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# TO WHAT EXTENT DO LOWER-LEVEL OFFENDERS GO ON TO COMMIT MORE SERIOUS CRIMES? A RAPID REVIEW

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## Rapid Research Evaluation and Appraisal Lab (RREAL)

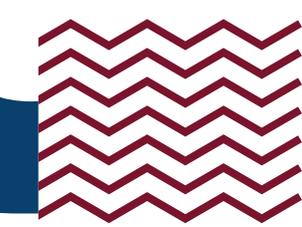
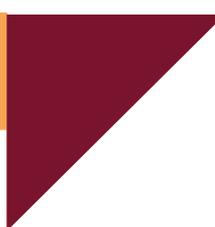
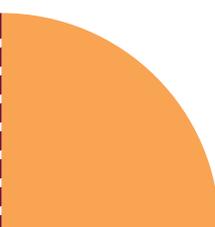
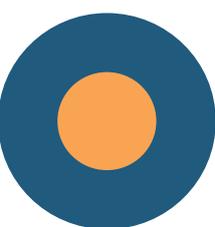
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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Aim

The aim of the project was to conduct a rapid review of the literature and develop a report summarising the evidence on perpetrators and/or offenders of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and whether committing lower-level offences leads to escalation to more serious crimes.

**Warning: This briefing flags issues around sexual violence and domestic abuse which some readers may find distressing.**

If you are affected by the themes of this briefing, you can call Samaritans on 116 123 (UK and ROI) or visit the Samaritans website: [www.samaritans.org/branches](http://www.samaritans.org/branches) to find details of the nearest branch. Alternatively, please consider following the support line: [www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape-and-sexual-assault](http://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape-and-sexual-assault)

### 1.2 Design

The review was guided following the approach for evidence reviews developed by Tricco et al. (2017). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) statement was followed to guide the review design and the reporting of the methods and findings.

### 1.3 Findings

#### 1.3.1 Previous convictions and re-convictions of domestic abuse, sexual assault and male-on-female homicide offenders

- Analysis of serial domestic abusers (i.e., where a single perpetrator commits domestic abuse against multiple victims) showed that the majority were also known to be repeat offenders of domestic abuse and other crimes (i.e., perpetrating domestic abuse on more than one occasion against each victim) (Robinson, 2017).
- Sexual offenders of older women were more likely to have previous convictions (both unspecified offences and for sexual offences) than those who assault younger women (Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2018).
- 36% of 38 serious sexual assault perpetrators had post-offence convictions for sexual assault (Almond et al., 2015).
- Convicted murderers had previously perpetrated abuse or offences against the women murdered including coercive control, harassment, cyberstalking, and physical violence (Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2012; Long et al., 2020; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).
- Convicted murderers had previous convictions of domestic abuse, sexual violence, physical violence and sexual assault that weren't specific to the women murdered (Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2015; Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Greenall and Wright, 2015; Stefanska et al., 2015).

#### 1.3.2 Factors associated with re-offending

Those who first offended at an earlier age were linked to a greater number of re-convictions (Almond et al., 2015).

Behaviours between serial and one-off rapist, did not differ significantly (in the type of victim targeted, the offence location, methods of control and the sexual acts forced upon the victim). Highlighting the challenge of using crime scene behaviour for the purpose of identifying the type of rape perpetrator (Slater, Woodhams and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014).

Behaviours of sexual offenders differed during sexual murders compared to previous sexual assault (Greenall and Wright, 2015).

Sexual killers may have closer behavioural patterns of sexual offenders than non-sexual murderers (Stefanska et al., 2015).

#### 1.3.3 Characteristics of victims

- Older victims of sexual assaults were more likely to be assaulted by offenders with previous convictions, than younger victims (Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2011).
- Victims of serial rapists were more likely to be sex workers compared to one-off rapists (Slater, Woodhams and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014).

#### 1.3.4 Interventions for perpetrators and offenders

- The intervention - Domestic Abuse Prevention Partnership perpetrator programme (DAPP) found that 17.5% of 57 participants were linked to domestic abuse related crime following completion of the programme (Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019).
- Whilst the intervention - Drive Project showed their intervention group had better outcomes in the reduction of domestic abuse incidents compared to a control group (Hester et al., 2019).
- A cognitive-behavioural group therapy programme for sexual offenders found that none of the participants were reconvicted 12 months after the programme for new sexual (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012).

#### 1.3.5 Problems with conducting research into re-offending of VAWG

- Inconsistent measures of ages to classify victims as adults or elderly (Slater, Woodhams and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014; Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Long et al., 2020; Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2015).
- Inconsistent definitions of 'serial' domestic abuse across police forces (Robinson, 2017).
- Small samples, no control groups and limited follow-up periods making it difficult to prove if an intervention has been successful (Almond et al., 2015; Stefanska et al., 2015; Robinson, 2017; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021; Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012).
- Low-response rates to interventions (Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes 2019; Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).
- Police forces not collecting online and digital data as evidence (Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).
- Murder victims being unable to tell their stories (Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Greenall and Wright, 2015).
- Inaccuracies in casefile data has also been flagged where different professionals with different points of focus and biases have contributed to the development of this data (Dobash and Dobash et al., 2011; Stefanska et al., 2015; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).
- Missing data of offenders that weren't convicted for their crimes (Almond et al., 2015; Long et al., 2020; Dobash and Dobash, 2015; Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014).

#### 1.3.6 Policy focussed recommendations based on the literature

- Early intervention programmes, multi-agency strategies and mentoring for perpetrators and offenders (Robinson, 2017; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021; Craig, Stringer and Sander, 2012; Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Almond et al., 2015).
- Need for standardised definitions (e.g., serial abuser) and consistent measures (e.g., age of victims) (Robinson, 2017).
- Information sharing and training between the police, probation services and social services (Long et al., 2020).
- A drive to collect digital and online evidence (Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

#### 1.3.7 Research focussed recommendations based on the literature

- Relevant and up-to-date research into VAWG that is centralised, transparent and disaggregated (Long et al., 2020).
- Expanding research to include more recent cases alongside online and digital evidence (Almond et al., 2015; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

### **1.4 Limitations of the review**

The limitations of the review methodology include the potential to have missed any data published after December 2022; the potential to have missed key terms from the search strategy; the potential to have missed key publications that did not reference the UK in their title or abstract; the inclusion of two grey literature publications; and the exclusion of publications that did not include the gender of the victims. The research team made a similar recommendation to that of the published literature, that future research into VAWG should share disaggregated data into the gender of victims.

## 1.5 Disclaimer

This rapid review has been produced in consultation with the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) to improve the conduct of scrutiny in Parliament; it is not, and should not be relied on as, advice. Neither the House of Lords nor the House of Commons are responsible for any information contained in this review, or for its accuracy, and will not be liable for any errors or omissions or for any loss or damage arising from its use. The review is the sole responsibility of the authors.

## 1.6 Project background

This rapid review was produced as part of a pilot project to develop robust methods for producing rapid reviews of research for Parliamentarians. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) has worked with the Rapid Research, Evaluation and Appraisal Lab (RREAL), International Public Policy Observatory (IPPO), and the Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement (CAPE) to produce rapid research synthesis based on comprehensive searches of academic databases, often involving the screening of thousands of studies. The researchers worked directly with Parliamentary select committees to carry out fast turnaround summaries of available research literature.

The researchers also wish to thank the external reviewers for their valuable feedback and comments on drafts of the review. The research was supported by Jonathan Breckon (POST, IPPO, CAPE Policy Fellow).

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) takes many forms and affects victims in different ways. Over the past two years there has been increased media attention in the UK around the victims of VAWG, and the offenders of these crimes who had often perpetrated VAWG previously. The UK Government has prioritised proactively seeking to tackle VAWG and developed their 2021 strategy focussing on exactly this (Home Office, 2021). The UK Government also ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2022 for preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (Coleman, 2022). Part of the UK Government's aim is to increase knowledge and understanding of perpetrator behaviours, especially with the objective of informing how repeat and escalating offending can be tackled and reduced. This report seeks to summarise the available evidence on perpetrators and offenders of VAWG and explore their offence pathway, to understand the link between committing lower-level offences (e.g., verbal harassment) and more serious offences (e.g., rape, domestic homicide).

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1 Research questions

The rapid evidence review was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent do lower-level offenders go on to commit more serious crimes?
2. What are the factors that influence the likelihood of offenders committing more serious crimes?
3. What interventions exist to prevent low-level offenders of VAWG committing acts of more serious crime?

### 3.2 Design

The review was guided following the approach for evidence reviews developed by Tricco et al. (Tricco et al., 2017). The review followed a phased approach, which began with a broad search strategy that was expanded with each round of searches. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) statement was followed to guide the review design and the reporting of the methods and findings (Moher et al., 2009).

### 3.3 Search strategy

Following confirmation of the research questions by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee, the search strategy was developed using the PICOS framework (Moher et al., 2009):

- Population: perpetrators (those who may not necessarily have been convicted for their actions) and offenders (those who have been convicted)
- Intervention/ Exposure: low-level offences
- Comparator: N/A
- Outcome: serious crimes
- Settings: violence against women and girls in the UK

The phrases above were entered into Google Scholar to identify alternative terms in the literature. The string of terms was then piloted with different Boolean operators on MEDLINE to ensure the publications returned were relevant. The search criteria was reviewed by a senior systematic reviewer, and implemented across three databases, MEDLINE, PsycInfo, Social Policy and Practice, one preprint server (Medrxiv) and one search engine (Google Scholar). A detailed version of the search criteria can be found in Appendix A.

The searches were conducted between the 18–20 December 2022, and, where possible, limits were added to the search, including limiting results to literature that had been published since 2010, and limiting the results to

**Table 1. Eligibility criteria**

INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
Published since 2010 (including articles with datasets collected prior)	Published prior to 2010
UK or UK comparative focus	No UK focus
Perpetrators and/or offenders of low-level offences of VAWG	No confirmation of the gender of the victim
Perpetrators and/or offenders of more serious offences of VAWG	
Any factors that influenced re-offending	
Any interventions targeted at the prevention of re-offending	

### 3.5 Screening process and data extraction

The research team screened the titles and abstracts of all the records on Rayyan against the eligibility criteria. Following rapid review methods, the two researchers involved in the screening process cross-checked the title and abstracts of a random 25% of each other’s excluded items.

The full texts were screened by two reviewers in parallel to data extraction on an Excel sheet. Relevant records were then marked for exclusion in the Excel sheet and the reasons for exclusion. The two researchers involved in the screening process cross-checked the title and abstracts of a random 25% of each other’s excluded items. Any discrepancies between the reviewers’ scores were discussed until resolved at both title/abstract and full text screening stages.

### 3.6 Data extraction

Data were extracted using a shared Excel sheet with a pre-established data extraction form (reviewed and approved by staff from the Women and Equalities Committee). The data extraction categories were informed by the eligibility criteria and the identification of emerging topics during the first stage of screening (see Appendix B for the full form). The data extraction categories included study details, the criminal histories of the re-offenders, their trajectory towards re-offending, any factors associated with re-offending frequency, any behaviours related to re-offending and any characteristics of the victims of re-offending perpetrators/offenders. The themes that were extracted also included any interventions conducted to try to prevent recidivism of VAWG, any problems in conducting research into re-offending perpetrators/offenders or VAWG and any recommendations to improve this field of research.

### 3.7 Quality assessment

Two quality appraisal tools were used to assess the quality of the diverse range of evidence included in the review. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used to assess the quality of empirical studies (Hong et al., 2018), and the Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date, Significance checklist was used to assess the quality of grey literature (AACODS) (Tyndall, 2010).

- MMAT access link: [http://mixedmethodsappraisaltoolpublic.pbworks.com/w/file/attach/127916259/MMAT\\_2018\\_criteria-manual\\_2018-08-01\\_ENG.pdf](http://mixedmethodsappraisaltoolpublic.pbworks.com/w/file/attach/127916259/MMAT_2018_criteria-manual_2018-08-01_ENG.pdf)
- ACCODS access link: [https://www.library.sydney.edu.au/research/systematic-review/downloads/AACODS\\_Checklist.pdf](https://www.library.sydney.edu.au/research/systematic-review/downloads/AACODS_Checklist.pdf)

### 3.8 Data synthesis

The data were synthesized using framework analysis (Gale et al., 2013) and the narrative synthesis method (Popay et al., 2006). Framework analysis was used to develop an analytical framework mirroring the data extraction form and based on the themes that had been identified from screening the papers. Key data from the articles were charted into the data extraction framework. The research team then synthesized the charted data to identify similarities and differences between the topics discussed in the articles, leading to the development of the themes in the results section of this report. Narrative synthesis was used to summarise the key characteristics of each article, the demographics of the VAWG perpetrators/offenders and their trajectories to re-offending (Table 2).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Study selection

A total of 3,838 records were retrieved from searching MEDLINE, PsycInfo, Social Policy and Practice, Medrxiv and Google Scholar. After deduplication, 799 records were removed. The titles and abstracts of 3,039 records were screened to exclude 2,933 records and include 106 records for full text screening. Of those, 91 full texts were excluded. A total of 15 full texts were included in the review. The main reasons for exclusion were that the articles were published prior to 2010, the articles were not specific to VAWG or re-offending, or they were not based in the UK. Please see Appendix C for the full list of included publications. Figure 1 below illustrates the screening process of the search results.

### 4.2 Quality assessment

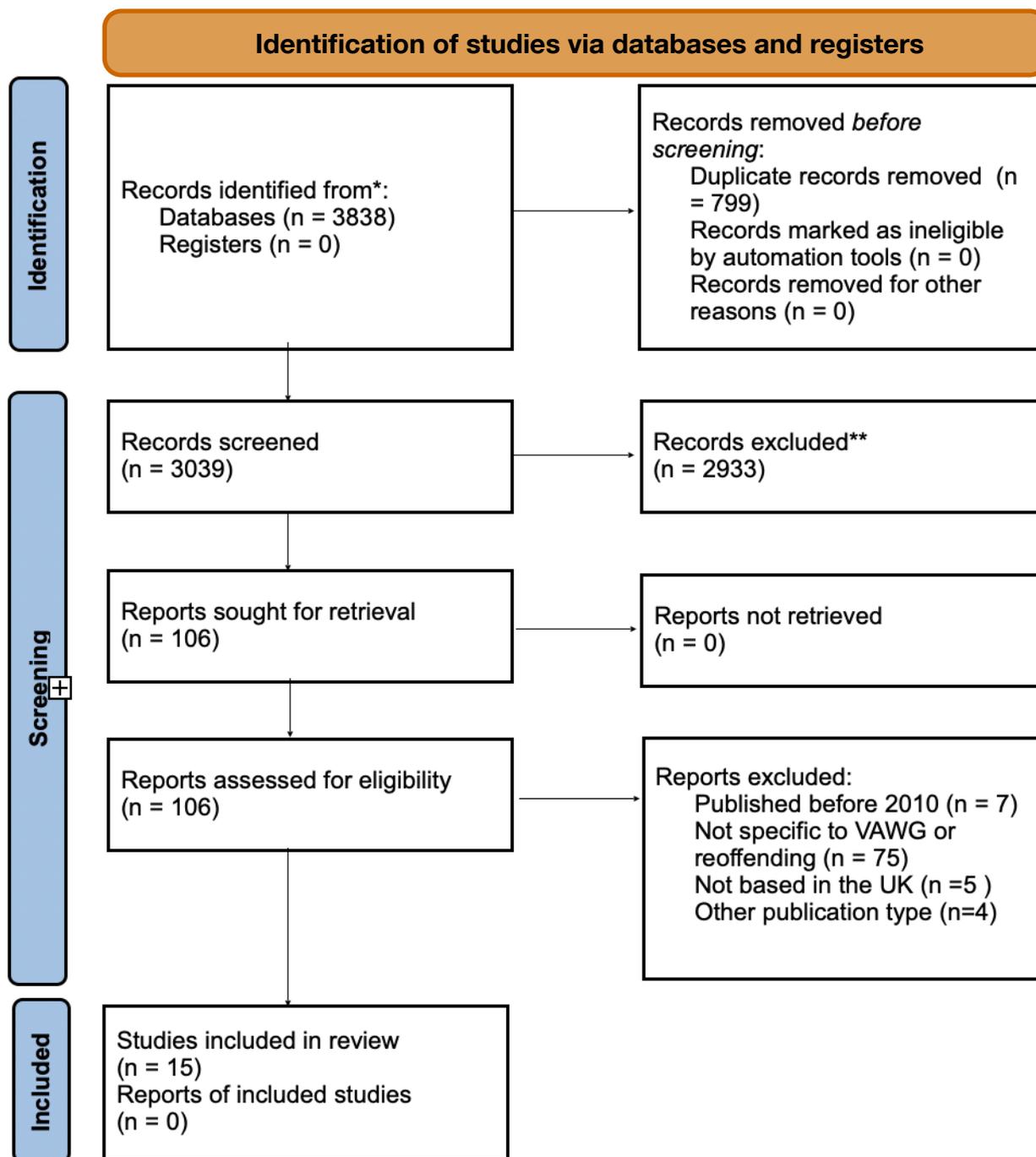
In the review, 13 empirical studies were assessed for quality using the MMAT and two articles that classified as grey literature were assessed for their quality using AACODS checklist. Most included literature was of moderate quality. Appendix C includes study-wise quality assessment scores.

### 4.3 Study characteristics

An overview of the study characteristics of the included articles can be found in Table 2. A full list of the included reference details can be found in Appendix D. Further detail on the themes from the publications can be found in the next section of this report. The majority of the studies included in this review were published between 2010-2015 (n=10), with the remaining five articles published between 2016-2021. Three authors of publications were referenced more than once – Dobash and Dobash were found to author three of the included references, and Greenall was found to author two of the included references. The majority of the studies involved the secondary analysis of data whether that was collected from the National Crime Agency including the Serious Crime Analysis Section; the Home Office Offenders Index; the Police National Computer; the HM Prison Service; the Sex Offender Treatment Programme; the Public Protection Unit Database; the Domestic Homicide Review team; Domestic Abuse agencies; Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC); Probation Trusts; general police data; homicide indexes, casefiles, reports from probation officers and police officers; news reports; police records. Some of the articles collected primary data, such as using emotional and behavioral assessment tools and interviews with perpetrators/offenders. Most of the included studies cited male perpetrators/offenders with female victims. There were four studies which either included

female perpetrators/offenders in addition to males, did not define the gender of all victims, or included male victims in their sample too (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; Dobash and Dobash, 2012; Robinson, 2017; Hester et al., 2019).

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of selection and screening process



AUTHOR/YEAR	ARTICLE TYPE	SAMPLE DETAILS AND OFFENCE	PREVIOUS OR POST CONVICTIONS
Dobash and Dobash, 2011	Empirical	104 men who killed an intimate partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their casefiles revealed that 59% had physically abused the woman they ultimately killed.</li> <li>• Of the men who had been in a previous intimate relationship, 57% had abused a former partner, and in that sense appeared to “specialize” in using violence against a woman partner.</li> </ul>
Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2011	Empirical	53 male offenders of female victims aged 60 years or over, matched with 53 offenders of younger female victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The offenders who sexually assault older women had more previous convictions than those who assault younger women, including convictions for sexual offences.</li> <li>• Offenders with previous convictions were more likely to take disguise precautions.</li> <li>• No correlation was found between the number of violent previous convictions (convictions for sexual offences and offences against the person) and the level of violence involved in the offence examined in this study.</li> </ul>
Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012	Empirical	<i>14 males with ‘intellectual limitations’ (IQ between 55-79) serving probation orders or prison licences having been convicted of a contact sexual offence (against children and an adult female) were enrolled in 14-month treatment programme.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the 12 months post-treatment none of the participants were reconvicted for committing new sexual offences.</li> <li>• However, it’s not possible to prove the intervention was successful in reducing sexual recidivism due to small sample and short follow-up period.</li> </ul>
Dobash and Dobash, 2012	Empirical	104 men convicted of killing an intimate partner (referred to as females), and 62 males convicted of intimate partner collateral murder. The victims of the collateral murder included children (n=19), allies (n=19) and new partners (n=24).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimate Partner Collateral Murder:</li> <li>• Prior to the murder of the 19 children, 65% of offenders had used extreme violence against the child victim and against their female partner.</li> <li>• In the murder of 19 allies of a present or former partner, previous violence against the woman partner was common (81%) in these cases. Persistent harassment of the intimate partner and/or the ally featured in many cases.</li> <li>• In the cases of murdered new partners, the offender had been violent to the woman partner in 42% of the original relationships. Persistent harassment of the new partner and/or the previous woman partner was common. During some of the murder events, the former female partner was also attacked, and in four cases, the offender was also convicted of attempted murder of their former woman partner, although none murdered.</li> </ul>

Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014	Empirical	38 serial and 50 one-off convicted rapists (male, lone, strangers) of a lone female victim.	Instead of looking at a trajectory of previous offences this article compares the different behaviours and victims of the serial rapists compared to the one-off rapists.
Almond et al., 2015	Empirical	38 convicted offenders of Serious Sexual Assault (SSA) hereby referred to as the index offence, where SSA was defined to be an offence of rape or more serious cases of indecent assault.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 87% of offenders had 12 or fewer post-offence convictions (after their index offence/SSA). The maximum number of post-offence convictions sustained was 39 and the median number of post-offence convictions was 5.5.</li> <li>• Violence-contact offending was the most common post-offence conviction (45%).</li> <li>• 36% of offenders received a post-offence conviction for a sexual-contact offence.</li> </ul>
Dobash and Dobash, 2015	Empirical	243 cases of men murdering women which constitute the three types examined here: intimate partner murder (n=105); sexual murder (n=98), and the murder of older women (n=40).	<p>Intimate Partner Violence murders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% of the 105 offenders had been violent in a previous relationship.</li> <li>• 57% with a previous conviction for assault had attacked a woman, often an intimate partner.</li> <li>• 3% had a previous conviction for sexual assault against women, including rape.</li> </ul> <p>Sexual murders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% of the 98 offenders had convictions for physical minor assault and serious physical assault (19%). The usual victim of those men convicted of a physical assault was a woman (56%).</li> <li>• 21% had convictions for sexual assaults against women, including rape.</li> </ul> <p>Murders of older women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39% of the 40 offenders were known to have been physically violent or sexually violent (4%) within previous intimate relationships.</li> <li>• 33% had at least one previous conviction for physical assault, the usual victim of these assaults were women (60%).</li> <li>• 18% had one or more convictions for sexual assault against women, including rape.</li> <li>• 63% had served at least one previous prison sentence.</li> </ul>

Greenall and Richardson, 2015	Empirical	81 non-serial, single offender–victim, adult male-on-female stranger sexual homicides that occurred within Great Britain between 1970 and 2010.	<p>Most offenders had previous convictions, and some had extensive criminal histories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 64% with previous conviction of some kind.</li> <li>• 28% had previous convictions for violent offences (gender of victims not confirmed).</li> <li>• 16% had previous convictions for sexual offences (gender of victims not confirmed).</li> </ul>
Greenall and Wright, 2015	Empirical	52 of 81 single offender–victim, adult male-on-female stranger sexual murderers that occurred within Great Britain between 1970 and 2010, that had committed previous crimes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 52 offenders who had committed previous crimes (theft, crimes against property, violent offences, previous convictions of sexual violence).</li> <li>• 13 of these offenders (25%) had previous convictions for sexual violence.</li> </ul>
Stefanska et al., 2015	Empirical	150 non-serial sexual killers who have been convicted and served or are serving a custodial sentence within HM Prison Service. Their victims were females aged 14, or older.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44 male sexual killers of females aged 14, or older, had a previous offence for rape/attempted rape.</li> </ul>
Robinson, 2017	Empirical	100 domestic abuse perpetrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 of 100 perpetrators were serial abusers (12 of which were male) where they had committed offences against previous and current partners.</li> <li>• 6 of the 13 seemed to be actively offending (i.e., were known to have committed domestic abuse within the past year).</li> <li>• 10 of the 13 serial abusers (76.9%) were also repeat offenders (of domestic abuse and other crimes), a higher proportion than non-serial abusers (58.6%). Serial abusers appear more likely to be repeat offenders than vice versa.</li> </ul>
Hester et al., 2019	Grey	506 domestic abuse perpetrators (94% male perpetrators and 97% female victims) enrolled in the Drive intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 149 service users had police data included, the control group included 173 random perpetrators identified from police records. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive service users were able to sustain the reduction in Domestic Violence-related incidents 12 months after case closure (13 to 30 months), whereas the percentage of control cases increased after more than 12 months post-Drive.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 184 service users had MARAC data included, the control group included 1,139 perpetrators with MARAC data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive service users appeared at MARAC less often (mean= 2.7 times) than perpetrators in the control group (mean= 3.3 times).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>228 Domestic Abuse Prevention Partnership perpetrators (male perpetrators in heterosexual relationships).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 of 228 perpetrators completed the programme.</li> <li>• 17.5% of 57 perpetrators were linked to domestic abuse crimes after completion of the programme.</li> </ul>
<p>Long et al. 2020</p>	<p>Grey</p>	<p>147 offenders of femicide in the UK in 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52%; 69 out of 133 cases where the offender was known to the victim, there was evidence of previous abuse or violence.</li> </ul>
<p>Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>41 domestic homicide reviews specifically related to intimate partner abuse. Male offenders in 80.5% of the reviews and all their victims were female.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 63% of the reviews there was evidence of controlling and coercive behaviour in the relationship on the part of the offender.</li> <li>• 59% of cases presented some evidence of digital activities or behaviours associated with the case which would constitute cyberstalking.</li> <li>• There was evidence of physical stalking and threatening behaviour by the offender prior to committing Domestic Homicide.</li> <li>• There was evidence that sending multiple messages over short periods of time that was associated with surveillance and/or coercive control were risk factors for escalation of behaviour.</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Thematic areas

The following sections highlight the themes we identified during the review process, and span across the trajectories of pre-convictions and re-convictions of perpetrators and offenders of VAWG; the factors associated with re-offending; and the characteristics of the victims of re-offenders. This is followed by the problems of conducting research into re-offending in addition to recommendations to improve this field of research. Following an external peer review stage additional references were suggested for inclusion but could not be incorporated into the body of the report within the agreed timeline. Instead, these references have been summarised and listed in Appendix E.

### 4.4.1 The types of offences and trajectories towards re-offending

A summary of the trajectories of recidivists of VAWG can be found in Table 2. The articles discussed a range of different offences according to which the following analysis is organised across domestic abuse, sexual assault and murder.

#### Domestic abuse

Three articles focussed on domestic abuse offences (Robinson, 2017; Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parke, 2019).

Robinson's article evaluated 'serial domestic abusers' who had been convicted or charged with domestic abuse against multiple partners (Robinson, 2017). The analysis of their offending trajectories illustrated that most serial abusers were also repeat offenders, as such they had perpetrated abuse against each of their victims repeatedly (Robinson, 2017). The mean age of the perpetrators' first conviction was 21 years however the mean age for assessment was much later at 35 years, illustrating a lack of intervention. As such, the findings question the assumption that serial domestic abusers are worthy of enhanced intervention and instead makes the case that earlier intervention and management is critical to rehabilitation.

Two of the articles discussed domestic abuse perpetrators in relation to an intervention programme (Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parke, 2019), with both reporting a decrease in offending patterns or behaviours by those enrolled on domestic abuse intervention programmes. These interventions will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.4.4 below.

#### Sexual assault

Four of the articles focused on sexual offenders (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; Slater, Woodhams and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014; Almond et al., 2015; Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2018).

Craig, Stringer and Sanders' article summarises the results of a cognitive-behavioural intervention for sexual offenders with intellectual limitations living in the community and serving probation orders (2012). Their research finds that none of the participants had been reconvicted for a sexual offence during the 12-month follow-up period, however they note that it is not possible to conclude that the intervention is successful in reducing sexual recidivism beyond that period.

Slater, Woodhams and Hamilton-Giachritsis' study focusses on differentiating serial and one-off rapists and finds that the majority of behaviours did not differ significantly (2014). This poses a challenge to using crime scene behaviour for the purpose of identifying the type of rape offender. Moreover, it cannot be guaranteed that all the one-off rapists in this study have indeed only committed one act of rape.

Almond et al.'s article addresses male offenders who had committed a serious sexual assault (SSA) against female victims but were not subject to punitive measures at the time, and found that for 10 of the 38 offenders, SSA was their index offence which refers to the last criminal action that brought the offender into contact with the criminal justice system (Almond et al., 2015). Following the index offence, SSA offenders that were not incarcerated continued offending in a general manner with 87% of the sample receiving 12 or fewer post-offence convictions following the index offence. Over a third (36%) of SSA offenders received a post-offence conviction for sexual-contact offences and 45% received post-offence convictions for violent-contact offences. Reconvictions for theft and other criminal justice matters appeared more frequently than SSA reconvictions suggesting that nonincarcerated SSA offenders have versatile criminal careers with the sexual offending

embedded in a more general pattern of offending behaviour. Ultimately, the findings indicate a greater degree of sexual re-offending compared to studies using incarcerated SSA offenders, suggesting a positive correlation between incarceration and sexual recidivism.

In the fourth article, the focus is on offenders who sexually assault older women (over 60 years old) (Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2011). In comparing their re-offending histories with offenders who assaulted younger women it was found that offenders who sexually assault older women had more prior convictions, specifically convictions for theft, sexual offences, property offences, and juvenile offences.

### Murder

Eight of the articles focussed on the trajectories or criminal histories of offenders that had committed various forms of male-on-female homicide (Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2012; Dobash and Dobash, 2015; Greenall and Wright, 2015; Greenall and Richardson 2015; Long et al., 2020; Stefanska et al., 2015; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

### *Femicide*

Long et al.'s study provides an overview of femicide in the UK in 2018 being the first year in which the criminal histories of the offenders of femicide have been explored (Long et al., 2020). It finds that the majority (52%) of 133 offenders that were known to the women had histories of previous abuse and violence against women, illustrating the widespread nature of such escalation in the violence against women.

### *Typologies of murder*

Dobash and Dobash's 2015 study found that 90% of 271 cases of women murdered by men could be classified into three categories: intimate partner murders, sexual murderers, and murders of older women. In all three cases it was found that the majority of offenders had histories of violence towards women. Among sexual murders 21% had previous convictions for sexual assault including rape and 38% convictions for violent assault. For intimate partner murderers, over 70% had been violent in a previous relationship and 57% had a prior conviction for assault on a woman, in most cases their partner, while only 3% had a previous conviction for sexual assault. Murderers of older women were found to have SSA convictions at a rate of 18% whilst 33% had a previous conviction relating to physical assault. As such, murderers of older women and sexual murderers demonstrate similar levels of pre-convictions for sexual and physical assault. Intimate partner murderers on the other hand demonstrate higher levels of pre-convictions for violence and lower levels regarding sexual assault pre-convictions.

### *Intimate Partner Murder*

Three of the articles addressed domestic homicide or intimate partner murders (Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2012; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria 2021).

Todd, Bryce and Franqueria's study focusses on Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and traces the offender's trajectory within the relationship to committing domestic homicide, however it does not discuss the escalation in relation to previous offences (Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021). The majority (63%) of the relationships evidenced controlling and coercive behaviour combined with stalking and threatening behaviour, with 59% of cases presenting some elements of cyberstalking prior to the murder. The findings suggest that in the offender's trajectory to committing domestic homicide the sending of multiple messages in short spaces of time associated with surveillance and coercive control are a significant risk factor for the escalation of behaviour.

Two other studies by the same authors address the trajectory of intimate partner murders (Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2012). In Dobash and Dobash's 2011 study of 104 men who murdered an intimate partner it was revealed that in 59% of cases the male partner had physically abused the female partner they later killed and that of the men who had been in a previous relationship 57% had abused their former partner as well. This illustrates that such offenders seem to 'specialise' in violent abuse of female partners. As such they may be comparable to the 'serial domestic abusers' discussed in the Robinson, 2017 article, as they seem to have both offended repeatedly and against multiple partners.

The Dobash and Dobash 2012 study focusses on a subset of intimate partner murders which concern 62

collateral murders with children, allies (friends or people that the victims know), and new partners as victims in situations where intimate partner violence is a crucial aspect of the abuse (Dobash and Dobash, 2012). In the murder of 19 children, 65% of the offenders had used extreme violence against the child victim and their female partner. The history of violence here makes it hard to distinguish that directed toward the female partner and that toward the child. As such, it is important to recognise that some degree of conflict with the female partner was present when the child was murdered. Similarly, 19 allies of intimate present or ex-partners were murdered with persistent harassment of the partner and the ally featuring in most cases and the murder of the ally occurring in the presence of the intimate partner in some cases. Previous violence against the woman partner was common (81%) in these cases. Regarding new partners, offenders were only violent to the new partners in 13% of cases prior to the murder but had been violent to a former partner in 42% of cases, demonstrating that for many offenders it is consistent with a history of violence towards female partners. In four cases the offender was also convicted of attempting to murder their former partner.

The evidence of a trajectory of violence by the offender towards the victim prior to the murder in these three articles is consistent with Dobash and Dobash's study describing typologies of male-on-female murders (Dobash and Dobash, 2015).

### *Sexual Murderers*

Four articles focused their attention on sexual killers (Dobash & Dobash, 2015; Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Greenall and Wright, 2015; Stefanska et al., 2015). Stefanska et al.'s article focused on tracing the offence pathways of non-serial sexual killers who had attended the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme (SOTP) (Stefanska et al., 2015). This is an important group to evaluate from a recidivism risk assessment perspective because offenders who participate in treatment programmes are more likely than non-treated offenders to be granted parole. This intervention will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.4.4 below.

Greenall and Richardson's article provides a descriptive overview of male-on-female sexual killers (Greenall and Richardson, 2015). It finds that the majority had previous convictions (64%), with 28% having previous convictions for violence and 16% having convictions for sexual offences. This is within a comparable range to Dobash and Dobash's study which found that 38% had previous violent-contact convictions and 21% had previous sexual convictions (Dobash and Dobash, 2015). The study went into detail on the murders of older women, finding that murders that were sexual were more likely to be committed by offenders who had served at least one prison sentence, compared to murders that were related to theft (Dobash & Dobash, 2015). This is significant because it illustrates the violent and sexual offence pathway of sexual murderers. Greenall and Wright's study finds that in a sample of 52 recidivists 25% had previous convictions for sexual violence, signifying that the act of sexual homicide was also an act of recidivism (Greenall and Wright, 2015). This fits with existing literature, indicating that this type of sexual homicide offender may represent a behavioural pattern which is more comparable to sexual offenders than to murderers.

It is important to acknowledge that the figures relating to sexual murderers' previous sexual offences are probably much higher in reality as a significant amount of sexual offending does not result in detection, arrest, or conviction.

#### **4.4.2 Factors associated with re-offending**

One article (Almond et al., 2015) discussed how the age of a serial sex offender at their index sexual offence had an impact on their re-offending. Their data suggested that offending at an earlier age was linked to a greater number of re-convictions and diversity of re-offending.

There were a few articles that analysed the behaviours of serial offenders during their offences (Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014; Greenall and Wright, 2015; and Stefanska et al., 2015). Behaviour in this context refers to the type of victim targeted, the location of the offence, the methods of control and the acts towards the victim. Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis compared the behaviours of serial rapists with one-off rapists and found that the majority of behaviours did not differ significantly. They did however find that serial rapists were more likely to bind their victims during the offence, which links to previous literature that they are more 'criminally sophisticated' than one-off rapists. They also found that the serial rapists were more likely to engage in more sexual acts during the offence than one-off rapists. Greenall and Wright looked into the criminal histories of 13 sexual killers that had previous convictions for sexual violence. They found that the

type of sexual offence during previous convictions were similar to the behaviours in the sexual murder for two out of 13 of the recidivists, in the sense that they engaged in sexual acts during their sexual homicide which appeared similar to previous sexual offending. The remaining 11 demonstrated varying degrees of diversity and escalation with their previous convictions, for example four of the recidivists had previous convictions for non-penetrative sexual offences but engaged in penetrative sexual acts involving their homicide victim (Greenall and Wright, 2015).

Stefanska et al.'s study illustrates that sexual killers previously convicted of rape follow a sexually driven pathway wherein violence seems to play an instrumental role in order to avoid detection and silence the victim, as opposed to being motivated by sadism, for the pleasure of inflicting pain (Stefanska et al., 2015). As such, it is argued that sexual killers may be more akin to non-homicide sexual aggressors than to non-sexual murderers, since the index offence of rape represents a behavioural pattern, they may have been seeking to repeat but ended up committing murder due to perceiving a personal threat. The finding that sexual murderers may be closer to the behavioural patterns of sexual offenders than non-sexual murderers is consistent with the Dobash and Dobash, 2015 and Greenall and Wright, 2015 studies.

#### 4.4.3 Characteristics of victims

Some of the articles have focussed on the types of victims of repeat offenders (Lea Hunt and Shaw, 2011; Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014). Lea, Hunt and Shaw compared the cases of 53 sexual offenders of older women (over the age of 60) with 53 sexual offenders of younger women (aged 20-25) and found the offenders with older victims were more likely to have previous convictions of sexual assault. Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis reviewed the backgrounds of the victims of serial rapists compared to one-off rapists and found that the victims of serial rapists were more likely to be sex workers (2014).

#### 4.4.4 Interventions for perpetrators and offenders

A number of the publications have discussed the use of interventions with VAWG perpetrators and offenders to determine if they affected their rates of re-offending (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019).

Craig, Stringer and Sanders conducted a study summarising the results of a community-based intervention for sexual offenders who had intellectual disabilities and were living in the community (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012). The intervention took the form of a cognitive-behavioural group therapy sessions, running for two-hours once a week for 14-months. The core treatment components included: sex education and education of the law, identifying and reconstructing cognitive distortions, developing victim empathy, and relapse prevention skills. After the intervention they found that the offenders' attitudes towards sexual assault had improved. They also found that after the follow-up period, none of the men had been re-convicted for sexual offences. However, it was not possible to prove that this intervention was successful in reducing risk of sexual re-offending as the follow-up period was restricted to 12 months post-treatment, the sample size was so small and there was no comparison with a control arm.

Two of the articles discussed domestic abuse perpetrators in relation to an intervention programme (Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019). Morgan, McCausland and Parkes evaluated police data on the re-offending of domestic abuse perpetrators enrolled in a voluntary 20-week Domestic Abuse Prevention Partnership perpetrator programme (DAPP) (Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019). The DAPP is a transformative initiative aiming to provide an integrated approach for perpetrators and survivors. The community-based partnership provides a tiered, flexible and needs-driven approach, linking specialist services for domestic abuse, with a focus on working directly with perpetrators. The partnership is perceived as innovative as it is a voluntary programme (i.e., not mandated by the court) for perpetrators, while it ensures that survivors are offered support at the same time. They found that 17.5% of those that completed the programme (n=57) in the first year, were linked to domestic abuse related crime 10-19 months after completion of the programme. It should be noted that only 80 of 228 participants that were referred into the programme fully completed the programme. A limitation of this evaluation was that there was no comparative analysis conducted on the re-offending police data of those that completed the programme against those that did not.

Hester et al., however, was able to offer a comparative analysis by evaluating the three-year Drive pilot intervention that enrolled high risk or serial perpetrators of domestic abuse to try to reduce their abusive behaviour (Hester et al., 2019). The Drive Project was piloted in Essex, South Wales, and West Sussex between 2016 and 2019 with the aim of reducing the number of child and adult victims of domestic abuse by targeting and deterring perpetrator behaviour. The intervention is designed to focus on the specific needs of individual service users, with Independent Domestic Violence Advisor case managers collaborating with social workers and trained counsellors. In addition to focussing on behavioural change, it involves a mix of disruptive activities aiming to prevent further perpetration and supportive activities helping service users address needs and overcome barriers to behaviour change. Drive's direct one-on-one work is a tailored offer delivered to each service user, rather than a standard programme. The interventions indirect work includes sharing information and educational material, institutional advocacy, and co-ordinating multiagency action to heighten risk awareness and the ability to respond.

Hester et al.'s evaluation compared police data of 149 participants enrolled in the programme with a control group of 173 random perpetrators. They also compared the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) data of 184 participants enrolled in the programme with a control group of 1,139 perpetrators. They found that the control cases appeared more frequently in MARACs than the intervention participants up to 12 months after the intervention. Using police data, they found that during the programme, and up to 12 months after the programme, the intervention group had greatly reduced their domestic violence incidents reported by the police compared to the control group. The Drive service users were also able to sustain the reduction in DV-related incidents 13-30 months after their case closure/step-down from the intervention. Whereas the percentage of DV-related incidents increased in the control groups after more than 12 months after the Drive project, suggesting that the intervention was successful in reducing DV-related incidents. However, the evaluators do highlight that it is impossible to state whether these actions would have happened without the intervention, or whether they are a direct result of the intervention rather than a cultural change in the area that the intervention was being conducted whereby practitioners in the field of domestic abuse were more proactive.

#### 4.4.5 Problems with conducting research into the re-offending of VAWG

In total, 14 of the articles discussed various different problems with conducting research into offending trajectories (Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2011; Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014; Almond et al., 2015; Dobash and Dobash, 2015; Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Greenall and Wright, 2015; Stefanska et al., 2015; Robinson, 2017; Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Long et al., 2020; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

##### Inconsistent measures and definitions

Inconsistent measures make the research into re-offending trajectories similarly challenging. This is illustrated by Greenall and Richardson's study which used a cut off age of 16 for adults, which contradicts studies that have defined adult women as 14 years and adult men as 18 years and above (Slater, Woodhams and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014; Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Long et al., 2020). This challenge is further illustrated by varying definitions of 'older' or 'elderly', for example in Lea, Hunt and Shaw's study older women are defined as 60 years or older whereas in Dobash and Dobash's study it is 65 years or older (Lea, Hunt and Shaw, 2011; Dobash and Dobash, 2015).

Robinson's article raises the issue of inconsistent definitions surrounding 'serial' domestic abuse, which make research into re-offending challenging (Robinson, 2017). Whilst all the Welsh police forces do have a definition for serial domestic abuse, they all vary from one another. Definitions were found to vary according to the imposed timeframe (e.g., the perpetrators entire known domestic abuse history, within last three years or within last 12 months), as well as the number of victims (e.g. whether it is more than one or three victims) and finally the different types of offences included (e.g., only intimate partner violence or any form of violence against women). This naturally makes research into the area rather problematic as it is difficult to establish how comparable the records of serial domestic abusers from different police forces. Moreover, the officer's awareness of the definition varies from one force to another because although all forces reported having issued guidance to local police forces regarding the revised UK governmental definition of domestic abuse, forces' definitions of serial domestic abuse were not necessarily included within this guidance. Indeed, it is important to recognise that the level of ambiguity in defining such problems can only undermine the effectiveness of responses developed to address it.

### Non-convictions and incomplete records

With regards to intervention programmes, the police data often only includes information on those who have completed the programme (Hester et al., 2019). This means that a comparative analysis, of those who participated versus those who did not, could not be carried out, which would otherwise be a valuable source of information (Morgan, McCausland and Parkes 2019). Moreover, it is difficult to estimate the effectiveness of intervention programmes due to low response rates and limited follow up periods (typically 12 months), which effectively makes it impossible to assert an intervention was successful in reducing re-offending outcomes, as we don't know if they continue to be successful following that time period (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

One notable problem with conducting research into the trajectory of offending is that the data can only account for what has been reported and recorded (Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014; Almond et al., 2015; Dobash and Dobash, 2015). In some cases, even when abuse or attacks are reported, victims feel unable to follow through on their complaints and even in cases where they did perpetrators are not always convicted (Dobash and Dobash, 2015). Indeed, even where violence and abuse are reported, police outcomes were unknown in a third of cases due to lack of available information (Long et al., 2020). As indicated by Almond et al. such data cannot account for any offences which an individual may have committed, but which has not resulted in a conviction (Almond et al., 2015).

A significant challenge with researching the behavioural trajectory for domestic homicide is that digital evidence is frequently overlooked in investigations relating to intimate partner abuse where homicide has not taken place (Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021). This is exemplified by one of the cases in the article wherein the perpetrator and victim originally met online and maintained an online presence throughout their relationship and the subsequent stalking of the victim by the perpetrator, however the DHR made no reference to any online communications or activity regarding either the perpetrator or victim. A further problem is that, where an offence is recognised, police officers often do not know how to secure the evidence if it has been committed online other than by seizing the device itself, which they seem especially reluctant to do concerning offences perceived as 'lower level'.

Although the National Crime Agency (NCA) serves all UK Police forces, it remains reliant on those same forces to provide it with accurate data (Greenall and Richardson, 2015; Greenall and Wright, 2015). In cases of murder, the victims are naturally unable to tell their story, which means police officers must extrapolate information from the crime scene or rely on the accounts of witnesses who may have limited exposure to the victim, offender, or offence. Consequently, there is always a risk that research using such data may contain some inaccuracies.

Much of the research on re-offending inevitably depends on analysing case related documents but documentary analysis, as with all methods, is not without limitations. Casefile information is drawn from numerous sources and original documents ranging from early childhood, education, social services and offending and followed by reports from various professionals in prison and treatment programmes (Dobash and Dobash, 2011). Therefore, it is an unavoidable issue that pre-sentence reports or domestic homicide reviews are written by various professionals with different concerns, expertise and foci, depending on their role which results in data sources with varying content (Dobash and Dobash et al., 2011; Stefanska et al., 2015; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021). This is also a problem for clinicians who may work on intervention programmes such as the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme but often only have incomplete access to those reports (Stefanaska et al., 2015).

### Sample sizes

The most frequently cited challenge into researching offending trajectories is the fact that sample data is frequently limited to small numbers and is therefore not necessarily representative of the broader population of offenders (Almond et al., 2015; Stefanska et al., 2015; Robinson, 2017; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021). This problem is further compounded by cases where there is no control group, which is often the case concerning those with intellectual disabilities (Craig, Stringer & Sanders, 2012; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019). Furthermore, samples often only include data for which there is a conviction which is not representative of all the offences that occur and especially of those which remain unsolved (Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014). In such cases the findings cannot be used to generalise to the rest of the population of offenders.

#### 4.4.6 Recommendations based on the literature

In total seven of the articles made recommendations regarding research into re-offending and interventions aimed at preventing recidivism and serial abuse (Dobash and Dobash, 2011; Almond et al., 2015; Robinson, 2017; Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019; Long et al., 2020; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

##### Early intervention, multi-agency strategies and mentoring

The most frequently cited recommendations revolved around the need for intervention and especially the need for multi-agency and early interventions. Studies highlight the importance of early identification and intervention in order to ensure the greater protection of women, enable the rehabilitation of perpetrators and offenders and prevent the escalation of offences (Robinson, 2017; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021).

There is also an emphasis on the need for interventions to involve multiple agencies and different areas of expertise (Robinson, 2017; Hester et al., 2019). Robinson advocates interventions focused on deterrence strategies combining criminal justice sanctions with the provision of other services and resources to support their desistance (Robinson, 2017). Hester et al. similarly recommends multi-agency risk assessments and interventions combined with a degree of statutory involvement (Hester et al., 2019). It is found that the involvement of statutory authorities such as the police or probation services are critical in many cases in the ability of interventions to engage service users. Research also underlined that rather than adapting treatment programmes for sexual offenders with intellectual limitations, programmes should be specifically developed along with assessments and treatment manuals (Craig, Stringer and Sander, 2012).

Despite compelling evidence suggesting that men change their behaviours following intervention programmes, data on re-offending indicates that for a minority of individuals more work is necessary to embed positive behavioural change (Hester et al., 2019; Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019). One recommendation is the increased use of mentoring services aimed at those who have completed intervention programmes, in order to enable them to have continued support in their rehabilitation (Morgan, McCausland and Parkes, 2019).

In their study focussing on the motivations and behaviours of men who murder intimate partners, Dobash and Dobash suggest that the beliefs, attitudes, and cognitions of men who perpetrate violence against a woman partner are of critical importance and a vital starting point for any effort seeking to understand and alter such behaviour (Dobash and Dobash, 2011). The authors recommend that interventions should be both retributive and reformative: retributive in that the man must acknowledge and recognise their own behaviour and reformative in that he must embark on the process of deep personal change by renouncing excuses that lay blame on the victim and exculpatory justifications for their violent behaviour. Other authors also advocated the need for retributive intervention, with Almond et al., recommending the continued use of incarceration for sexual offenders, underlining that those who are convicted and subsequently incarcerated showed lower levels of recidivism once released from prison (Almond et al., 2015).

##### Digital evidence and technology

Two articles highlighted the importance of collecting digital and online evidence (Almond et al., 2015; Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021). The data used in Almond et al.'s study does not take into account particular offending patterns concerning sexual offences utilising novel communication technology and data-sharing capabilities as the study is based on a sample from 1989-1999 (Almond et al., 2015). Since technology has made strident advances and an increasing number of offenders have been involved in committing online sexual offences or using digital means for stalking and controlling/coercive behaviour, it is recommended that an expansion of their study using more recent sexual offence data and accounting for online and digital evidence should be conducted.

Another study underscored the importance of including any available digital evidence for effective risk assessments, prosecution of perpetrators and protecting victims from possible escalation of offences (Todd, Bryce and Franqueria, 2021). The authors discuss digital evidence in relation to digitally enabled tracking applications, social media accounts, emails, or messages (text and vocal). As such, the article also emphasises the need for organisational learning to properly educate police officers on the possible involvement of these behaviours and train them in collecting and assessing digital evidence as well as providing them with clear grounds to investigate it even when the offence is considered 'lower level'. Digital evidence and the

involvement of technology in such cases is important for risk assessment and earlier intervention in order to prevent escalation of behaviour to domestic homicide.

#### Data collection and research

Finally, Long et al. make a series of practical and policy recommendations in their report (Long et al., 2020). Two of the recommendations are relevant to this review, as they relate to VAWG related data and research which will help to further understand the offence pathway and inform prevention strategies and interventions.

1. Promotion of relevant up-to-date research, information sharing and targeted training for police, probation and social services, among others (e.g., on the Femicide Census, the Homicide Timeline, the impact of pornography on perpetration of male violence and on repeat patterns of abusers).
2. Collecting, centralising and publicising transparent, searchable, and disaggregated data about VAWG and about the findings and implementation of statutory reviews, DHRs, notices to prevent future deaths, along with an action plan to learn from and hold authorities to account for failings.

## 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW

The findings of this review should be considered in light of a series of limitations. We ran the searches on 19 December 2022, so any articles published after this date were not included. Even though our search terms were generated and reviewed through a series of exploratory phased searches and were assessed by an experienced systematic reviewer, we might have missed important terms in our search strategy. Additionally, when conducting the search of the literature we wanted to confine our search to the UK only, so we included phrases for the UK such as England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland in our search terms. This however meant that any articles that may have referred only to cities located in the UK would have been excluded from our results. Similarly, any articles that did not include the location in the title or abstract would have been excluded. In terms of the literature included in our review, there were two articles that were classified as grey literature whereby they were not published in a peer-reviewed journal (Hester et al., 2019 and Long et al., 2020), which may impact how the findings are used in future discussions. We also found that a large number of publications were excluded during title and abstract and full text screening as they failed to confirm the gender of the victims of any crimes committed by recidivists. Some of the included articles failed to specify the gender of the current victims (Craig, Stringer and Sanders, 2012; and Robinson, 2017) which made it difficult to confirm if the perpetrators and offenders were specific to the VAWG context. In terms of conducting research into VAWG it is important that future research specifies the gender of victims so analyses can be conducted on these subgroups.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this scoping review has identified the pre-convictions and re-convictions of VAWG offenders that have exhibited offences such as domestic abuse, sexual assault and murder.

The review has identified factors associated with re-offending, including age of first offence whereby those who offended at an earlier age were linked to a greater number of re-convictions. Additionally, the behaviours exhibited by repeat offenders were analysed, and found behaviours of serial rapists did not differ significantly to one-off rapists; the behaviours of sexual offenders differed during sexual murders compared to previous sexual assaults; and that sexual killers may have closer behavioural patterns of sexual offenders than non-sexual murderers.

The characteristics of the victims of re-offenders were also assessed in the review and found that older victims of sexual assaults were more likely to be assaulted by offenders with previous convictions, than younger victims. Additionally, the victims of serial rapists were more likely to be sex workers compared to one-off rapists.

The problems of conducting research into re-offending has then been highlighted from the literature, including inconsistent measures of age to classify individuals as adults or elderly, and inconsistent definitions of 'serial' domestic abuse. Additionally, the problem with small samples, no control groups and limited follow-up time have made it difficult to prove if interventions have been successful. Problems with incomplete data have also been identified such as low-response rates to interventions, problems with police forces collecting online and digital data as evidence, and murder victims being unable to tell their stories. Inaccuracies in casefile data has also been flagged as a limitation as different professionals with different points of focus and biases have contributed to the development of this data. Finally, the big problem with missing data of offenders that weren't convicted for their crimes was identified.

Recommendations from the literature were also identified that may contribute to tackle VAWG and beneficially contribute to research in the field. These recommendations included early intervention programmes, multi-agency strategies and mentoring for perpetrators and offenders. Also suggested was the information sharing and training between the police, probation services and social services, along with a drive to collect digital and online evidence. In terms of research, it was recommended that there continues to be relevant and up-to-date research into VAWG that is centralised, transparent and disaggregated.

The limitations of the review methodology have also been highlighted, including the potential to have missed any data published after December 2022; the potential to have missed key terms from the search strategy; the potential to have missed key publications that did not include references to the UK; the inclusion of two grey literature publications; and the exclusion of publications that did not include the gender of the victims. The research team made a similar recommendation to that of the published literature, that future research into VAWG should share disaggregated data into the gender of victims.

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Todd, C., Bryce, J. and Franqueira, V.N., 2021. Technology, cyberstalking and domestic homicide: Informing prevention and response strategies. *Policing and Society*, 31(1), pp.82-99.

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## 8. APPENDICES

### Appendix A – Search criteria

Database: Ovid MEDLINE (searched 18 December 2022)

- 1 exp Criminals/ 6129
- 2 Offender\*.ti,ab. 12238
- 3 Criminal\*.ti,ab. 24778
- 4 Perpetrator\*.ti,ab. 7629
- 5 low level crime\*.ti,ab. 4
- 6 low-level crime\*.ti,ab. 4
- 7 minor offence\*.ti,ab. 19
- 8 stalk\*.ti,ab. 14649
- 9 Harass\*.ti,ab. 4902
- 10 Verbal\* abus\*.ti,ab. 1140
- 11 verbal\* assault\*.ti,ab. 76
- 12 verbal\* attack\*.ti,ab. 49
- 13 exp Bullying/ 6396
- 14 bully.ti,ab. 1020
- 15 exp Aggression/ 43349
- 16 aggress\*.ti,ab. 242849
- 17 threat\*.ti,ab. 281535
- 18 intimidat\*.ti,ab. 1593
- 19 controlling.ti,ab. 313267
- 20 coerci\*.ti,ab. 8697
- 21 (unwanted adj1 communication).ti,ab. 7
- 22 (unwanted adj1 phone call\*).ti,ab. 2
- 23 (unwanted adj1 message\*).ti,ab. 9
- 24 (unwanted adj1 email\*).ti,ab. 3
- 25 (unwanted adj1 interaction\*).ti,ab. 146
- 26 (unwanted adj1 comment\*).ti,ab. 7
- 27 (unwanted adj1 behaviour\*).ti,ab. 61
- 28 online abus\*.ti,ab. 15
- 29 cyberflash\*.ti,ab. 0
- 30 (Unsolicited adj1 image\*).ti,ab. 4
- 31 (unwanted adj1 image\*).ti,ab. 24
- 32 revenge porn\*.ti,ab. 16
- 33 upskirt\*.ti,ab. 3
- 34 flash\*.ti,ab. 32025
- 35 Indecent exposure\*.ti,ab. 38
- 36 exposure\*.ti,ab. 1016273

- 37 exp Racism/ 5932
- 38 racism\*.ti,ab. 6850
- 39 racist\*.ti,ab. 1071
- 40 exp Sexism/ 3162
- 41 sexi\*.ti,ab. 3282
- 42 Misogyn\*.ti,ab. 184
- 43 Fear incit\*.ti,ab. 0
- 44 Distress inciti\*.ti,ab. 0
- 45 voyeur\*.ti,ab. 147
- 46 serious crime\*.ti,ab. 260
- 47 Serious offence\*.ti,ab. 71
- 48 Severe crime\*.ti,ab. 31
- 49 exp Homicide/ 24197
- 50 homicide\*.ti,ab. 7535
- 51 Murder\*.ti,ab. 4758
- 52 Assault\*.ti,ab. 16398
- 53 Abus\*.ti,ab. 150443
- 54 Abduct\*.ti,ab. 22948
- 55 exp Violence/ 110013
- 56 violen\*.ti,ab. 72088
- 57 attack\*.ti,ab. 146111
- 58 false imprison\*.ti,ab. 22
- 59 Physical offen\*.ti,ab. 3
- 60 Human traffick\*.ti,ab. 566
- 61 exp Human Trafficking/ 646
- 62 sex\* traffick\*.ti,ab. 337
- 63 sex\* exploit\*.ti,ab. 699
- 64 sex\* offen\*.ti,ab. 3513
- 65 exp Sex Offenses/ 27021
- 66 rape\*.ti,ab. 13849
- 67 rapist\*.ti,ab. 458
- 68 (sex\* adj2 ((without or no) adj (consent or consensual))).ti,ab. 26
- 69 exp United Kingdom/ 387398
- 70 UK\*.ti,ab. 150592
- 71 United Kingdom\*.ti,ab. 45284
- 72 Scotland\*.ti,ab. 18532
- 73 Wales\*.ti,ab. 26944
- 74 Northern Ireland\*.ti,ab. 5665
- 75 England\*.ti,ab. 58819

76 exp Great Britain/ 387398  
77 Great Britain\*.ti,ab. 8513  
78 GB\*.ti,ab. 80237  
79 Britain\*.ti,ab. 17320  
80 British\*.ti,ab. 54639  
81 English\*.ti,ab. 131862  
82 Northern Irish\*.ti,ab. 250  
83 Scottish\*.ti,ab. 10212  
84 Welsh\*.ti,ab. 2700  
85 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 42145  
86 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 2278823  
87 69 or 70 or 71 or 72 or 73 or 74 or 75 or 76 or 77 or 78 or 79 or 80 or 81 or 82 or 83 or 84 771944  
88 85 and 86 and 87 1625  
89 limit 88 to yr="2010 -Current" 981

Database: APA PsycInfo (searched 18 December 2022)

1 exp Criminal Offenders/ 22203  
2 criminal\*.ti,ab. 46819  
3 offender\*.ti,ab. 34496  
4 exp Perpetrators/ 29242  
5 perpetrator\*.ti,ab. 12954  
6 low level crime\*.ti,ab. 13  
7 low-level crime\*.ti,ab. 13  
8 minor offence\*.ti,ab. 28  
9 stalk\*.ti,ab. 1936  
10 exp Harassment/ 4994  
11 Harass\*.ti,ab. 7624  
12 exp verbal abuse/ 610  
13 Verbal\* abus\*.ti,ab. 1019  
14 verbal\* assault\*.ti,ab. 106  
15 verbal\* attack\*.ti,ab. 107  
16 exp Bullying/ 11793  
17 bully.ti,ab. 2312  
18 exp Aggressive Behavior/ 179987  
19 aggress\*.ti,ab. 85974  
20 threat\*.ti,ab. 76737  
21 intimidat\*.ti,ab. 2065

- 22 controlling.ti,ab. 85067
- 23 coerci\*.ti,ab. 9737
- 24 (unwanted adj1 communication).ti,ab. 9
- 25 (unwanted adj1 phone call\*).ti,ab. 2
- 26 (unwanted adj1 message\*).ti,ab. 12
- 27 (unwanted adj1 email\*).ti,ab. 2
- 28 (unwanted adj1 interaction\*).ti,ab. 9
- 29 (unwanted adj1 comment\*).ti,ab. 4
- 30 (unwanted adj1 behaviour\*).ti,ab. 42
- 31 online abus\*.ti,ab. 53
- 32 cyberflash\*.ti,ab. 1
- 33 (Unsolicited adj1 image\*).ti,ab. 3
- 34 (unwanted adj1 image\*).ti,ab. 4
- 35 revenge porn\*.ti,ab. 59
- 36 upskirt\*.ti,ab. 4
- 37 flash\*.ti,ab. 9120
- 38 Indecent exposure\*.ti,ab. 62
- 39 exposure\*.ti,ab. 148564
- 40 exp Racism/ 10005
- 41 racism\*.ti,ab. 13796
- 42 racist\*.ti,ab. 3673
- 43 exp Sexism/ 3076
- 44 sexi\*.ti,ab. 5614
- 45 Misogyn\*.ti,ab. 764
- 46 Fear incit\*.ti,ab. 3
- 47 Distress inciti\*.ti,ab. 0
- 48 voyeur\*.ti,ab. 601
- 49 serious crime\*.ti,ab. 580
- 50 serious offence\*.ti,ab. 142
- 51 Severe crime\*.ti,ab. 56
- 52 homicide/ 7144
- 53 homicide\*.ti,ab. 6862
- 54 Murder\*.ti,ab. 8057
- 55 sex offenses/ 12211
- 56 exp violent crime/ or violence/ 76497
- 57 Assault\*.ti,ab. 16129
- 58 Abus\*.ti,ab. 139442
- 59 Abduct\*.ti,ab. 2961
- 60 violen\*.ti,ab. 101484

61 attack\*.ti,ab. 37164  
62 false imprison\*.ti,ab. 24  
63 Physical offen\*.ti,ab. 5  
64 exp human trafficking/ 1279  
65 Human traffick\*.ti,ab. 770  
66 sex\* traffick\*.ti,ab. 665  
67 sex\* exploit\*.ti,ab. 1255  
68 sex\* offen\*.ti,ab. 9794  
69 rape\*.ti,ab. 9667  
70 rapist\*.ti,ab. 1193  
71 raping\*.ti,ab. 86  
72 (sex\* adj2 ((without or no) adj (consent or consensual))).ti,ab. 21  
73 UK\*.ti,ab. 43151  
74 United Kingdom\*.ti,ab. 12707  
75 Scotland\*.ti,ab. 5081  
76 Wales\*.ti,ab. 7894  
77 Northern Ireland\*.ti,ab. 2683  
78 England\*.ti,ab. 23841  
79 Great Britain\*.ti,ab. 2235  
80 GB\*.ti,ab. 4755  
81 Britain\*.ti,ab. 7900  
82 British\*.ti,ab. 24358  
83 English\*.ti,ab. 147880  
84 Northern Irish\*.ti,ab. 273  
85 Scottish\*.ti,ab. 3229  
86 Welsh\*.ti,ab. 1251  
87 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 88676  
88 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 or 69 or 70 or 71 or 72 698067  
89 73 or 74 or 75 or 76 or 77 or 78 or 79 or 80 or 81 or 82 or 83 or 84 or 85 or 86 255658  
90 87 and 88 and 89 2789  
91 limit 90 to yr="2010 -Current" 1510

Database: Social Policy and Practice (searched 19 December 2022)

1 Offender\*.ti,ab. 7703  
2 Criminal\*.ti,ab. 7527  
3 Perpetrator\*.ti,ab. 2459  
4 low level crime\*.ti,ab. 13

5 low-level crime*.ti,ab.	13
6 minor offence*.ti,ab.	26
7 stalk*.ti,ab.	164
8 Harass*.ti,ab.	1442
9 Verbal* abus*.ti,ab.	170
10 verbal* assault*.ti,ab.	9
11 verbal* attack*.ti,ab.	5
12 bully*.ti,ab.	2345
13 aggress*.ti,ab.	2582
14 threat*.ti,ab.	4146
15 intimidat*.ti,ab.	317
16 controlling.ti,ab.	2585
17 coerci*.ti,ab.	779
18 (unwanted adj1 communication).ti,ab.	0
19 (unwanted adj1 phone call*).ti,ab.	2
20 (unwanted adj1 message*).ti,ab.	1
21 (unwanted adj1 email*).ti,ab.	0
22 (unwanted adj1 interaction*).ti,ab.	0
23 (unwanted adj1 comment*).ti,ab.	0
24 (unwanted adj1 behaviour*).ti,ab.	9
25 online abus*.ti,ab.	90
26 cyberflash*.ti,ab.	2
27 (Unsolicited adj1 image*).ti,ab.	1
28 (unwanted adj1 image*).ti,ab.	1
29 revenge porn*.ti,ab.	7
30 upskirt*.ti,ab.	2
31 flash*.ti,ab.	80
32 Indecent exposure*.ti,ab.	9
33 exposure*.ti,ab.	3748
34 racism*.ti,ab.	1840
35 racist*.ti,ab.	686
36 sexi*.ti,ab.	267
37 Misogyn*.ti,ab.	20
38 Fear incit*.ti,ab.	0
39 Distress inciti*.ti,ab.	0
40 voyeur*.ti,ab.	13
41 serious crime*.ti,ab.	95
42 Serious offence*.ti,ab.	80
43 Severe crime*.ti,ab.	0

- 44 homicide\*.ti,ab. 525
- 45 Murder\*.ti,ab. 571
- 46 Assault\*.ti,ab. 1416
- 47 Abus\*.ti,ab. 26541
- 48 Abduct\*.ti,ab. 151
- 49 violen\*.ti,ab. 13187
- 50 attack\*.ti,ab. 965
- 51 false imprison\*.ti,ab. 6
- 52 Physical offen\*.ti,ab. 0
- 53 Human traffick\*.ti,ab. 283
- 54 sex\* traffick\*.ti,ab. 125
- 55 sex\* exploit\*.ti,ab. 1745
- 56 sex\* offen\*.ti,ab. 2579
- 57 rape\*.ti,ab. 632
- 58 rapist\*.ti,ab. 88
- 59 (sex\* adj2 ((without or no) adj (consent or consensual))).ti,ab. 6
- 60 UK\*.ti,ab. 36334
- 61 United Kingdom\*.ti,ab. 5665
- 62 Scotland\*.ti,ab. 19958
- 63 Wales\*.ti,ab. 14807
- 64 Northern Ireland\*.ti,ab. 5377
- 65 England\*.ti,ab. 36769
- 66 Great Britain\*.ti,ab. 1358
- 67 GB\*.ti,ab. 372
- 68 Britain\*.ti,ab. 9109
- 69 British\*.ti,ab. 7062
- 70 English\*.ti,ab. 8076
- 71 Northern Irish\*.ti,ab. 85
- 72 Scottish\*.ti,ab. 11382
- 73 Welsh\*.ti,ab. 2977
- 74 1 or 2 or 3 15676
- 75 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 53366
- 76 60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 or 69 or 70 or 71 or 72 or 73 118039
- 77 74 and 75 and 76 1723
- 78 limit 77 to yr="2010 -Current" 1106

Database: medRxiv (searched 19 December 2022)

“low level crime and serious crime”

114 results

Database: Google scholar (searched 20 December 2022)

“low level crime/low level offences” and “serious crime” and “violence against women and re-offending” and “escalation of violence against women”

127 results

## Appendix B – Data extraction form

<p><b>Study details</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors</li> <li>• Publication title</li> <li>• Date of publication</li> <li>• Empirical evidence or grey literature</li> <li>• Type of study design if relevant</li> <li>• Type of analysis (primary or secondary)</li> <li>• Date of data collection</li> <li>• Setting e.g., prisons, perpetrator programmes</li> <li>• Sample size</li> <li>• Demographic information on the sample</li> <li>• Location of study (UK only or comparison)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criminal histories of re-offenders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The trajectory towards re-offending</li> <li>• Any factors associated with re-offending frequency</li> <li>• Behaviours related to re-offending</li> <li>• Characteristics of victims of re-offending perpetrators</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interventions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any interventions to prevent recidivism of perpetrators of VAWG</li> </ul>
<p><b>Limitations and recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems with conducting research into re-offending perpetrators of VAWG</li> <li>• Recommendations to improve this field of research</li> </ul>

## Appendix C – Article information and quality assessment

YEAR OF PUBLICATION	AUTHORS	TITLE	TYPE OF ANALYSIS	QUALITY ASSESSMENT (MMAT/AACODS)
2011	Dobash and Dobash	<i>What were they thinking? Men who murder an intimate partner</i>	Secondary using Homicide Indexes, casefiles and existing interview data.	4/5 (MMAT)
2011	Lea, Hunt and Shaw	<i>Sexual assault of older women by strangers</i>	Secondary using data from the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS), National Policing Improvement Agency.	2/4 (MMAT)
2012	Craig, Stringer and Sanders	<i>Treating sexual offenders with intellectual limitations in the community</i>	Primary and secondary using Official records (Home Office Offenders Index; OI and Police National Computer; PNC) as well as unofficial reports from supervising probation officers and police officers.	2/5 (MMAT)
2012	Dobash and Dobash	<i>Who died? The murder of collaterals related to intimate partner conflict</i>	Secondary using Homicide Indexes, casefiles and existing interview data.	4/5 (MMAT)
2014	Slater, Woodham and Hamilton-Giachritsis	<i>Can serial rapists be distinguished from one-off rapists?</i>	Secondary using data from the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS).	2/4 (MMAT)
2015	Almond et al.	<i>Cold case reviews of serious sexual offenders: An exploration of pre- and post-index offending patterns</i>	Secondary data from the National Crime Agency (NCA)	3/4 (MMAT)
2015	Dobash and Dobash	<i>When men murder women</i>	Primary and secondary using casefiles from Prison Headquarters in London and in Edinburgh.	4/5 (MMAT)
2015	Greenall and Richardson	<i>Adult male-on-female stranger sexual homicide: A descriptive (Baseline) study from Great Britain</i>	Secondary data from the National Crime Agency (NCA).	3/4 (MMAT)
2015	Greenall and Wright	<i>Exploring the criminal histories of stranger sexual killers</i>	Secondary data from the National Crime Agency (NCA).	3/4 (MMAT)

2015	Stefanska et al.	<i>Offense pathways of non-serial sexual killers</i>	Secondary data from those convicted and served/ serving a custodial sentence within HM Prison Service; Sex Offender Treatment Programme; Public Protection Unit Database (PPUD).	3/4 (MMAT)
2017	Robinson	<i>Serial domestic abuse in Wales: An exploratory study into its definition, prevalence, correlates, and management</i>	Primary and secondary data from practitioner agency databases in Wales and from the Wales probation Trust.	3/5 (MMAT)
2019	Hester et al.	<i>Evaluation of the Drive Project: a three-year pilot to address high-risk, high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse</i>	Primary and secondary using Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) and police data.	5.5/6 (AACODS)
2019	Morgan, McCausland and Parkes	<i>Baseline characteristics and outcomes of the main perpetrator programme within the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Prevention Partnership, UK: A mixed methods study</i>	Primary and secondary	3/5 (MMAT)
2020	Long et al.	<i>Annual report on UK Femicides 2018</i>	Secondary using Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to UK police forces. This data is supplemented with information gained from publicly available sources such as news reports, court records, judges' sentencing remarks and through the data collected on Karen Ingala Smith's blog Counting Dead Women.	4/6 (AACODS)
2021	Todd, Bryce and Franqueria	<i>Technology, cyberstalking and domestic homicide: informing prevention and response strategies</i>	Primary and secondary data from the Home Office Domestic Homicide Review Team.	4/5 (MMAT)

## Appendix D – Full list of included articles

- 01 Almond, L., McManus, M.A., Worsley, J. and Gregory, P., 2015. Cold case reviews of serious sexual offenders: An exploration of pre-and post-index offending patterns. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*, 15(3), pp.205-225.
- 02 Craig, L.A., Stringer, I. and Sanders, C.E., 2012. Treating sexual offenders with intellectual limitations in the community. *The British Journal of Forensic Practice*.
- 03 Dobash, R.E. and Dobash, R.P., 2011. What were they thinking? Men who murder an intimate partner. *Violence Against Women*, 17(1), pp.111-134.
- 04 Dobash, R.P. and Dobash, R.E., 2012. Who died? The murder of collaterals related to intimate partner conflict. *Violence Against Women*, 18(6), pp.662-671.
- 05 Dobash R.E., Dobash R. 2015 *When men murder women*. Interpersonal Violence, Oxford University Press
- 06 Greenall, P.V. and Richardson, C., 2015. Adult male-on-female stranger sexual homicide: A descriptive (baseline) study from Great Britain. *Homicide Studies*, 19(3), pp.237-256.
- 07 Greenall, P.V. and Wright, M., 2015. Exploring the criminal histories of stranger sexual killers. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 26(2), pp.242-259.
- 08 Hester, M., Eisenstadt, N., Ortega-Avila, A.G., Morgan, K.J., Walker, S.J. and Bell, J., 2019. Evaluation of the Drive Project: –A Three-year Pilot to Address High-risk, High-harm Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.
- 09 Lea, S.J., Hunt, L. and Shaw, S., 2011. Sexual assault of older women by strangers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(11), pp.2303-2320.
- 10 Long, J., Harvey, H., Harper, K., Ingala Smith, K. and O’Callaghan, C. (2020) *Annual Report on UK Femicides 2018*, Women’s Aid: Bristol
- 11 Morgan, S.A., McCausland, B.M.S. and Parkes, J., 2019. Baseline characteristics and outcomes of the main perpetrator programme within the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Prevention Partnership, UK: a mixed methods study. *Plos one*, 14(7), p.e0218408.
- 12 Robinson, A.L., 2017. Serial domestic abuse in Wales: an exploratory study into its definition, prevalence, correlates, and management. *Victims & Offenders*, 12(5), pp.643-662.
- 13 Slater, C., Woodhams, J. and Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., 2014. Can serial rapists be distinguished from one-off rapists?. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 32(2), pp.220-239.
- 14 Stefanska, E.B., Carter, A.J., Higgs, T., Bishopp, D. and Beech, A.R., 2015. Offense pathways of non-serial sexual killers. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(2), pp.99-107.
- 15 Todd, C., Bryce, J. and Franqueira, V.N., 2021. Technology, cyberstalking and domestic homicide: Informing prevention and response strategies. *Policing and Society*, 31(1), pp.82-99.

## Appendix E – Additional publications suggested by external reviewer

### Articles discussing previous offences of VAWG

#### **Yardley, E., 2021. The killing of women in “sex games gone wrong”: an analysis of femicides in Great Britain 2000–2018. *Violence against women, 27(11)*, pp.1840-1861.**

- This study assessed the cases of 43 women who had been killed by men in alleged Sex Games Gone Wrong between 2000 and 2018 in Great Britain.
- When exploring perpetrators' histories of criminal and abusive behavior, in cases where this information was available (N = 26), more than half (N = 15) of perpetrators had past criminal convictions for violent offenses. The differences observed in whether or not there were past criminal convictions for violence were statistically significant.
- In relation to a history of abuse of women (N = 40), this was identified in the source material in just more than half of the cases (N = 21), but differences were not statistically significant.
- In relation to the perpetrator engaging in behaviors toward the victim that could be described as domestic abuse, coercive control, or stalking, this was identified in the source material in three quarters of cases (75.0%, N = 30). Differences in whether or not these behaviors were present were statistically significant.

#### **Monckton-Smith, J., Szymanska, K. and Haile, S., 2017. Exploring the relationship between stalking and homicide. *Suzy Lamplugh Trust*.**

- This research study looked at 358 cases of criminal homicide which occurred in the UK in the years 2012, 2013, and 2014. All cases included a female victim and male perpetrator.
- The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between stalking and homicide by tracking the frequency of certain characteristics in the antecedent histories. The analysis of those frequencies suggests that there is a strong correlation between some key stalking behaviours and homicide:
  - Stalking behaviours were present in 94% of the cases.
  - Surveillance activity/following which included covert watching was recorded in 63% of the cases (the study estimates this is likely to be much higher in reality).
  - Control was recorded in 92% of the cases.
  - Acknowledged high risk action markers were present across the sample. For example: strangulation assault 24%, threats to kill 55%, suicidal threats 23% (again the study estimates the presence of these markers could be much higher).

#### **Carter, A.J., Hollin, C.R., Stefanska, E.B., Higgs, T. and Bloomfield, S., 2017. The use of crime scene and demographic information in the identification of non-serial sexual homicide. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology, 61(14)*, pp.1554-1569.**

- This study identified samples of sexual and non-sexual homicide offenses from official United Kingdom Home Office files where the homicide victim was a female aged 14 years or above.
- Approximately half (50.8%) of the 65 sexual homicide perpetrators had at least one previous appearance for a sexual offense compared with the 64 non-sexual homicide perpetrators who infrequently (14.1%) had previous sexual offenses.

#### **Almond, L., Matin, E. and McManus, M., 2021. Predicting the criminal records of male-on-female UK homicide offenders from crime scene behaviors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36(21-22)*, pp.NP11852-NP11876.**

- This study reviewed a sample of 213 adult male-on-female homicides with sexual or unknown motive from a U.K.-wide database.
- Of the offenders, 73.7% had a previous criminal record, 39% had a previous conviction for violence and 14.6% had a previous conviction for sexual offences.

**Chantler, K., Robbins, R., Baker, V. and Stanley, N., 2020. Learning from domestic homicide reviews in England and Wales. Health & Social Care in the Community, 28(2), pp.485-493.**

- This study analysed 141 domestic homicide reviews (DHRs) in England and Wales where the majority (97%) of domestic homicide victims were female, killed by a male suspect.
- Intimate relationships, including former partners, accounted for 77% of all cases.
- The perpetrators' histories revealed a range of potential risk indicators which may have enhanced risk of perpetrating DVA. The single largest category was previous violent behaviour (70%).
- Prior to the homicide, a third (33%) of perpetrators had allegations against them of physical violence to a previous partner and nearly a third (32%) had allegations of prior violence against the victim themselves.
- Within the full dataset of 141 cases, just over a third (35%) had been assessed using a DVA assessment tool, rating cases at the following risk levels: standard/low (23%), medium (16%), high (9%) or very high (2%). Assessments were infrequently referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), with only 13 cases (9%) receiving support through MARAC. Of those cases where DVA was known to services, nearly half of victims (48%) had not received a formal DVA risk assessment at the time of the victim's death.

**Chopra, J., Sambrook, L., McLoughlin, S., Randles, R., Palace, M. and Blinkhorn, V., 2022. Risk factors for intimate partner homicide in England and Wales. Health & Social Care in the Community, 30(5), pp.e3086-e3095.**

- This study assessed all publicly available Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) published between July 2011 and November 2020 where the victim and perpetrator were or had been intimate partners (N = 263) from Community Safety Partnership websites in England and Wales.
- The majority of perpetrators of intimate partner homicides were male (88%, n = 231), with the majority of victims being female (86%, n = 225).
- Of the perpetrators 28% (n = 73) had a known history of domestic abuse in previous relationships, and 23% (n = 59) had a history of other violent offences. About 40% (n = 106) had some contact with the criminal justice system before the homicide occurred.
- The most commonly experienced forms of abuse were coercive control (n = 135, 51%), physical abuse (n = 135, 51%) and psychological abuse (n = 131, 50%).
- In the two months prior to the homicide:
  - There were 24% (n = 64) of victims that were experiencing stalking and harassment from the perpetrator.
  - There were 25% of victims (n = 65) that feared for their safety and 13% (n = 34) were actively help seeking at the time of the homicide.
  - About 11% (n = 30) of perpetrators had contact with the criminal justice system, with 7% (n = 19) having recorded violations of court orders, 14% of perpetrators had harmed or threatened to harm others, and 12% (n = 32) had threatened suicide or were demonstrating suicidal thoughts.
  - In 76% of cases (n = 200), services were involved with the victim and/or perpetrator at the time of the homicide. Most common were primary care services and the police.
  - In 46% of cases (n = 91), at least one of the services was aware of domestic abuse in the relationship.
  - In 51 of the cases, a risk assessment was carried out for the victim, with the majority being classed as medium risk (n = 20, 39%), 13 (25%) as high risk, and 11 (22%) as standard. 24 of these cases (47%) were referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

**Home Office. (2023) Key findings from analysis of domestic homicide reviews: October 2019 to September 2020 (accessible). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-findings-from-analysis-of-domestic-homicide-reviews/key-findings-from-analysis-of-domestic-homicide-reviews> (Accessed: 13 April 2023).**

- This report presents key information from 124 domestic homicide reviews (DHRs) which were reviewed by the Home Office quality assurance process for the 12 months from October 2019.
- Female victims made up 80% of the sample and 20% of the victims were male. For perpetrators, 83% were male and 17% female.

- Approximately 60% of perpetrators were indicated to have a previous offending history. Of these three quarters had abused previous partners and one third family members. This includes a small proportion who had abused both previous partners and family members.

#### Articles of interventions attempting to reduce re-offending

#### **Kelly, L. and Westmarland, N., 2015. Domestic violence perpetrator programmes: Steps towards change. Project Mirabal final report.**

- This report assessed whether domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs) work in reducing men's violence and abuse and increasing the freedom of women. Twelve Respect (UK domestic abuse charity) accredited DVPPs agreed to be part of the project.
- A survey was administered to women to reflect on how their partners or ex-partners enrolled in the intervention had changed from baseline to 12 months after the intervention.
- For the seven physical and sexual violence indicators, the baseline sample size for these indicators ranged between 94 and 97. The 12-month sample size ranged between 61 and 62. The changes in indicators can be seen below:
  - Two indicators reduced to zero (made you do something sexual that you did not want to do – from 30%, used a weapon against you – from 29%).
  - Whilst there were repetitions for the other indicators, they all reduced from a higher initial baseline:
- Threatened to kill you or someone close to you – from 59% to 10%.
- Tried to strangle, choke, drown or smother you – from 50% to 2%.
- Punched, kicked, burnt, or beaten you – from 54% to 2%.
- Slapped you, pushed you, or thrown something at you – from 87% to 7%.
  - Punched or kicked walls or furniture, slammed doors, smashed things or stamped – was present in almost a quarter of cases (23%) after the intervention but had previously happened in nearly all cases (94%).

The changes in acts of harassment and abuse were assessed with baseline sample sizes between 96 and 97, and 12-month sample sizes ranging between 62 and 67.

- Some acts were reduced significantly following 12-months after the intervention:
- Deliberately interfered with or damaged your property – from 64% to 9%.
- Followed you or waited outside your home or workplace – from 34% to 7%.
  - However, some behaviours did continue for a proportion of women. The everyday diminishment that have been documented as part of coercive control - intimidation, belittling and humiliation, insults - were both more common at base line and more likely to persist:
- Did things that scared or intimidated you – from 90% to 41%.
- Belittled or humiliated you in front of other people – from 69% to 27%.
- Insulted or made you feel bad about yourself – from 91% to 48%.
- Harassed you using letters, emails, texts or phone calls – from 68% to 28%.
  - This data does not, however, support the oft made contention that DVPPs result in men shifting from physical violence to other forms of abuse, rather that these more frequent forms abuse, which are embedded in everyday interactions, are more difficult to change.

#### **Bloomfield, S. and Dixon, L., 2015. An outcome evaluation of the integrated domestic abuse programme (IDAP) and community domestic violence programme (CDVP). London: National Offender Management Service.**

- This study evaluated the effectiveness of two domestic violence and abuse interventions, the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) and the Community Domestic Violence Programme (CDVP).
- It assessed their effectiveness in reducing three categories of reoffending (any offence, core violence and domestic violence) during a two year follow up period.

- The sample consisted of 6,695 offenders referred to either IDAP or CDVP between January 2002 and April 2007. A total of 4,537 had at least started IDAP or CDVP and formed the treatment group; a total of 2,158 had never started IDAP or CDVP and formed the control group.
- The results indicated that both IDAP and CDVP were effective in reducing domestic violence and any reoffending in the two-year follow up period with small but significant effects; IDAP also produced significant small effects in reducing core violence reoffending.
- A difference of 13.2 percentage points was observed between those who received treatment and those who did not for any reoffending across both programmes (13.3 for IDAP and 12.7 for CDVP).
- A difference of 10.9 percentage points was observed for domestic violence reoffending across both programmes (11.0 for IDAP and 9.6 for CDVP).
- A difference of 6.5 percentage points was observed for core violent reoffending across both programmes (7.1 for IDAP and 2.6 for CDVP, although the difference for CDVP was not significant).