



# *'They speak for you when you can't speak'*

An Evaluation of the Paladin Service  
Research Report  
**September 2020**

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## Summary

The Paladin service is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and a range of other funders to provide trauma-informed support, advice and advocacy to high risk victims of stalking. From 2018 Paladin introduced a dedicated young people's Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC) for 16 to 25-year olds at high risk of stalking. The support is delivered by a team of specialist caseworkers. ISAC support predominantly entails safety planning and evidence gathering to ensure service users receive an improved response from the Police.

This report provides a dedicated evaluation using over 12 months of data collected on victims' needs and system response. The report outlines findings using outcome data for 427 service users, 75 service user feedback forms, interviews with 15 service users and five ISAC's, and five case studies. The majority of victims referred to Paladin in 2019 were White British females. Victims commonly knew their stalker and in most cases this had been an intimate partner.

Accessing specialist support is key to the emotional wellbeing and physical safety of victims of stalking, but for many the path to support was difficult and isolating. The report highlights some of the dangerous and inappropriate circumstances that victims face before accessing ISAC support, the inability of services to meet the needs of stalking victims and limited provision.

*That's what I got told from the police, that's not stalking... I just thought... because the police didn't take it serious, well it wasn't serious.*

Prior to Paladin support, service users described lengthy periods of stalking and repeated calls to the police. ISAC support was critical in improving the responses from criminal justice agencies. Service users described high levels of fear, emotional turmoil and desperation. A lack of understanding from others was cited repeatedly.

*I must have contacted so many and it was just getting harder and harder with every rejection... but nobody could help me.*

Many victims explained how grateful they were for ISAC advocacy and support. The findings indicate that the Paladin service continues to improve awareness, understanding and knowledge of stalking and its impact for victims and professionals. It also enhances victim confidence in talking about stalking to others.

### **Improved understanding and awareness of stalking behaviours and its impact**

High risk victims of stalking confirmed that ISAC support increased their understanding of the nature and impact of stalking, the associated risks and the law.

*I'm much more aware of the risks, the behaviours... the best way to describe me when I was referred into Paladin, is clueless*

Improved knowledge and understanding helped victims to explain their situation to others or to challenge negative responses, both of which they had felt unable to do previously.

### Reduced feelings of fear and isolation

The strengths-based approach of the Paladin service was found to enhance victim confidence and resilience. Victims described feeling safer and less isolated and the responsiveness and availability of support contributed to this.

*They just listen, listen, listen and then impart the information, the help you need. And sometimes just empathise with you*

### Improved emotional wellbeing and safety of victims

Victims reported improved emotional wellbeing and enhanced safety as a result of ISAC support. Paladin provide emotional support in the form of listening to, understanding and believing victims of stalking. The validation and affirmation offered by Paladin was significant and led to increased feelings of empowerment. This extended to reporting incidents of stalking, attending appointments and attending court.

*I feel much more sort of chilled and relaxed... I've taken the necessary steps, listened to all the advice and I know what to do...*

The empathic approach of staff made a substantial difference to service users, being believed and having the opportunity to talk of their experiences was expressed as invaluable for their wellbeing. However,

a gap was identified in terms of long-term wraparound emotional support.

### Improved responses from other professional agencies

Victims identified improved responses from other professional agencies, particularly criminal justice agencies.

*They've really fought my corner and kind of, they advocate for you, they do contact the police.*

Advocacy work helped to move cases forward. For example, Paladin staff have been able to influence police actions by advising and educating them about the risks associated with alternative methods, such as??

### Raising awareness of the risks and nature of stalking

There is an identified need for increased awareness of stalking for victims, agencies and the general public. There is also a requirement to raise the profile of Paladin.

*I had no idea at the time I was being stalked for a good for a long time before I even knew there was anything like [Paladin]*

Paladin is educating professionals through training delivery and advocacy work. Increased media coverage and early education were suggested as important ways to raise awareness of stalking and specialist provision.

## Paladin Background

Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service was launched in the House of Lords on 11th July 2013, following a successful stalking law reform campaign. Paladin is a trauma-informed service established to assist high risk victims of stalking<sup>1</sup> in England and Wales. Their team of accredited Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) ensure that high risk victims of stalking are supported and that a coordinated community response is developed locally to keep victims and their children safe.

### Paladin Key Objectives include:

- Provide trauma informed support, advice and advocacy to high risk victims
- Raise awareness of the dangers and risks of stalking
- Provide university accredited ISAC training and CPD accredited training to professionals
- Analyse the application of the stalking law
- Campaign on behalf of victims of stalking
- Develop a “Knowledge Hub”– a single port of call for any victim seeking the best support and safety advice, for a professional seeking information about how to respond to stalking and principles of an effective advocacy service

Paladin has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund since 2013. From 2018 Paladin introduced a dedicated specialist young people’s Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC). The specialist advocate will be working with 16 to 25-year olds at high risk of stalking, funded by the Tudor Trust.

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<sup>1</sup> Victims of stalking that are at ‘A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible’ (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006)

## A Poem

Oh, what can I say?  
You were my saving grace.

You gave me hope and faith,  
That there would be a better day.

When it all felt too heavy to carry,  
You shifted the weight.

The appreciation I feel,  
I cannot explain.

A support system like no other,  
You made me feel safe.

When the world was such a dark and scary place.

Would I be here, if it wasn't for Paladin?  
With their support and care.

Paladin picked up the broken pieces,  
That were shattered in despair.

Paladin so delicately filled the cracks,  
With understanding and care.

Paladin built me up and made me strong,  
- The reason I'm still here.

Guardian angels come in all shapes and sizes,  
In the form of you.

Thank you, Paladin  
For everything you do.

I am stronger.  
I am braver.  
I am safer, because of you.

I am not a victim; I am a survivor.  
Thanks to you.

This poem was sent to Paladin by a service user who had not been interviewed as part of this evaluation. The service user added that she wrote and sent it to *"show how important Paladin is to us stalking victims."*



# 1. What is Known about Stalking?

## How is stalking defined?

Because of disparities in its nature and severity, stalking definitions vary in the literature. Most definitions refer to an intentional pattern of intrusive and intimidating behaviours which creates fear or anxiety in the victim (Logan & Walker 2017; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). In the absence of a definitive legal definition in England and Wales, stalking has been defined by Paladin, the UK's National Stalking Advocacy Service, as 'a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress'.

## Legislation

The first UK legislation against stalking was introduced in 1997 with the Protection from Harassment Act (PHA). Two new offences of stalking were inserted into this Act in 2012: harassment, which involves a course of conduct that amounts to stalking (s.2A(1) PHA 1997) and Stalking - s.4A (1) PHA 1997 which involves the fear of violence or serious alarm and distress. The Crown Prosecution Service highlighted that these additions had defined stalking as distinct from harassment.

Stalking crimes were first recorded in 2014, and the number of recorded offences has increased since then. Despite this, and consistent with existing evidence stalking crimes are not always recorded accurately by police forces (HMIC & HMICFRS, 2017).

Section 2A (3) of the PHA 1997 lists behaviours associated with stalking, include<sup>1</sup>:

- following a person
- contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means
- monitoring a person's use of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication
- loitering in any place (public or private)
- interfering with any property in the possession of a person
- watching or spying on a person

Section 4A states that the defendant's behaviour has a substantial adverse effect on the victim's usual day-to-day activities. This may include<sup>2</sup>:

- the victim changing their route to work, work patterns or employment
- the victim arranging for someone else to pick up children from school
- the victim putting additional security measures in place at home
- the victim changing the way they socialise or stopping altogether

The new offences focus on the *cumulative effect* of stalking on the victim instead of looking at specific incidents in isolation.

<sup>1</sup>The list of stalking behaviours above is not exhaustive.

<sup>2</sup>The list of effects is not exhaustive. Some victims will try to continue their lives as usual in defiance of a stalker. Therefore, the absence of the factors listed does not necessarily mean that stalking is not taking place.

## Prevalence

According to the Office for National Statistics for the year ending March 2019, there were an estimated 1,472,000 victims of stalking in England and Wales (ONS, 2019). Police records show year on year (YOY) increases in stalking offences from 2,882 in 2014 to 10,258 in 2018 (ONS, 2019). However, following their inspections, HMICFRS and HMCPSI (2017) report that despite better recognition of stalking offences, police forces do not record stalking crimes accurately. Furthermore, over the same four-year period, charges being brought against perpetrators of stalking decreased YOY, from 49% in 2014 to 25% in 2018 (BBC News, 2018). Regrettably, prosecuting perpetrators does not necessarily lead to cessation of stalking behaviour. Research indicates that up to 56% of those charged go on to reoffend after prosecution, with repeat offending more likely where the perpetrator has a mental health condition or personality disorder (Eke et al., 2011; Paladin, 2015).

## What does stalking involve?

Although every situation is unique, there are common factors that link the experience of stalking. Stalking, a pattern of repeat and persistent unwanted behaviour (Paladin, 2020), can go on for many years (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Thirty per cent of people who contacted the Suzy Lamplugh Trust Helpline have been victimised by their stalker for over two years, 13 per cent for over five years (Metropolitan Police, 2020). Prolonged stalking is more likely when the victim and stalker are former intimate partners (Elke et al., 2011; Rosenfeld, 2003; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). Often attempts by victims to distance themselves from their stalker can aggravate the offender and increase the risk of serious harm (Quinn-Evans et al., 2019). Stalkers employ a variety of stalking behaviours including: sending unwanted messages; presents or letters; making unwanted calls; following and surveillance; using offensive or sexual language in their communication; making threats; sexual harassment and physical assault (Dreßing et al., 2005; Logan, 2010).

## Who is affected?

Most victims of stalking are female, and most offenders are male (Kuehner et al., 2012; Logan & Walker, 2009; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). Women are also more likely than men to experience fear due to stalking (Sheridan & Lyndon, 2010). For lifetime estimates (since the age of 16) approximately one in five women and one in ten men experience stalking (ONS, 2019). Most victims know their stalker: the largest group of stalkers (46% of all cases) are ex intimate partners (Metropolitan Police, 2020). People stalked by an ex-partner are at greater risk of serious harm (Logan, 2010; McEwan et al., 2017; McFarlane et al., 2002).

## What is the impact?

Victims of stalking have reported various psychological and physical effects such as depression, posttraumatic stress, panic disorders, anxiety, and hopelessness (Dreßing et al., 2005). Stalking related fear impacts on the everyday lives of victims, with severely heightened worries about their personal safety, vulnerability and risk (Logan & Walker, 2019). These fears are not unfounded as half of stalkers who make threats act on them (MacKenzie et al., 2009), some with fatal consequences. Monckton Smith et al's (2017) study of 358 criminal homicides in the UK, which all consisted of a female victim and a male perpetrator, revealed stalking behaviour was an antecedent in 94% of cases. Laura Richards has described such cases as 'murder in slow motion' as they consist of 'stalking, threats to kill, high levels of fear, and women not being believed' over a period of time (Bowcott, 2017). The fear of not being believed as well as the fear of the consequences following reporting are common reasons for non-reporting (Logan, 2010).

In 2016, 19-year-old Shana Grice was murdered in her home by ex-boyfriend Michael Lane. The victim had reported Lane's stalking behaviour to the police on five occasions in six months, which included fitting a tracker to her car and stealing a house key. She was fined for wasting police time, despite 13 other women previously reporting Lane's stalking behaviour to the police. In the same year as Shana's death, graduate Alice Ruggles, 24 was killed by her ex-boyfriend Trimaan Dhillon, an army signaller, who had a history of stalking and controlling behaviour. Alice had reported Dhillon to the police after he had hacked into her social media accounts and hung around her home late at night. Instead of dealing with the complaint, police handed it over to the barracks where Dhillon was based.

## The Service Response

Understanding how to respond to stalking is a matter of huge importance for intervention. Many victims of stalking do not report or only do so after an extremely high number of incidences have occurred (Sheridan, 2017). When victims do report, most experience inaction or inappropriate actions from the police (Quinn-Evans et al., 2019; Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). Victims need to be believed, be listened to, have their concerns taken seriously and actioned, and have their feelings validated (Boehnlein et al., 2020).

## Stalking and the Covid-19 pandemic

The evaluation began in early March 2020, immediately prior to the lock-down response to the global pandemic in the UK. This meant that the evaluation was delayed. However, it also meant that we were able to gather anecdotal evidence about the impact of the covid-19 crisis. We found that the pandemic creates a paradox when considering staying safe in our homes, but it

is important to recognise the dangers this presents to many victims of stalking. Whilst lockdown measures might appear to be a time when victims are less accessible to their stalkers, in fact, their vulnerability is increased. Further information can be found here:

Bracewell, K., Hargreaves, P. & Stanley, N. The Consequences of the COVID-19 Lockdown on Stalking Victimisation. *J Fam Viol* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00201-0>

## 2. Aims and Overview of the Evaluation

This section will outline the aims of the research evaluation, the methods utilised and any identified limitations.

The term 'victim' will be used consistent with Paladin literature, in acknowledgement of the long-term impacts of stalking and in recognition of those who do not survive.

### Evaluation Aims

This evaluation sought to explore the following outcomes:

1. Did high risk victims of stalking receive advocacy services for stalking?
2. Did high risk victims of stalking gain a greater understanding and awareness of stalking behaviours and its impact?
3. Were feelings of fear and isolation reduced for victims?
4. Was emotional well-being and safety of victims improved?
5. Did high risk victims report improved responses from other professional agencies?
6. Was the awareness of the risks and nature of stalking raised within the public domain?

### Methodology Overview

To achieve the aims of the evaluation a mixed-method approach was adopted, and the research adhered to ethical guidelines.

The evaluation team were fully aware of the need to reassure service user participants, who because of their stalking experiences may have been fearful of answering telephone calls. Therefore, on the date of interview, the interviewer called at the precise time agreed from the number previously provided and immediately followed up the interview with an email thanking the participant for their time and contribution.

To maintain the anonymity of participants pseudonyms are used throughout this evaluation report. The service data provided by Paladin did not contain any identifiable information to the service user. Only the email addresses of service users who had agreed to participate in an interview and had consented to be contacted by the evaluation team were disclosed. All email communication with the participants and any contact details were subsequently deleted. Participants provided verbal consent and could withdraw from the interview at any time. Service users were provided with a £15 voucher to acknowledge that their time and contribution to the study was provided.

The following methods were used:

<p>Service monitoring data (n=427)</p>	<p>Paladin supplied demographic and outcome data for 427 service users. The data consisted of all cases opened by Paladin in 2019 regardless of whether they had since been closed (n=389) or were still open (n=38) at the end of April 2020 when the data was provided.</p> <p>Outcome measures included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criminal justice outcomes during the time the case was open to Paladin</li> <li>- Work completed by ISACs including any referrals made to other services</li> <li>- Improvements for service users over the period of support</li> </ul> <p>The demographic and outcome datasets were combined and quantitatively analysed using SPSS statistical software v24. The findings are reported in Section 3.</p>
<p>Service users feedback forms (n=75)</p>	<p>As part of their ongoing service monitoring, Paladin provide all users an opportunity to provide feedback about their experience. Feedback forms are sent to service users who are safe to contact following closure of their case. The forms consist of eleven statements requiring an agree or disagree tick-box response with the additional facility to provide further comments. Participants are also invited to provide written responses to a further three statements. Paladin supplied a sample of 75 feedback forms randomly selected from 427 that were returned in the previous year.</p> <p>Tick box data from the feedback forms was quantitatively analysed using SPSS statistical software v24. Qualitative comments were analysed thematically using NVivo v12. The findings from the feedback forms are reported throughout this document.</p>
<p>Interviews with service users (n=15)</p>	<p>Telephone interviews were undertaken with service users to explore their experiences of Paladin. We planned to interview 12 service users, however all 15 who were initially approached agreed to be interviewed, increasing the reach of the evaluation (14 females, 1 male).</p> <p>Interview participants ranged in age from 21 to 52 years old. Eleven were of White British ethnicity and four had a BAME background. Service users resided at locations across England.</p> <p>At the time of interview the average length of stalking was 18.4 months, the longest being four years and the shortest just under six months. Victims were most likely to be stalked by an ex-partner (n=8) but stalkers also included acquaintances (n=3), friends (n=2), clients (n=1) and strangers (n=1).</p>

Paladin made initial contact with service users to offer them the opportunity to participate in this evaluation. All participants were sent an *information sheet* (see appendix 1). Service users who had voluntarily agreed to participate, and had given their consent to be contacted, were emailed by the evaluation team to arrange a suitable date and time and gain contact details for interview. Participants were provided with a £15 voucher following the interview.

Interviews lasted between 17 and 42 minutes, with an average duration of 33 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants, transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using NVivo software v12 by the two lead researchers. Once analysed all audio recordings were deleted. The findings from service user interviews are reported throughout this document.

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Interviews with  
service staff  
(n=5)

Face-to-face interviews were undertaken with all five Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) employed by the Paladin National Stalking and Advice Service. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were provided with an *information sheet* (see appendix 2).

Interviews lasted between 37 and 65 minutes, with an average duration of 51 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants, transcribed verbatim and analysed with the service user interviews. The findings from staff interviews are reported throughout this document.

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Case studies  
(n=5)

Five ISACs each provided details for one case study. It was intended that collectively the five cases would provide a spectrum of case backgrounds, Paladin work and outcomes. Each study was written using the same generic sectioned format (see appendix 3). The key points of the case were extracted and summarised by the researchers for presentation throughout this report.

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## Study Limitations

Owing to time and resource limitations of the evaluation the following limitations should be highlighted:

- The sample of service users volunteering for interview were selected by Paladin staff. Therefore, the findings could be subject to bias.
- The feedback forms used in this report were designed by Paladin not the research team and not for the purpose of this evaluation.
- Little information was gained about children's experiences of stalking where their parent was a victim.
- There are no victims who experienced stalking from more than one perpetrator included in the sample.
- The small number of male victims accessing the service makes it difficult to make any comparisons regarding gender.

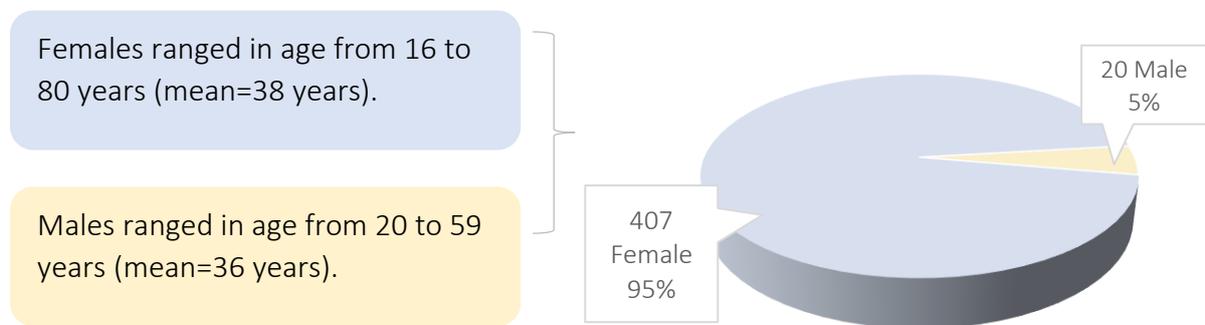
### 3. Paladin Service Users

This section provides an overview of demographic and outcome data for the 427 service users who had their case opened by Paladin in 2019. The vast majority of service users were female (n=407), as detailed in figure 1 below.

Service users were more likely to be single, heterosexual and of White British ethnicity. A breakdown of demographic data and key points is provided below.

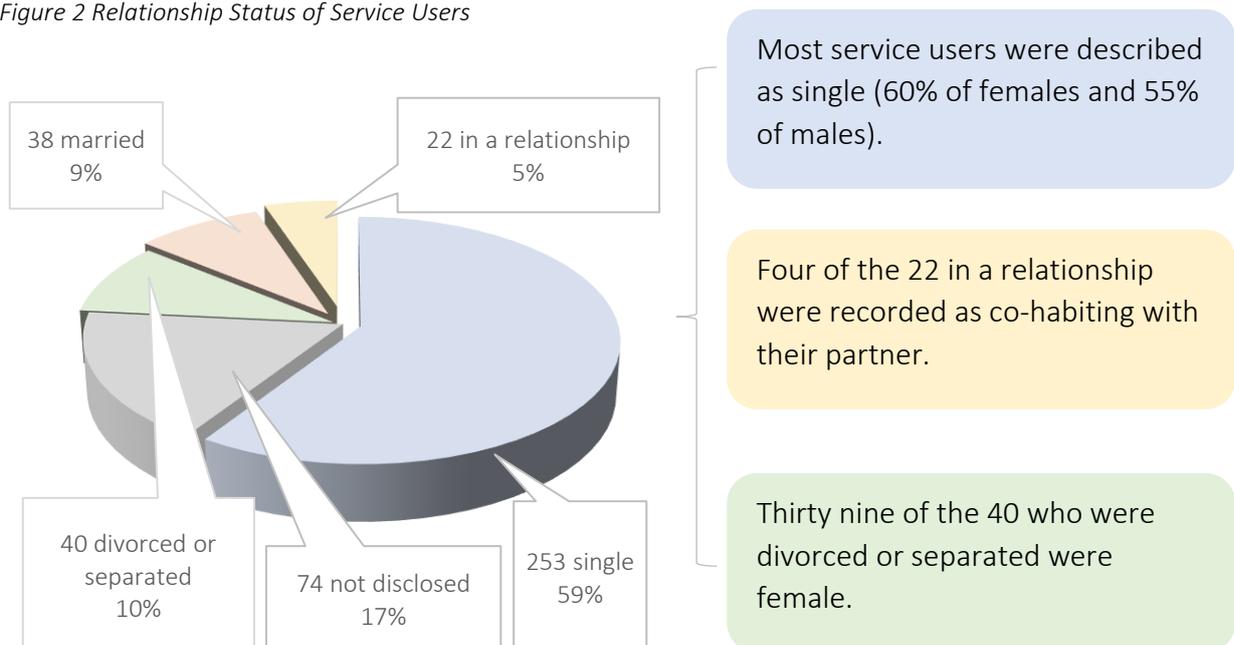
#### Gender and Age

Figure 1 Gender of Service Users



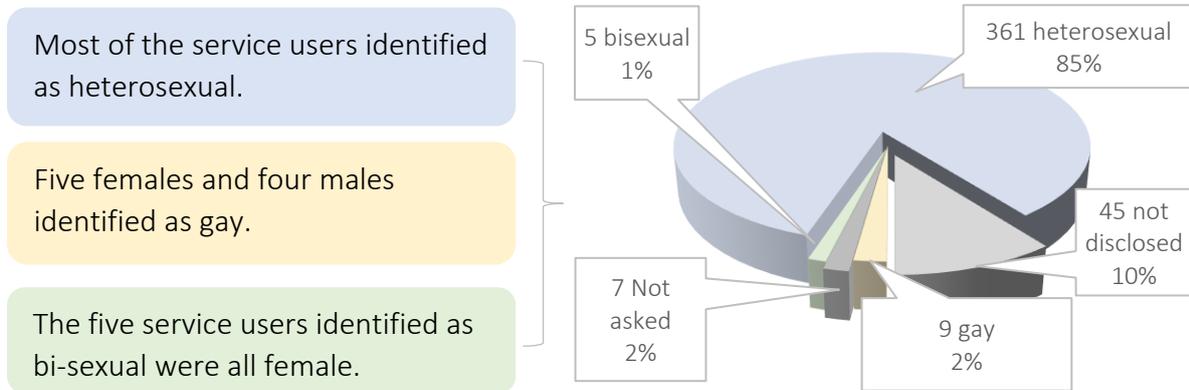
#### Relationship Status

Figure 2 Relationship Status of Service Users



## Sexual Orientation

Figure 3 Sexual Orientation of Paladin Service Users



## Ethnicity

Table 1 Ethnicity of Service Users

	n	Percent
<b>White</b>		
British White	295	69.1
Other White	35	8.2
White	2	0.5
<b>BAME</b>		
British Asian	14	3.3
British Black	11	2.6
Other Asian	8	1.9
Other Mixed	7	1.6
Black Caribbean	6	1.4
Black African	5	1.2
Indian	5	1.2
Other	5	1.2
Bangladeshi	4	0.9
Other Black	4	0.9
Black Caribbean & White	2	0.5
Pakistani	2	0.5
Asian	1	0.2
Black British	1	0.2
White & Asian	1	0.2
White & Black African	1	0.2
<i>Not disclosed</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>4.2</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>100</b>

78% of service users defined as White or White British (females n=317; males n=15).

18% were from BAME backgrounds (females n=90; males n=5)

## Religion

Table 2 Religion of Paladin Service Users

	n	Percent
No Religion	128	30.0
Christianity	79	18.5
Islam	29	6.8
Hinduism	6	1.4
Judaism	5	1.2
Buddhism	2	0.5
Agnostic	1	0.2
Pagan	1	0.2
Sikhism	1	0.2
Other not listed	2	0.5
<i>Not disclosed</i>	<i>173</i>	<i>40.5</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>100</b>

50.4% of the 254 service users who specified said they had no religion.

Christianity was the most common religion amongst service users who expressed following one.

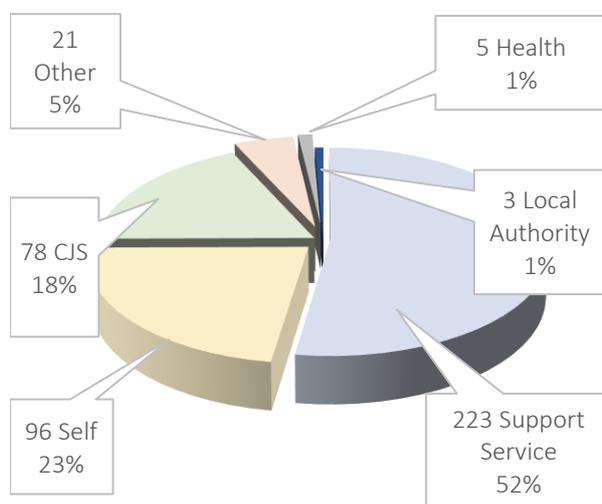
## Location and Language

Table 3 Location of and Language spoken by Paladin Service Users

	Region	n	percent
Over 1 in 4 service users resided in the Greater London area.	Greater London	126	29.5
	North West	87	20.4
	South East	55	12.9
65% of BAME victims were from the Greater London area	South West	54	12.6
	East of England	31	7.3
	Yorkshire & Humberside	30	7.0
	West Midlands	22	5.2
English was the first language of 97% of service users (n=415).	East Midlands	10	2.3
	Wales	7	1.6
	North East	4	0.9
	Not recorded	1	0.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>100</b>

## Referral Source

Figure 4 Referral Source



Most of the 78 referrals made by the CJS were from uniform police n=63, just one being for a male victim.

More than half of victims were referred to Paladin by another support service. Most commonly:

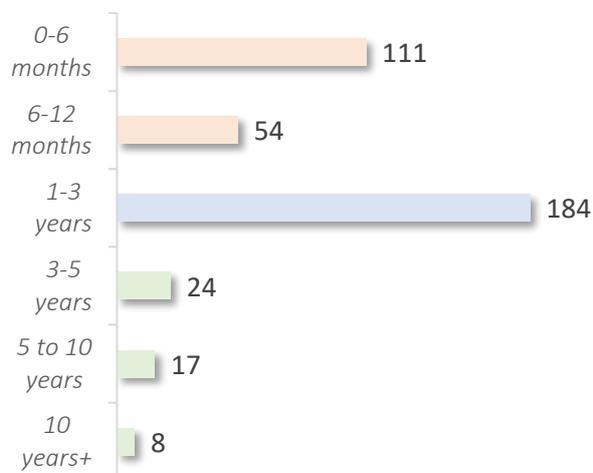
IDVA service n=133 (32% of females; 10% of males): Victim Support/Witness Service n=78 (17% of females; 40% of males).

22% of female victims (n=88) made a self-referral to Paladin compared to 40% of male victims (n=8)

'Other' consisted of: Children/Young People n=9; Family/Friend n=6; Employer n=3; Refuge n=2; Education n=1

## Stalking Duration

Figure 5 Stalking Duration



In 59% of the 398 cases where the duration was known, the victims stalking experience exceeded 12 months.

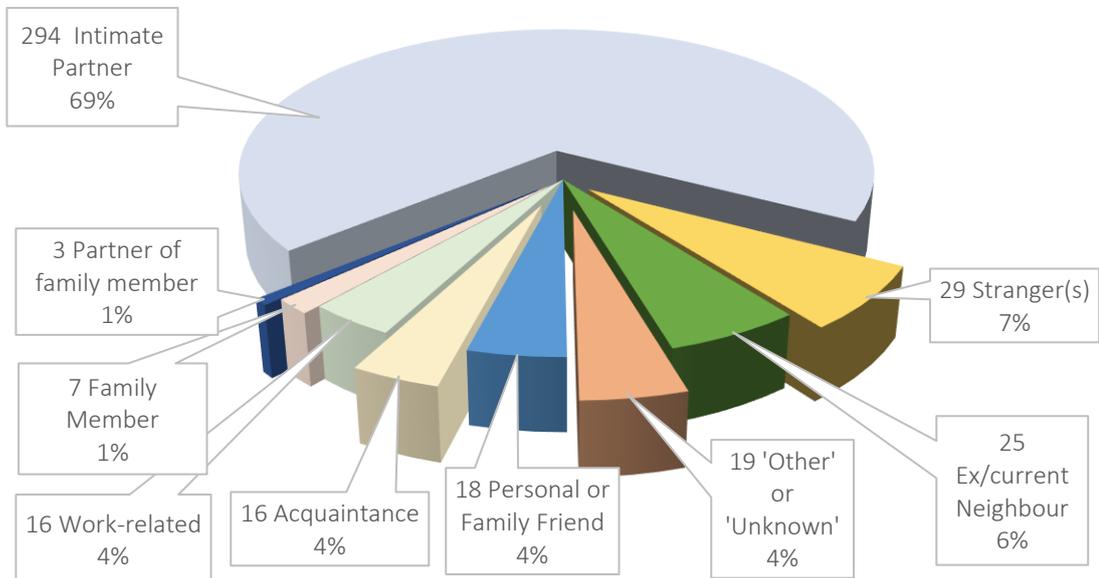
47 of the 49 victims whose stalking experience exceeded 3 years were female.

There was no association between ethnicity and stalking duration.

There was no association between marital status or relationship to stalker and stalking duration.

## Relationship to Stalker

Figure 6 Service Users Relationship to their Stalker



Female service users (71%, n=247) were proportionally more likely stalked by an intimate partner than male service users (35%, n=7).

Female cases: ex-partner n=248; husband n=23; ex-husband n=15; partner n=1

Male cases: ex-partner n=6; wife n=1

Sixteen stalkers were acquaintances of the victim consisting of: fellow student n=2; fellow resident n=1; tenant n=1.

Sixteen stalkers were grouped as work related consisting of: client n=8; ex-colleague n=6; client's son n=1; employer n=1.

Seven stalkers were a family member, consisting of: parent n=5; other family member n=2.

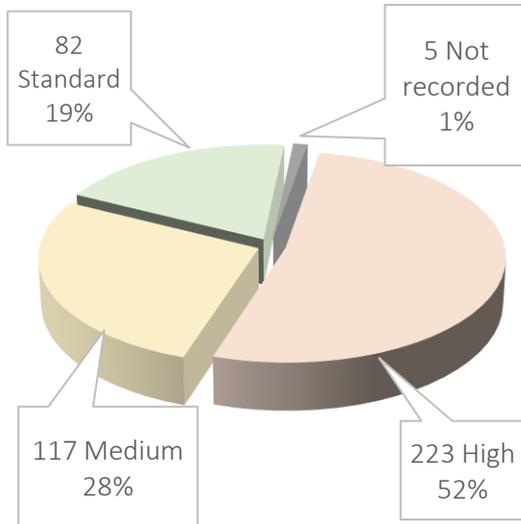
In 50 cases (12%) the stalker had a history of abusive and stalking behaviour against others. In all but one case the current victim was female.

In 6% of cases (n=27) the stalker had breached bail conditions. In all 27 cases the victim was female.

Four stalkers had been sectioned under the Mental Health Act. In all four cases the victim was female.

## Risk Level<sup>2</sup>

Figure 7 Risk Level Recorded by Paladin



Over half of victims referred to Paladin were at high risk

54% of female victims (n=221) were recorded as at high risk compared to 10% of males (n=2)

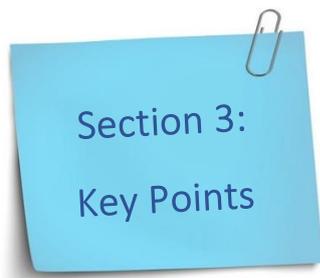
Victims stalked by an ex-intimate partner, family member, a personal/family friend or work related were more likely to be recorded high risk.

50% of males (n=10) compared to 18% of females (n=72) were recorded as standard risk.

Victims whose stalker was a stranger or acquaintance were more likely recorded standard risk.

There was no association between risk level and duration of stalking

<sup>2</sup> Risk level is assessed on various factors not only the risk of physical and psychological harm, but also the capability of victims to cope and manage their wellbeing as a result of their stalking victimisation.



Section 3:  
Key Points

- The overwhelming majority of victims of stalking (95%) referred to Paladin in 2019 were female.
- Most (60%) of the stalking victims were single at the time of referral to Paladin.
- Over three quarters of service users were White British (78%) which corresponds with the estimated 79% of the population in England (ONS, 2016).
- Over a quarter (29%) of those referred to Paladin in 2019 lived in the Greater London area. The area where the service originated.
- While female victims were most likely to be referred to Paladin by an IDVA (32%), male victims were most likely to self-refer (40%) or be referred by Victim Support (40%).
- Contrary to common misconceptions that stalkers are often strangers, 93% of the victims referred to Paladin knew their stalker, in most cases this had been an intimate partner (69%).
- Many victims experience being stalked for a long period. Approximately 3 in 5 service users had been subjected to stalking beyond 12 months, 12% had been stalked for 3 or more years.

## 4. Service User Experience of Stalking, Support and the Professional Response Prior to Accessing Paladin

During the discussions with 15 service users (14 females, 1 male) interviewees disclosed information regarding their stalking victimisation and talked about their experiences of other services and the response of the criminal justice system (CJS), particularly the police. Recalling the behaviours their stalker had subjected them to was difficult and upsetting. It was largely expressed that other services had not met their needs, and the police were frequently and heavily criticised for their poor response.

### Stalking Experiences

Many service user interview participants described being subjected to various threats and persistent harassment in person, at home and work. One participant recalled threats being made by her stalker to set the house on fire with her and her child inside. Another expressed that her stalker had made her life hell, turning up at her work, persistently emailing and trying to make contact, forcing her to change her email addresses and phone number. Participants described living in constant fear and a state of anxiety. Their experiences had a significant impact on their wellbeing and how they went about their everyday lives.

... I can't put into words, I mean I was living in fear, I'd already changed the way that I went to work, I never shopped in the same place, stopped shopping in my local village... it was living, constantly looking over your shoulder, in terms of day to day life. (Service user 13)

Participant's disclosures provided insight into the fear stalkers instil in their victims and the devastating and pervasive impact. All those we spoke to had endured significant disruption to their daily lives as a result of their stalking experiences.

### Lack of Support

Prior to accessing the Paladin service, support was said to be non-existent, insufficient, dangerous or even inappropriate. With few specialist services available, accessing suitable support can be problematic for victims of stalking. When asked, participants intimated that due to the lack of specific service provision available they often relied on support from domestic violence/abuse (DVA) agencies and this was confirmed by Paladin staff. Although the support from DVA agencies had been beneficial to those who had accessed them, the expertise within those services did not always extend to stalking and they had both limited funding and capacity.

[DVA service] were quite good. They were, you know, they were as supportive as they could be with the situation, but on the stalking side of things, they didn't really have a clue. (Service user 8)

However, for victims of stalkers who are not ex-intimate partners access to any support may be even more difficult. This was certainly the experience of at least three interview participants. One participant explained how exasperated she was in her attempts to seek help as she repeatedly did not fit the criteria of DVA services.

I must have called I couldn't even tell you. I must have contacted so many and it was just getting harder and harder with every rejection, because I felt like I was spinning. And I just kept spinning and bumping into things and nobody was helping, like they kept sending me to other places, but nobody could help me in the other places that I called. (Service user 10)

Largely, service user participants we spoke to described feeling let down by the criminal justice system (CJS). The overriding consensus was that the police had offered little in the way of helping them to access appropriate and much needed support. Nine participants specifically expressed experiencing a distinct lack of support from individual officers and the police as an organisation.

The police never offered any support whatsoever. They never recommended any charities or anything. The only thing that was put forward was around whether I would get Legal Aid. (Service user 6)

## Poor Professional Response

Dissatisfaction with the police response was a prominent feature of our interviews with service users. Police officers were accused of minimising the victims experience and looking at incidents in isolation, thereby failing to recognise the pattern of behaviour that defined it as stalking.

...twelve different officers would turn up at the house over the year and each one telling me a different story and not taking me seriously. And, oh it's only a picture, it's only a message, it's only this, but it's not when you put it together. (Service user 4)

Participants stated that the police were not taking their plight seriously and they were failing to recognise the true nature and extent of what was happening. One participant stated that over forty incidents she had reported were treated as isolated incidents by the police, and as harassment rather than stalking behaviour. Consistent exposure to a poor response from the police had created feelings of self-doubt. The reported failure by the police to recognise stalking and their subsequent inaction was seen to contribute to a prolonging of the stalker's behaviour.

the Police...I was just getting nowhere and didn't feel supported. So that's why [employer] recommended me contacting Paladin. I don't know how she knew about them...there was over forty-two incidents, but they were all like separately recorded incidents and [the police] kept it all as harassment, just separate incidents. So, it was [Paladin staff] that contacted the police and told them this is stalking, and you need to look into it as stalking. Then they put it altogether and that's why it was actually being looked into. (Service user 8)

However, not all participants had a negative experience with the police. One described a mixed experience, both positive and negative. Another who was referred to Paladin by the police voiced her satisfaction, although she acknowledged others may not feel the same.

They've managed it so nicely because the police said, we've done this, we will refer you to the Paladin Service and if there's something else you need, you know, we always seek that out, which was nice... people maybe disappointed, but I think the police are trying their best... (Service user 12)

Generally, however, positive experiences with the police and the wider criminal justice system (CJS) were uncommon amongst the interview participants. As part of the CJS process being referred to Victim Support was perceived by one participant to be a token gesture with little substance due to the broader nature of their work.

The police take a report, they then forward it to Victim Support, who then contact the victim and say, oh we believe you've reported something to the police, if you need any help ring this number. If you need anybody to speak to. But it's not, they're just going through the motions. They're not interested in you as a person or what you're going through. (Service user 4)

## A Lack of Understanding

Much of the perceived failings of the police, and the wider CJS, was attributed by service users to a lack of understanding of stalking. One participant stated that officers lacked the training to respond effectively. Non-physical stalking episodes were described as largely brushed off, demonstrating an inability to see risk beyond physical injury and a lack of understanding of the impact of stalking behaviour.

I don't think they (police and witness protection) understand... how close [I was] to, you know, not being here... (Service user 15)

Being dismissed by the CJS was a common feature of the interviews. The severe disruption stalking had caused to participants everyday life and the detrimental impact on their emotional wellbeing was not recognised.

The lack of understanding spread beyond the CJS according to many of the service users interviewed. Other support services, family/friends and the general public were all said to lack awareness and understanding of what stalking involved, and the implications. Participants described feeling increasingly isolated as family, friends, and professionals failed to understand the magnitude of their experiences.

I was a nervous wreck, I was utterly distraught, I was utterly deflated, to be quite honest, because I just felt like nobody out there was listening to me. And nobody understood what was going on or they didn't want to understand, or they wanted to turn a blind eye. (Service user 9)

Overall, prior to ISAC involvement, participants were living in a state of fear and anxiety. Despite exposure to a high frequency and severe forms of stalking behaviour many experienced a poor response, with little support and understanding from the police and others. They expressed an increasing sense of isolation as a result. Abebi's summarised case study overleaf provides a helpful example of the extent of her stalking experiences and a lack of understanding by the Police Officer in Charge (OIC).



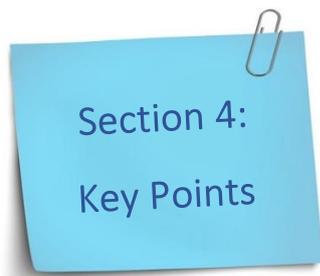
### *Case Study: Abebi*

Abebi was a young gay woman who had refugee status in the UK and was referred to Paladin by an LGBT+ charity. Her perpetrator had befriended her via a support group and began stalking her when she rejected his advances. His behaviour gradually escalated to constant calls, text messages and emails and he had followed her home on several occasions. He regularly turned up outside her home or workplace. When he could not ascertain her whereabouts, he also contacted professionals, such as the manager of her housing association. He made threats to her life and that of her girlfriend. Consequently, Abebi had to move home, give up her job and isolated herself from her social networks. It also had a negative impact on her relationship as they both felt unsafe?

There were difficulties in the OIC seeing beyond hate crime to understanding the stalking behaviours in this case. Paladin provided support for ten months to help Abebi understand the UK criminal justice process, provide safety planning, advice and liaise with the police and witness care. Working alongside the charity, a new OIC and supported housing provider, ensured no duplication of work and the victim was provided with the best support.

Court bail was put in place which the perpetrator continuously breached. He was convicted with stalking 2a and an indefinite restraining order was granted. The perpetrator then appealed his conviction, so Abebi was required to go back to court 6 months later which she initially refused to do. This appeals process enabled the perpetrator to continue his control of Abebi but with support she did attend, and the conviction was upheld. Abebi subsequently moved to a new area with her girlfriend, is furthering her education and feels much safer.

*'I really appreciate your {Paladin's} help.'* (Abebi)



- Being stalked was described by service users as an extremely frightening experience, which significantly impacted on their daily lives. Expressions of extreme fear not only for their own life but for their children's too, highlights the seriousness of their experiences.
- Prior to contact with Paladin, appropriate support for victims was identified as rare.
- A lack of expertise in stalking meant the support received from DVA agencies whilst beneficial, was felt to be insufficient. This indicates that stalking is distinct from other forms of abuse.
- Many service users interviewed voiced their dissatisfaction at the CJS response to their reports of stalking behaviour. They felt that a lack of understanding by the police resulted in a failure to recognise stalking behaviour and its impact on victims.
- There is a lack of understanding amongst family and friends and the general public which compounds the negative experiences of victims of stalking. Participants talked about increased sense of isolation and self-doubt as a result.

## 5. Initial Access to the Paladin Service

During the interviews, both service users and Paladin staff explained that many victims of stalking are not accessing the service simply because they and those supporting them are not aware it exists and therefore do not know to refer to Paladin. Despite efforts by the service to increase their visibility Paladin staff are aware progress is still to be made. Nevertheless, Paladin endeavours to ensure accessibility to victims from BAME backgrounds and younger age groups (under 25s) as well as those with impairments and complex needs.

The length of time ISACs support a service user varies and is dependent on their needs. Interview data from service users confirms this is helpful. In a limited number of cases (2%) support consisted of one-off same day advice. As the service data below shows this is unusual and support is normally accessed between a month and 12 months.

### *Outcome data: Time Period Accessing Paladin Support*

A total of 427 victims of stalking had a case opened by Paladin between the 1st January and the 31st December 2019.

From January 2019 to April 2020 (the time the data was submitted) forty-one percent of service users (n=175) accessed Paladin support for a period of one to three months.

Open cases ranged from same day to 55 weeks, with an average of 72 days.



## Little Knowledge of the Paladin Service

A lack of widespread knowledge of Paladin means that many victims of stalking who might benefit from specialist support are not receiving it. One service user we interviewed said she had never heard of Paladin until she was going through the court process, when she was advised to call them as a potential source of support.

...I've never heard of Paladin before...it was only on ringing I found out about what they do. And since then I've mentioned it to other people. And I don't know that it's a very big organisation because not a lot of people have heard of Paladin. (Service user 2)

Although they have escalated their online presence to make the service more visible to victims of stalking and promote self-referral, staff are acutely aware this will not necessarily reach all potential service users. However, as service users often report being referred to DVA or generic victim support services it may be beneficial for Paladin to target those organisations so that these services can refer to Paladin for specialist stalking support.

There are some people who have got no access... somebody might not be able to access the internet very easily, or they might not be able to use, you know, they might not feel comfortable. (Staff member 2)

Paladin are employing various methods to increase visibility and knowledge of their service to professionals, victims and the general public. We discuss awareness raising activities in more detail in section 8.

## Contact and Accessing Support

Access to ISAC support is based on the risk to the victim regardless of their relationship to their stalker, be they ex-partner, other family member, acquaintance or stranger. Staff pointed out that risk is not confined to the likelihood of serious physical harm, but on many factors including psychological impact, duration of stalking and a victim's access to alternative support. Although a level is attributed at intake either high, medium and standard (see figure 7), risk is viewed as fluid. There was recognition by ISACs that adopting an exclusively risk-led approach would limit the support provided to service users when a more holistic approach was required.

Of the 14 service user interview participants who disclosed their referral source, six said they had been referred to the service by the police (MASH team or DVU), two from a DVA agency and one from a sexual violence charity. Another five service users had self-referred after a recommendation was made by either a work colleague, Early Help or the CPS.

Although victims can self-refer, one service user said she found it difficult to contact the service. She also believed that being referred by another service, as she was, enhances a victim's chances of receiving support from Paladin.

I looked on the internet for support and I tried ringing them and I just never got through. I tried loads of times and I just, it wasn't, I think it was actually, I think it was Witness Care or it might have even been Victim Support that made a referral in the end. And because that's a specialist service in itself, I think that's how I got it. (Service user 5)

However, as one ISAC was keen to point out, the service offer is not reliant or prioritised based on a referral request from another service. Self-referrals were said to be common. Staff always do a needs and risk assessment with the victim to ensure a fully informed decision is made.

So even whether we've looked at a referral and said, this person isn't for us, as in they don't meet the criteria of being in imminent risk to life, what we'll do, is that we'd always ring them up anyway, regardless of what, because sometimes the referral doesn't tell you everything, until you've actually rang them up and had that conversation with them. (Staff member 4)

Inevitably, access to support is somewhat reliant on capacity to meet demand, a common experience for helpline services. It was clear from the accounts of ISACs that they need to make difficult decisions when accepting cases. Not meeting the criteria for direct support from Paladin can be upsetting for victims, particularly if they have been disappointed before [as identified in Section 4].

... the first time I contacted them I didn't actually fall within their remit. They said that they'd had a lot of cases and, obviously, the people that worked there... they didn't have enough people, so they couldn't take my case on... So, once again, I'd hit a brick wall. Obviously, the stalking continued and then I contacted them again, I can't remember, I think I had to fill in a form and then somebody called me. (Service user 10)

## Additional Needs and Minority Groups

It was acknowledged that language barriers, no recourse to public funds and insecure legal immigration status can make it difficult for people from BAME groups to report their stalking victimisation. Still, staff confirmed that ISAC support is accessed by victims from a range of ethnic backgrounds. As the service data previously showed many referrals come from the Greater London area, particularly those from BAME backgrounds. This was attributed to the base Paladin had already established there.

I think, because there's a lot of agencies that are based in London that are kind of pointed out to a lot of different types of cultures and ethnicity bases, I feel like because we've got that base in London, a lot of agencies will then contact us because they'll assume that we still, we've got a base there. (Staff member 3)

Staff expressed that the skillset within the team is vital in overcoming many of the challenges that come in reaching out to minority groups. A good awareness of cultural differences and the capability to speak different languages, including Urdu and Punjabi, was considered to significantly increase accessibility to the service for BAME groups.

We do make the services accessible as possible, i.e. sometimes, if you've got BAME women, there might be elements of different, you know, there's elements that can come with the stalking that could be more honour based...Language barriers, we try to facilitate...some of my colleagues can speak different languages, so, you know, that is a skillset that they can use if needed and are happy to do that. (Staff member 2)

Yet, the language barrier remains a significant problem in a minority of cases. One staff member expressed the need for easier access to interpreters, as they simply cannot 'employ staff that can speak all the languages' required. One way of overcoming this and potential cultural barriers is to work indirectly with a victim where feasible and appropriate. One member of staff described how she supported a Kurdish woman in London via her existing support service worker. She utilised the trust that had been built between the woman and the support worker.

So, I worked alongside that worker. They were like the local hand holding, know her very well service, who she trusted and supported. I supported her worker really, to support her around the stalking side of things. Because she had that local connection with her, and she'd known her for a long time. I did speak to the victim a couple of times, but it felt more appropriate to support her worker. (Staff member 3)

As a predominantly telephone service, working with existing support workers is an important aspect of making Paladin as inclusive and as accessible as possible for those with additional needs. Expanding links with other services, was said to have increased Paladin's capacity to reach out and provide support to victims with complex needs. Because of Paladin staff's recognition and understanding of the daily detrimental impact stalking has on a victim enables them to better address their mental health. Staff expressed the importance of consistently asking service users about their emotional well-being and assessing the additional support they may need, something often overlooked by the CJS. Staff encourage service users to seek help from local services and to speak to their GP. However, according to one staff member in doing so it brings home the lack of support available.

... doing this job does make you, it just emphasises the lack of services available to victims of crime... and stalking specific crime, especially when it comes to therapeutic support service, mental health service... (Staff member 2)

The service takes care not to have victims repeat their experiences and retraumatise them. Being a telephone service can make it easier to support victims with physical impairments

according to one staff member. For victims who are hard of hearing, emails provide a way of supporting them.

We have people that have severe mental health problems, physical problems... [Obviously], somebody who's hard of hearing, it will be difficult for that person. However, we can communicate by email, and we have had cases where we've just communicated by email and not communicated on the phone. (Staff member 3)

It can be challenging to engage young people to access a support service. Thirty seven percent of young victims aged 16-25 years referred to Paladin in 2019 had suffered a prolonged period of stalking (1-10 years). Yet, young people may be less likely to report their victimisation to the police, as one staff member revealed, many of the younger service users had not done so and did not want to. It was expressed by staff that people aged 16-25 years tend to be more transient members of the population than over 25's. Paladin have been increasing their efforts to raise awareness of stalking amongst young people, using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and focus groups, and to make their service more accessible to them. A young person's ISAC is now in place to support service users in this age group. The needs of this age group can be very different to those in older age brackets. Non-reporting to the police or less accessing of other support may mean more intense safety planning is needed and liaison with educational bodies.

So, a lot of that is around just kind of keeping in contact with them around safety and trying to encourage them to report...in terms of safeguarding, that is one of the better things they can do... college and universities I have to liaise with, just around safety. ...sometimes, the stalker is possibly a student with them as well. So, a lot, especially universities, will have a protocol that they have to go and speak to them. So if the victim's refusing to report to the police, they'll kind of get their security complaints department to deal with it, which is fine, but then, obviously, if it is stalking, they're going to put the victim at further risk, so we'll try and liaise with them quite a bit as well. (Staff member 5)

Despite the above challenges only one of the 53 young people aged 16-25 referred to Paladin in 2019 declined their support and only one other disengaged from the service. A new initiative to create youth ambassadors up and down the country has recently been employed by the service, to which young people have contributed their ideas. A longer-term evaluation of this work might be beneficial to enable learning to be transferred to other wider support services to improve engagement of young people.

## Service Response

Once a referral has been made the speed of the service response was found to be important for service users and confirmed by Paladin staff. A quick response instils a sense of importance

and validation, factors largely missing in the service users' experiences with the police. Service users communicated their satisfaction regarding the speed of the response from Paladin staff.

...it was the MASH Team that got in contact and referred me. Literally, within a couple of hours, (Paladin worker) rang me, so that was brilliant. (Service user 3)

Service users described how, in their view, ongoing support from Paladin was always accessible and consistent. The email and text facility were identified as a valuable methods of maintaining contact, raising concerns or even just offloading. This was particularly useful outside of office hours. For one service user it was her preferred method of communication when she was at a low point.

I was able to speak to \_\_\_\_ when I could on the phone, I never had a problem getting hold of her. If she wasn't available and I left a message, she would always communicate via email. And do you know what, just the action of actually writing the email to her, a lot of the time when you're in that position, helps you to get things off your chest anyway...sometimes, when I was at some very low points, I couldn't bring myself to actually talk on the phone. However, I could put it down in an email to her. (Service user 11)

According to staff, the length of time spent engaging with the service depended on the needs of the victim and the circumstances surrounding the case. Because of this they highlighted that flexibility is important.

Yes, so it can vary. I think each case varies, depending on what's going on. Because some cases might just be that we're just doing safety planning with them, advising them of how to keep themselves safe. But then there's some cases where we actually need further intervention, there's police involvement and there's investigations that are ongoing, or whether the perpetrator, stalker's breaching their conditions or carrying on stalking. So, it all depends, it all really depends. (Staff member 4)

However, interview participants perceived Paladin staff as going above and beyond what was required of them, for example checking in on them after case closure was appreciated by service users.

And you can tell that they care about you as a person, even now I still get messages off her, you know. And this was almost a year ago and they're still in touch now. So, it's not like you're just a number and like job done, gone. (Service user 4)

Making the Paladin service known to victims, services and the public is crucial to enhancing access. Staff are acutely aware that despite the efforts to improve awareness, and thereby enhancing access, there is more to do. This is discussed later in the report. Paladin is continuing to maximise the skillset of ISACs and their capacity to make the service accessible

to all victims, including minority and younger age groups and people with impairments and/or complex needs.

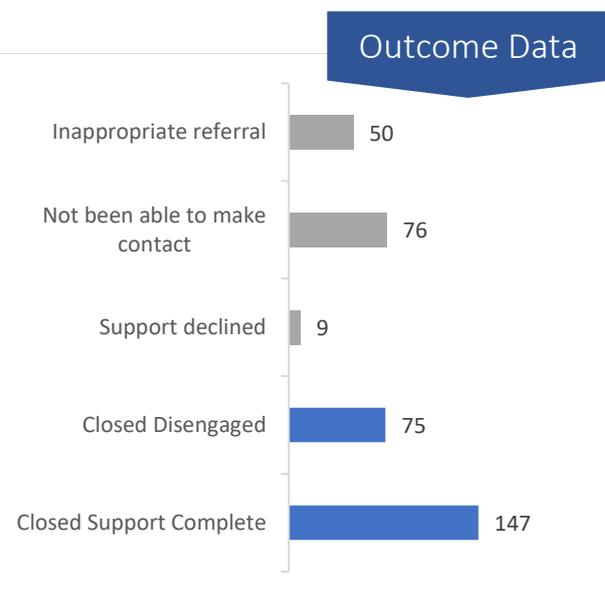
As can be seen in figure 9 not all those referred to Paladin in 2019 accepted the support, whilst others disengage over time. Although there is no hard and fast rule Paladin staff aim to contact a victim who has been referred at least 3 times before it is deemed unsuccessful (unable to contact). It is not clear from the service data why someone might have declined or disengaged with the service. Further work is needed to investigate this.

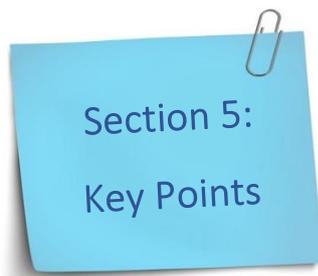
*Outcome data: Referral outcomes*

In 14% of cases the referral was inappropriate for ISAC support. For closed cases (n=389) a reason for closure was supplied in 307 cases.

28% of cases were closed because the victim declined support or Paladin was unable to make further contact with them and 24% of service users disengaged from the service.

48% of cases came to a natural closure after support was complete.





- Many victims of stalking may not have access to Paladin because they and services supporting them are unaware the service exists. Significant efforts are being made to increase awareness of the service but there are areas which require improvement.
- Current service capacity means that Paladin workers must make difficult decisions regarding who they offer support to. As a result of the lack of specialist provision nationwide, stalking victims may need to be at high risk of serious harm before being eligible to access appropriate support provided by Paladin. Due to funding capacity Paladin are limited to working with high risk victims of stalking, but staff identified that their assessment of risk extends beyond the usual narrative of the likelihood of physical harm to include ongoing psychological harm and contextual factors around stalking triggers.
- Staff described the skillsets within their team as improving service accessibility for BAME victims, younger victims of stalking and those with complex needs. However, it was suggested that easier access to additional resources would help them to further meet the needs of all service users.
- Service users were highlighted the importance of the speed of the response from Paladin once a referral had been made. They also described the benefits of access to ongoing support via telephone or email and the consistency of the service response.
- The varying length of time support is accessed illustrates the bespoke nature of the service that Paladin offers.
- Further work is needed to investigate the referrals who could not be contacted, declined the service or disengaged after initially accepting support. This should include any key demographic differences such as ethnicity or gender.

## 6. Service User Needs, Ongoing Experiences of Paladin and Achieving Change

This section will detail service users' initial expectations of Paladin in meeting their needs and the extent to which this matched up to their experience of the service. In doing so it will illustrate the key areas in which Paladin helps to achieve change through practical and emotional support and multi-agency working. The impact of this change will be discussed separately in more detail in section 8.

### Initial Needs

Service users recalled the reasons why they needed support and identified what they were looking for from a service. Service user interview participants described their struggles with managing their risk and mental state. Based on the behaviours they were exposed to, the impact on their well-being and the poor professional response, service users wanted effective safety advice, emotional support and advocacy, summed up here by one participant.

...I wanted some practical support through what I was going through with the stalker that wouldn't stop stalking me...I wanted someone who could advise with the police side of things... and someone to make me feel better because I've lost my life through this stalking, my whole world is falling apart, and I just wanted someone to actually care that that happened to me, you know. (Service user 5)

As detailed earlier, interview participants largely described having difficult experiences with the police and wider CJS. Across the interviews it was expressed that a victim's lack of knowledge of the law around stalking hinders their capability to progress their stalking case allowing the police to lessen the offence and undermine the impact. Therefore, victims identified a key need for someone with knowledge of stalking behaviours and the law to advocate on their behalf in dealing with the CJS.

Yes, I wanted somebody who understood, somebody who could confirm that I wasn't going crazy. That this does happen. Somebody who understood the law because the police give you a lot of mumbo jumbo and, basically, just try and tell you it's harassment, it's harassment. (Service user 10)

Whilst service users identified their requirement for practical and emotional support, few participants had any initial expectations of Paladin. A lack of awareness of the service and scepticism were key features of a lack of expectation. Feeling that they had been let down before, meant that some participants were sceptical of how Paladin would help them. Previous

negative experiences of potential sources of support had impinged their perceptions of other services, meaning they had few expectations by the time they were referred to Paladin.

To be honest, at that time, I had no expectations at all. Because I'd been told to call \_\_\_\_\_ Helpline and I never even got a call back from them, they weren't much help. And I was having a bit of a bad time with the police. So, I don't think I had any expectations... (Service user 2)

Despite almost giving up on finding adequate support, some interview participant's desperation and their willingness to try anything drove their initial engagement with Paladin staff. For the service users we interviewed, ISAC support had largely met their needs. Indeed, many described the service as exceeding their initial expectations.

I got more from Paladin than I expected. I thought, maybe they would arm me with the, I don't know, the resilience that you need, because it's all about resilience, because it almost broke me several times, this entire process. And they did more than that, they have become a kind of silent champion to someone who is probably too stubborn for their own good... (Service user 13)

## Ongoing Experiences of Paladin

Overwhelmingly, interview participants experience of Paladin was described as very positive. It was expressed that the support they had received during their time with Paladin had gone a long way to meeting their needs.

The largely positive experiences expressed by the service users we interviewed was replicated in the sample of feedback forms provided. The overwhelming majority of the 75 respondents to a request for feedback indicated that their experiences of Paladin was positive. There was large agreement that staff were knowledgeable and competent, they had listened, responded and supported them appropriately in a non-judgemental way and this chapter will provide further detail about these experiences using service data and information gathered from interviews.

Feedback Form Data: Experiences of the Paladin Service



Overwhelmingly positive responses to statements about their experiences of Paladin in the 75 feedback forms supports much of the positive experiences expressed during the interviews. Because of their positive experiences almost all the participants indicated they would recommend Paladin to others.

Statement	Agreed	Responses
I feel that Paladin listened, responded and supported my needs appropriately	97%	73 agreed 1 disagreed 1 did not answer
I feel that staff at Paladin have been knowledgeable and competent	96%	72 agreed 2 disagreed 1 did not answer
I feel that Paladin is a non-judgemental service	97%	73 agreed 0 disagreed 2 did not answer
I would recommend Paladin to friends/family if they needed help	97%	73 agreed 0 disagreed 2 did not answer

*Feedback Form Data: Satisfaction with the Paladin Service*

The extensive knowledge within the service was frequently referenced in the feedback forms. When expressing their overall satisfaction with the support and advice they had received. The following two areas featured prominently:

- 1) Because of Paladin's wide knowledge of stalking behaviour and the law the advocacy work they did was particularly effective.
- 2) The effective transfer of knowledge by staff to service users was felt to have empowered them, increasing their confidence and reducing their anxiety when dealing with the CJS themselves.



*'Paladin helped me with the police so that I was taken seriously. I experienced stalking for a long time before the police paid attention.'*

*'She offered knowledge throughout that helped me understand the police side of this case in a way that I could come to terms with and feel not so anxious.'*

Service user interview participants described key areas in which Paladin had helped them. They talked at length about the support they had received which included practical support around safety advice and risk management; emotional support and feeling validated; and working with other agencies and advocating on their behalf. Although these interlinked areas are difficult to separate, we endeavour to discuss each area in turn in the sections below.

Paladin supplied the following data on the work they carried out on a case by case basis.

*Outcome data: Statistical overview of work undertaken by Paladin*

Outcome Data				
	All cases		Cases completed	support
	n	percent	n	percent
<b>Liased with:</b>				
Police	186	44%	99	67%
Local IDVA <sup>3</sup>	164	38%	75	51%
SPOC	120	28%	81	55%
Another agency	73	17%	34	23%
Local ISAC	9	2%	6	4%
Housing	10	2%	6	4%
<b>Advocated for:</b>				
Stalking conviction	142	33%	97	66%
<b>Provided support letter for:</b>				
Housing	15	4%	11	8%
Court	12	3%	6	4%
MARAC (with recommendations)	11	3%	7	5%
Workplace	6	1%	2	1%
Education	3	1%	2	1%
Re: child contact	4	1%	3	2%
<b>Other work:</b>				
Safety advice	316	74%	143	97%
Safety Plan Completed	170	40%	98	67%
Emotional support	142	33%	96	65%
Support with mental health	14	3%	10	7%
VRR Completed - Case Reviewed	4	1%	4	3%
VRR Completed - NFA	4	1%	3	2%
Safe contact for children/young people	3	1%	1	1%

## Safety Advice and Risk Management

As can be seen in the table above, a key focus of Paladin is to safeguard victims, increase protection and increase physical safety. Staff participants described how risk assessments received by referral sources are used as a method of gaining insight into the needs of a potential service user. However, staff member one pointed out that they are mindful that many

<sup>3</sup> Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

of these assessments consist of interpretations of what victims have said or consist of little detail.

...for example, today, I had two lines, literally, on a referral form, two and a half lines. And after contacting that person, there were so many risk factors in that individual's case, that I contacted the police this morning and within half an hour of me contacting them, an officer from the safeguarding team's contacted her saying, would you like to make a statement? And that just shows the kind of impact Paladin has on cases at times. (Staff member 4)

Staff described considering the context surrounding the victim to assess risk rather than relying on risk checklists which did not always capture the full extent and complexity of the situation. Whilst the Stalking Risk and Needs screening questions were utilised in assessments the most valuable information was considered to come from more detailed information provided by service users themselves. Paladin staff identified the importance of speaking to the victim themselves and conducting their own in-depth assessments, which are then used to tailor individual support and shape safety plans.

...it actually came to light that there was quite a lot of risk, there was finality, he'd lost his...home life and their job. So then actually, I need to have them open conversations with my client about that element of finality and the risks could be increased... (Staff member 2)

Staff used this information to feedback and in some cases challenge key agencies such as the police around safety; for example, where perpetrators had breached their bail conditions. Paladin arranged or co-ordinated practical tools to improve home security such as better-quality lighting, lock changes, burglar alarms, personal alarms, cameras or GPS systems. They provided examples of working with employers to increase a victim's safety both in the workplace but also to and from their place of employment. Paladin worked directly with victims and those involved in the case to raise awareness and risks of stalking and provided advice and guidance about keeping safe.

I've never sort of ever been through anything like this and I now know the signs to look out for, how to keep myself safe, the safety document. Yes, just a bit more aware now. (Service user 3)

Safety plans were regularly reviewed, including where perpetrators used child contact to continue to harass the victim and supported victims to safety plan with others around them, including their children. Victims were encouraged to vary their daily routine, and some gave examples of where they recruited others to help them to do this, such as their child's school.

Staff explained that they helped victims to collect and keep all the evidence of stalking behaviours, often contradicting advice victims had been given previously by professionals who do not fully understand the law around stalking. For example, other agencies often advised victims to block calls/ messages or change their phone number. This effectively reduced the evidence victims can present. Victims were encouraged by Paladin to keep a diary of every incident - record calls or take photographs/ screenshots of emails for example - to provide a full account of the pattern of behaviour rather than the situation being viewed as 'one off' isolated incidents or 'coincidence'. Interviewees confirmed increased knowledge around stalking and its severity, their physical safety, recognition of patterns and the law due to working with Paladin.

...there was a massive element about safeguarding, putting myself first, making sure the relevant safeguards are in place for me, and just thinking more seriously about the behaviour, what I needed to do. So, writing a diary, making sure my social media was private, you know, just really being aware of what was around me. So, they definitely helped with that. (Service user 6)

Paladin provided advice with regards to online safety around their digital footprint, password protection, privacy settings, social media, laptops, mobile telephones and apps they could use to improve their physical safety.

...she's been very proactive, in that she's emailed me lots of safety information, you know, just practical things, you know, about things you can do on your phone and, you know, about keeping safe... (Service user 9)

Service users explained that they had started to 'hide away' because of their experience. They had been isolated by their perpetrator due to the responses from others and feelings of fear or had started to isolate themselves further either socially or online as they were increasingly distrustful of others. Staff at Paladin worked to address this. Service users were given practical help with their employment, their daily movements, digital technology, reporting to the police, working with other agencies and explaining their situation and the risks to family, friends and colleagues. Service Users explained that this practical advice helped them to involve others in their safety planning but also enabled them to feel more empowered.

Staff explained that providing a combination of practical and emotional support facilitated feelings of empowerment and personal recognition of their stalking experience and reduced feelings of self-blame.

Yes, the hardest part for me was accepting it. But by the time I was in touch with Paladin, obviously, I'd already, I'd left the relationship, I was trying to move on from it, but I felt

very embarrassed. And Paladin made me feel very empowered because they were telling me, you know, no, this can happen to anyone. I mean you can stand up for yourself, this is what you need to do. (Service user 1)

One participant explained that she had been provided with a ‘toolbox’ which she would now use throughout her life. Feeling equipped to deal with their experiences and potential future experiences was valued.

*Feedback Form Data: Safety Advice from Paladin*



The majority of the 75 service users who provided responses to the following statements around safety, were happy with the safeguarding aspect of Paladin’s work and confident they could put their advice into practice.

Statement	Agreed	Breakdown (n)
I’m happy with the safety advice provided by Paladin	<p>95%</p>	71 agreed 1 disagreed 3 did not answer
I feel confident in being able to put this safety advice into practice	<p>93%</p>	70 agreed 2 disagreed 3 did not answer

## Emotional Support and Validation

Emotional support provided by the service was important alongside the practical support detailed above. All service users described how their emotional health and wellbeing had been affected not only by their stalking experience but by a lack of understanding from others which compounded their situation and increased feelings of isolation and exhaustion. Some service users explained that they had felt suicidal and depressed because they had nobody to talk to about what was happening. In contrast, one of the key aspects of ISAC support was understanding their situation and not minimising their experience. Being allocated a dedicated worker helped to facilitate this understanding and service users felt that they were working with someone who cared about their situation.

I mean this man targeted my, every single part of my life, my family life, my working life, my social life, absolutely everything that he could to try and destroy me. And she understood from every single aspect what I was going through. (Service user 11)

I was a nervous wreck, I was utterly distraught, I was utterly deflated, to be quite honest, because I just felt like nobody out there was listening to me...nobody understood what was going on or they didn't want to understand, or they wanted to turn a blind eye...[ISAC] reassured me that everything I was feeling was normal, you know, because I didn't feel like I was normal...I said, I feel like I'm going mad. And she said, no, you're not going mad...she also gave me a little bit of inner strength, you know, as in like you can do this...we are here for you. (Service user 9)

Victims described how taking formal action against their perpetrator could increase their physical risk which then impacted on their emotional wellbeing by increasing fears and anxiety. When, for example, they were worried about particular incidents or criminal justice processes, they could contact their worker who helped to reassure them. Developing their resilience was something that service users often referred to when explaining how Paladin had helped them. The value of feeling like someone was on their side and having a listening ear was mentioned repeatedly. When service users needed support, they explained that they would contact their worker by phone, text, or email to request a phone call and that the service was always responsive. Staff were described as providing a listening ear, emotional support, understanding and reassurance. Having a professional 'check in' with them at regular intervals was also valued. Staff were described as 'always there' when needed even though they do not operate a 24-hour service.

There was a lot of emotion throughout this whole process, and [ISAC] just really, really, really helped to stabilise my emotions at any one time. I found, sometimes I'd just feel really worried or concerned, then I'd have a call with [Staff] and she just really reassured me, and she just really made sure that I was OK. (Service user 6)

It was building my confidence back up. It was trying to help me not feel scared you know I felt suicidal, so scared, so alone and having that service there she was my lifeline. She made me she taught me the skills, she taught me how to just breathe, just cope with it really and she made me feel some faith that I'll get through the end of it...she just made me feel like I wasn't alone anymore. (Service user 15)

Service users described feeling panicked, anxious, worried or frightened and that nobody – professionals, family or friends – really understood their experience. Even where friends and relatives may have been supportive initially, service users felt that was difficult to maintain over time as the situation continued. This was confirmed by all Paladin staff who acknowledged that this understanding was an important part of their work. The service user below explains that her friends were supportive whilst she was in an abusive relationship but

could not understand the ongoing stalking behaviour because she had left and therefore the abuse should have stopped.

...I had one or two close friends...that I would talk to about it. But after a while, you don't want to burden them with it...my situation was, literally, the only thing I spoke about for about eight months. I felt like I was boring them, like they didn't want to hear it anymore...they'd get fed up with me because...they've heard about things that he'd done when he assaulted me or when he'd stop me from leaving the house...they'd say, well just leave him...for a long time it was like, I couldn't, I was just stuck...then when I did, they were like, oh great, OK, it's over now...I'm like, no, it's not over, because he's still trying to contact me, he's still harassing me. I felt like a prisoner in my own home. (Service user 1)

The validation and affirmation provided by Paladin support was significant. Staff explained that it was important to acknowledge and believe victims and then work to advocate on their behalf (detailed above). Service Users highlighted that an important part of Paladin's role was to reassure victims that the behaviour of the perpetrator was not their fault, they were not to blame and that they were not going 'crazy/ mad', being 'overly dramatic', 'paranoid' or 'exaggerating'. Victims stated that this was how they had been made to feel by other professionals or people in their life. Reassurance and validation were especially important where stalking behaviours were more subtle or did not seem a risk to outsiders. For example, leaving gifts on the doorstep or seeing the perpetrator in public places.

People need to feel like they've been listened to...you hear it time and time again, it's not necessarily the impact of the stalking and the abusive behaviours they're experiencing from the perpetrator involved, it's how the system, like maybe the police, or any other agencies involved, are treating them that makes them feel worse, more traumatised. (Staff member 1)

Staff described working from a trauma-informed, strengths-based perspective and acknowledging the victim as the expert in their situation. This helped to increase victim confidence in reporting, evidence gathering, and their own safety planning which helped some victims to feel more in control of an unpredictable situation. This improved confidence in turn enabled some victims to challenge professionals where they had previously been unable to.

I mean it's also increased, in terms of when I talk to the police. Because when they'll say things to me, I wouldn't go back and say, well, you know, and having somebody able to liaise with the police...I'm not just going to be a statistic for them. You're not going to hear about me and my kids on the news because you don't want to do your job. (Service user 10)

This confidence extended to telling others, such as friends, colleagues or relatives about their situation because they felt assured that what was happening was serious. The support of a national specialist organisation made them more certain of their stalking experiences and they believed this support would also provide them with more credibility when explaining the situation to others. They described Paladin as helping to increase their coping skills. For example:

It was building my confidence back up... I felt suicidal, so scared, so alone and having that service there she was my lifeline... she taught me the skills, she taught me how to just breath just cope with it really and she made me feel some faith that I'll get through the end of it. (Service user 15)

Emotional support from staff also enabled service users to do things they lacked confidence to do previously. For example, attending appointments with their GP or counsellor. Although ISACs are unable to attend court hearings with victims due to their geographical location, service users described the valuable support provided in preparing for these events. The service user below explained that without the support of her worker it is unlikely that she would have been able to attend court.

...I was absolutely terrified, as many people are, of testifying in court, but I also knew it was something that I was going to have to do. The strength that she gave me through that, she kept reminding me of the outcomes...she grounded me. So, every time I'd be like, well this is pointless, and I feel like giving up, it was a case of, you know, this is not for nothing, trust me...when I actually testified, I wiped the floor with him. I can't even tell you; it was like I had the strength. She told me all along that when it came down to it, I'd have the strength to do it and I would do a damn good job of it because I'm articulate and I've been brave and I've coped through it, and she was absolutely right. (Service User 11)

This example helps to highlight the work of Paladin in empowering service users to bring perpetrators to justice. The data below confirms the positive outcomes highlighted in the interview data above.

Feedback Form Data: Emotional Support from Paladin



Emotional support is an important aspect of Paladin’s work. Many who responded to the question of isolation, felt the service’s support had reduced their isolation and helped to increase their confidence in areas of their life.

Statement	Agreed	Breakdown (n)
I feel that Paladin helped to reduce my isolation	87%	65 agreed 2 disagreed 1 agreed and disagreed 7 did not answer
I feel that Paladin helped to increase my confidence in making my own choices/decisions	96%	72 agreed 1 disagreed 2 did not answer
After being supported by Paladin, I feel more confident to ask for help from agencies	93%	70 agreed 0 disagreed 5 did not answer

However, the long-term support required by some service users may not be fully met by current service provision. One service user explained that she required further ongoing support to deal with the aftermath of stalking. She felt that once she was deemed as physically safe there was an absence of longer-term therapeutic support available. She explained that Paladin are not funded to provide ongoing support and were therefore unable to meet her needs around recovery due to limited capacity and a need to focus on those at risk.

## Multi-agency Working and Advocacy

Participants identified advocacy as a prominent feature of the positive outcomes from working with Paladin. Many described their frustrations and difficulties in dealing with the police, as reported in Section 3. Paladin’s specialism and knowledge of stalker’s behaviours and stalking laws also set Paladin apart from other agencies, according to interview participants. This enabled more effective safety planning with service users as well as productive challenges to the CJS. AS detailed, participants talked of the pressure of dealing with the stalking, reporting it and then trying to circumvent the barriers of the CJS. Therefore, a service with the extensive knowledge and empathic approach of Paladin was described as invaluable.

They know every single route, you know, it's like they get in the brain of a stalker and they'll know exactly how that stalker works. So, they're then able to feed that back to people like me and make us aware of how to be safe and how stalkers work... (Service user 4)

Paladin's knowledge of limitations within the CJS was seen to enable them to effectively manage the service user's expectations, providing support within the context of what is achievable. This was particularly useful in empowering victims to regain control where this was possible, and not take responsibility when this was not conceivable.

... they help you be realistic because the criminal justice system is appalling. It failed me totally in every way, to be honest, and Paladin haven't failed me. They've just kind of held my hand through it. (Service user 5)

As highlighted, stalking was often considered to be prolonged because of the inaction of the police. In advocating on a victim's behalf, Paladin staff were able to either activate or speed up CJS processes, something defined as beyond the capacity of the individual victim or even other agencies.

I don't know how many phone calls and how many emails she sent, but all of a sudden, out of the blue, I got a phone call from a Detective Chief Inspector, saying, we're now looking at your case... I wouldn't have had the capacity to do that... I've many a time said to her (Paladin worker), you've accomplished more in the last six months than I've managed to do in two years, me and multiple agencies... They speak for you when you can't speak, you know. Because I know, at that time, I didn't have a voice, or I felt like I didn't have a voice... she was the voice that was needed when I couldn't do it myself. (Service user 9)

Being the 'victim's voice' when required was described as an important aspect of the work of the ISAC. In advocating on a victim's behalf, Paladin were identified as better positioned to hold other agencies such as the police to account. The skillset of staff, including their knowledge of stalking behaviours and the law, enabled them to advocate for stalking charges that may have otherwise result in a lesser offence charges. One staff member explained that the impact of stalking affects a victim's capability and capacity to challenge those minimising their experiences. Victims therefore require someone with stalking expertise to take up the mantle for them and educate others.

Kind of being that voice of the victim really... sometimes they'll feel like no one's really understood what's happened... So, I think a big bit is believing them and then being that voice to advocate on their behalf, to try and get other professionals to recognise the risks really. (Staff member 5)

The empathic approach adopted by Paladin staff was conveyed as a key factor in participants positive experiences of the service. Being given the time to talk about their stalking experiences

without interruption was identified as important by both service users and staff alike. Listening was expressed as a key skill in developing the appropriate support.

They just take the time and listen without, you know, butting in. They just listen, listen, listen and then impart the information, the help you need. And sometimes just empathise with you, which is really nice. (Service user 2)

The empathy and belief in the victims' experience shown by staff were key features of what set Paladin apart from other services in service user interviews. Service user participants communicated that they felt Paladin staff 'really cared about them', and how their working relationship was more akin to a professional friendship. They identified that empathy and understanding had been lacking in their involvement with some other agencies. Having their experiences of stalking validated, as Paladin did, was identified as extremely important and beneficial to their wellbeing.

Staff confirmed that they advocated on behalf of service users to help other professionals understand the situation and harms presented (actual and potential), particularly where actions of other agencies may place the victim at increased risk.

I feel like it's a really important role of ours, if we speak to a victim and they share that information. Oh, I've reported to the police and they're going to go out and give words of advice. We would then step in and challenge that. (Staff member 3)

...I emailed the officer and they contacted within half an hour, she'd been going through that for seven years. There'd been so many, there's been six incident logs...and they've all been NFA'd. It just shows that little bit of nudge and it's a bit of, let's stand up for that person, advocate on their behalf, what can be done?' (Staff member 4)

This advocacy was described positively by service users who stated that Paladin staff were able to achieve results that, due to their status as victims, and their lack of both knowledge and confidence about how to navigate systems and processes, they had been unable to. As identified throughout this report, victims often described a history of stalking and of inaction; many said they felt exhausted, ignored and helpless – they had followed the advice given for long periods of time without achieving any positive results. Support from Paladin staff gave service users a feeling of security that other professionals would listen and take action. It also meant that they did not have to keep contacting professionals themselves. The quotes below describe feelings of powerlessness when dealing with other professionals but also the proactive role of Paladin in addressing this.

They constantly push the police...it's brilliant...until the police give them answers. Then they can, obviously, get back in touch with me and tell me what's going on. Because if I try and ring the police, I mean I've got messages on my phone from police officers, sorry we didn't turn up last night, got called off onto another job. I'm sorry I didn't call you

back, we've just been busy...being fobbed off...if it wasn't for Paladin, I'm quite a shy person, so I would never think to ring the police and go, I want an answer. I'd, literally, not speak up and then think, oh shit, what am I going to do? Where they do it all for you. (Service user 4)

...the criminal justice system has failed me so massively, I wanted a service that just would kind of fight my corner, and I feel like they have done. They've really fought my corner and kind of, they advocate for you, they do contact the police. (Service user 5)

Victims described not being seen or heard and stated that they were viewed as a number rather than a person. This lack of voice is key to their experience and can contribute to victim's reluctance to engage with other agencies in the future. In contrast Paladin were described as empowering service users by prioritise their voices. Staff understood their situation as they perceived it.

...the way I'd describe them is...somebody who's on your side and, basically, who's your advocate. They speak for you when you can't speak, you know. Because I know, at that time, I didn't have a voice or I felt like I didn't have a voice and she was my voice at that time, you know, and still is...she was the voice that was needed when I couldn't do it myself. (Service user 9)

Paladin worked to educate criminal justice agencies involved in stalking cases, particularly the police, around legislation and policy and confidently challenge actions or outcomes on behalf of their service users. This included advocating for stalking charges and liaising with the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) which several service users explained they did not know existed prior to working with Paladin. For example:

The most useful part, I'd possibly say, the fact that they can liaise with the SPOC, but I didn't even know that that team existed in the police. Having somebody fight, because sometimes, you just can't fight...to take the reins and just say, it's OK, have a rest for a minute. (Service user 10)

Service users stated that they were taken more seriously by criminal justice agencies because they had recruited the expertise of Paladin. They explained that Paladin had the capacity, knowledge and determination to challenge decisions or to gather information which they had been unable to do themselves. One service user also disclosed that they were making a formal complaint against their local police force and that Paladin were supporting them to do this.

Outcome data: Criminal Justice Outcomes

Outcome Data

The following CJS outcomes were recorded for the stalkers of the service users whilst accessing support from Paladin.

<i>Offence</i>	<i>Charges n</i>	<i>Convictions n</i>
4A Stalking	23	7
2A Stalking	17	9
Harassment	14	12
Harassment with violence	1	1
Breach of Non-Molestation	14	9
Malicious communication	2	2
Coercive control	1	1
Other offences	21	8

In some cases, victims could be signposted to local services in their geographical area, such as women’s centres or counselling services for additional support around confidence building for example. Working with other agencies was also required in cases where practical interventions were needed for physical safety e.g. alarms identified above. However, due to the impact of austerity and cuts to service provision there may be a lack of alternative wraparound services available within a victim’s geographical location to provide ongoing support once the stalking had stopped.

As highlighted earlier in the report, Paladin staff also described working indirectly with victims by supporting another agency to do so or alongside them by providing advice, guidance and expertise around stalking. For example, where a victim was already receiving intensive support for DVA locally and had an established trusted relationship with their worker. Providing advice to other professionals also helped to ease the burden on the victim as they were not contacted by multiple agencies and this was considered as beneficial by service users, meaning that they did not need to repeat what was going on to multiple service providers. One victim for example, described her Paladin worker and Women’s Aid staff as ‘working together to know what’s going on and keep [me] updated’ (Service User 8) and another explained that ‘...when she emails to me, she cc’s the lady from the Domestic Violence Agency into it as well, so that everybody knows, you know, what’s going on and where we’re all up to.’ (Service user 9).

Outcome data: Referrals by Paladin

Outcome Data

The service data supplied by Paladin provided a snapshot of the agencies they had referred their service users to. Amongst the most common were:

- Various support groups (n=28)
- Specialist DVA service (n=16)
- Counselling (n=15)

More isolated cases included MARAC (n=5); ISAC service (n=5); voluntary agencies (n=4); adult safeguarding (n=1) and children’s social care (n=1).

Feedback Form Data: Referrals by Paladin for additional support



Most service users who fed back expressed that they had been referred appropriately where necessary.

Statement	Agreed	Breakdown (n)
I feel that Paladin signposted me to the most appropriate services to meet any additional needs	<p>93%</p>	<p>70 agreed 0 disagreed 5 did not answer</p>

When asked to reflect on the most important or useful aspect of the support they had received from Paladin, service users struggled to disentangle the multiple and interconnect ways Paladin had helped them. They did, however, specifically identify a number of key areas which are relevant to other professionals working with victims of stalking: Being listened to; feeling understood; being believed; advocating on their behalf to achieve results; and learning how to keep yourself safe.

...when people believe you, when people tell you, it's not you, that's massive. I mean when someone has spent so much time telling you, you misunderstand, you don't get it, you're the stupid one, you know, you make things, you know, you make things up, you misunderstand, no, that didn't happen, you question your own sanity. And actually, when you have someone independent of that come and tell you, this is not you, this happens day in, day out, this is how they behave. (Service user 13)

*Feedback Form Data: Ways in which Paladin had helped*

In asking service users to feedback on specific support from Paladin that had helped them, the following components were most frequently expressed:

**Advocacy:** This was described by service users as essential in some cases, because without it their case was not being taken seriously by the police. Paladin's intervention was felt to have been a catalyst for progressing police action.

**Advice:** Service users commented on how useful Paladin advice was in relation to their personal safety. Provision of safeguarding information and safety planning was expressed as essential.

**Emotional support:** Paladin staff just listening was deemed to be very important during a very difficult and traumatising time. Participants commented that Paladin staff had demonstrated a good empathic understanding of their experiences and were non-judgemental. As a result, their stalking experiences had been validated.



*'\_\_\_ also wrote a letter to CPS on my behalf spelling out my fears and how I was at high risk of homicide... how frightened I was of him and also helped set out the additional steps needed to be added to the restraining order to help protect me and my girls'*

*'...their advice was really focused and structured. They were amazing and I couldn't have done this without them.'*

*'I felt at ease discussing really distressing and emotional matters concerning my ex-partner. There was never an attempt to stop me talking mid-sentence and she did not make me feel ashamed about being a victim'*

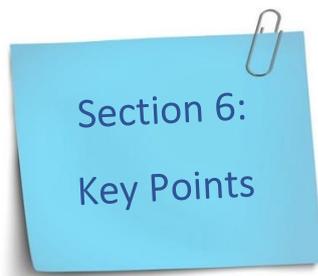


### *Case Study: Cindy*

Cindy initially had a 3-month affair with a man who became her stalker. When she ended it, he threatened to tell her partner about the affair and exhibited controlling and threatening behaviour. The perpetrator stalked her followed her daily routine, such as on the school run, and online, creating fake profiles, writing posts or threatening social media statuses about her, and asked others to contact Cindy. He also threatened to commit suicide. Cindy reported his behaviour to the police who referred her to Paladin. Cindy was unable to work, and the stalking impacted on her relationships with her partner and her children. She felt isolated and was afraid to go out and described the impact on her physical and emotional health.

The police said it was difficult to prove the perpetrator was responsible for the online stalking and initially did not retrieve his electronic devices. Paladin worked with Cindy for 8 months to obtain a restraining order, provided safety planning advice and documented the stalking behaviours. Paladin referred the case to the SPOC and highlighted the identified risks and impact. The case was reviewed by a specially trained officer and a new OIC (officer in case) was identified and allocated to the case. The case was referred to the SPOC within the CPS for advice on the charging decision and requested that this was reviewed and that the higher charge of Stalking 4A to be considered as this includes the element of fear. Paladin provided support to go to court and applied for special measures in addition to working alongside other agencies to provide court support.

*‘Thank you for all your help and support, I do not know how I would have got through this without you’ (Cindy)*



- Owing to previous experiences of a poor professional response service users described initial scepticism of any support service. Never having heard of the service meant some had no prior expectations of Paladin.
- Participants largely talked very positively of Paladin when discussing how important interwoven areas of support had met their needs and exceeded their expectations. A responsive service was highlighted as important by service users.
- Staff participants expressed the importance of needs assessments based on direct contact with the victim, rather than a reliance on risk assessments provided by referral sources. It is important to take account of the whole situation as a pattern of behaviour and not view stalking as isolated incidents.
- Advocacy work had helped move cases forward which was pivotal, particularly for those victims who were on the brink of giving up. The empathic approach of staff had made a huge difference to service users, being believed and having the opportunity to talk of their experiences was expressed as invaluable for their wellbeing.
- Paladin provide practical safety advice and interventions such as alarms to improve victim safety. This includes working with employers and the police. Safety planning and evidence gathering are key elements to this support.
- Paladin provide emotional support in the form of listening to, understanding and believing victims of stalking. The validation and affirmation offered by Paladin was significant. Support from Paladin led to increased feelings of empowerment and confidence. This confidence extended to reporting incidents of stalking, attending appointments and attending court.
- Paladin also work with other agencies to provide wraparound support for victims or provided advice and guidance to professionals who already had a trusted relationship with a service user.

## 7. Facilitators and Barriers to Working

### Facilitators

The skillsets of the staff, working as a team and effective management were expressed as the key facilitators to Paladin carrying out the work they do and have the positive impact they have. Staff described being a part of a close team that supported each other. Staff draw on the vast experiences within the team through regular team and peer meetings, case reviews, supervision and external clinical supervision.

Oh yes, it's incredible. That's what I mean, you couldn't do this job without this team... We have peer supervision now, peer support every week, where just the caseworkers are getting together... We have clinical supervision that's done with \_\_\_ from outside, I've never had anything like that... she talks to you about trauma and how it affects your body. It's not just sitting and talking to someone; it's about how you feel and how your body's responding to all those things. (Staff member 3).

There was consensus amongst staff interviewees that the support peers and management offer is extensive and has benefitted them both personally and professionally. The supportive environment was said to be good motivator in what is a difficult and serious job.

... basically, you learn to laugh, you have to have a laugh with your peers, otherwise, you'll just go a bit burnout, listening to people's trauma every day. I think that supportive environment then helps you, obviously, motivates you to be able to do the job that you do to the best of your ability. (Staff member 1)

Having working relationships with other agencies helped enable Paladin focus on where they can be most effective. Referring and signposting to another service better placed to assist with a specific aspect of the victim's experience, freed up ISAC's time to do more in meeting other needs. Working closely with existing support workers benefitted some service users more so than direct work. Utilising the trust already built with victim, the existing support worker can act as a go-between for the relevant work of Paladin.

So in them sort of cases, what I try and do, is if I feel like it's a bit overwhelming, I'll give victims the option, they don't have to liaise with us direct, but we can liaise with the worker, the worker that they trust already. (Staff member 5)

Because of the changing nature of stalking behaviours, staff training is a crucial facilitator to maximising the effectiveness of the service. Being trained in different aspects was said to enable a sharing of roles.

I think training's crucial, it's changing all the time. The online cyber stuff, it's changing all the time. So, we're constantly looking at ways to work better. We're doing things differently in the team. (Staff member 3)

I did the ISAC Accredited Training... we now share responsibilities of the other roles between us all. So, we take it in turns on a daily rota basis to do the info@ emails, and then the telephone we all just, if you're available you'll answer the phone. (Staff member 2)

## Barriers

The lack of availability of resources in areas of England and Wales was described as a challenge in being able to find appropriate local support to meet all the needs of all service users. One staff member referred to a 'postcode lottery' when it comes to availability of external/wider support services. Those living in rural areas were considered to be at an instant disadvantage to urban areas. It means there is little consistency in service offer and can lessen the reach of Paladin.

And, potentially, for us as workers, we could work through more people, you know, we could offer more support to more people. But, unfortunately, we can't do that because, potentially, somebody could be living, I don't know, in Cumbria, in a very rural area... trying to find the right services or how to get the victim to be able to access them...It's all aspects, I've found, sort of in terms of being able to, like sort of look at housing or things that. (Staff member 1)

Inconsistent accessibility to appropriate local services, means Paladin service users will inevitably experience varying levels of wraparound support. This was identified earlier in the report and is pertinent to victims whilst accessing ISAC support and afterwards where longer-term emotional support for recovery is required.

The time a case reaches Paladin's attention was seen to present a challenge to the services capabilities to achieve positive change. Referrals come at different time points of a stalking case for various reasons e.g. a lack of awareness of the service, or a victim's state of mind at the time.

I think that sometimes can be a big challenge, because we wish that we might have been involved a little bit earlier in some cases... I've had times where service users haven't wanted to (engage) but then later they have. And then they've just constantly said, I really regret not getting involved prior to this now, because it's gone down as harassment... it makes a massive difference when we're looking at the stalking register now as well. So that individual won't go down on the stalking register because of harassment. (Staff member 4)

Referral agencies often close a case after making a referral to Paladin. This creates a barrier to forming a working relationship with that service provider. Examples were given of DVA and social services employing this practice. If the victim is no longer in a relationship but still experiencing stalking, services do not always provide ongoing support for DVA, seeing stalking

as a separate issue. This restricts Paladin's ability to liaise with other support services and ensure the victims needs are being met.

So, they're not even giving us chance to liaise with them and see if they're better suited to support or to do some work, or if there's anything they could do to help safeguard. They just refer it on and shut the button. (Staff member 2)

Closing down communication can also have implications for victims. It was identified that having to recount their experiences to an ISAC can be traumatising. Staff expressed that they would rather work with an existing agency where possible to minimise repetition, but that sometimes this was a challenge.

What we want to do, is we want to empower that agency, so when they have referrals like that again, they'll know what to do with them. But they'll see it as a little bit of an offence that we're not actually going to ring their client up, but we're going to liaise with them to share that information with them. (Service user 4)

Working with the varied knowledge and understandings of external agencies can also present challenges. For example, it was explained that the lack of recognition and understanding of stalking within the CPS negatively impacts on the police response.

One staff member described having to 'battle' with the police to get them to recognise a case of stalking rather than just malicious communication for example. Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) for stalking offences within the police have helped ISAC's to get cases reviewed where necessary. Inconsistencies in the police is certainly a challenge. Kausar's case overleaf provides a useful example of Paladin working with an IDVA to overcome the poor response she had received from the police.



### *Case study: Kausar*

Kausar is a female Pakistani national in the UK on a spousal visa. Her stalker was an ex colleague who wanted an intimate relationship with Kausar. The stalking behaviour started when she rejected him and had continued over a 9-year period. Her stalker had threatened to find her, rape her and kill her, her parents and her brother. He had expressed an interest around joining the army in order to kill Muslims. He stalked Kausar via social media and sent her hundreds of messages using over 10 Facebook accounts.

Kausar was working with an IDVA due to DVA from her husband. She disclosed the stalking from her ex colleague to the IDVA who then made a referral to Paladin. Anum was upset with the Police manner when speaking to Kausar and the way they had responded to her reports.

The IDVA was able to provide Kausar with emotional and practical support around DVA, including moving out of the property where she lived with her husband and support with her insecure immigration status. Paladin staff worked with the client and IDVA on this case for 8 months.

Kausar now has a new job. She expressed that she now understands stalking and the CJS much better. She feels safer and her confidence to stand up for herself has increased.

*'I never had a sister in life until you came to support me. I opened up about everything, thank you for the amazing support.'* (Kausar)



- Paladin has created a working environment and structure that facilitates an effective service for its users. Staff talked of working effectively as a team, with regular supervision and team and peer meetings. This supportive environment had benefitted staff professionally and personally. With good job satisfaction aside a strong skillset and knowledge base staff can provide appropriate support.
- As well as enabling staff to keep pace with the changing nature of stalking regular training opportunities increase their capacity to undertake different roles within the service and share the workload.
- Establishing good working relationships with other agencies was described as a crucial element of supporting service users. Liaising with other service providers to identify local support networks, aid communication with service user, and enhance knowledge of stalking and the law.
- Accessibility to support for victims of stalking can be a postcode lottery. Paladin staff were aware of the lack of services in areas of the country, which presents a challenge when trying to offer holistic support.
- Paladin's capacity to help with a case can depend on when it comes to their attention, as referrals are made at different time points on the victims stalking experience. Other agencies like the police may have closed a case when a referral to Paladin is made.

## 8. Service Impact and Areas for Improvement

An important way of monitoring service performance is to consider the impact of the support received. This section aims to collate information which will identify areas of positive practice, identify any gaps in provision and enable improvements.

### Impact for service provision

It was expressed that by being a voice for the victim Paladin had influence over how a case may be handled by the CJS. With their expertise service staff put what might have been viewed as minor behaviours into the context of more patterned/serious stalking when advocating for their service user with police or other professionals.

Like if it's a stalking case or been highlighted as a stalking case, words of advice (to the perpetrator) shouldn't be given... It can be very dangerous, and it shouldn't happen in stalking cases. So, it's a really important role of ours, if we speak to a victim and they have shared that information. 'Oh, I've reported to the police and they're going to go out and give words of advice'. We would then step in and challenge that. (Staff member 3)

A staff member described successfully changing a police response from providing advice to desist to a perpetrator to making an arrest. Although he went on to breach his bail, the perpetrator was eventually charged and remanded, without further harm to the victim. In another case, the actions of a staff member directly affected a charging outcome.

I'd sent my stalking assessment to the CPS, even though we'd been told not to really do that. But I went to the stalking lead and just asked for it to be double checked and reviewed, and these were my concerns... off the back of that, they went from a harassment charge to a higher level charge... when the SPOC got involved, they actually reviewed it and realised the reviewing lawyer had missed stuff. And that was only because we'd shared our concerns. (Staff member 5)

It was also found that Paladin empowered victims to challenge and put pressure on the CJS themselves. One participant expressed that until they had accessed the Paladin service, they were unaware that previous support was inadequate. As detailed, empowerment is a key aspect of the work carried out by Paladin, as the CJS process can be a very long one and the victim does not always get the best outcome. Despite this, with the right support the service user can be better equipped to deal with the situation should the stalking reoccur, as in this example.

I'm thinking, well the issues are still the same, you know, if anything, he's getting more brazen, considering he's had like quite a heavy, like quite intense dealing with the police and the courts and everything... I need to probably like do a risk assessment, open this case up, she (the victim) is like, no, no, no, I know exactly who I need to go to in the

police. Thank you for your support, I know if things don't work out, I can come back to you. But I'll go to this person, I'll do this... (Staff member 1)

Paladin also try to educate others beyond the CJS about the risks, such as employers. Staff described influencing workplaces to put safeguarding measures in place so their service users can continue to work. In one instance after the ISAC had contacted their Human Resources the employers set up a buddy scheme, staggered work patterns and provided safer parking. Paladin have challenged employers to ensure they have a stalking and DVA policy in place. Such work is aimed at keeping service users as safe as possible and providing some reassurance that their employers are taking their situation seriously.

## Impact for Victims

Service user interview participants talked about the impact Paladin has had on their lives. The accounts of service users were overwhelmingly positive. Paladin was described as a lifeline. Many acknowledged that without the support of Paladin things would not have changed for them, in fact many said that their situations would have worsened. The practical and emotional support was conveyed as invaluable.

Like I say, I, literally, don't think I'd be in this situation now, where it seems to be coming to the end, if it weren't for them. I think I'd have just been living it and it would have, well who knows what would have happened. (Service User 8)

I felt suicidal, so scared, so alone and having that service there she was my lifeline. ... she taught me the skills, she taught me how to just breath, just cope with it really and she made me feel some faith that I'll get through the end of it. (Service user 15)

Importantly, ISAC support had made a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of the service users we interviewed. Increased confidence, greater resilience, and feeling safer were key aspects of the improvements to their wellbeing. Stalking victim's mental health was often referred to during our interviews. Staff described victims as traumatised when they are initially contacted, not just because of the abusive behaviours of their stalkers but also because of their poor treatment by professionals. With a strength-based approach the service aims to instil confidence in its users. For one staff member this begins with validating their experiences.

So, it's about validating their experience and what they've gone through, which makes them feel more like they're being believed. Because when somebody feels as though they're not being believed, they will have very low self-esteem... (Staff member 4)

As well as acknowledging and validating the service users' experiences, enhancing their knowledge of stalking and the law, and safety planning helped to increase self-confidence. Although there were few suggestions that all was perfect, there were plenty of examples of positive change.

I mean I was so, so down when I first spoke to her (ISAC). Yes, like I say, my confidence is back, I'm going out now. I wouldn't go out into the town where he was, but I am now. (Service User 3)

Staff talked about using their skillsets to recognise the impact the stalking was having on their client, tailoring their approach to best move them forward in their case and support them to access any additional support where available, such as the Women's Centre or counselling. An aim of the service is to build up victims' resilience to deal with what can be a long process with sometimes disappointing CJS outcomes. Having someone to encourage and support them through often very difficult times by providing a reassuring voice helped to keep service users engaged and motivated.

I mean just having that when I had the low moments, to be told by somebody that understood what I was going through completely, that I will get through it, and that when it comes down to it, I will have that bravery, it was such a huge part of me handling it. (Service user 11)

Although CJS outcomes were not always favourable, Paladin had, in some cases, helped victims to get restraining orders and convictions. Despite a lack of satisfactory CJS outcomes in many cases, service users generally reported a reduction in some of their anxieties and stated feeling somewhat safer as a result of the safety planning with their ISAC.

I feel much more sort of chilled and relaxed... I mean I'm not saying that I'll never look over my shoulder ever again, I think I'm still always going to do that naturally, I think that will take time. But I just feel like I've taken the necessary steps, listened to all the advice and I know what to do should I be in this situation again or should anything else arise. (Service user 6)

Service user interviews revealed that Paladin had a positive impact not only on their case but on their emotional wellbeing. Even the one service user who said that they had felt let down by the service, acknowledged that initially the support had impacted positively on her wellbeing and in moving the case forward. However, the negative impact of her latter experiences of Paladin should be recognised and reflected upon. Her experience also highlights the importance of consistency of support workers.

The service data below illustrates positive movement made in the 110 closed cases that had come to a natural conclusion.

Outcome data: Outcomes at Case Closure

Outcome Data

Positive movement was recorded for 75% of service users (n=110) whose case came to a natural closure following completion of ISAC support.

- 60% reported increased confidence
- 56% had increased in improving their own safety
- 53% recorded a reduction in their risk
- 41% reported a reduction in isolation

Feedback Form Data: Predicted outcomes without Paladin support

When asked to describe how things would be different if they had not accessed Paladin, survey participants most frequently expressed the following:

- Their poor emotional state due to their stalking experience would probably have worsened.
- Paladin was the difference between giving up and carrying on; whether this referred to leaving a job, giving up on their case or even on life.
- They would not have gained the awareness or knowledge about stalking.
- Their stalking experience and the negative impact would likely have been prolonged.



*'The worry and anxiety would have been higher. It was all overwhelming'*

*'I was suicidal... I couldn't see a way forward ... (the) help and support changed my way of thinking and I have been able to move forward...'*

*'I wouldn't have known about the extra options available to me in terms of the court case and extra support and ways I can take action to keep myself safe.'*

*'I think the process and experience would have been longer, harder and more stressful'*



## Case study: Stephanie

Stephanie's ex-partner had been abusive, excessively jealous and coercively controlling during their relationship. He had a history of criminal behaviour, DVA, sexual abuse, stalking and was involved with gangs. She had moved as a result of the continued stalking and was referred into Paladin from local DVA service that were closing the case as she had moved out of area. The stalker had managed to find where she had moved to by hacking into an online account and he was able to hack into her mobile phone. Stephanie feared that he would harm her and her children. The perpetrator also made threats towards her previous ex-partner.

Stephanie had tried to report DVA to the police once they had separated but she felt that they did not see his behaviour as abusive. The perpetrator made disclosures of a sexual nature involving their young daughter; he was fixated with and would accuse Stephanie of having sexual relations with her family members. He used the family court to continue his abusive behaviour where he was trying to gain access to their daughter. Paladin provided considerable emotional support and encouragement to increase Stephanie's confidence and reduce risk. Stephanie was assessed as high risk and referred to the MARAC in her new area as this had not been transferred. Paladin also developed a safety plan with Stephanie, particularly to address the online stalking.

Paladin contacted the SPOC and requested they review Stephanie's case and consider stalking charges based on what she had previously reported. The Police force in her previous location were quite difficult in sharing information which delayed investigations and there was a failure to take a holistic approach. Paladin liaised with CPS to highlight the nature of the behaviours and the impact on the victim and with the Police to pursue criminal charges. They supported her in the civil arena, advising about orders and writing supporting letters. Stephanie was supported through the whole criminal justice process and with writing a victim personal statement.

Paladin linked with Probation when the case was adjourned for pre-sentence report so that they understood the longevity, risks and nature of the case when writing their report for sentence recommendations. A non-molestation order was granted which was breached. The perpetrator initially pleaded not guilty but at a subsequent plea and case management hearing he pleaded guilty to 3 breaches of a non-molestation order and an additional harassment charge. A 2-year restraining order was granted with robust conditions, community service, ordered to attend a Building Better Relationships course and had to pay £85 to CPS and £90 to victim support services.

Stephanie has moved again and to date there has been no further incidents.

*'Thank you for everything as you have been amazing. All your efforts are really appreciated, without which I'm not sure where I would be'. (Stephanie)*

## Identified Service Improvements

During our interviews, areas for improvement in responding to stalking were largely reserved for factors outside of Paladin’s remit. For example, longer-term wraparound emotional support to deal with trauma. Aside from one, service user interviewees said that Paladin had met their needs. It appears that in the isolated case, the handover process from one Paladin caseworker to another had not gone smoothly leaving the service user dissatisfied as her case had been discontinued/ closed.

### *Feedback Form Data: Identified areas for improvements*



When asked what areas of Paladin’s work could improve, 27 of the 58 participants (47%) who made a comment specifically expressed that they could not think of any improvements. Few of the proposed suggestions were within the control of Paladin. However, the following improvements were suggested:

#### *Additional Support*

It was suggested having a Paladin worker, with their expertise, present in court or at meetings with the police or other relevant bodies would be of great benefit to the victim. A live chat facility was also offered as a way of face-to-face support.

#### *Awareness and broadening of the service*

Although not a criticism of Paladin, participants expressed the need for more awareness of the service, and a bigger team so they could expand their reach. Fifteen participants said they would be willing to discuss their experiences with the media to help raise Paladin’s profile and awareness of stalking. A further five offered this if they could do so anonymously.

#### *Risk Assessment*

A few comments were made about the risk assessment process. One participant felt it was too rigid whilst another said more could have been done to help her workplace make an effective risk

*‘It is a really good service so I wonder if more could be done to make people aware of it.’*

*‘I would like to think that there would be future scope for staff to attend court and support victims through legal proceedings... Paladin know far more about the law and legal issues surrounding stalking so it would be fitting and extremely reassuring to be supported by such a knowledgeable and understanding service at such a stressful and overwhelming time.’*

*‘I would like to share my story so others may know they are not alone but could seek reassurance through my story.’*

*‘I would like to share my story so others may know they are not alone but could seek reassurance through my story.’*



- Paladin staff have been able to influence police actions by advising and educating them of the risks of alternative methods.
- With their knowledge of the law around stalking Paladin is often better placed than a victim to challenge the CJS and have an impact on charging outcomes. Examples were given whereby the direct actions of Paladin had led to charging reviews.
- By educating them around stalking laws, Paladin have empowered their service users to challenge police and the wider CJS themselves. Processing stalking cases can take a long time and empowering victims to take some control is seen as an important element of Paladin's work.
- The support of the service has also had a direct impact on the wellbeing of its users. Safety planning and emotional support provided by Paladin was described as a lifeline.
- The strengths-based approach of the service is designed to enhance victim's confidence and resilience. Service users talked of being at a very low point of their lives prior to working with Paladin. Although, the stalking may not have ceased in all cases and the desired CJS outcomes may not have materialised, service users generally expressed feeling more confident and resilient, having acquired better coping strategies as result of the support they received.

## 9. Awareness of Stalking and Wider Improvements

There is a need for increased awareness of stalking for victims, agencies and the general public. Enhanced awareness might lead to improvements in practice and response and help victims to access support sooner. There is also a need to raise the profile of specialist service provision. However, it should be remembered that increasing awareness can increase demand for support. Further resources would be needed to address increased demand.

### The importance of improving awareness for victims

All victims participating in the evaluation confirmed that since working with Paladin their understanding of the nature and impact of stalking, the associated risks and the law had increased considerably. They explained that their increased understanding would help them to identify stalking behaviours in the future and be able to help or encourage others to access support from Paladin.

Participants discussed their initial misconceptions around stalking and how these resulted in an inability to accurately define their experience. They explained that prior to their victimisation they would not have understood the pattern of behaviour, the impact of stalking or how it manifests.

I'm much more aware of the risks, the behaviours. I had no idea, so the best way to describe me when I was referred into Paladin, is clueless...I honestly thought, when I left him, it was over. (Service user 13)

I was one of these, you're only being stalked if somebody is physically following you or jumping out of bushes, because that's what you say, isn't it? ...But it isn't, it's made me more aware that it happens everywhere. Online is a major, major, major thing. You can't be safe online. They think, just because you're not seeing that person, that you can't be a victim of stalking. (Service user 4)

Participants explained that most wider professionals did not identify reported or witnessed behaviours as stalking, often deeming it as harassment or malicious communication. Where perpetrators had mental health problems, the stalking was also minimised. This lack of identification meant that victims similarly did not recognise their experience as stalking or understand the severity of what was happening. Consequently, victims were sometimes dismissive of behaviours themselves, thinking/ hoping that it would stop, or they normalised the perpetrators behaviour.

In order to bring about change, victims said they needed to know that what was happening was unacceptable, support was available, and something could be done to address it.

However, as noted throughout the report, victim's concerns were more frequently trivialised by others or they were seen as responsible which compounded the situation and feelings of isolation and self-blame. The data in this report has consistently highlighted a need for increased awareness.

That's what I got told from the police, that's not stalking. And it was only talking to Paladin, she said to me, it absolutely is stalking...I just thought...because the police didn't take it serious, well it wasn't serious. (Service user 9)

It's like 'oh well you must have been giving him a come on for him to be like that' and it's like how fucking dare you. People just don't understand I've done nothing to deserve to be treated this way...You must've done something wrong. And that's very much the way people made me feel until Paladin...It's like being trapped...I couldn't even go the shop you know my electric run out but because he lived around the corner, I couldn't even go to the corner shop. You can't do anything you feel so alone. (Service user 15)

In contrast to some negative responses of family, friends and professionals, Paladin provided service users with both confirmation and a more nuanced understanding of their stalking experience. Recognising the seriousness of their situation could sometimes enhance feelings of fear however the strategies outlined in section 6 helped to alleviate such concerns.

Increased understanding of the law was considered helpful and this was provided by Paladin staff explaining processes and procedures, understand what was taking place and supporting them to attend court.

It's made me see...how serious of a crime it is. I didn't think it was serious and because of the way my case was being handled...it made me believe that, you know, it wasn't actually a serious thing. But Paladin helped me understand that it was. (Service user 7)

...she explained a lot about the dynamics of it...unless you've experienced it, you don't know what constitutes it...when he targeted my workplace, it was like understanding how the law works...she was able to educate me with those factors...it went on for, three years, so my understanding of the law, because I've had to go through that many court proceedings and all of that, I feel like I've got a good working knowledge of the system now, but a lot of that was because of her. (Service user 11)

Victims described receiving information from Paladin over the telephone or via post or email and some participants said they had then undertaken further online research of their own. Participants explained that they were then able to use their knowledge of the law (combined with their improved confidence to challenge professionals to take appropriate action.

With regards to the impact of stalking, many participants explained that they would never have thought they would be a victim of stalking and described the consequences for their physical and emotional/ psychological safety. We repeatedly heard that it had permeated every aspect of their life. Victims described changing their behaviours and the impact on their relationships with others, feeling isolated and, in some cases, terrified.

Yes, it was really severe...I'd get bombarded with around seventy calls from her a day...I'd block her number, she'd call me with other phones, call me on no caller ID. Make fake accounts on social media to get into contact with me. I closed my social media...So she bombarded my [family], friends, told them all lies...Made up stories, made up conversations, just tried so hard to ruin my life really. (Service user 7)

...little things, like now, when I come home from work, I shut all the blinds and curtains, so that I can't be seen. Little things like that, I've never done that before...I've also reduced my friends circle...I am a lot more suspicious about people and people's motives...I think that will take some time to change. (Service user 6)

Victims explained that prior to their experience of stalking, and validation by Paladin they had not fully recognised the impact stalking had had on their everyday life. They explained that more awareness is needed so that victims and potential victims have a fuller understand of the impact and can manage their personal self-care and the support systems around them. Almost all service users interviewed described a distressing journey to support and expressed a willingness to share their story in order to raise awareness for others in the hope that they could then access support sooner.

I'd like to do a talk one day really, on how it affects people...I was a professional person with a really good career, which has crumbled because of this...it's so sad how stalking can ruin lives...I'd like to have the opportunity and platform to speak out about it really, and talk about what it's really like. (Service user 5)

Where their experience was more positive it was because the stalking behaviour had been recognised and they had been signposted to ISAC support. In two cases, an employer signposted an employee to the service. However, one victim was unaware how her line manager was aware of Paladin and for another employer, their awareness of Paladin was attributable to living in the same local area as a Paladin staff member.

Feedback Form Data: Understanding of Stalking and the Law



Based on the responses in the feedback forms, service users understanding of stalking and the law has been enhanced since working with Paladin.

Statement	Agreed	Breakdown (n)
I feel that since paladin involvement, I have a better understanding of stalking and the law		72 agreed 0 disagreed 3 did not answer

Raising awareness amongst victims alone was not considered enough. Some service users believed that it was more important to focus on training professionals and agencies than to raise awareness amongst the general public (such as friends and family members) because, in their view, it was these agencies who would act, help to gather evidence, and refer to specialist support. It appeared that victims made a distinction between those who they perceived could offer practical support and those who could not. Confirmation and validation from others, including professionals is also key to recognising what is happening, as detailed throughout this report. However, the general public includes professionals and therefore awareness raising activities should not be restricted to targeted agencies.

## The importance of improving awareness for professional agencies

Paladin staff and service users established that there was a need for improved awareness amongst professionals in order to provide an appropriate and consistent response to victims. There was a particular lack of knowledge around stalking legislation, the severity of stalking and its impact. Staff members explained that there was a lack of understanding around the new legislation, Stalking Protection Orders, and how they could be utilised as well as limited knowledge of earlier legislation.

I think a lot of people have these sorts of stereotypical ideas of what's kind of put out there in the media. You know, it's often strangers or it happens to high-profile celebrities...Rather than a lot of the things that, I guess, all cases that we come across, there has to be some element usually, of online cyber stalking. Because people don't associate a lot of behaviours with stalking. (Staff member 1)

Interestingly several staff indicated the lack of knowledge and competence around stalking compared to professional understanding of DVA. This was particularly the case surrounding new legislation. We suspect this is attributable to the women's movement which began in the 1970's and has established national and local service provision.

...if we can train more professionals and then they can, obviously, raise awareness with their service users, whether that's a teacher or a GP or, I think it's a massive thing. I think stalking's where domestic abuse was like thirty years ago. (Staff member 5)

It is worth noting that the end of the evaluation and write-up stage of this report occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was heightened awareness of DVA including media reports, helpline advertisements and social media messages. However, there was much less awareness around the impact on stalking or advice for victims, including where the stalker may be an ex-partner. Staff and service users feel that this is reflective of the situation generally and that there is a repeated information deficit concerning stalking.

Victims of DVA also explained that the focus was often on their experiences of DVA rather than stalking specifically. Where their case was not related to a partner or ex-partner service users explained that professionals struggled to understand their situation.

I would say most people that I've spoken to about it at my University know someone, know of him or know someone that's had a bit of a horrible interaction with him...the University could have stopped it a lot sooner, or the police could have definitely stopped it a lot sooner... I think there's training needed to recognise, that...gender based crime is different...to like, I don't know, getting in a fight at a pub or, you know...gender based violence is different and it should be treated differently. (Service user 14)

...my case, it wasn't a domestic violence case. This wasn't anything to do with an ex-partner. It was somebody that was hatefully obsessed with me quite randomly. So, I think the education lies with the infrastructure of those services perhaps...I think that's the only way to kind of raise awareness in that sense, isn't it?...there's been a lot of services that I've dealt with that I wouldn't have known has existed, had it not been for them offering training for my workplace. (Service user 11)

Awareness among professionals was seen to improve through conversations around individual cases. Whilst conversations were useful in educating individual professionals, they were considered to have less impact than targeting an organisation as a whole. It is important that professionals know how to translate that awareness into action. Staff confirmed the need for organisations to undergo training so that they had the confidence to tackle stalking as part of their role. They described delivering training sessions to the police, health professionals, DVA agencies and victim support services to help them recognise stalking behaviour, provide help and signpost to stalking advocacy services. In these sessions Paladin provided knowledge and

understanding of the law and the evidence required; challenged existing misconceptions and terminology around stalking; and clarified the differences between stalking and harassment. Staff also described providing accredited training across the UK to support the development of Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC).

One service user recommended that all police officers should receive mandatory training. There were a small number of suggestions that employers should be targeted so that they could improve the support offered to staff. Current awareness of stalking is patchy and inconsistent which means that victims face a lottery when seeking intervention and support. The goal must go beyond an awareness campaign aimed at professionals into specific actions to overcome current obstacles and drive change. To address this, one staff member suggested a role of local stalking advocates who would have responsibility for stalking in their area and support other professionals around this work, including making referrals to Paladin where required and providing guidance around new legislation. This would help to recognise warning signs much earlier and provide service before risk escalates.

Paladin continue to deliver training to professionals to improve understanding of stalking. As identified throughout the report, interviewees acknowledged that there is a general lack of understanding amongst professionals, with the existence of stereotypical ideas of stalking. However, they have observed some improvements amongst police and other professionals, whilst recognising further developments are needed.

... the legislation's there, the law's there, it's just going to take, I think it's probably where domestic abuse was fifteen years ago and it's just, it's going to slowly, slowly trickle through... there was eighteen people there, we had done a full day's training, who left saying, we now understand the difference between stalking and harassment.  
(Staff member 3)

Since 2019 Paladin have delivered awareness raising sessions to approximately 280 individuals via bespoke training, workshops and at conferences. This figure includes 107 professionals who have attended full day training sessions; 33 professionals who have completed the accredited ISAC course; and 29 Youth Ambassadors.

The quotes below have been provided by Paladin following feedback from participants attending these awareness raising activities. Further information can be found in their most recent audit report.

‘Good to explore differences between harassment and stalking, really helped with understanding around the topic.’

‘Excellent use of case studies, a really eye-opening day, it was interesting to hear how all the different agencies approach safety planning – some of which I will be applying in my role.’

‘It was so helpful to understand how stalking should be handled within the Police. I feel armed with information to try and make changes locally.’

‘All the topics of discussion were fantastic. I found the breakdown of SPO’s very helpful.’

‘Discussing stalking typologies and vignettes completed during this session were really useful.’

‘Brilliant speaker, good use of techniques and useful strategies to take away with me.’

‘The unit was amazing; I am really grateful to be taking away some very useful tools. These are all tools I know I will use in both my personal and work life.’

‘I feel I have gained a lot of knowledge from the ISAC course which I can use in my work and further support my colleagues. I have a lot more confidence in challenging professionals and decisions and advocating on behalf of my clients. Thank you to [PALDADIN STAFF] for sharing your knowledge and experiences in supporting clients’.

‘I feel a lot more confident in supporting both intimate and non DVA stalking victims. This will grow even more when I put into practice all that I have learnt.’

‘Very informative, I feel empowered and more confident to advocate for the people I support.’

The quotes above identify the value practitioners placed on gaining additional tools to support victims of stalking in their work. The training is seen to provide improved knowledge and understanding of stalking and confidence in supporting victims. Further research is needed to see if this is maintained post training and if these improvements extend to increased identification of stalking behaviours/ cases. Areas for improvement identified by participants included providing more group activities to facilitate participant learning.

These examples and requests for training indicate an appetite for an improved professional response to stalking victims. Other services are also restricted by funding and working beyond capacity. Improving awareness beyond services may therefore be helpful as an additional way to improve knowledge and understanding of stalking and the support available.

## The importance of improving awareness to the general public

Three staff members discussed Paladin board members participating in media coverage, such as documentaries and radio which was helpful for victims to understand stalking and learn about the support available from Paladin. Examples can be found in appendix 4. However, service users believed that there still needed to be much more coverage in the national press. They suggested including more case studies and statistics to help educate and challenge existing beliefs. They suggested adverts and storylines in television soaps. These should cover different intersections and experiences such as different stalking relationships (stranger, partner, acquaintance), gender, age and ethnicity. A small number of service users also suggested that awareness sessions should be delivered in schools and colleges.

Staff explained that they had been working to increase awareness of stalking and ISAC support via their website and social media, using platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They also provided an online question and answer session for professionals. Staff described consulting with young people through their Youth Ambassador Scheme around the best ways to communicate online. These Youth Ambassadors are aged 16-25 years old and have received specific training around stalking and abuse. They intend to make real tangible difference themselves by raising awareness of stalking in the areas in which they live, or online, and signpost other young people to specialist support.

For National Stalking Awareness Week 20th-25th April 2020 Paladin promoted the campaign 'See Stalking Clearly' with the aim of making sure stalking victims are still visible and supported throughout the response to Covid19 through the National Stalking Helpline, police and other vital services such as Paladin. Hashtags #NSAW2020 #SeeStalkingClearly and #YouAreNotAlone.



In the evaluation service user interview participants confirmed that social media was a helpful platform but that it was possibly not promoted enough at present.

I had no idea at the time I was being stalked for a good for a long time before I even knew there was anything like [Paladin] about I feel like there needs to be more promotion like say social media, Facebook, Instagram. If people know that these services about then it be easier to access...if you could just put a few messages you know like domestic violence and stuff you see that as you're scrolling through. 'If anyone is suffering from domestic violence call this number you're not alone' and I've never seen anything about stalking like that anywhere. (Service user 15)

One service user explained that the lack of visibility or recognition around stalking awareness contributed to feeling isolated or blameworthy. Another explained that she had started to write her own blog, originally for herself but also as a form of activism, to raise awareness for

others.

As well as a lack of awareness about stalking, the law and its impact there was consequently an absence of knowledge surrounding the specialist support available. As noted earlier in the report, victims described long periods of stalking before they were referred to Paladin for support. Service users and staff interviewees expressed that because of the skillset available at Paladin the service is uniquely situated to support victims of stalking. Therefore, it is imperative that victims, professionals and the general public know that this specialist provision exists. Awareness raising activities must therefore take a strategic approach to target multiple realms. As many people as possible need knowledge and understanding about stalking and be empowered with tools and information to take direct or indirect action. The importance of awareness and access to appropriate support is highlighted in the case of Hannah, overleaf.



## Case Study: Hannah

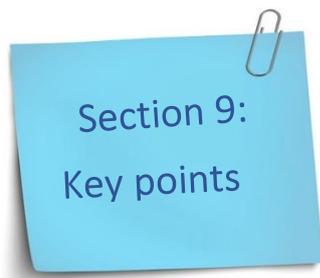
Hannah contacted paladin directly and was very distressed emotional and scared. Hannah had received unwanted letters and gifts from her stalker, whom she had previously been in an abusive on/off relationship with for 3 years. He had contacted her via social media, knew her whereabouts and had tried to gain entry to her property. Hannah also believed that he was following her and was monitoring her house. She was staying at friends and families houses to help keep herself safe as she was too frightened to stay at her own property alone. Hannah was struggling to sleep, felt anxious, scared and emotional and had removed herself from social media and stopped going out. She had been given some time off work, and her employer was supportive.

Hannah, who was aware of the perpetrators violent abuse towards an ex-partner, had made several reports to the police (via 999 and 101 calls) about the stalking behaviour, had provided evidence and given full statements. However, the police informed her that they were unable to arrest due to low numbers of officers and the OIC had been told by their sergeant that “she is not able to arrest perpetrator right now”. Hannah felt the police were not taking her seriously and were failing to offer any intervention to the stalking.

Paladin provided emotional support and validated Hannah’s concerns. This helped her to feel empowered and she worked with Paladin to challenge the police. Paladin contacted the OIC who provided inconsistent contact and made little progress. The CPS returned the case with a request for additional evidence, but this was not done for an additional 6 weeks. Paladin raised the case with the area Stalking lead for guidance and approached CPS and SPOC with concerns. They supported Hannah to provide a victim personal statement. Due to covid-19 and the perpetrator pleading not guilty, the trial has been delayed.

Since working with Paladin, Hannah’s confidence in her safety has increased. Going forward Hannah wishes to raise awareness of stalking and raise funds for Paladin. She has already participated in interviews with the media, sharing her experiences of stalking.

*“I would have been lost without ISAC” (Hannah)*



- The failure to recognise or trivialise stalking behaviours was mentioned repeatedly. There is a need for increased awareness of stalking for victims, agencies and the general public.
- There is also a need to raise the profile of specialist service provision such as the Paladin service. Many victims and professionals were unaware that the service existed.
- Victims confirmed that working with Paladin increased their understanding of the nature and impact of stalking, the associated risks and the law. It also helped them to explain their situation to others or challenge negative responses.
- Paladin is educating professionals through training delivery and their advocacy work with the aim of improving their understanding of what constitutes stalking and the risks it poses to victims. Training was considered an essential way to enhance knowledge and understanding of organisations and agencies beyond individual professionals. It was also important that this awareness could be translated into practice.
- Increased media coverage, adverts, television storylines and an increased social media presence were important ways to raise awareness of stalking and specialist service provision. Early education was also suggested.

## Conclusion

This research evaluation provides findings about the Paladin service and the support they provide. The majority of victims of stalking referred to Paladin in 2019 were White British females. Victims commonly knew their stalker and in most cases this had been an intimate partner. Many victims experience being stalked for long periods. These high risk victims received advocacy services from Paladin. ISAC support is largely around safety planning to ensure service users receive an improved response from the Police.

Service user participants largely talked very positively of Paladin when discussing how important interwoven areas of support had met their needs and exceeded their expectations. Service users highlighted the speed of the response from Paladin once a referral had been made. They also described the benefits of access to ongoing support via telephone or email and the consistency of the service response. The varying length of time support is accessed illustrates the bespoke nature of the service.

Most participants had few initial expectations of Paladin, due to little prior knowledge of the services and previous poor responses to their stalking victimisation. When asked to compare, participants described their positive experiences of Paladin to be in stark contrast to their largely negative encounters with the CJS. The findings indicate that the Paladin service continues to improve awareness, understanding and knowledge of stalking and its impact for victims and professionals. It also enhances victim confidence in talking about stalking to others. Victims reported reduced fear and isolation alongside improved emotional wellbeing and enhanced safety as a result of ISAC support. Victims identified improved responses from other professional agencies, particularly criminal justice agencies.

Further research would be useful to increase wider understanding of stalking and its impact. For example, more knowledge about children's experiences stalking where their parent was a victim would be helpful. It would also be interesting to see if a victim having children makes any difference to the response of and perception of risk by other agencies such as the police. A larger scale evaluation could also capture more nuances around additional needs of victims such as those with a BAME background, male victims, or young people. It could also consider the extent to which stalking legislation is understood and utilised (or not) by criminal justice agencies.

Key findings are detailed below in relation to the research questions outlined at the beginning of the report.

### Did high risk victims of stalking receive advocacy services for stalking?

Prior to contact with Paladin, appropriate support for victims was identified as rare. A lack of expertise in stalking meant the support received from DVA agencies whilst beneficial, was felt to be insufficient to meet all their needs. Due to the lack of specialist provision nationwide,

stalking victims need to be at a point of high risk of serious harm before being eligible to access appropriate support provided by Paladin.

Paladin aimed to improve accessibility for BAME victims, younger victims and those with complex needs. However, it was suggested that easier access to additional resources would help them to further meet the needs of all service users. Limited funding capacity means that Paladin are limited to working with high risk victims of stalking, and so it is important for staff to continue to extend their assessment of beyond the usual narrative of physical harm to include ongoing psychological harm and contextual factors. Further work is needed to investigate the referrals who could not be contacted, declined the service or disengaged after initially accepting support.

#### Did high risk victims of stalking gain a greater understanding and awareness of stalking behaviours and its impact?

High risk victims of stalking confirmed that working with Paladin increased their understanding of the nature and impact of stalking, the associated risks and the law. By educating them around stalking laws, Paladin have empowered their service users to challenge police and the wider CJS themselves. Processing stalking cases can be a lengthy process and empowering victims to take some control is seen as an important element of Paladin's work. Improved knowledge and understanding also helped victims to explain their situation to others or to challenge negative responses, both of which they had felt unable to do previously.

#### Were feelings of fear and isolation reduced for victims?

Being stalked was described by service users as an extremely frightening experience, which significantly impacted on their daily lives. There is a lack of understanding amongst family and friends and the general public which compounds the negative experiences of victims of stalking. Participants talked about increased sense of isolation and self-doubt as a result. Service users talked of being at a very low point of their lives prior to working with Paladin.

The strengths-based approach of the Paladin service was found to enhance victim confidence and resilience. Although, the stalking may not have ceased in all cases and the desired CJS outcomes may not have materialised, service users generally expressed feeling more confident and resilient, having acquired better coping strategies as result of the support they received. Victims described feeling safer and less isolated and the responsiveness and availability of support contributed to this.

#### Was emotional wellbeing and safety of victims improved?

Safety planning and emotional support provided by Paladin was described as a lifeline. Paladin provide emotional support in the form of listening to, understanding and believing victims of stalking. The validation and affirmation offered by Paladin was significant. Support from

Paladin led to increased feelings of empowerment. This extended to reporting incidents of stalking, attending appointments and attending court.

The empathic approach of staff had made a huge difference to service users, being believed and having the opportunity to talk of their experiences was expressed as invaluable for their wellbeing. However, a gap was identified in terms of long-term wraparound emotional support. Paladin take account of the whole situation as a pattern of behaviour and not view stalking as isolated incidents. They provide practical safety advice and interventions such as alarms to improve victim safety. This includes working with employers and the police. Safety planning and evidence gathering are key elements to this support.

#### Did high risk victims report improved responses from other professional agencies?

Many service users interviewed voiced their dissatisfaction at the CJS response to their reports of stalking behaviour. They felt that a lack of understanding by the police resulted in a failure to recognise stalking behaviour and its impact on victims. Despite the existence of stalking legislation victims are often advised by Police there is nothing they can do.

Establishing good working relationships with other agencies was described as a crucial element of supporting service users. Advocacy work had helped move cases forward which was pivotal, particularly for those victims who were on the brink of giving up. With their knowledge of the law around stalking Paladin is often better placed than a victim to challenge the CJS and have an impact on charging outcomes. Paladin staff have been able to influence police actions by advising and educating them of the risks of alternative methods. Examples were given whereby the direct actions of Paladin had led to charging reviews. The qualitative data gathered from service user interviews and feedback forms confirm the improved responses attributable to the work of Paladin.

#### Was the awareness of the risks and nature of stalking raised within the public domain?

The evaluation found that many victims of stalking may not have access to Paladin because victims and services supporting them are unaware the service exists. The failure to recognise or trivialise stalking behaviours was mentioned repeatedly. Significant efforts are being made to increase awareness of the service and stalking behaviours but there are areas which require improvement. There is an identified need for increased awareness of stalking for victims, agencies and the general public. There is also a need to raise the profile of specialist service provision such as the Paladin service.

Paladin is educating professionals through training delivery and their advocacy work with the aim of improving their understanding of what constitutes stalking and the risks it poses to victims. Training was considered an essential way to enhance knowledge and understanding of organisations and agencies beyond individual professionals. It was also important that this awareness could be translated into practice. Increased media coverage, adverts, television

storylines and an increased social media presence were important ways to raise awareness of stalking and specialist service provision. Early education was also suggested.

## Recommendations

1. Increased service capacity would enable provision for victims of stalking to be more comprehensive and available for those at low, medium and high risk.
2. Paladin should continue to ensure access to all communities and in particular target BAME victims, younger victims and women with complex needs, to ensure access to support.
3. Effective and wide-reaching strategies are needed to raise awareness of stalking and of the specialist provision available. This should include continuing and enhancing Paladin's online presence. However, caution is exercised due to the limited resources available to support increased demand.
4. Increased training and resources for voluntary and statutory professionals, particularly the criminal justice sector, would be beneficial. Any training needs to be embedded and regularly updated to allow for staff turnover and changes in the law.
5. Long-term evaluation of Paladin services to victims of stalking is required which can provide both quantitative and qualitative longitudinal data. A larger scale evaluation could also capture more nuances around additional needs of victims such as those with a BAME background, male victims, or young people.
6. More knowledge about children's experiences stalking where their parent was a victim would be beneficial. .

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## Appendix 1 – Service User Participant Information Sheet

# Evaluation of Paladin Service Use

### Who is this information for?

This is for people who have accessed the Paladin Service. Before you decide if to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Participation is voluntary and deciding not take part will not affect your use of the service now, or in the future.

### Why is this research being done?

The Paladin Service committed to reducing stalking and its impacts. We are undertaking an independent evaluation into how effective their work has been and how it could be improved. To do this we need your views on what worked well and what you feel could be done better.

### Who is doing the research?

We are a group of researchers who regularly carry out research around experiences of violence and abuse. Paul and Kelly will be leading on these interviews.

### What will I be asked to do?

We are asking people who have used the Paladin Service to take part in an interview over the telephone. The interview will take place at a time convenient for you. The researcher has some questions about your experience of the service you have received. The conversation will be audio-recorded and typed up by a professional typist afterwards. For example, the researcher will ask: *What was the most useful aspect of the support you have received?*

The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. We will provide you with a £15 voucher to compensate for your time.

### Will what I say be confidential?

Your confidentiality and safety are important to us. We may use some of what you tell us in our report or other articles we may write but we will never use your name or any other personal information. We will ensure that any quotes cannot be used to identify you.

We will give everyone who takes part a false name or code number. However, if you tell us that you or a child or young person is at risk of serious harm then we will have to a worker at Paladin, but we will talk to you about this first.

*Please be assured that anything you say within the interview will not impact on the services you currently receive.*

Information provided in the interview will be kept private and confidential by all staff involved with the research project. We will keep all data such as recordings and write-ups secure in accordance with data protection regulations.

The telephone interview should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time during the interview. We would like to record the interview and verbal consent can be provided at the start if okay with you.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research study.

## Appendix 2 – Staff Participant Information Sheet

### Paladin Evaluation

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Dr Kelly Bracewell and Paul Hargreaves

### Information Sheet for Staff Interviews

**Who is this information for?**

We are inviting practitioners in your service to participate in an interview. The interview will ask about your experiences of service delivery and awareness raising activities.

**Why is this research being done?**

We are undertaking an independent evaluation of service which can be provided to funders. Service users are also being invited to participate in an interview.

**What's involved if I take part?**

The interview will be arranged at a time that suits you. It will last approximately 45-60 minutes. We will ask you about your work and the service you work for. We will also request some details about other agencies you work with regularly. If you agree, we would like to audio-record the conversation, which will then be typed up by a professional typist.

It is your choice whether to take part and you can stop the interview at any time. You will be reminded of this information and asked for your consent again before any conversations are recorded. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason and up to 2 weeks after by emailing "NO CONSENT" to [KBracewell1@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:KBracewell1@uclan.ac.uk)

**Confidentiality?**

We may use some of what you tell us in our report, journal articles or in conference presentations about the research but we will never use your name or any other personal information. We will disguise the identity of everyone who takes part to ensure that you cannot be recognized. We will ensure that any quotes cannot be used to identify you. We will only use generic job titles. We will keep interview recordings and write-ups secure and they will be destroyed within five years.

Thank you for considering taking part in this study.

## STAFF INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Please read the following statements and tick the boxes if you agree:

- I have read the research information sheet and I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I agree to this interview being recorded
- My participation is voluntary, and I understand I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason and up to 2 weeks after
- I understand that information which suggests that there may be serious risks to me or a child cannot be kept confidential and I have had this explained to me
- I understand that my participation will be anonymous and any details that identify anyone will not be included in reports or other publications produced from the research
- I agree to take part in the research

Please sign below to give your consent

Name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: / /

Name of researcher (PRINT): Kelly Bracewell/ Paul Hargreaves

Signature of researcher : \_\_\_\_\_

Date: / /

## Appendix 3 – Service User Feedback Form

### Paladin Feedback Form

We'd really appreciate it if you could tell us about your experience of using our service. It's important for us to know what we're doing well and how we can get better, so that we can go on improving the support we offer to people who have experienced stalking.

Please complete and return to [info@paladinservice.co.uk](mailto:info@paladinservice.co.uk)

Date:	Case Number:	Worker name:		
<b>Please tick from the following and leave comments:</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>My Comments</b>	
I feel that Paladin listened, responded and supported my needs appropriately				
I feel that staff at Paladin have been knowledgeable and competent				
I feel that Paladin is a non-judgemental service				
I'm happy with the safety advice provided by Paladin				
I feel confident in being able to put this safety advice into practice				
I feel that Paladin helped to reduce my isolation				
I feel that Paladin helped to increase my confidence in making my own choices/decisions				
I feel that since Paladin involvement, I have a better understanding of Stalking and the law				
I feel that Paladin signposted me to the most appropriate services to meet any additional needs				
I would recommend Paladin to friends/family if they needed help				
After being supported by Paladin, I feel more confident to ask for help from agencies				
Please comment on the specific support that you felt Paladin provided that helped you:				
Please comment on any area's that you feel we need to improve within the service and how you feel we can accomplish this:				
How would things be different if you hadn't accessed Paladin:				
Due to Paladin completing a lot of campaigning for Stalking we often get asked by the media whether we have any previous service users that would be willing to discuss the Stalking that they have experienced and the effect that this has had on them anonymously.  Is this something that you would be willing to participate in? If so, are you happy for us to keep your contact details and contact you in the future?				

**Your feedback is extremely important to us so thank you for taking the time to complete and return the feedback form.**

## Appendix 4 – Raising awareness in the national press

The links below provide examples of recent media articles which are helpful to raise awareness of both stalking behaviours and the support available. Trustees are also actively involved by providing television interviews e.g. BBC News, Sky News; ITV news. Further examples and updates can be found on Paladin's website. Activities also took place during the initial 'lockdown' period of the COVID-19 crisis.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/have-stalker-lockdown-recently-found-security-camera-stopped/>

<https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/18455618.sister-murder-victim-speaks-rise-domestic-violence-stalking-lockdown/>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/women-isolated-scared-rise-cyberstalking-lockdown-britain/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-stalking-domestic-abuse-harassment-paladin-a9475071.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/may/08/coronavirus-surge-stalking-victims-seeking-help-during-uk-lockdown>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/need-get-real-piece-paper-will-not-protect-victims-serial/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/19/new-stalking-prevention-orders-victims-at-risk>

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/stalking-victims-living-fear-terror-18122448>

<https://www.itv.com/news/2018-10-21/mps-call-for-national-register-of-serial-stalkers-and-domestic-abusers/>

<https://paladinservice.co.uk/nsaw-paladin-bulletin/>



### **'I am scared to go into the garden': Stalking victims reveal horror of lockdown as reports rise**

'Since lockdown, I ensure all curtains are closed early and I don't check if he is there because I am so scared,' stalking victim tells The Independent

Maya Oppenheim Women's Correspondent | @mayaoppenheim |  
Saturday 25 April 2020 11:15 |



## Appendix 5 - Key Terms and Stalking Offences

CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DVA	Domestic Violence and Abuse
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
ISAC	Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
s.2A(1)	Stalking – harassment which involves a course of conduct that amounts to stalking.
s.4A(1)(b)(i)	Stalking involving fear of violence.
s.4A(1)(b)(ii)	Stalking involving serious alarm or distress.