



Home Office

Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

Matthew Kewley  
HM Assistant Coroner for Derbyshire

18 January 2024

*Dear Matthew,*

Thank you for sending the Report to Prevent Future Deaths on 27 November 2023 regarding the tragic death of Gracie Spinks.

Before I respond in turn to the important points you raise in your report, I would like to foremostly recognise that at the heart of this inquest is Gracie Spinks and I speak directly to her bereaved family when I express my deepest condolences for their loss. Stalking is an appalling crime that has a devastating impact on victims, and this is something the Government takes extremely seriously.

In your report, you raise concerns regarding the lack of consistency and availability of Independent Stalking Advocates (ISAs) to victims of stalking across the UK. The Government recognises the value of this support and has provided additional funding to stalking charities for victims. The National Stalking Helpline, run by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust with part-funding from the Home Office provides advice and advocacy services for victims. The Ministry of Justice are also quadrupling funding for victim and witness support services by 2024/25, up from £41m in 2009/10.

At the local level, the Ministry of Justice provides grant funding to Police and Crime Commissioners to commission support services for victims of all crime types, based on their assessment of local need. Police and Crime Commissioners can also use core funding to directly fund stalking advocates in their local area providing additional specialist support and advice.

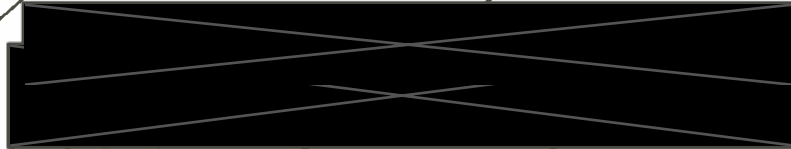
However, I am open to exploring whether more needs to be done to recognise and promote this important specialism. This is why the Government is continuing to explore with relevant stakeholders, such as the National Stalking Consortium, where Government intervention could improve the criminal justice response to stalking and support for stalking victims, including within the Victims and Prisoners Bill. The Bill continues its passage through Parliament with Committee stage in the Lords beginning on the 24 January where we welcome further debate on this area.

I would also like to respond to some of the wider points made in the report in relation to the police response to stalking. The Home Office regularly works with the National Police Chiefs' Council to raise awareness among police officers of the available guidance and training on stalking. I have also asked officials to review the Home Office statutory guidance on coercive and controlling behaviour (CCB) so it makes clear what the differences are between CCB and stalking, allowing officers to respond appropriately.

I have also asked officials to work with the National Police Chiefs' Council to gather examples of best practice in terms of policing stalking cases, to share with forces and support them with their force policies on stalking.

I thank you for raising the important issues in your report. I would like to assure you that the Home Office is fully committed to tackling the crime of stalking and is dedicated to doing all that it can to protect victims and to robustly target perpetrators.

*Yours ever*



**Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP**