

femicide census
profiles of women killed by men

REDEFINING AN ISOLATED INCIDENT

Report author

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With thanks to:

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Dedication

Recently, there was an online news article about a man who killed his estranged wife, and then committed suicide. We learned what his age was, what his job had been, and how he was a “*kind, honest, hardworking man who loved his family.*” We didn’t learn anything about her – the woman whose life he had taken in the most vicious of ways.

This report is dedicated to the women whose lives have been stolen in similar ways. It aims to count and to recognise each woman who was taken from us at the hands of men’s fatal violence. It dedicates itself to each woman whose voice – in court hearings, police statements and newspaper publications – is silenced as the perpetrator writes the story of her death. It dedicates itself to the friends and families who grieve every day. This report aspires to be a voice for all of them.

The women to whom this report is dedicated are commemorated by name on page 38.¹

All quotes in this report have been taken directly from news reports on cases of femicide. Names, and other details relating to the identity of victims and perpetrators in specific cases, have been removed. Please note that some of these quotes contain explicit details on abuse (physical, mental, emotional, verbal, and sexual), and methods of killing/excessive violence which may cause distress or harm to the reader.

1. A number of names remain unidentified at the point of publication of this report. Some names have been removed from the list on the request of families.

Executive Summary

Femicide is generally defined as the killing of women because they are women, though some definitions include any killing of women or girls.² Femicide has been identified globally as a leading cause of premature death for women, yet there is limited research on this issue. The Global Study on Homicide in 2011 indicated that whilst there had been a decrease in the number of homicides worldwide, there had been an increase in the number of femicides.³

In December 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on femicide, urging Member States to undertake a range of measures to address the gender-related killing of women and girls, including the need to enhance data collection and analysis. The recent report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (SRVAW) to the UN General Assembly noted that the UN and its Member States have repeatedly concluded that the comparability and availability of data is key to defining and understanding femicide, and its manifestations, causes and consequences. The SRVAW cited the UK's Femicide Census in her report as a laudable example of best practice in this regard, and recommends that States “collect and publish data on femicides and on other forms of violence against women (VAW) and establish Femicide watch or observatories on VAW with such functions.”⁴

The Femicide Census is a database currently containing information on almost 1,000 women killed by men in England and Wales since 2009. The data on all cases is not yet complete, and thus this report summarises the early findings on cases of femicide between 2009 and 2015, involving a total of 936 women.⁵ The Femicide Census was developed in partnership by Karen Ingala Smith and Women's Aid, with support from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP and Deloitte LLP. Where possible, the census has captured a wide range of information about each case including: (i) the

name of the woman and her killer, and their age, occupation and health status; (ii) the incident and date of the killing itself; (iii) details of the relevant police force area, the weapon and recorded motive; and (iv) other available details on children, ethnicity and country of birth. The census aims to provide a clearer picture of men's fatal violence against women, committed by partners, ex-partners, male relatives, acquaintances, colleagues and strangers.

The killing of a woman, especially in a domestic setting, is often reported as an ‘isolated incident with no further threat to the public’. Such descriptions dismiss the scale of the issue, and diminish the fact that gender-based violence is a society-wide issue.⁶ The Femicide Census collates the details of hundreds of femicides committed by men, to explore whether lessons can be learnt by viewing these cases together. The initial analysis finds that these are not isolated incidents, since too many of them followed a similar pattern of violence and were premeditated. Data analysed from the Femicide Census showed that many femicides were committed in similar settings, where similar weapons were used, and similar relationships existed between the perpetrators and victims. By highlighting the trends in cases of femicide, this report further shows that through social, institutional and state changes, instances of femicide can be reduced, if not completely prevented.

2. World Health Organisation (WHO), ‘Understanding and addressing violence against women’, http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77421/1/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf, 2012, (accessed 24 November 2016).

3. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), ‘The Global Study on Homicide’, Vienna, UNODC publication, 2011.

4. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences’, 2016, http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=106, (accessed 24 November 2016).

5. More information on the methodology of the Femicide Census and this report can be found on page 8.

6. Article 3 of the 2011 Istanbul Convention defines gender-based violence (GBV) as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. [GBV] refers to any harm that is perpetrated against a woman and that is both the cause and the result of unequal power relations based on perceived differences between women and men that lead to women's subordinate status in both the private and public spheres.” Source: Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, 11 May 2011, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ddb74f72.html> (accessed 24 November 2016).

Key findings

Between January 1st 2009 and December 31st 2015:

- The killings of women and girls by men are not isolated incidents. It is known that 936 women were killed by men in England and Wales.
- Most women who are killed are killed by a man known to them. 598 (64%) women were killed by men identified as current or former partners.
- Women are at significant risk at the point of separation from an abusive partner. 152 (76%) of women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse were killed within the first year that followed their separation.
- Women of any age can be victims of femicide. 149 women aged over 66 were killed in England and Wales. 50 of these women (34%) were killed by their partner or spouse. 34 of them (23%) were killed by their sons.
- The murder weapon most used in cases of femicide was a sharp instrument. A sharp instrument was used in 426 cases of femicide; 290 of those cases were domestic intimate-partner femicides.
- 218 (23.3%) cases of femicide were committed by men not related to their victims e.g. by a friend, colleague, client, co-worker, neighbour, stranger.
- 31 women were killed in sexually motivated attacks. 20 (64%) of the women knew who the perpetrator was; he was an acquaintance or friend. 10 of the women (32%) were killed by a stranger.
- 21 women were known to be involved in prostitution, and 13 (61.9%) of these women were killed by their clients.

Key Recommendations

Key Recommendations for Government

Support the Femicide Census with the collection of data on femicides, which is key to defining and understanding the causes and consequences of men's violence against women, including femicide.⁷ Ensure that national data on homicide reflects the gendered nature of these crimes, by collecting comparative data on the sex and age of the perpetrator and victim, on their relationship, on any previous convictions relating to abuse or violence and by disaggregating across police force area. Our key findings identify trends in men's violence against women and girls; therefore a significant improvement to data collection will help to further understand how femicide can be prevented.

Ensure that specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services have sustainable and long term funding and that funding is available for specialist projects for women to exit prostitution.

Recognise that post-separation is a significantly heightened risk period for women leaving abusive relationships. Refuge provision: (i) include refuges resourced to support women facing multiple disadvantages such as problematic substance use, prostitution and mental health problems; and (ii) increase support for black and Minority Ethnic (BME) led organisations that provide refuge for BME women. This will mean women are more likely to safely escape violence.

Key Recommendations for Police

Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and the College of Policing should work together to improve the learning from domestic homicides and contribute effectively to, and learn from, the information held within the Femicide Census.⁸

Police training should include information and learning from the findings of the Femicide Census to improve their response to women at risk of femicide, ensuring the seriousness of threats of violence and killing are recognised, taken seriously and perpetrators are prosecuted. Training should also challenge stereotypes and reduce victim-blaming.

Key Recommendations for the Criminal Justice System

An improvement to sentencing is imperative. Appropriate sanctions for perpetrators of all forms of men's violence against women and girls, including perpetrators of femicide, sends out the message that violence against women and girls will be taken seriously and be rigorously punished by the law. The Crown Prosecuting Service must review charging in cases of femicide, and the Sentencing Council must review sentencing for femicide perpetrators to ensure effective sanctions are in place to hold perpetrators to account.

Key Recommendations for the Media

There should be appropriate reporting of femicide cases with due respect to the victim and her family. News reports should not be overly sympathetic to perpetrators, privileging the perpetrator's story. Women should not be written out of reports – nor should women be defined one-dimensionally by their relationship to men/families.

7. The Femicide Census is currently funded by a private donation with pro-bono support from Deloitte LLP and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP.

8. Recommendation nine of the progress report on the police response to domestic abuse published by HM Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) report 2015 noted that "The Femicide Census is an extremely useful tool, which could potentially assist with the identification of key themes and learning from DHRs". Source: HMIC, 'Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse', December 2015, p.104.

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What is Femicide?

The term ‘femicide’ was made popular by feminist author Diana Russell in the 1970s, in the hope that highlighting and stigmatising the murder of women as a specific type of lethal hate crime would be the first step toward reducing the killings of women worldwide.⁹ Diana Russell and Jill Radford later wrote the book, *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing*, which offered the first known written and explicitly feminist definition of femicide as “*the misogynistic killing of women by men*”.¹⁰ The Femicide Census tracks killings in which the victim was a woman, and the charged or known perpetrator was a man. This report aims to significantly increase the knowledge and understanding of femicides in England and Wales, with the aim of ultimately reducing the number of women killed by men.

Femicide has been identified globally as a leading cause of premature death for women.¹¹ It is the most extreme manifestation of men’s violence against women, and yet there are limited data available. There have been calls from the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to all member states to establish a Femicide Watch, and to take a holistic approach to their national laws, policies and actual implementation, and other factors that perpetuate discrimination and violence.¹² This report highlights the need for more effective action to prevent and tackle men’s violence against women across the board. It is crucial that the Government makes every effort to prevent violence against women, and address the cultural and societal attitudes that normalise male dominance and foster the sexism and inequality that underpin men’s violence against women and girls.

What is Men’s Violence Against Women and Girls?

Men commit more fatal crime than women. In the year ending March 2015, the Office for National Statistics’ (ONS) Homicide Report for England and Wales found that among non-domestic adult homicides, 94% of male victims and 89% of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by a male suspect. For the same period, the ONS showed, once again, that women are far more likely than men to be killed by their partner or expartner (44% of female victims compared with 6% of male victims).¹³ The killing of women and girls is thus overwhelmingly committed by men.¹⁴ At a global level, it has been reported that 95% of homicide perpetrators are male and that one in every two women victims of homicide is killed by her intimate partner or a family member.¹⁵ For the period 2009 to 2015, the UK Femicide Census contains over 900 stories of women killed by men, 64% of whom were killed by their current or former partner.¹⁶ The Femicide Census collects data to examine whether or not significant similarities exist across these killings, and if so, what can be learned from analysing the killing of women by men as a distinct group.

9. Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), ‘Femicide: A Global Issue that Demands Action’, Vienna, ACUNS, 2013.

10. D. Russell and J. Radford, *Femicide: the politics of woman killing*, Michigan, Twayne, 1992.

11. The highest rates of femicide have been recorded in Latin America. The term *feminicidio* is widely used in Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala, with *femicidio* used in other South and Central American countries. Source: Peramato, Teresa Martin. 2012. “Femicidio and feminicidio.” *Journal of Jurisprudence* 1.

12. Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), ‘Femicide Volume V: A Global Issue that Demands Action’, Vienna, ACUNS, 2016.

13. Note that the ONS includes ‘lover’s spouse and emotional rival’ in their definition of ‘partner/ex-partner homicide’. Source: ONS, ‘Focus on Violent Crimes and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015, Chapter 2: Homicide’, February 2016, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter2homicide>, (accessed 24 November 2016).

14. Seven women are known to have been sentenced, alongside male perpetrators, for their involvement in the killing of women on the census. Details on their name, age and criminal verdict have been recorded on the census but are not analysed in this report.

15. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), ‘The Global Study on Homicide’, Vienna, UNODC publication, Sales No. I4.IV.1, 2013.

16. This research comprises data from January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2015 inclusive.

Methodology

The Femicide Census gathers information on women and girls aged 14 years and older who have been killed, and where the principle charged, alleged, or convicted perpetrator is a man.¹⁷ The Census is constantly being updated and currently contains information on almost 1,000 women killed since 2009. This report is based on our most complete data thus far, comprising femicides committed between January 1st 2009 and December 31st 2015, in England and Wales. Information has been collected on both the victim and perpetrator: on their age, occupation, relationship, health status, the method of killing, other victims, the context of violence (i.e. intimate-partner violence, for financial gain, child-parent, sexually motivated) and in which police force area the woman was killed. When the child(ren) of a victim is also killed, the information is stored on the database but not analysed in this report.¹⁸

The underlying data for the Femicide Census was taken from Karen Ingala Smith's blog *Counting Dead Women*. Karen has been searching the web for news of women killed by men and recording each case on her blog since 2012.¹⁹ This information, as well as other publicly available information (primarily online news articles), constitutes the building blocks of the Femicide Census. These 'blocks' have been verified by, and supplemented with, information gained from the submission of requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The FOIA sets out a framework under which members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities via Freedom of Information Requests (FOI Request). As part of verifying and collating information included in the Femicide Census, FOI Requests were sent to:

- All 43 police force areas in England and Wales;²⁰ these included requests for a list of the names of all women killed within the respective police force area, their ages, the names of the accused, dates of death, the relationship between the victims and their perpetrators and, if identified, the methods of killing. FOI Requests sent for the year 2015 also included a request for the ethnicity of the victim; and
- Other public authorities: information gathered from these FOI Requests was of limited value (as a result of various public authorities relying on exceptions under the FOIA which allow them to resist disclosure of information requested via an FOI Request).

Further to the FOI Requests, a small amount of data included in the Femicide Census has been verified through the collection and analysis of Independent Police Complaints Commission Reports, NHS mental health homicide reviews, Serious Case Reviews, Coroner reports, and Domestic Homicide Reviews.

The collected data is stored on the software platform *Relativity*, where it is noted as being either:

- Verified (i.e. data coming from, or otherwise verified by, a public authority); or
- Not verified (i.e. coming from publicly available sources, including newspaper articles, and not backed up by responses received to FOI requests). The information that remains unverified primarily includes further background to the murder, including details pertaining to the victim's and the perpetrator's occupations, their health status, whether or not the woman had children, the type of relationship that existed between the victim and perpetrator and, in certain cases, how long the victim had been separated from the perpetrator prior to the femicide.

Relativity is a sophisticated, interactive software platform hosted by Deloitte. The platform has been used as the primary analytical tool in compiling this report as it facilitates analytical searches and statistical breakdowns, allowing comparisons and parallels to be drawn between cases. Data on *Relativity* has been summarised in tables and charts using the *Pivot* feature, and large datasets have also been exported to Excel for further breakdown, and to create the charts found in this report.

17. Seven women are known to have been sentenced, alongside male perpetrators, for their involvement in the killing of women on the census. Details on their name, age and criminal verdict have been recorded on the census but are not analysed in this report.

18. 24 children under the age of 14 are known to have been killed alongside their mother, 10 sons, and 14 daughters.

19. K. Ingala Smith, 'Counting Dead Women', <https://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/>, (accessed 24 November 2016).

20. Not all police force areas responded in full to these requests. The London Metropolitan Police did not respond to any requests.

Limitations

Information in the public domain is limited and, where information is available, it is not always verifiable. It has not been within the scope of the project to verify all of the information from public sources that have been stored on the database, and in turn, used for this report.

Further, the media seem to value the reporting of some deaths over others, appearing to suggest that some women are valued over others. It can therefore be difficult to obtain the full picture on each femicide. The deaths of black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women often receive less media coverage than that assigned to killings of white women – especially young women considered ‘attractive’ and who are killed by a stranger. This perpetuates a hierarchy of victims, classifying the deaths of some women as more important or more newsworthy than others. This means that large gaps remain in certain data fields. Accordingly, some of the findings in this report are based on incomplete data. For example, information on each woman’s occupation was sought but, almost without exception, it was easier to find out whether or not the victim had been a mother than it was to find out where she worked. Additionally, information on the health status of the victim and perpetrator was difficult to source. The phrase ‘at least’ is used to qualify findings in matters where full data is unknown. Nonetheless, despite these drawbacks, media reports remain central to some of the findings identified in this report.

Each death has been categorised through the identification of the primary contextual factor. While each killing can be contextualised as a femicide, or as men’s violence against women and girls, it was important to attempt to differentiate the killings further to understand the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and/or the motive behind the killing. Where details on the relationship between victim and the perpetrator were disclosed in FOI Requests, it was possible to establish if the femicide can, for example, be contextualised as ‘Domestic – intimate partner violence’. At other times, it was necessary to use details obtained from news reports to understand the context. For example, if it was reported that a woman had been killed during a burglary, her death was contextualised as ‘in the course of other crime – robbery or burglary’. It is important to note that, in addition to the primary context of violence, there may have been a number of other relevant contexts, such as ‘sexually motivated’ or ‘financial gain’. However, only one context has been assigned to each case, and as a result this report is undercounting sexual violence.

The ethnicity of the victim was only requested in FOI Requests to the police for the year 2015. While attempts have been made to record the country of birth of each victim thus far, the findings in this report are not complete. Data collection is currently being developed to record the country of birth, race and ethnicity of the victim for each year. It is also hoped that the research can be expanded into Scotland and Northern Ireland, in order to create a UK-wide picture of femicide.

Findings

This section introduces the initial findings on femicide: (i) an overview of the cases; and (ii) the case rates per year. It then introduces the demographics of the women on the census, including their age, ethnicity, where they were from and where they were killed. The section on Context of Violence gives detailed findings on intimate partner violence, post-separation femicides, women over 66 years of age, and femicides committed by men not related to their victims. Finally, findings on the method of killing and on perpetrators are presented.

When all of these cases are brought together, the patterns emerging show that the killings of women and girls are anything but isolated.

Incidents of Femicide

The following figures give a breakdown of the 936 femicides in England and Wales between 2009 and 2015:

Women killed by their current or former partner:

- 598 women in total, an average of 85 women per year.²¹ In 2011, 100 women were killed by their current or former partner.

Women killed by their sons:

- 75 women in total, an average of 11 women per year.²² There were 15 women killed by their sons in 2012 and six killed by their sons in 2009.

Women killed by any other male family member:

- 45 in total, six women on average per year. Nine women were killed by a male family member in 2012.

Women killed outside the context of domestic femicides (e.g. by a friend, stranger, colleague, neighbour, client, lodger etc.):

- 218 women killed, an average of 31 women per year.

21. 586 women were killed in the context of 'Domestic – intimate partner violence', 10 women were killed by their partners in the context of "'Mercy' Killing', and two women were killed by their ex-partners in the context of a so called "'Honour Killing'".

22. The averages were derived from the seven year period January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2015 e.g. $75/7 = 10.71$

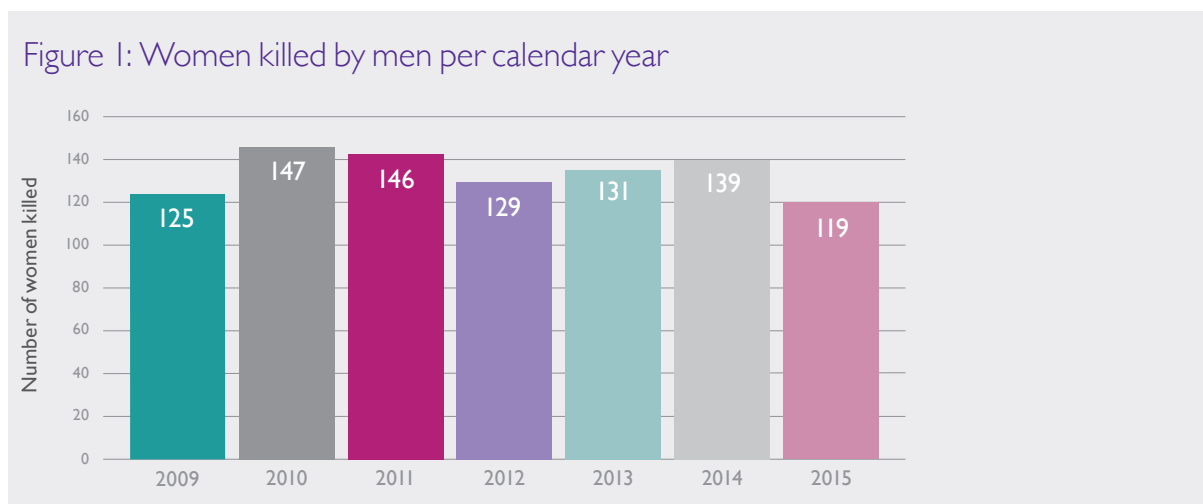


Figure 1: Total number of cases of femicide per calendar year

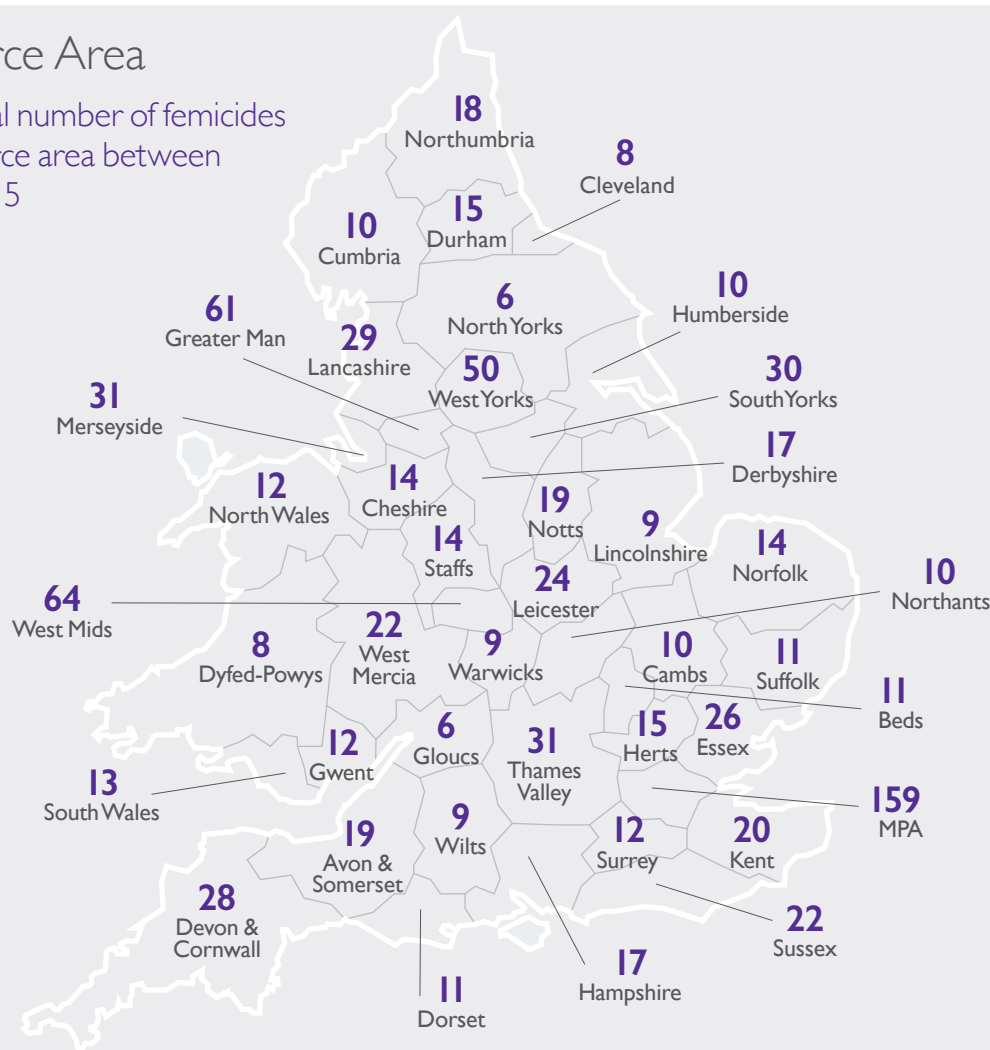
Figure 1 highlights that the number of women killed by men fluctuates each year. The Femicide Census and other research (Walby, 2016) indicate that it is not possible to conclude from the fluctuations that violence against women and girls is decreasing. At the point of publication of this

report, a number of cases of femicide from 2015 could not be included. These cases are still under investigation and information could not yet be released by the police via responses to FOI Requests. It is therefore believed that 119 is not the total number of cases of femicide for 2015.

Demographics

Police Force Area

Figure 2: Total number of femicides per police force area between 2009 and 2015



The number of women killed by men per police force area over the course of the seven-year period is presented in figure 2 above. **London Metropolitan, West Midlands and Greater Manchester police serve the largest populations in England and Wales and also exhibit the largest number of femicides** (n=159, 64, 61 respectively). However, Leicestershire (n=24)

and Durham (n=15) both have considerably high numbers of femicides relative to their population.²³ To highlight the proportion of femicides per area, the rate of femicide per 100,000 population has been calculated and presented on the map in figure 4; the five police force areas with the highest femicide rate are presented in figure 3.

23. Population figures as of 2012, the mid-way point of this research period, Source: ONS, 'Recorded Crime Tables', Period ending March 2012, (accessed 25 November 2016) <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/2016105160709/http://ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2012/rft-recorded-crime-tables-2011-12.xls>.

24. Refer to the appendix for a full list of femicide rates per police force area in England and Wales.

For the period 2009–2015, the femicide rate has been calculated by dividing the total number of femicides per police force area by the population of the police force area. This result was then multiplied by 100,000.

For example:

Total number of femicides in Kent (n=20) × 100,000 = 1.18764

Kent police force area population (n= 1,684,000)

Figure 3: Femicides per 100,000 population

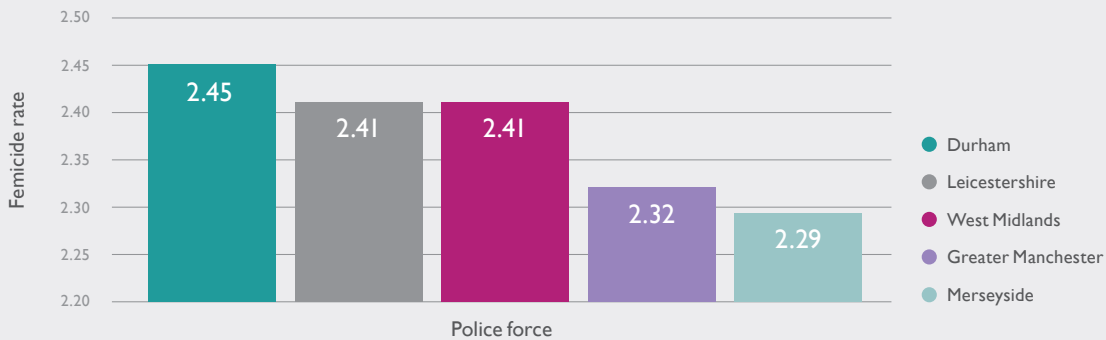
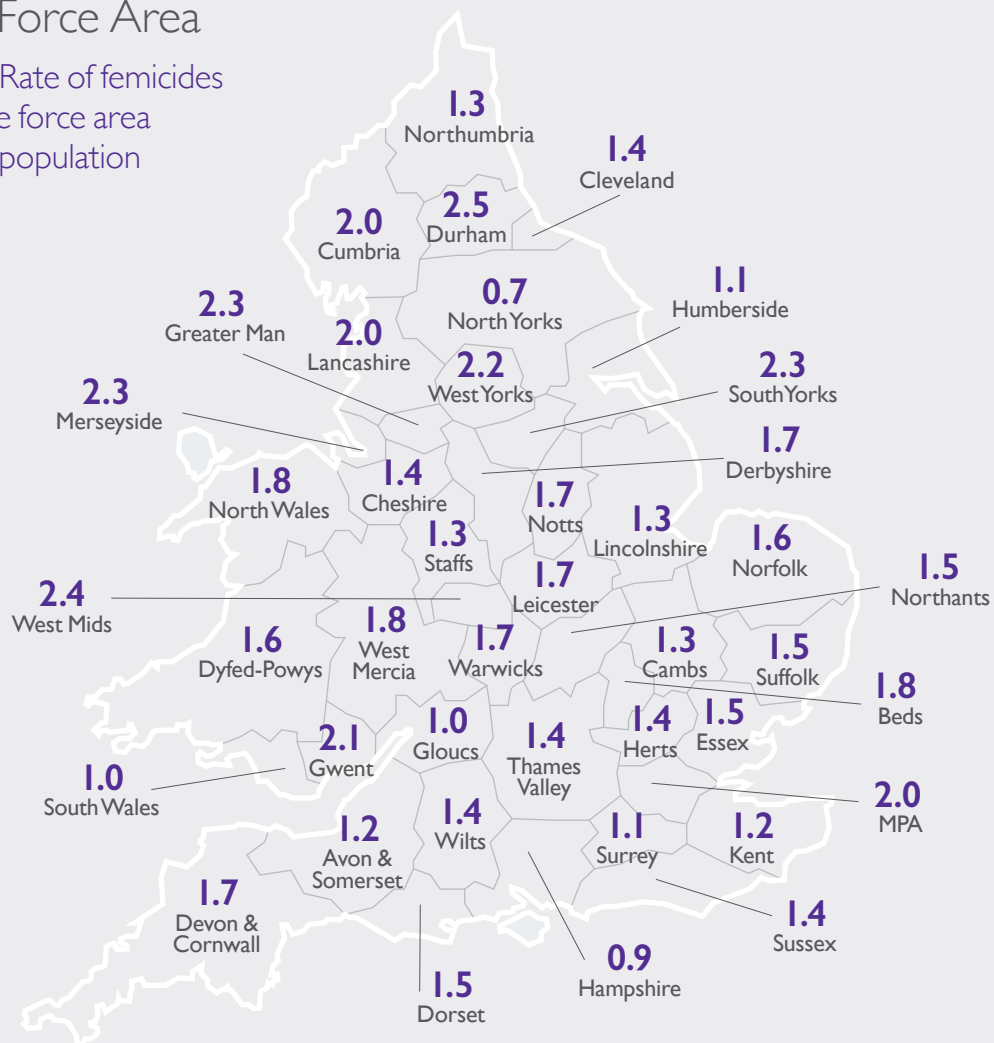


Figure 3: Police force areas with largest femicide rates per 100,000.²⁴

Police Force Area

Figure 4: Rate of femicides per police force area 100,000 population

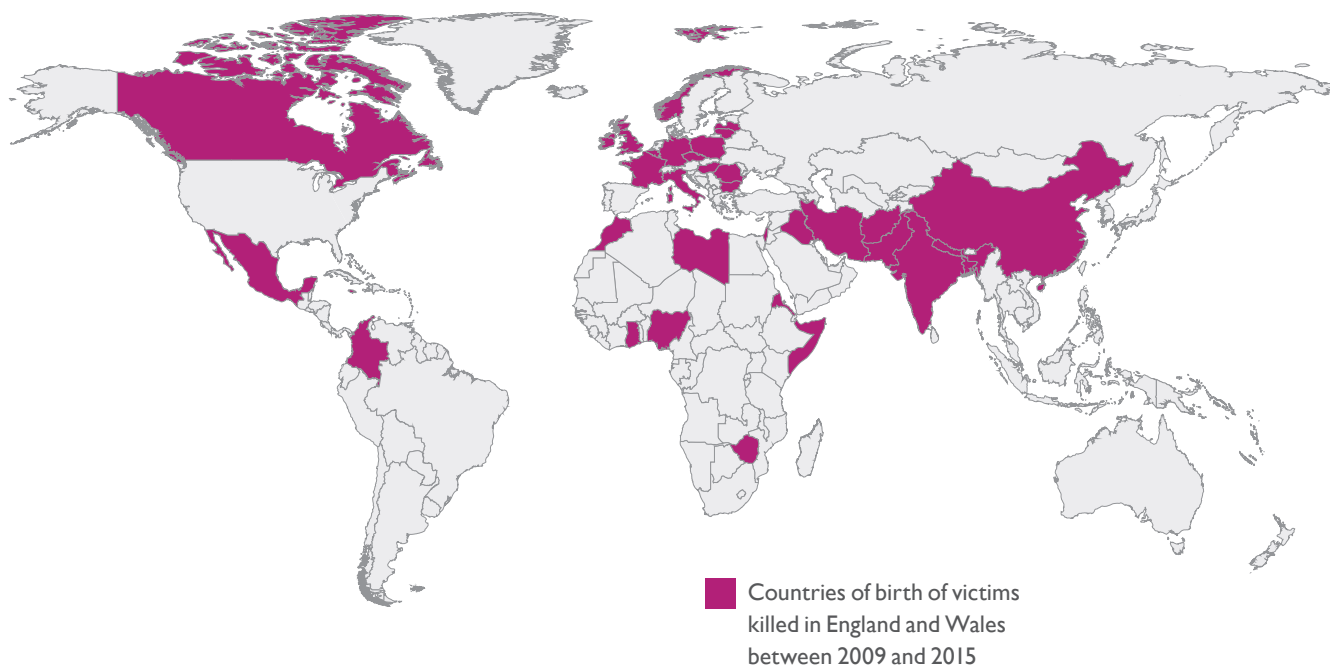


Country of Birth

The collection of data on victim's country of birth began during the latter stages of the project. It is not a comprehensive list and thus is not intended to make comparisons between countries. However, it serves as an initial picture of where women were born before they were killed in England or Wales. Though the majority of women are believed to have been born in the UK, the findings

presented on the map in Figure 5 provide evidence that femicide is an issue facing migrant women in the UK, and calls for increased learning on the levels of protection needed by some of the most marginalised women in our communities. It also highlights the need for increased support to specialist support services for BAMER women around the country.

Figure 5: Countries of birth of victims killed in England and Wales between 2009 and 2015.²⁵



25. This map has been created using Mapchart.net. For the full list of countries of birth of women killed in England and Wales refer to page 35 of the appendix.

Race and Ethnicity

The ethnicity of victims was requested in FOI Requests to each police force area since 2015 only.²⁶ Table 1 shows the number of women per race classification, as assigned by the police. As is clear from the table, the categories used to describe ethnicity vary across police forces; this could be streamlined to ensure consistency and accuracy.

The London Metropolitan Police Force has not yet replied to any FOI Requests for the Femicide Census. As a result, there is no data on race from the 24 cases of femicide known to have occurred within the London Metropolitan Police Force area in 2015.

Table 1: Number of women per race classification

Race (Categories as assigned by the Police)	Grand Total
White North European	26
No FOI response	24
Unknown	23
White	15
White European	10
White British	9
Asian	4
Not Recorded	2
African Caribbean	1
Any Other White Background	1
Black – Other	1
British	1
Dark European	1
White – Other	1
Grand Total	119

26. Data collection is currently being developed to collate the ethnicity of every victim on the Census.

Age Bands

The chart below highlights that femicide is occurring at a significant rate across all age groups:

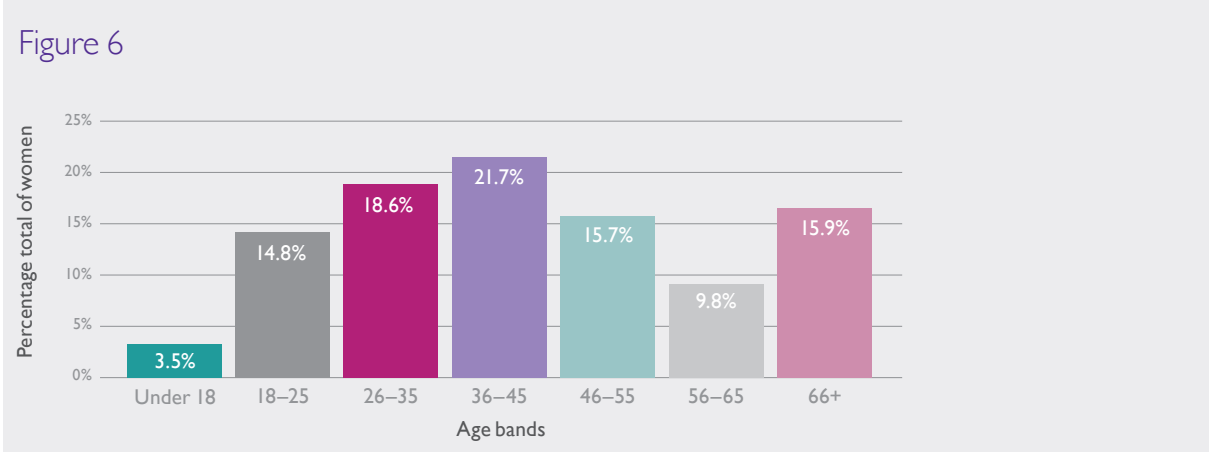


Figure 6: Age bands of women killed between 2009 and 2015 in England and Wales.²⁷

Of the 936 women killed by men between 2009 and 2015, the largest group of women (21.7%) were aged between 36 and 45 years. The second and third largest groups were women aged between 26 and 35 (18.6%), and women

66 years and older (15.9%), respectively. Violence against older women is one of the less explored areas of research. On page 23 we further examine our findings on women over 66 years of age.

27. The category “Under 18” represents women aged between 14 and 17 only.

Context of Violence

The Femicide Census gathers data on all women killed by men. These killings have been contextualised by their violence, to help with answering questions such as: ‘Was the woman known to the perpetrator? Was he her partner or her son? Was he motivated by financial gain, or was he someone who sought to kill a woman, any woman?’ Since every femicide could be contextualised in a number of ways, according to the circumstances, the primary context is identified in each case. For example, the murder of a woman by her son could be contextualised as ‘Financial gain’ and ‘Domestic child-parent’. Since typically the assigned context clarifies the relationship to the perpetrator, in this example the killing would be contextualised as ‘Domestic child-parent’ only. There have been several news reports on

extremely sexually violent killings perpetrated by a current or former partner. Such cases have been contextualised as ‘Domestic – intimate partner violence’ only, despite the overlap between intimate partner violence and sexual violence. Data on the prevalence of sexual violence in a homicide was not requested through FOI Requests. As a result, the Femicide Census and this report is undercounting sexual violence. Again, sexual violence has been undercounted for women in the sex trade. To examine the risk to women in the sex trade, their femicides were contextualised in the present report as ‘Prostitution/pornography’ – although many could also have been contextualised as ‘Sexually motivated’ killings. The table below outlines the number of women killed per respective context:

Table 2: The number of women killed per respective context

Context of Violence	Number of Women	Total as a percentage
Domestic – Intimate partner violence	586	62.7%
Domestic – Child-parent	73	7.8%
Unknown	43	4.6%
In the course of other crime – robbery or burglary	35	3.7%
Sexually motivated	31	3.3%
Domestic – Extended family	25	2.7%
Other – Mental health	17	1.8%
Prostitution/Pornography	16	1.7%
Financial gain	15	1.6%
Other	14	1.5%
Intimate partner violence collateral	12	1.3%
Domestic – Parent-child	11	1.2%
Domestic – Sibling-sibling	9	1.0%
“Mercy killing”*	9	1.0%
Mistaken victim	8	0.9%
Rejected advance	6	0.6%
Revenge against victim’s family member	5	0.5%
Symbolic woman	5	0.5%
Resulting from an offence of arson	5	0.5%
Authority figure – known	3	0.3%
Authority figure – unknown	3	0.3%
Assisted suicide or suicide pact*	3	0.3%
So called “Honour” Killing*	2	0.2%
Grand Total	936	100%

*These women were killed by either their current or former partner, or their son, but were contextualised separately as they were interpreted within these contexts by state agencies and in news reports.

Differentiating cases by 'context of violence' shows that **62.7% (n=586) of all women killed in the period 2009–2015 were killed in the context of 'intimate partner violence'**, i.e. they were killed by an intimate partner or ex-partner, a spouse or ex-spouse. In fact, 598 (64%) women in total were killed by their current or former partner but 12 cases were contextualised separately. 10 women were killed by their partners in the context of 'Mercy Killing' or 'Assisted suicide/suicide pact', and two women were killed by their ex-partners in the context of so called "'Honour" Killing'.

The second most prevalent context of violence were 'Child-parent killings', 7.8% (n=73) of women were killed in this context. In fact, the total number of women killed by their sons is 75 (8%) – but two cases were contextualised separately as 'Mercy Killing'. The number of women killed in the context of 'Sexually motivated killings' (3.3%, n=31) is a reminder of the prevalence of such attacks. A number of women aged 66 years and over were subjected to sexual assaults prior to being killed in their homes.

The context 'Intimate partner violence collateral' describes the killings of friends and family members such as a mother-in-law, sister-in-law, neighbours, or bystanders in domestic violence-related situations.

The killings of 14 women were contextualised as 'Other'. In one case a man who, on hearing that he was fired from his job, killed his employer. The woman suffered a prolonged attack with a heavy blunt instrument – so severe that in a

fracture to her skull brain tissue was visible. In another case of femicide, contextualised as 'Other', a woman was stabbed to death by a neighbour after a row over noise at a house party.

43 cases were contextualised as 'Unknown' due to lack of information regarding the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, or in many cases because the motive behind the killing remains unknown.

'Symbolic woman' stands for cases where a man sought to kill a woman – any woman. One such case was of a man who, 'hurt' that his girlfriend ended their relationship, brutally beat a stranger to death. Afterwards he told police: *"My girlfriend hurt me so I have hurt someone ... I hit her, punched her and kicked her"*.

The context 'Authority figure – known' represents cases where a woman, in a position of authority, was killed by someone known to her, e.g. her pupil, or her patient. While 'Authority figure – unknown' represents cases where a woman in a position of authority e.g. a policewoman or security guard is killed by a stranger. Women who were killed in the context of a 'Rejected advance' were subject to harassment prior to their death. The perpetrator would not accept that the woman did not want a relationship with them, and so ended her life.

The Final Act of Control

‘Senior detectives said the murder was an “isolated incident” with no wider threat to the public.’

598

Figure 7: 598 women killed by their current or former partner between 2009 and 2015.²⁸

Detective Inspector: ‘I want to reassure local residents and the student community that this was not a random attack. [They] were known to each other.’

Intimate partner violence accounts for the majority of killings on the femicide census.²⁹ Taken together, this body of killings confirms that intimate partner femicide is not an outlying or isolated phenomenon. Over the course of seven years, there were 598 women killed by their partners/ex-partners (including spouses and ex-spouses). The perpetrators will probably have emotionally and/or physically dominated these women for years. Many cases of abuse will have gone unreported, due to women’s very real and justified fear of her perpetrator, and due to her shame about having experienced domestic abuse. Coercive control is at the heart of domestic abuse; it is where a perpetrator exerts control over a victim’s life through a system of intimidation tactics (e.g. limiting her personal freedoms, surveillance and the threat of violence).

‘He had a rather controlling nature, telling her what she could and couldn’t wear. He wouldn’t let her wear short-sleeved tops.’

The abuse of women occurs across society, through all classes, in all communities, across each religion, race, ethnicity and culture, and at all ages. The tactical and systematic abuse of a partner is part of a pattern that makes these deaths both predictable and preventable. While the number of intimate partner femicides is of huge concern, the volume is not surprising. The ONS research and the Femicide Census prove, without question, that women are far more likely than men to be killed by their partners.³⁰ Despite this clear statistic, refuges and domestic abuse service providers often have to justify the concentration of their efforts on women and girls. The fact that two thirds of women killed over a seven-year period had been in a relationship with their perpetrator also proves the importance of statutory sex and relationship education covering healthy relationships, domestic abuse, consent and challenging sex role stereotypes as part of the national curriculum. Better education about healthy relationships will help to prevent domestic abuse, and ensure that victims and perpetrators know where to go for help.

‘[He] was found guilty of the manslaughter of his wife [-] by reason of loss of self-control’.

‘[He] claimed his wife lunged at him, scratching him across the face, but [he] accepted lashing out with a hammer after “losing the plot”’.

Understanding that **the killing of a woman by her intimate partner or ex-partner is the ultimate act of control and not the ‘loss of control’** – as is commonly reported in news reports, or in judge’s sentencing remarks – is key to breaking misconceptions around domestic abuse. It is clear from analysing newspaper articles and Domestic Homicide Reviews that many of the femicides examined were preceded by months or years of abuse: coercive, manipulative and controlling behaviour that terrified victims. In 2015, it became a criminal offence to subject someone to coercive control, a welcome new law which if prosecuted, can carry a jail term of up to five years. To prevent femicide, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and Judiciary need training to understand this new offence, and to ensure that perpetrators are dealt with effectively – even when physical violence has not been used.

28. By comparison the ONS found that from April 2009 to March 2015, 117 men were killed by their partner/ex-partner, the sex of the suspect was not recorded. Source: ONS, ‘Homicide Index, appendix table 2.06’, February 2016, www.ons.gov.uk, (accessed 24 November 2016).

29. 586 women were killed in the context of “Domestic intimate partner violence”. However, the sum total of women killed by their current or former partner is 598 which includes 10 women killed in the context of ‘mercy killing’ or ‘alleged suicide pact’, and two women killed in the context of a so-called “Honour” killing’.

30. Killed by a partner/ex-partner: 44% of female victims, 6% of male victims. Source: ONS, ‘Focus on Violent Crimes and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015, Chapter 2: Homicide’, February 2016, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter2homicide>, (accessed 24 November 2016).

Before being killed by her ex-partner, a girl of only 17 years had told her family she ‘*knew that one day*’ she would die at his hands. Creating safe pathways to leaving an abusive relationship is one of the first ways to challenge the horrifying number of intimate partner femicides in England and Wales. Refuges save lives, and so cuts to services for women and refuge closures place women escaping violence at significant risk. This risk is compounded by competitive tendering processes, where non-specialist organisations win contracts to deliver services to women experiencing men’s violence. At best, services are delivered by organisations without an understanding of or contextualising of violence against women as both caused by and a consequence of inequality and discrimination. At worst, women at risk of being killed will have nowhere to go when they are in crisis. Moreover, the outreach work that women’s organisations do to educate and challenge local authorities, communities and schools about the nature, scale and impact of domestic abuse will be lost, which is in direct conflict with efforts to reduce and prevent male violence against women. Since 2010, 17% of specialist refuges in England and Wales have been lost, and continued funding uncertainty remains. Many local authorities operate restrictions on accessing local services which means that women from outside the area are maybe unable to access support, contrary to Government guidance.³¹ This can be extremely dangerous for women seeking safety far away from their abuser. As one survivor explained in a recent report on the provision of specialist domestic refuges services in England, ‘*I would be dead if it had not been for a refuge*’.³²

Post-Separation

‘[She] wanted to end the relationship... But [he] refused to accept that their relationship was over.’

‘I know she’s leaving me. If I can’t have her, no-one else can.’

‘[The victim] was stabbed more than 80 times in a “sustained and brutal” attack by her “controlling” ex-boyfriend, moments after she dumped him.’

The Femicide Census records the number of women who were killed following a separation from their partner or spouse. Information is also collected, where available, on the length of time to death following that separation. 200 women on the Census are known to have been separated from their partner or spouse at the time of their killing. We are often reliant on the perpetrator’s interpretation of separation – and for that reason this report is possibly undercounting separation. For the 200 women known to be separated, figure 8 shows how soon each woman was killed after the separation occurred.

31. ‘We expect service provision to’: “Meet the needs of victims from within and outside the local area, recognising that many victims move from their local area to be safe” UK Government, Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 – 2020, 2016, p17. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF

32. Women’s Aid, ‘SOS: why we need to save our services’ September 2015, https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/SOS_Data_Report.pdf (accessed 24 November 2016).

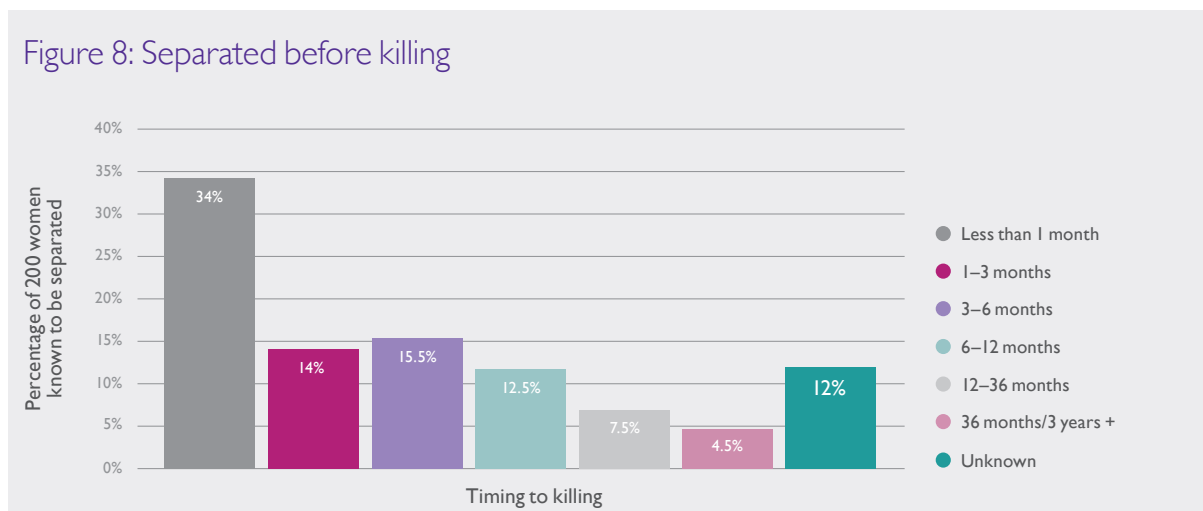


Figure 8: The length of time between separation and killing for 200 women on the Census.

‘[He] says he killed her after losing control of himself during an argument about their divorce.’

Figure 8 illustrates the startling reality of the risk to a woman’s life in the immediate aftermath of a break-up. **Exactly one third of the women who were separated were killed within the first month that followed the separation.** Many of these women were killed as soon as they initiated the separation. Of the 200 women known to have been separated before they were killed, a massive 76% were killed within the first year of separation. The statistics of these women’s deaths offer a harrowing reminder that separation does not always bring an end to domestic violence. A perpetrator of domestic violence and abuse assumes dominance over a woman throughout their relationship, and his belief in this privilege does not vanish once the relationship has ended. Ex-husbands and

ex-partners are not deterred from assaulting women who have left them. Many are angered by her exercising control by leaving the relationship, and in response perform the ultimate act of control – killing. Refuge provision, better access to services for women with complex needs, and more funding to specialist services, such as those for women from BME communities, will mean women have more barriers to safety to escape the very real threat of serious violence or murder. The findings for women’s deaths after separation are also a crucial learning focus for police forces, independent agencies and other statutory agencies, as they highlight what factors increase a woman’s risk of being killed. 106 women killed by their ex-partner had a child or children under 18 years old and eight women were pregnant when killed.

The following page provides detailed information on the 200 women killed between 2009 and 2015 following a separation.

Separation

Woman killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse following a separation



Figure 9: Timeline of incidents of women killed following a separation

Women Aged 66+

Between 2009 and 2015, **149 women aged over 66 years were killed in England and Wales**. The largest group of such women were killed by their partner or spouse (34%), and a fifth of them (23%) were killed by their sons. The rate of child-parent killings increases considerably in the over-66 age category. By comparison, among all women on the Census, less than a tenth (7.8%) were killed by their sons. A further 15% of women over 66 years of age were killed in the course of a robbery or burglary, mostly in their own homes.

Killed in the Course of a Robbery or Burglary

‘[The perpetrator] did not need to enter my mother’s house that night. He chose to. Upon finding my mum at home, he easily could have left. Instead he chose to beat her and throw her against the wall. And when she screamed in pain, he chose to kick her, stamp on her, and jump on her head until she was unable to scream anymore.’

A police statement that was published alongside an article on a case of an older woman killed during a burglary read, *‘Thankfully we still live in a society where to be attacked in your home is incredibly rare’*. Yet it seems untrue to say that deaths of 22 women of similar age, killed during a similar incident, and killed mostly by a blunt instrument in their own homes, are *‘incredibly rare’* events.³³ This report shows that there is a need for further examination of the types of help and support available to older women who may be experiencing male violence, or be at risk of it within their home, and that there is a need too for a more coordinated framework of policy and practice to protect older women from male violence.

Intimate Partner Violence

Data in the UK on the prevalence of domestic abuse among older women is severely lacking. It appears that women in age groups above 66 years do not often use domestic abuse services as they are not represented to any great extent in statistics from domestic abuse refuges, community services or helplines. Additionally, the Crime Survey for England and Wales currently only includes data on experiences of domestic abuse and sexual violence for those

aged between 16 and 59 years. Yet it’s true that women of all ages experience domestic abuse – and so the small number of older women accessing services is worrying. The Femicide Census shows that 50 women aged 66 and over were killed by their partner or ex-partner, proving that more needs to be done to intervene early and assist older women to get the support they need to live free from abuse.

“Mercy Killing”

‘I did not want her to become a decrepit old hag’.

‘[He] was not quite so sociable, but a kindly, gentle giant and he clearly worshipped the ground that [she] walked on.’

‘Devoted husband, 84, killed dementia-hit wife, 88, and himself because he could not cope with her going into a care home’.

“‘Loving son’ bludgeoned 95-year-old mum to death after she pleaded with him to end her suffering’.

Within the seven-year period 2009–2015, three women were killed in an ‘alleged suicide pact or assisted suicide’, and nine women were killed in the context of an alleged “mercy killing”. All 12 women were aged 66 years or older: 10 were killed by their spouse or partner, and; two by their son. While these femicides could be contextualised as ‘Domestic – intimate partner femicide’ or ‘Domestic child-parent’, they have been isolated in this report to reflect the classification they received in coroner reports, police statements and in speculation in news reports. Killings of this type reflect the fact that **we are frequently reliant on the perpetrator’s narrative to determine what happened when a woman was killed**. These killings may have been preceded by years of abuse, but this can be completely overlooked in criminal proceedings when the perpetrator claims that the killing was carried out in response to the woman’s ‘suffering’. It is also a mistake for the media to rush to label the killing of older, ill or disabled women as “mercy killings” and to portray perpetrators as caring, loving individuals who acted out of compassion. As explained by Monckton Smith et al. (2014) some domestic homicides are misinterpreted, and therefore the full extent of the problem is not captured. The authors go on to say that homicide should always be considered wherever there has been a history of abuse. It is hoped the findings in this report will provide an opportunity for further research into the interpretations of domestic femicides.

33. In 2009, three women over 66 years of age were killed in a robbery or burglary, two in 2010, four in 2011, eight in 2012, two in 2013, two in 2014 and one in 2015.

Child-Parent Killings

'Son found guilty of murdering mother after stabbing her 50 times'

Although the ONS does not disaggregate perpetrators by sex, it did find that women were more likely than men to be killed by their child (son or daughter). For the period April 2009 to March 2015, the ONS found that 83 women were killed by their son or daughter, and 54 men were killed by their son or daughter.³⁴ This report found that **75 women were killed by their sons between 2009 and 2015**,³⁵ and while there were significant numbers of women killed by their sons in different age groups, women over 66 were affected by the highest levels of child-parent killings.³⁶ Further to this, women over 66 years account for 48% of women killed by a male member of their extended family.³⁷

Data on the 75 men in the Femicide Census who killed their mothers are drawn from public sources and Domestic Homicide Reviews. They show that at least 47 of the men, 63% of perpetrator sons, had either one or more of the following: mental health issues, problematic substance use issues, or physical health issues. As shown in figure 10, mental health issues were very common amongst this group, as was the occurrence of both mental health and problematic substance use issues. These findings are reflective of a Metropolitan Police review of domestic homicides in 2008-09, which found that all six perpetrators who killed family members (four mothers and two fathers), were men and were either suffering from mental health problems and/or were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.³⁸ Violence is not caused by problematic substance use or by mental health issues, and many who use substances or have mental health issues are not violent. But the prevalence of these types of health issues must be taken into account to understand the types of abuse experienced by older women from their sons, to understand other forms of domestic violence experienced by all women, and to integrate preventative steps into interventions. Financial abuse and coercion tactics similar to those perpetrated in intimate partner abuse could also be involved, but further research is necessary to understand the different nature and the form

that abuse of mothers takes. The charity Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) and the organisation Adfam carried out joint research in this area in recent years. Not only did they find that mothers of abusive sons report effects similar to victims of intimate partner violence i.e. fear, lack of sleep and severe financial worries, but they also found a significant gap in access to support:

*'Knowing what to call Child Parent Violence (CPV) and how to conceptualise it was very problematic for parents. Most saw it as an extension of their child's substance use – with the corresponding assumption made that if treatment was found for the substance use, it would resolve the problem of CPV. Because of this, very few parents considered that they were experiencing domestic violence, and the thought of accessing dedicated domestic violence services only crossed the mind of a small handful.'*³⁹

It is vital that statutory agencies that may come into contact with perpetrators and potential victims are aware of the risks to women with sons and partners who have such health issues, so as to ensure the women's additional support needs are met and that the violence is addressed.

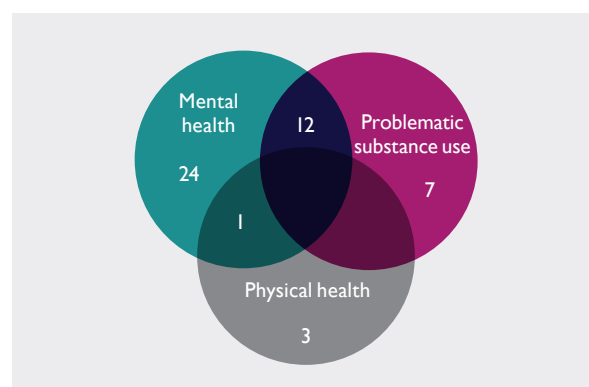


Figure 10: Known health issues of the sons who killed their mothers between 2009 and 2015

34. ONS, 'Homicide Index, appendix table 2.10', February 2016, www.ons.gov.uk, (accessed 27 November 2016).

35. 73 killings were contextualised as 'Domestic – Child-parent', however two women killed in the context of "Mercy Killing" were also killed by their sons and making the total 75.

36. Women killed by their sons: Six women aged 36–45, 15 women aged 46–55, 20 women aged 56–65, and 34 women aged 66+.

37. Women killed by a male member of their extended family: two women aged 18–25, three women aged 26–35, three women aged 36–45, two women aged 46–55, three women aged 56–65, and 12 women aged 66+.

38. L. Neville and E. Sanders-McDonagh, 'Preventing Domestic Violence and Abuse: Common themes and lessons learned from West Midlands DHRs', Middlesex University London, July 2014, <http://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/media/346469/13-spcb-11-sep-14-domestic-homicide-reviews-research-appendix-2.pdf>, (accessed 24 November 2016), p.42.

39. Adfam and AVA 'Between a rock and a hard place: how parents deal with children who use substances and perpetrate abuse', September 2012, http://www.adfam.org.uk/docs/Between_a_rock_and_a_hard_place_-_Project_report.pdf (accessed 24 November 2016), p.5.

Men's Fatal Violence to Non-Related Women

'We believe that [the perpetrator] is a dangerous and violent person, particularly towards women and female children.'

Between 2009 and 2015, 218 women were killed by a man of no familial or intimate relation to them: an average of 31 women per year and almost **one quarter of all cases of femicide**. To understand how male violence affects women as a distinct group, it is vital to look at all cases of women killed by men – not only domestic femicides or intimate-partner femicides. This will reveal the ways in which men exert the most violent form of control over the lives of women who are their friends, neighbours, colleagues, or in several cases, women who they have never met before.

Within the period examined, there were five killings of women contextualised as 'Symbolic woman'. In a perpetrator's own words they wanted to kill someone, anyone, any woman. When arrested, one perpetrator told the police, 'I've never seen her before. My girlfriend hurt me, so I've hurt someone'. In a different case, a man, 'bitter and angry' over recent issues in his relationship with his partner in Poland, fatally stabbed his landlady and her son at their home in Wales.

Sexual violence

'London murderer mutilated victim's genitals "because she was a lesbian."'

31 women were killed in sexually motivated attacks. Four of the 31 were aged 66 and over, and five women were under 18 years of age.⁴⁰ Over two thirds (64%) of the women killed in a sexually motivated attack knew who the perpetrator was; he was an acquaintance or friend. One third of the 31 women were killed by a stranger.⁴¹

Prostitution

'During the investigation it was discovered [he] "preyed" on and attacked other prostitutes in the area, but they were unreported.'

We know that at least 21 women on the census were involved in prostitution and/or pornography and the majority of these women were killed by their clients (n=13).⁴² We believe this is likely to be an undercount. Women in prostitution and trafficked women are frequently estranged from families, and so may never be reported missing. Unless a body is found, their deaths may go unacknowledged. In addition, the links of some women to the sex trade may have been unknown and/or unreported. Prostitution is a system of violence and abuse against women grounded in inequality and exploitation. Women who are involved in prostitution face abuse, rape, physical violence and murder by men who are their pimps, clients and partners. They also face social isolation and stereotyping. The fact that the majority of women in the census known to be involved in prostitution and/or pornography were killed by their clients highlights the risks to women involved in this trade. Two transwomen were killed in the reporting period, both of whom were involved in prostitution.

Analysing all cases of femicide, and not only intimate partner and domestic violence killings, furthers our understanding of femicide as a gender-based violent crime.

40. The category "Under 18" represents victims aged between 14 and 17 years only.

41. Sexually motivated femicide – perpetrator's relationship to victim: 10 strangers, 20 acquaintance/social acquaintance, one unknown.

42. Women involved in prostitution – perpetrator's relationship to victim: 13 clients, two strangers, four spouse/partner, one business associate, and one social acquaintance.

Method of Killing

‘It was a £3 kitchen knife. She suffered 14 wounds from that knife and it obviously cost her life.’

In the 936 cases of femicide examined for this report, there were 1,033 methods of killing employed. In 792 cases, one method of killing was used; two methods were used in 103 cases; three methods were used in nine cases, and four methods of killing were used in two cases. In 30 cases, the method of killing is unknown.

‘His attack was so violent the knife recovered from the scene was bent at a 45 degree angle.’

In total, a sharp instrument was used in 426 cases of femicide; 290 of those cases were domestic intimate partner femicides. Strangulation was the second most common method of killing: it was employed in 233 cases of femicide, 156 of which were committed by a current or former partner. A blunt instrument was used in 130 cases, and kicking or hitting without a weapon was the method of killing in 91 cases of femicide. The most common method of killing used in sexually motivated killings was strangulation/asphyxiation (n=18). Women killed in the course of a robbery or burglary were most likely to be killed by a blunt instrument (n=12); second to that was killing by kicking or hitting etc. without a weapon (n=9). The previous section noted that 66% of women killed in the course of a robbery or burglary were

women aged 66 years and over – a grave reminder of the brutal way in which some of society’s most vulnerable women are preyed on and killed. The commonalities in methods used to kill women reemphasises the theme of this report: that femicides are not isolated incidents but display definite patterns. Identifying these patterns and addressing them raises the prospect that femicide is a preventable crime.

The findings clearly show that women who experience domestic abuse are at a significantly high risk to knife crime. These are cases where a basic household item can become a deadly weapon. While it is impossible to exclude items such as knives from a home, there is powerful work being carried out by charities who simultaneously promote the dangers of knife crime and work towards ending domestic abuse. Those carrying out risk-assessment need to ensure that the use of knives/sharp weapons in a domestic violence incident is given sufficient weight. Specialist domestic violence courts also need to ensure that the severity of threats of violence with a knife, or physically harming a woman with a sharp instrument, is taken into account when prosecuting perpetrators of domestic abuse, as it could ultimately mean life or death for the woman involved.

Perpetrators

Demographics

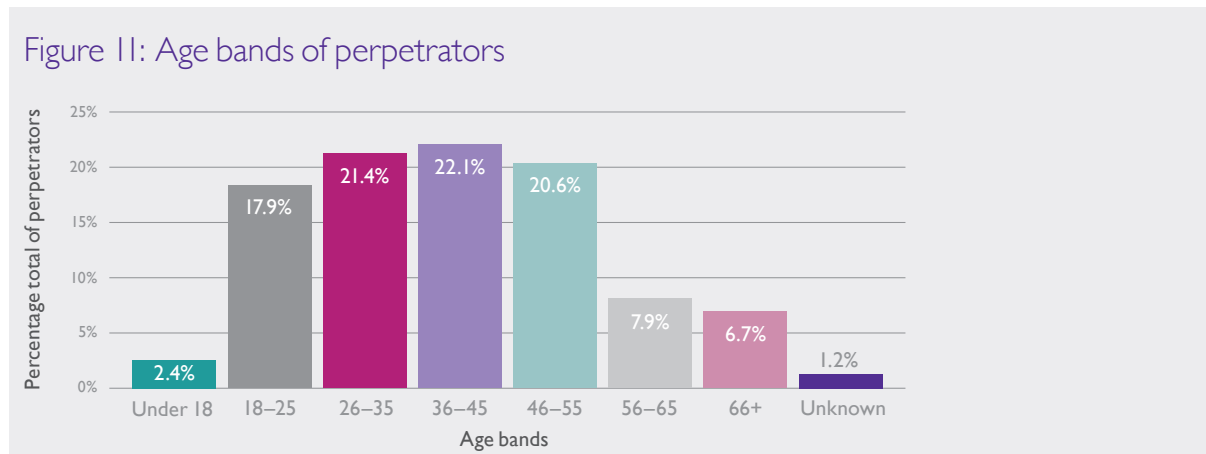


Figure 11 Age Bands of 929 known perpetrators of femicide.

Of the 929 known perpetrators of femicide in England and Wales over the course of the seven-year period, the **largest group of perpetrators (22.1%) were aged between 36 and 45 years**, and the largest group of victims on the census are from the same age category.

Sentencing

'As [he] is sentenced to life, his victim's family learn he had 23 convictions, many for brutality against partners.'

'In my judgement, in this case, there was substantial provocation.'

'Family were furious after judge described killer as "kind and caring"... Judge [-] admitted the tariff was "unusually low for premeditated murder" but said he felt "entitled" to pass such a sentence... Judge [-] praised [the perpetrator's] character saying "It is clear you are generally a kind and caring person and you have done a great deal of good, especially to people with serious problems whom you have helped."'

'Denies murder but admits manslaughter by reason of a loss of self-control'.

'Life sentence for doting dad who murdered his wife and disabled daughter at the family home'.

Table 3: Known sentencing outcome or sentencing progress for perpetrators

The table below shows the criminal justice outcome/progress for each known perpetrator, sourced predominantly though publicly available information:

Criminal Justice Progress/Outcome	Grand Total	Total as a %
Guilty of murder	558	60.1%
Completed suicide at time of offence	94	10.1%
Guilty of manslaughter	86	9.3%
Detained under Mental Health Act	62	6.7%
Manslaughter due to diminished responsibility	47	5.1%
Completed suicide after offence	30	3.2%
Outcome unknown	17	1.8%
Charged with murder	10	1.1%
Other – deceased	8	0.9%
Other – case dismissed	6	0.6%
Guilty of perverting the course of justice	5	0.5%
Guilty of causing death by dangerous driving	2	0.2%
Guilty of conspiracy to murder	1	0.1%
Guilty of manslaughter and kidnapping	1	0.1%
Guilty of false imprisonment	1	0.1%
Guilty of preventing lawful burial	1	0.1%
	929	100%

The dismissal of the seriousness of men's violence against women is visible in low sanctions for femicide. A woman's life is taken from her and the person responsible for that may receive only **five years for manslaughter**, as happened in some cases in this Census. In one such case, a perpetrator received the lesser offence of 'manslaughter on the grounds of loss of control' – because his partner had supposedly verbally provoked him. In a small number of cases, the suspected perpetrator was cleared of all charges. We have not been able to count those victims in our findings here, but it is critical to bring these cases to the light nonetheless. One woman dialled 999 and reported that she was being assaulted by her partner. He punched her in the head, and after losing consciousness, she later died in hospital. Her partner was found not guilty of manslaughter.

Unduly lenient charges and sentences are handed down time and time again, conveying the message that women's lives are not valued highly enough for the judiciary to hand out a severe sanction. This perpetuates myths such as the common idea that the perpetrator had accidentally 'lost it'. This is compounded by a victim-blaming attitude: she was partly to blame for her own murder. The murder of women and girls is the exertion of power and control that reflects the historically unequal power relations between women and men. It is vital that men's violence against women and girls is understood and taken seriously through the whole of the criminal justice system, and that sentencing should reflect the seriousness of the crime. It will only be possible to prevent further femicides if we have a robust criminal justice response to male violence against women.

One of the key recommendations of this report is that sentencing should reflect the severity of the crime in every case. To improve research on femicide, we also need data on sentencing and convictions at the national level, to be disaggregated by sex and relationship, and to be made publicly available.

Murder-suicide

‘Devoted son who feared he had cancer stabbed his elderly mum to death then killed himself’.

In a number of cases, there was no criminal justice outcome. The Femicide Census found that 124 men killed themselves after killing a woman. For a period similar to this report, the ONS found that only one female suspect was not convicted of homicide because she either ‘committed suicide or died’ between April 2009 to March 2015.⁴³ Data on the 124 perpetrators in the Femicide Census who completed suicide showed that at least 77% (n=96) of them were not known to have had mental health issues or problematic substance use issues. This is an important finding, given the critical role of media in influencing public opinion. Too often, murder-suicides are explained away by the media in terms of mental illness. In fact, murder-suicides are often domestic violence.

Media

‘[the perpetrator] who ran [a] family business [...] had suffered from depression and anxiety’.⁴⁴

‘Lab technician Dr [...], 52, killed his 55-year-old wife.’

‘[He] was a brilliant man. They were a lovely family with everything to live for.’

‘He was always very grateful and very polite. He was always a really nice guy.’

‘Woman killed at exclusive £2m home’.

‘Mum drowned by jealous ex-boyfriend after she found new love on Turkish holiday.’

In death, a woman cannot speak for herself. So while she is written out of the story, the judge, the court and mass media hear from the perpetrator. Often what the public hears are the positive attributes of the killer: his hard-working and loving nature that glosses over the facts of what he committed. A softened portrayal of a man who kills succeeds in diminishing the severity of his actions, and paints a fuller picture of his character in the hope that ‘he will not be remembered for his actions on that day’. The same space is rarely granted to the woman who was killed. Although the media can be a powerful tool to give a voice to the bereaved families, it too often depicts the victim as a one-dimensional character, such as a ‘divorced mother-of-two’, and seldom dwells on her character, or even her occupation. The media has the responsibility to end the normalisation of violence against women through respectful reporting in cases of femicide, giving due recognition to the lives of the women who have been killed.⁴⁵

43. ONS, ‘Homicide Index, appendix table 2.16’, February 2016, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter2homicide#main-points>, (accessed 24 November 2016).

44. Quotes taken from media sources, references listed on page 27.

45. For further reading on media portrayal of perpetrators, refer to: L. Dunne, ‘Rest in Peace Invisible Woman’, 2016, <http://www.linneadunne.com/2016/08/31/rest-in-peace-invisible-woman/> (accessed 24 November 2016).

Conclusion and Recommendations

‘At this time I believe this to be an isolated incident, with no wider threat to the local community’.

The Femicide Census set out to investigate whether themes exist across cases of femicide, and whether or not women face distinct risks of being killed by men. The killing of 936 women by men over the course of seven years highlights the fact that femicide is a serious, prevailing issue in the England and Wales. The incidents of femicide are not isolated, there are significant similarities and patterns in these killings. These killings are rooted in the inequality and discrimination that women face in their everyday lives, inequalities that both cause and reinforce violence against women. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) recognises that “equality between women and men is a key element in the prevention of violence against women”.⁴⁶ The Istanbul Convention explicitly recognises that such violence is committed against women because they are women. This, along with the findings in this report, clearly evidences the need to classify the killing of women as a distinct category. Commonalities in cases of femicide have been found in the methods used to kill women, their relationship to the perpetrator, and in the women’s ages. Identifying patterns in femicide and addressing those patterns can result in femicide being a preventable and avoidable crime.

This report highlights the need for more effective action to prevent and tackle men’s violence against women, right across the board. It is critical that the Government makes every effort to prevent violence against women, and address the cultural and societal attitudes that normalise male dominance, and factors such as sexism and inequality that underpin men’s violence against women and girls. The murder of women and girls is the exertion of power and control that reflects the unequal power relations between women and men. Also, it is the responsibility of the media to end their normalisation of male violence against women through a shift from the over-riding focus on attributes of the perpetrator, to respectful reporting of cases of femicide, with due respect for the lives of women who have been killed.

The following are recommendations for ways in which society, state and policy can take steps to address and prevent femicide:

Recommendations for Government

The Government is obliged under international law to address all forms of violence against women and take measures to prevent it, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. To reduce femicides the UK Government should:

- Address the root causes of inequality and discrimination that underpin and reinforce men’s violence against women and girls.
- Support the Femicide Census with the collection of data on femicides, which is key to defining and understanding the causes and consequences of men’s violence against women including femicide. Ensure that national data on homicide reflects the gendered nature of these crimes by collecting comparative data on the sex and age of the perpetrator and victim, on their relationship, on their race and ethnicity, on any previous convictions relating to abuse or violence and by disaggregating across police force area. Our key findings identify trends in men’s violence against women and girls, therefore a significant improvement to data collection will help to further understand how femicide can be prevented.
- Support Change that Lasts (CtL) – a new strengths-based, needs-led approach that enables earlier intervention with appropriate support. CtL is a trauma-informed approach that supports domestic abuse survivors and their children to build resilience and leads to independence.⁴⁷
- Ensure that specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services have sustainable and long-term funding, and that funding is available for specialist projects for women to exit prostitution.

46. Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, 11 May 2011, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ddb74f72.html> (accessed 27 November 2016).

47. For information about this ground-breaking new approach to domestic abuse contact Women’s Aid: Women’s Aid, ‘Our Approach – Change that Lasts’, www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/, (accessed 24 November 2016).

- Recognise that post-separation is a significantly heightened risk period for women leaving abusive relationships. Refuge provision: (i) including refuges resourced to support women facing multiple disadvantages such as problematic substance use, prostitution and mental health problems; and (ii) increasing support for BME organisations that provide refuge for BME women, will mean women are more likely to safely escape violence.
- Ratify the Istanbul Convention, a powerful agreement that requires states to make comprehensive provisions to protect women against violence and punish perpetrators.
- Make sex and relationships education a statutory part of the national curriculum for all schools, and challenge and address misogyny and sexism in schools that encourages and reinforces discrimination and inequality, in order to prevent men's violence against women and to ensure that victims and perpetrators know where to go for help.

Recommendations for Police

The Police have a crucial role in preventing and addressing femicide. To reduce femicides, protect potential victims and address perpetrators:

- Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and the College of Policing should work together to improve the learning from domestic homicides and contribute effectively to, and learn from, the information held within, the Femicide Census.⁴⁸
- Police training should include information and learning from the findings of the Femicide Census to improve their response to women at risk of femicide, ensuring the seriousness of threats of violence and killing are recognised and taken seriously, and perpetrators are prosecuted. Training should also challenge stereotypes and reduce victim-blaming.
- Data collection by police forces on violent crimes should be desegregated by sex, and include the age and relationship of the victim and perpetrator, and whether there is repeat victimisation.

Recommendations for the Criminal Justice System

- The Crown Prosecution Service and the judiciary need to ensure that the severity of threats of violence (typically with a knife) is taken into account when prosecuting perpetrators of domestic abuse, or when considering criminal and civil court orders or restraining orders.
- Training prosecutors, the judiciary and other professionals in the criminal justice system must include information about the findings from the Femicide Census.
- An improvement to sentencing is imperative. Appropriate sanctions for perpetrators of all forms of men's violence against women and girls, including perpetrators of femicide sends out the message that violence against women and girls will be taken seriously and be rigorously punished by the law. The Crown Prosecuting Service must review charging in cases of femicide and the Sentencing Council must review sentencing for femicide perpetrators, to ensure effective sanctions are in place to hold perpetrators to account.
- Data on sentencing should be collected nationally, segregated by sex and relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, and made publicly available.

48. Recommendation nine of the progress report on the police response to domestic abuse published by HM Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) report 2015 noted that "The Femicide Census is an extremely useful tool, which could potentially assist with the identification of key themes and learning from DHRs". Source: HMIC, 'Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse', December 2015, p.104.

Recommendations for Statutory Agencies Including, Health Service, Social Services, and National Data Repositories

- Training on men's violence against women must include information about the findings from the Femicide Census, challenge stereotypes and reduce victim-blaming.
- Violence against women and girls is overwhelmingly committed by men. Greater efforts should be made by statutory agencies to document and collect data on the violence and abuse perpetrated against women only, including women of all ages. Data collected should be segregated by sex and relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, and made publicly available.
- Risk-assessments of men with mental health problems and problematic substance use should routinely include assessment of risk to others, in particular to female family members/partners.
- The VAWG strategy in every local area should include data on femicides in the area and local Commissioners should ensure sufficient provision of appropriate support services to protect women and girls experiencing violence.

Recommendations for the Media

The media can do more to appropriately and respectfully report on cases of femicide:

- News reports should not be overly sympathetic to perpetrators, privileging the perpetrator's story. Women should not be written out of reports nor should women be defined one-dimensionally by their relationship to men/families.
- The hierarchical treatment of victims should end. At present, it is difficult to obtain information in the public domain, for example, on BAMER women who have been killed, since they receive a small fraction of news coverage.
- The practice of overt and covert sexism and 'banter' that normalises inequality between women and men needs to stop. These attitudes in the media create a society that condones sexual violence and domestic abuse.
- Challenge the use of 'isolated incidents' if used by the police or others in relation to femicide, and report men's fatal violence against women within the broader context of femicide.

Recommendations for Further Research

There is significant need for further research on men's violence against women and femicide including:

- On the system-response to women prior to femicide, and what can be learned from this. Research in this area could also include an investigation into the interpretations of domestic homicides that are commonly described as 'Mercy Killings' and 'suicide pacts'.
- To examine more closely the effects on migrant women, including the barriers they face to accessing services, and the impact of women's economic status including no recourse to public funds on femicide.
- To fill the gap in research on the experiences of abuse of older women by both their sons and partners.
- To look at the variations in femicide across different police force areas that have high rates of femicide.

Appendices

Table 4: The total number of femicides per police force area and the rate of femicide per police force area per 100,000 population

Police Force	Grand Total	Police Force	Grand Total
Metropolitan Police Service	159	Norfolk	14
West Midlands	64	Staffordshire	14
Greater Manchester	61	Gwent Police	12
West Yorkshire	50	North Wales	12
Merseyside	31	South Wales Police	13
Thames Valley	31	Surrey	12
South Yorkshire	30	Bedfordshire	11
Lancashire	29	Dorset	11
Devon and Cornwall	28	Humberside	10
Essex	26	Suffolk	11
Leicestershire	24	Cambridgeshire	10
Sussex	22	Cumbria	10
West Mercia	22	Northamptonshire	10
Kent	20	Lincolnshire	9
Avon and Somerset	19	Warwickshire	9
Nottinghamshire	19	Wiltshire	9
Northumbria	18	Cleveland	8
Derbyshire	17	Dyfed-Powys Police	8
Hampshire	17	Gloucestershire	6
Durham	15	North Yorkshire	6
Hertfordshire	15		
Cheshire	14		
		Grand Total	936

Table 5: Rate of femicide per 100,000 per police force area population

Police Force area	Rate of Femicide per 100,000	Police Force area	Rate of Femicide per 100,000
Durham	2.5	Suffolk	1.5
Leicestershire	2.4	Essex	1.5
West Midlands	2.4	Northamptonshire	1.5
Greater Manchester	2.3	Cleveland	1.4
Merseyside	2.3	Sussex	1.4
South Yorkshire	2.3	Cheshire	1.4
West Yorkshire	2.2	Thames Valley	1.4
Gwent Police	2.1	Wiltshire	1.4
Metropolitan Police Service	2.0	Hertfordshire	1.4
Cumbria	2.0	Staffordshire	1.3
Lancashire	2.0	Lincolnshire	1.3
West Mercia	1.8	Cambridgeshire	1.3
Bedfordshire	1.8	Northumbria	1.3
North Wales	1.8	Kent	1.2
Nottinghamshire	1.7	Avon and Somerset	1.2
Derbyshire	1.7	Humberside	1.1
Warwickshire	1.7	Surrey	1.1
Devon and Cornwall	1.7	South Wales Police	1.0
Norfolk	1.6	Gloucestershire	1.0
Dyfed-Powys Police	1.6	Hampshire	0.9
Dorset	1.5	North Yorkshire	0.7

Table 6: List of countries of birth of women killed in England and Wales between 2009 and 2015

Country of Birth	Grand Total	Country of Birth	Grand Total
Believed to be UK	846	Gambia	1
Poland	18	Germany	1
Pakistan	9	Ghana	1
Latvia	5	Hungary	1
Lithuania	4	Iran	1
China	3	Iraq	1
Eritrea	3	Israel	1
India	3	Italy	1
Somalia	3	Jamaica	1
Zimbabwe	3	Libya	1
Afghanistan	2	Mexico	1
Czech Republic	2	Morocco	1
Ireland	2	Nepal	1
Kuwait	2	Norway	1
Nigeria	2	Palestine	1
Romania	2	Philippines	1
Bangladesh	1	Portugal	1
Belgium	1	Saudi Arabia	1
Bulgaria	1	Sri Lanka	1
Canada	1	Uganda	1
Colombia	1	Zambia	1
France	1		
		Grand Total	936

Glossary

AVA	Against Violence and Abuse
BAMER	Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CPS	The Crown Prosecution Service
CPV	Child Parent Violence
DVA	Domestic Violence and Abuse
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOI Request	Requests submitted under the framework of the FOIA
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
ONS	Office for National Statistics
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

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The Women to Whom this Report is Dedicated

Aamena (Jyoti) Hussain (Puaar)	Assia Newton	Christine Lee	Elizabeth Coriat	Heather Dyer	Jill Goldsmith
Abida Bi	Audrey Taylor	Christine Massey	Elizabeth Thomas	Heather Arthur	Jill Moon
Afsana Kossar	Ava Anthony	Clair Smith	Elizabeth Knott	Helen Findlay	Jillian Nevitt
Agnes Sina-Inakoju	Ayesha Mohammed	Claire Atkinson	Elizabeth Nyanzi	Helen Skudder	Jitka Nahodilova
Agnieszka	Ayodele Akinsiku	Claire Howarth	Elizabeth Pecka	Helen Ding	Joan Charlton
Dziegielewska	Aysel Djeddet	Claire White	Elsie Ford	Helen Dawson	Joan Mungall
Aileen Bell	Aytul Serbetli	Claire Parrish	Elsie Hayes	Helen Dillon	Joan Chopping
Aisha Alam	Badri Dabir	Claire O'Connor	Elsie Mowbray	Helen Lancaster	Joanna Michael
Akua Agyueman	Barbara Yates	Claire Munro	Elzbieta Olga Kincyzk	Helen Kim Buckley	Joanna Yeates
Alethea Taylor	Barbara Hobbs	Clara Patterson	Emily Longley	Hester Mottershead	Joanna Brown
Alexandra Kovacs	Barbara Baraniecka	Clare Wood	Emily Munemo	Hilda Oakland	Joanna Elizabeth Hall
Alexis Durant	Beata Slomiana	Clare Denise Ashill	Emma Ward	Hollie Gazzard	Joanne Oliver
Alice Huyton	Beata Hausner	Collette Daffin	Emma Burns	Howarum Begum	Joanne Kitchen
Alice Adams	Beatrice Bennett	Constance (Connie)	Emma Ewart	Ildiko Dohany	Joanne Harrison
Alice McMeekin	Becky Ayres	French	Emma Winnall	Imelda Molina	Josephine Lamb
Alice Gross	Beena Bhatt	Corby Craze	Emma Siswick	Iram Shah	Josephine Gilliard
Alisa Dmitrijeva	Bei Carter	Corrin Barker	Emma Crowhurst	Irene Barrett	Josephine Williamson
Alison Studd	Bernadetta Jakubczyk	Cynthia Barrass	Eni Mevish	Irene Dale	Joy Billam
Alison Turnbull	Bernadette Gallagher	Cynthia Beamond	Esther Arogundade	Irene Edwina Lawless	Judith Scott
Alison Morrison	Bernadette Fox	Czarina Baker	Ethel Dohoney	Isabel Trindade	Judith Garnett
Alison Wilson	Beryl Webb	Da In Lee	Eystna Blunnie	Isabel Parker	Judith Brierley
Aliza Mirza	Bethan Callaghan	Daisy Castell	Farkhanda Younis	Ivy Hawken	Judith Ege
Amal Khadar	Betty Yates	Daiva Kucinskie	Faye Isaac	Jacqueline Barrett	Judith Maude
Amanda Birks	Betty Constable	Daksha Lad	Ffion Roberts	Jacqueline Evans	Judith Nibbs
Amanda Hartley	Betty Gallagher	Daneshia Arthur	Fiona Newton	Jacqueline Grant	Judith Barbara Marion
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Amanda Sorrell	Bianca Shepherd	Danuta Damagalska	Florence Habesch	Jacqueline Oakes	Julia Thurgarland
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Linda Bakewell	Marie Codreanu	Nicola Hughes	(Malik)	Shereka Marsh	Wendy Goodman
Linda Merigo	Marie Stewart	Nicola McKenzie	Rui Li	Shigi Rethishkumar	Weronika
Linda Allen	Marie McGrory	Nicola Langtree	Rukshana Miah	Shirley Goring	Gospodarczyk
Linda Sheard	Marie Florisse Corette	Nicole Cartmell	Rushna Begum	Shirley Rumbold	Winifred Thomas
Linda Lietaviene	Mariola Cudworth	Nicola Selena	Ruth Jacobs	Shirley Mercer/Holmes	Xing Ding
Linda Norcup	Marion Stones	Waterhouse	Sabah Usmani	Shivani Kapoor	Yasmin Akhtar
Linda Mills	Marijorie Elphick	Nikitta Jade Grender	Sabeen Thandi	Shobna Jethwa	Yolanta Dumciuviene
Lindsay Hughes	Marlene Hicks	Nisha Lad	Sabira Alam	Sian O'Callaghan	Yong Li Qui
Linzi Ashton	Marta Ligman	Nonita Karajavaite	Sabrina Moss	Sian Rees	Yvette Hallsworth
Lisa Beverley	Mary Griffiths	Olga Pleguezuelos	Saiba Khatoon	Sian Roberts	Yvonne Walsh
Lisa Leckenby	Mary Woolley	Puixeu	Saimah Ali	Sian Blake	Yvonne Fox
Lisa Emmitt	Mary Fox	Orina Morawiec	Sally Hingston	Siobhan Kelly	Yvonne Tapp
Lisa Hoolahan	Mary Parker	Paige Emily Chivers	Sally Garwood	Sophie MacDonald	Yvonne Davies
Lisa Clay	Mary Thorpe	Palmira Silva	Sally Cox	Sophie McDonald	Zainab Taufiq
Lisa Winn	Mary Saunders	Pam Wheeler	Sally Lawrence	Stacey Quigley	Zandra Maxwell-Nelson
Lisa Anthony	Mary Roberts	Pamela Hardy	Sally Harrison	Stacey Mackie	Zaneta Kindzierska
Lisa Jane Banks	Mary (May) Evans	Pamela Glen (Turner)	Sally Campion	Stacey Anne Henderson	Zarina Bibi
Loreta Raupiene	Mary Philimena Quinn	Pamela Jackson	Salma Parveen	Stephanie Bellinger	Zeneta Balazova
Lorna Smith	Mashaal Albasman	Paramjit Kaur	Samantha Day	Stephanie Owen	Zohra Amrani
Lorna McCarthy	Maureen Cosgrove	Patricia Thompson	Samantha Warren	Susan Rushworth	Zudba Bi
Lorraine Williams	Maureen Allen	Patricia Smales	Samantha Sykes	Susan Meanwell	
Lorraine Barwell	Maureen Tyler	Patricia Hammond	Samantha Laney	Susan McFall	
Louisa Denby	Maureen Postlethwaite	Patricia Phillpotts	Samantha Medland	Susan Hughes	
Louisa Jane Brannan	Maxine Showers	Patricia Goodband	Samantha Ho	Susan Forster	
Louise Evans	Mayurathy	Patricia Seddon	Samantha Hendersen	Susan Workman	
Louise Wilson	Perinpamoorihy	Patricia Cairns	Samantha (Petra)	Susan McGoldrick	
Louise Webster	Megan Peat	Patricia Durrant	Atkinson	Susan Cole	
Louise Donnelly	Melinda Palmer	Paula Hounslea	Sameena Zaman	Susan Ashworth	
Louise May Evans	Melissa Crook	Paula Clinton	Sameena Imam	Susan Lancaster	
Luan Leigh	Melissa Mathieson	Paula Castle	Sandra Wedderburn	Susan Whiting	
Lucinda Port	Melissa Liddle	Paula Newman	Sandra Voicchevovska	Susan Davenport	
Lucy Landry	Meryl Parry	Pauline Adams	Sandra Crawford	Susan Mitchelson	
Lucy Lee	Michaela Heaton	Pauline Samarraie	Sandra Maralhas	Susan Mary Williams	
Lucy Ayris	Michelle Samaraweera	Pauline Smith	Sandra Talman	Susan Rose Southern	
Lydia Pascale	Michelle Jenkinson	Pauline Gillen	Sandra Brotherton	Susie Smith (Beaney)	
Lynda Hankey	Michelle Stonall	Pauline Butler	Sandra Boakes	Suzanne Blamires	

Karen Ingala Smith

Karen Ingala Smith is Chief Executive of nia, a London based charity championing an integrated approach to addressing all forms of men's violence against women and girls. Karen has been recording and commemorating UK women killed by men since January 2012 in a campaign called Counting Dead Women.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that supports a network of around 300 local services working to end domestic violence against women and children in England. Our member services are integrated domestic violence service providers delivering a range of holistic services for women experiencing domestic violence and their children. Keeping the voices of survivors at the heart of its work, Women's Aid campaigns for better support for women and children, provides training and resources for professionals and delivers a package of vital 24 hour lifeline services through publications, websites and the National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership with Refuge).

women's aid
until women & children are safe



delivering cutting edge services
to end violence against women and children