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice\)](#), [The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP \(/government/people/shabana-mahmood\)](#), [Jess Phillips MP \(/government/people/jess-phillips\)](#) and [Alex Davies-Jones MP \(/government/people/alex-davies-jones\)](#)

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All police forces will introduce specialist rape and sexual offence investigation teams to hunt down perpetrators, under sweeping reforms announced today by the Home Secretary.

As part of the government's violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy due to be launched later this week, the full power of the state will be deployed in the largest crackdown on violence perpetrated against women and girls in British history.

This will see specialist investigators apprehend, investigate and lock up rapists and sex offenders across the country.

Devastatingly, on average, every day, 200 rapes are recorded by the police – and more go unreported.

Offenders of these vile crimes are among the most prolific and dangerous criminals in our society. Yet the tools and tactics used by law enforcement to pursue them are outdated, too often leaving men and boys to wreak havoc without any consequence.

The dedicated rape and sexual offence specialist investigators, deployed in every police force in England and Wales, will replace an outdated system, where officers often did not have the specialist knowledge to investigate rapists and sex offenders, leaving predators to walk the streets.

The Home Secretary has instructed all police forces to bring in these dedicated specialist teams to better support victims and relentlessly pursue perpetrators.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

“This government has declared violence against women and girls a national emergency.

“For too long, these crimes have been considered a fact of life. That’s not good enough. We will halve it in a decade.

“Today we announce a range of measures to bear down on abusers, stopping them in their tracks. Rapists, sex offenders and abusers will have nowhere to hide.”

Nour Norris OBE, lead campaigner, aunt and sister of Raneem Oudeh and Khaola Saleem, said:

“I welcome the measures announced today as part of the government’s VAWG strategy, and fully support the government’s recognition of the scale and complexity of the problem. This strategy will be the first time we have seen a government bring together all these critical areas of failure and act on them within such a short period. That acknowledgement matters, as does the willingness to reform.

“For my family, these reforms to have specialist rape and sexual offence investigation teams in every force and rolling out DAPOs [domestic abuse protection orders] to tackle perpetrators, are not abstract. Khaola and Raneem not only faced a failing 999 control room but also experienced almost every gap that will be outlined in this strategy. Raneem lived for years with a perpetrator who was able to exploit weaknesses across policing, risk assessment, information sharing, and enforcement. My campaign has always been about closing those gaps so no woman is left unprotected, unheard, or unbelieved. I stand ready to support this work, and look forward to the publication of the VAWG strategy.”

CEO of Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse, Cheryl Henry-Leach, said:

“Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse welcomes the government’s commitment to strengthening the national response to violence against women and girls. The scale of this ambition reflects the urgency of the challenge and we stand ready to support government in its mission to halve VAWG within the next

decade. The focus on improved investigation, enhanced tools to protect victims, and greater oversight of perpetrators signals a renewed commitment to systemic change.

“For these measures to be effective, accountability must be meaningful. Breaches of domestic abuse protection orders and other safeguards must be treated with the seriousness they warrant, recognising that non-compliance is not an administrative lapse, but a deliberate act that places victims at further risk.

“We welcome increased resources for victims and survivors, as well as the expansion of specialist investigative capacity. However, lasting progress requires more than enforcement alone. Perpetrator accountability must form part of a whole-system approach that prioritises victim-survivor safety, strengthens multi-agency collaboration, and ensures that every part of the system plays its role.

“Our specialist domestic abuse courts (SDAC) model provides an evidence-based example of how co-ordinated practice can reduce harm, improve justice outcomes, and keep survivors safer. We look forward to working with partners across policing, criminal justice, health, and local authorities to ensure these reforms translate into meaningful change for victims and survivors.

“Standing Together remains committed to supporting government in building a response that is trauma-informed, co-ordinated, and centred on the voices and experiences of those most affected.”

Domestic abuse protection orders will also be rolled out across England and Wales, placing mandatory curfews, electronic tagging, exclusion zones and notification requirements on abusers, with offenders who break orders facing up to 5 years in jail.

These pioneering orders cover all forms of domestic abuse including economic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking and ‘honour’-based abuse and, with no maximum time limits placed on the orders, victims can be provided with protection for as long as they need.

A new crack team of online operatives will be deployed to use covert and intelligence techniques to tackle violence against women and girls online. With nearly £2 million investment, a brand-new network of officers will have the technical capability to target the most technologically sophisticated offenders.

This builds on the Home Office’s successful undercover network on child sexual abuse that has arrested over 1,700 perpetrators.

The measures set out today are essential as the government pushes forward on its unprecedented mission to halve the issue within a decade.

This builds on action already being taken, including launching facial recognition technology to help police apprehend dangerous predators, including sex offenders, and bringing in Raneem’s Law to embed domestic abuse specialists in 999 control rooms.

Last year, the Home Office also announced a raft of measures to tackle stalking and provide greater support to victims, including giving women the right to know the

identity of their online stalker and making strangulation a criminal offence, as part of the Crime and Policing Bill.

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