

**femicide census**

women killed by men in the UK

Annual Report on UK  
Femicides 2018



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## Acknowledgements

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Over the last five years, the Femicide Census has been developed by Karen Ingala Smith and Women's Aid, and has become established as a leading articulation of men's fatal violence against women in the UK. We are now ready to take the Femicide Census into its next phase as an independent entity which will be led by Karen Ingala Smith and Clarrie O'Callaghan. We are very grateful to Women's Aid for their support and expertise in developing the impact and influence of the Femicide Census.

## Foreword

The number of women known to have been killed by men in 2018 remains high and this year reached 149. It is heartbreaking to write this. Karen has spent eight years on her project Counting Dead Women, and together we have spent seven years on the Femicide Census. The whole point in highlighting these killings is so that those who control the response to men's endemic violence against women take our data, learn from the patterns and change policy and behaviour so that fewer women are harmed and killed each year. It is heartbreaking for everyone, but most of all for the families and loved ones of the women killed, including the children left behind, but too little has been done to ensure that another woman is not killed in the same way.

As we enter a new decade with a new government, with ongoing challenges and new ones too, and with a probable continuation of institutional neglect, sexism and misogyny, we need to hold our authorities to account. All women are at risk of men's violence and the killing of women crosses all boundaries. Our data show us that, as with every year to date, the women whose lives were taken were a microcosm of British society, aged between 14 and 100 years old; they included schoolgirls and pensioners, women who worked in shops, healthcare settings, public services and the home. They included women who had enjoyed and benefited from fantastic opportunities in their lives, and women who had faced, overcome, and had their lives blighted by disadvantages and difficulties. They were ethnically and religiously diverse, representing women of many faiths and none, and most, but by no means all, UK born.

A woman is more likely to be killed by a partner or former partner than any other man and that partner is more likely than not to have hurt her, or another woman, previously. A quarter of women aged over 66 were killed by their son or grandson. There is a frenzy of activity around youth knife crime, but a woman is more likely to be killed by stabbing than any other method, yet we hear no outcry about this. Not all people with mental health problems are violent, but almost a third of perpetrators had mental health problems and one in six had problematic substance use. We know all of this. We have made recommendations that would aid the government, policymakers and statutory bodies in tackling these issues, but still the numbers of women killed do not fall. We need to see a wide-ranging, coordinated and ambitious approach to tackling men's violence against women that is located within the context of sex inequality.

Karen Ingala Smith  
Clarrie O'Callaghan

## Dedication

This report is dedicated to the 149<sup>1</sup> women killed by men in the UK in 2018, to those killed in previous years and to their grieving families and friends. We wish never to lose sight of the women behind the figures in this report, and to honour their lives.

Every effort has been made to use victims' preferred names with the correct spelling. However, media and official reports sometimes use alternative names and alternative spellings, so we apologise if the name or spelling used is not the preferred or correct version.

<sup>1</sup> At the point of publication of this report, a number of cases of femicide from 2018 could not be included, as investigations were ongoing or cases were unsolved. It is therefore believed that 149 is less than the total number of cases of femicide for 2018. Please see the Methodology section of the 2017 Femicide Census Annual Report for a discussion of the criteria by which cases are included or excluded.

## The women killed by men in 2018 to whom this report is dedicated:

Alena Grlakova	Heather Whitbread	Laura Mortimer	Rosina Coleman
Alexis Flynn	Hollie Kerrell	Leah Reek	Sabrina (Diane) Gossett
Andra Hilitanu	Hope Barden	Lesley Davies	Saeeda Hussain
Angela Conoby	Jacqueline Allen	Lesley Potter	Sally Cavender
Angela Craddock	Janet Scott	Leyla Mtumwa	Samantha Archer
Angela Mittal	Jeanna Maher	Linda McArity	Samantha Clarke
Angela Rider	Jennifer Morgan	Lisa Butler	Samantha Eastwood
Anne James	Jennifer Rogers	Lorna Myers	Samantha Gosney
Ann-Marie Pomphret	Jenny Cronin	Lorraine Matos-Sanchez	Samantha Toms
Avan Najmadeen	Jessica Patel	Lynn Forde	Sana Muhammad
Barbara Davison	Jill Hibberd	Lynn McNally	Sandra Zmijan
Bernadette Green	Jill Sadler	Margaret Harris	Sarah Wellgreen
Betty Lyons	Joan Hoggett	Margaret Howlett	Sarbjit Kaur
Carole Forth	Joanne Bishop	Marie Gibson	Sharon Harris
Carole Harrison	Joanne Gallacher	Marie Toulouse	Sharon Perrett
Cassie Hayes	Joleen Corr	Marie Walker	Sheena Jackson
Celia Levitt	Joy Morgan	Marissa Aldrich	Sheila Small
Charlotte Teeling	Joyce Burgess	Mary Ragoobeer	Sheila Thomas
Cheryl Gabriel-Hooper	Julie Clark	Maryna Zhytnyk-Kavaliauske	Shuren Ma
Christina Abbotts	Julie Hunt	Maureen Watkins	Simonne Kerr
Claire Harris	Julie Owens	Memunatu Warne	Sophie Cavanagh
Claire Tavener	Julie Reilly	Michelle Savage	Stela Domador-Kuzma
Cristina Magda-Calancea	June Jones	Natalie Hastings	Stephanie Packman
Danielle Richardson	June Knight	Natalie Saunders	Susan Gyde
Denise (Crystal) Gossett	Karen Peter	Natalie Smith	Tamara Sinakova
Denise (Michelle) Rosser	Katerina Makunova	Nazia Begum	Tasneem Sheikh
Diane Jones	Katie (Katherine) Kemp	Nicola Roberts	Teresa Garner
Elisabeta Lacatusu	Kay Richardson	Onees Khatoon	Terrie-Anne Jones
Elizabeth Lacey	Keeley Wilson	Ourania Lambrou	Tina Cantello
Faye Caliman	Kelly Franklin	Parwin Quriashi	Tracey Evans
Fiona Fisher	Kelly Worgan	Patricia Franks	Tracy Patsalides
Fiona McDonald	Khaola Saleem	Paula Harris	Tracy Stonehouse
Fiona Scourfield	Klarissa-Charlene Faith	Pauline Kilkenny	Viktorija Ijevleva
Frances Hubbard	Kylie Dembrey	Poppy Devey-Waterhouse	Viktorija Sokolova
Geraldine (Geri) Mellor	Lana-Jayne Owen	Rahman (Ruksana) Begum	Zofija Kaczan
Gita Suri	Laura De Figueira	Raneem Oudeh	
Glenda Jackson	Laura Harrison	Renata Poncova	
Heather Jordan	Laura Huteson	Riasat Bi	

# Acknowledging women killed in 2018 but not counted in the Census

## Women killed abroad<sup>2</sup>

Amelia Blake

Barbara Findlay

Grace Millane

Karen Cleary-Brown

## Unsolved UK cases<sup>3</sup>

Agnieszka Swierczynska-Jaros

Barbie Pigg

Cecilia Seddon

Claire Thompson

Claire Wright<sup>4</sup>

Dawn Sturgess

Gina Ingles

Henriett Szucs

Jacqueline Smith

Katarzyna Paszek

Linda Richardson

Maureen Whale

Mihrican Mustafa

Naheed Khan

Rebecca Halliday

Rona Wilson

Tanesha Melbourne

2 Some media reports have identified women from the UK believed to have been killed abroad by men (including unsolved cases); however, we have not included them in the figures counted in the Census. We realise there may be others who have not drawn any media coverage as well as further unsolved cases and we have not to date tried to systematically collect data for UK women killed overseas. Please see the Methodology section in the 2017 Annual Report for more information.

3 Unsolved cases include cases where women have been killed and there is evidence to suggest a male perpetrator but little further is known or no suspect has as yet been charged. The minimum criterion for case inclusion in the Census is that a man (or men) has (have) been charged.

4 At time of going to print, Warren Martin Coulton had just been charged with the manslaughter of Claire Wright and is due to appear in court: <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/man-charged-over-womans-death-17584586>. In addition, at the time of going to print, Zahid Younus was charged for the double murder of Mihrican Mustafa and Henriett Szucs.

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## Previous Reports

The Femicide Census has produced three previous reports on femicides in the UK:

*Annual Report on UK Femicides 2017*

*Annual Report on Cases of Femicide in 2016*

*Redefining an Isolated Incident*

(covering UK femicides from 2009 to 2015)

All of these reports are available at:

[http://www.niaendingviolence.org.uk/about\\_us/research.php](http://www.niaendingviolence.org.uk/about_us/research.php)

# Introduction

At least 149 women were killed by men in the UK in 2018: the highest number of known UK femicides since the Femicide Census was established in 2009.<sup>5</sup> This report presents findings on these femicides, including demographics of victims, features of the killings, demographics of perpetrators, criminal justice outcomes and sentencing.

At the time of finalising this report, 17 cases remain unsolved, still under investigation or exempt from disclosure via police Freedom of Information (FOI) Act requests. It is therefore believed that the total number of 2018 femicides is in fact likely to exceed this figure.

## Methodology

For a full discussion of methodological issues, including terminology, rationale, decisions, limitations and criteria for case inclusion, please see the Methodology section of the 2017 Annual Report.

As in previous years, sources for this report include responses from UK police forces to FOI Act requests and publicly available sources, such as news media reports. Where available, a minimum of three media sources were utilised for each case: often more sources are used, in order to develop as detailed a profile as possible.

The census database has recently been refined and expanded to enable data collection across an increased number of categories. This means that the 2018 report presents findings across a wider range of areas than in previous years. New or refined categories include health, disability, sexual orientation, history of previous abuse, the 'rough sex' defence, pleas, sentencing and use of IT in relation to the femicide.

The report is primarily quantitative. Findings are presented in chart and table form, with an accompanying narrative. For ease of reading, percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

All quotations in the report have been taken directly from news reports on cases of femicide occurring in 2018. Names and other details relating to the identity of victims and perpetrators have been removed from the main text. Please note that some of these quotations contain explicit and distressing details of abuse, violence and methods of killing.

## Context

For a detailed discussion of the current policy, and the legal and cultural context of UK femicides, please see the Context section of the 2017 report. Further to that, some relevant updates are outlined below.

At the time of writing, the Domestic Abuse Bill (England and Wales<sup>6</sup>) has undergone pre-legislative scrutiny, with several recommendations made and many accepted. Concerns remain over a number of areas; in particular over the apparent gaps in the Bill with regard to safety and justice for migrant women, women with no recourse to public funds, refugee and asylum seeking women. There also remain concerns expressed by the specialist women's sector regarding the framing of the Bill in terms of 'domestic abuse', which is deemed too narrow to adequately reflect the full range and motivation of all forms of violence against women and would also be more in line with the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW. The prorogation of Parliament in the Autumn of 2019 and the announcement of a General Election in December 2019 meant that progress of the Bill was halted, but is expected to return in the new administration.

Brexit and the General Election have dominated the 2019 news and political agenda, with the political and economic landscape characterised by uncertainty. However, in the field of violence against women and girls, a number of campaigns and initiatives have gained traction in recent months, including:

- A challenge to the Crown Prosecution Service (England and Wales) concerning the falling rape prosecution rate.
- The utilisation of the Femicide Census and the website 'Counting Dead Women'<sup>7</sup> as resources by academics and

5 It should be noted that it is only in 2017 and now 2018 that the killings of women in Scotland and Northern Ireland have been included, so this may be a contributory factor to the higher numbers.

6 The Scottish Parliament passed the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act 2018 and it entered into force in 2019; Northern Ireland has drafted a Domestic Abuse Bill; and Wales has a Violence Against Women Act, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

7 <https://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/>

lawyers addressing issues of violence against women, including the following campaigns and initiatives:

- “We can’t consent to this”<sup>8</sup>, a campaign to remove the notion of ‘consent’ in so-called ‘rough sex’ defences as a defence to manslaughter and murder of women (see Section 4) and to ensure this is added as an amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill. All party leaders publicly agreed both to reviving the Bill and supporting such an amendment.<sup>9</sup>
- The publication of a ‘Homicide Timeline’<sup>10</sup> which identifies key stages of domestic homicides and opportunities for early identification of perpetrator risk, and therefore of preventative interventions with women.
- A campaign to make choking/non-fatal strangulation a stand-alone offence.<sup>11</sup>
- A campaign launched by a victim’s mother to end mixed-sex provision in rehabilitation facilities.<sup>12</sup>
- The Crown Prosecution Service review of its Obscene Publications Prosecution Guidance; relevant to femicide cases where possession of, or accessing, extreme violent content was a feature.<sup>13</sup>

### Main findings from Femicide Census report of killings of women in the UK in 2018:

- 149 women were killed by 147 men.<sup>14</sup>
- 91 women (61%) were killed by their current or former male spouse or intimate partner.
- 12 women (8%) were killed by sons or step-sons; a further 5 women (3%) were killed by a son-in-law or ex son-in-law.
- Only 6% of femicides (9 victims) were committed by a stranger or where there was no known relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- There was evidence of previous abuse or violence in over half the cases where the perpetrator was known to the victim (52%; 69 out of 133 cases).

- The youngest victim was aged 14 years<sup>15</sup> and the eldest 100, with 23 women (16%) aged 66 or over when killed.
- Approximately one third of victims (34%) had a child/children under 18 when killed.
- In at least 37 cases, women had separated/taken steps to separate from their male partner.
- 41% (37 of 91) of women killed by a partner/ex had separated or taken steps to separate with 30% of them (11/37) killed within the first month and 70% (24/37) killed within the first year.
- 102 (68%) femicides took place in the woman’s home, whether shared with the perpetrator (33%) or not (35%).
- Men most frequently killed women with a sharp instrument (69 cases; 46%).
- Overkilling was evident in over half the femicides (83 cases, 56%).
- Most perpetrators were aged between 26–55 (100 perpetrators, 68%).
- At least 76 (52%) perpetrators were known to have had histories of previous violence against women.
- Three perpetrators had killed women before.
- At least 16 (11%) perpetrators used pornography and/or women in prostitution in relation to the femicide.
- 89 perpetrators (61%) were found guilty of murder.
- 25 perpetrators (17%) were found guilty of manslaughter; 12 (8%) on the grounds of diminished responsibility.
- Sentences for murder ranged from minimum tariffs of 12.5–38 years.
- Sentences for manslaughter ranged from 2–20.5 years, with three perpetrators being given suspended sentences and eight being given hospital orders/detained under the Mental Health Act.

8 <https://wecantconsenttothis.uk/>

9 <https://graziadaily.co.uk/life/in-the-news/boris-johnson-jeremy-corbyn/>

10 Monckton Smith, Jane (2019). ‘Intimate Partner Femicide: Using Foucauldian Analysis to Track an Eight-Stage Progression to Homicide’. *Violence Against Women*. Sage. 1-19. DOI: 10.1177/1077801219863876. See: <https://www.glos.ac.uk/news/pages/the-homicide-timeline.aspx>

11 <https://www.change.org/p/theresa-may-mp-uk-home-office-make-non-fatal-strangulation-a-specific-criminal-offence-e2879a9e-4c86-45d2-8920-33314c087337>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-50185648>

12 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07mdc4l>

13 <https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/public-consultation-obscene-publications-prosecution-guidance>

14 At the time of writing and going to print, but there may be cases that were not solved or concluded at this time so the figure may be higher.

15 The Census collects data on girls and women aged 14 and over, so this was the youngest eligible for the Census.

# I. Victims

## I.1 UK femicides per calendar year

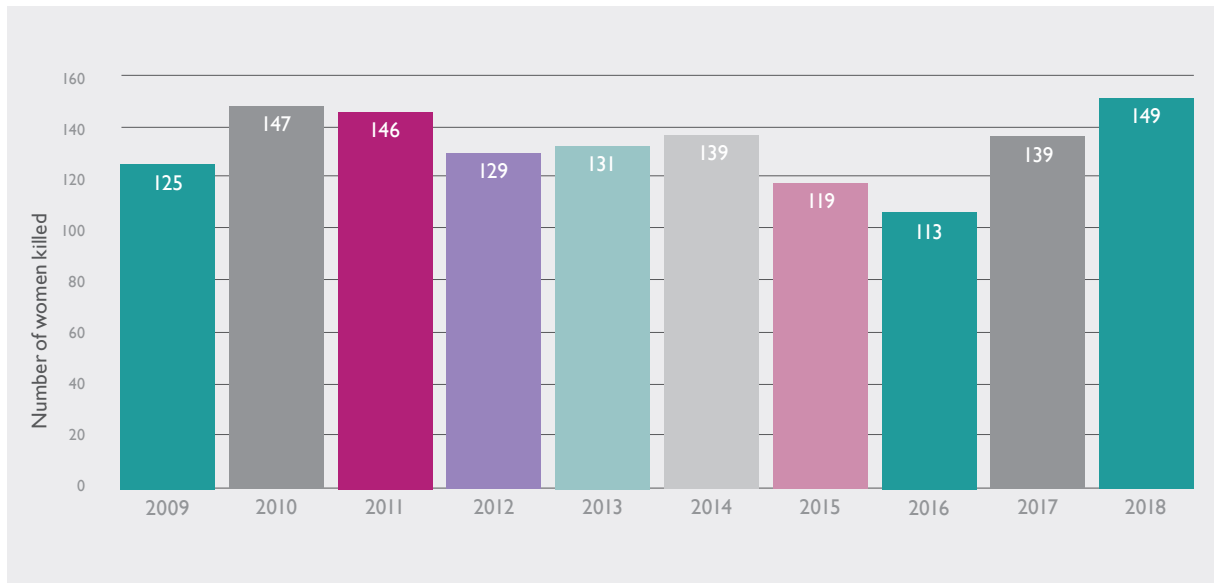


Figure I: UK femicides per calendar year

## 1.2 Police force area

The number of women killed by men per police force area in 2018 is presented in **Figure 2** below. These numbers relate to the police force area in which a woman was killed and where the force had jurisdiction to investigate the killing. Where a police force area is not included in the table, this means no femicides were known to have taken place in that area.

While most forces provided the core information required<sup>16</sup>, a number either did not respond, provided very incomplete responses or refused to provide certain information under S.30 and S.40 of the FOI Act.<sup>17</sup> In a very few cases, there was considerable disparity between the information provided

in the FOI response and publicly available information: for example, seven cases were missing from one response<sup>18</sup>, including a number of high profile cases that had featured in the national news. Some responses provided data that were at odds with publicly available information emerging from trials. Where information was not forthcoming from police forces, the Census has had to rely on publicly available sources.

As the table shows, the highest number of femicides occurred within populations served by the Metropolitan Police Service, Police Scotland, West Midlands, Sussex and Kent, respectively.

Police force area	Total femicides	Police force area	Total femicides
Metropolitan Police Service	27	Humberside	3
Police Scotland	9	West Mercia	3
West Midlands	9	Cambridgeshire	2
Sussex	8	Cheshire	2
Kent	7	Derbyshire	2
Cleveland	6	Dorset	2
Leicestershire	6	Dyfed-Powys Police	2
Merseyside	6	Hertfordshire	2
Nottinghamshire	5	Norfolk	2
Avon and Somerset	4	Northumbria	2
Essex	4	South Yorkshire	2
Greater Manchester	4	Gloucestershire	1
Police Service of Northern Ireland	4	Lancashire	1
South Wales Police	4	Lincolnshire	1
Staffordshire	4	North Wales	1
Thames Valley/Hampshire	4	North Yorkshire	1
West Yorkshire	4	Suffolk	1
Devon and Cornwall	3	Surrey	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

Figure 2: Femicides per police force area, 2018

<sup>16</sup> FOI requests were sent to all police forces in January 2019 and followed up in March 2019. Further follow-up requests were sent in September 2019.

<sup>17</sup> At the time of writing, these included Dyfed Powys, Gloucestershire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia police forces.

<sup>18</sup> From West Midlands police force.

**1.2.1 Rate of femicide**

To identify the proportion of femicides per area in 2018, the rate of femicide per 100,000 population has been calculated and presented in **Figure 3**<sup>19</sup>. If a police area is not represented in the table it is because no relevant killing was recorded there in 2018.

While the Metropolitan Police Service, Police Scotland and West Midlands Police had the three highest *numbers* of femicide in 2018, the highest *rate* of femicides per population in fact occur in Cleveland, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Sussex features in the top five police force areas in terms of both numbers and rates of femicide.

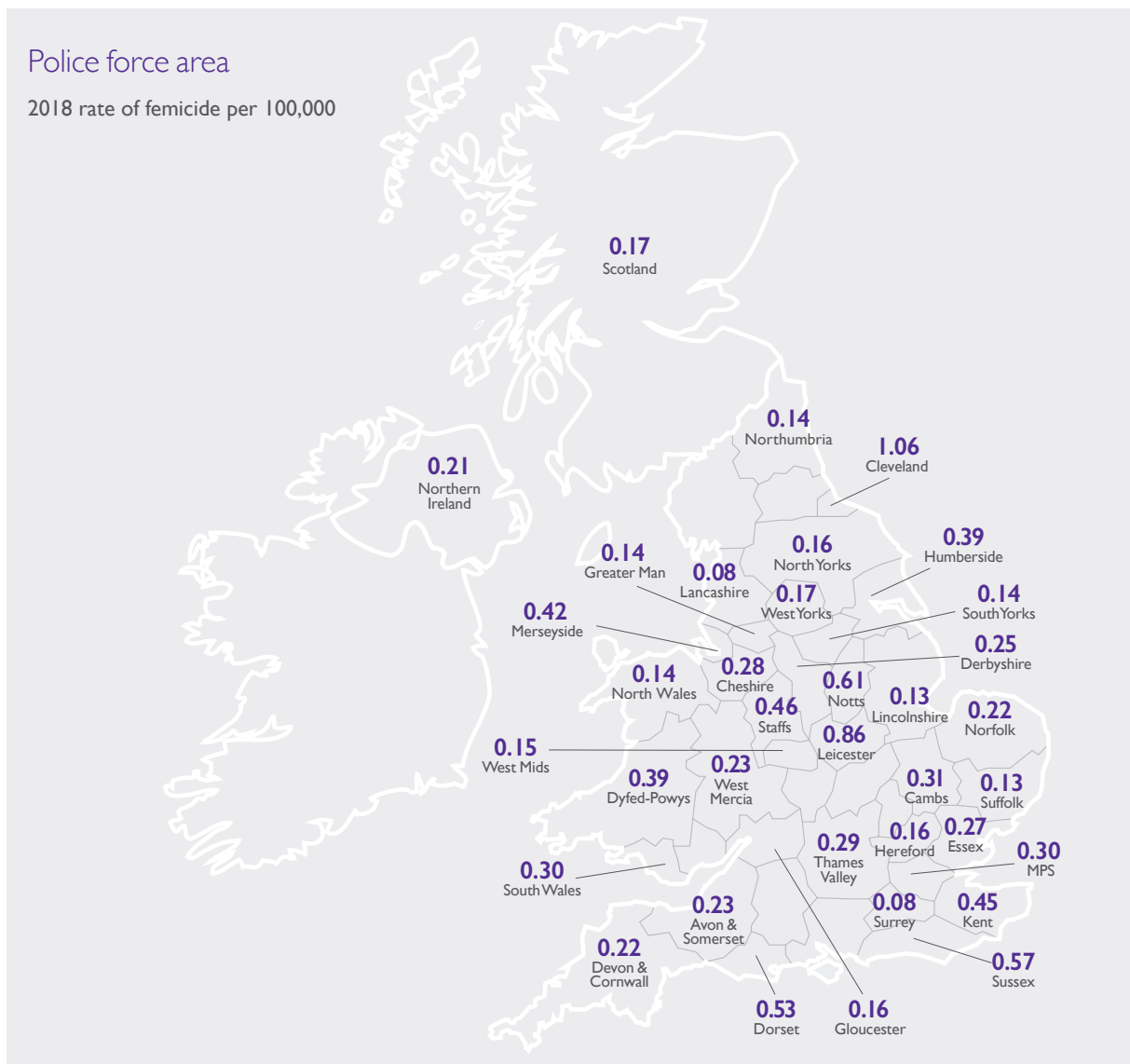


Figure 3: Rate of femicide per 100,000 population by police force area, 2018

<sup>19</sup> The femicide rate has been calculated by dividing the total number of femicides per police force area by the average population in the police force area. This result was then multiplied by 100,000.

For example:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of femicides in Sussex (n=8)} \times 100,000}{\text{Sussex police force area population (n=1,413,442)}} = 0.57$$

### 1.3 Country of birth, ethnicity and immigration status

#### 1.3.1 Country of birth

Unless stated otherwise in publicly available information and where there are no indicators suggesting otherwise, it is assumed that a victim was born in the United Kingdom. Where known, the countries of birth of women killed in 2018 are presented in the table below. In 11 cases, the country of birth was recorded as 'unknown', where there was very little information available or where there were indicators suggesting that the country of birth may have not been the UK but no definitive information was available.

Country of birth	No. of victims
UK/believed to be UK	115
Unknown	11
Romania	3
Latvia	2
Mauritius	2
Poland	2
Syria	2
Venezuela	2
China	1
Cyprus	1
India	1
Iraq (Kurdistan region of Iraq)	1
Lithuania	1
Pakistan	1
Sierra Leone	1
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	1
Ukraine	1
Zimbabwe	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

Figure 4: Victim countries of birth, 2018

#### 1.3.2 Ethnicity

2018 saw a slight improvement in data received from police forces in relation to race and ethnicity, although data were still not provided for 66 (44%) victims, and categories were inconsistently used across forces.

Ethnicity	No. of victims
Information not provided	66
White ( <i>no further information</i> )	35
White British	14
White Northern European	10
Asian	5
Chinese	1
British ( <i>no further information</i> )	4
White European	7
Black	3
Not recorded	2
Asian – Pakistani	1
Black – other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

Figure 5: Victim ethnicities, 2018

Data on race and ethnicity have not been taken from press reports, as details were seldom specified, and would have involved potentially inaccurate assumptions. Unfortunately, lack of information in this area prevents the Census from capturing important data, which in turn hinders examination of other issues, such as potential risk factors, specific disadvantages, barriers to support, and progress in criminal justice investigations. Another area of concern is the apparent asymmetry in terms of media coverage in relation to victims' ethnicity.

### 1.3.3 Immigration status

*[The perpetrator] admitted murdering his wife after she had refused to support his application to remain in the UK.[...] The couple had shared the same immigration lawyer until [the perpetrator] discovered [the victim] had asked the solicitor not to cooperate with her husband's application.<sup>20</sup>*

Information relating to the victim's immigration status seldom features in media reports. Women with insecure immigration status, women with no recourse to public funds, refugee and asylum-seeking women and women who are 'over-stayers' or cannot show that they are legally resident, may face decreased access to support services, safety and justice. In at least two cases, there was evidence of the perpetrator pressurising his partner to support his asylum claim, and killing her when she refused to do so. There was at least one case where the victim did not report the perpetrator's violence for fear he would be deported. In at least two cases where the victim was an immigrant, the perpetrator killed the victim within the context of an arranged marriage: in one case the victim had been 16 and the perpetrator 30 when they married;<sup>21</sup> the other victim was 19 and the perpetrator 27 when he killed her.<sup>22</sup> A further perpetrator killed his mother-in-law when she helped her daughter escape the arranged marriage.<sup>23</sup>

20 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/fenton-stabbing-stoke-husband-wife-immigration-court-case-trial-stafford-a8776636.html>

21 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/nov/29/man-jailed-for-crossbow-of-pregnant-ex-wife-ifford-london>

22 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/man-who-stabbed-teen-wife-16476834>

23 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/arranged-marriage-murder-mother-in-law-rochdale-manchester-muhammed-tafham-rahman-be-gum-a8502116.html> A forced marriage is one in which one or both parties did not give their full, free and informed consent and 'duress' is a factor. ('Duress' is measured on a subjective test). An arranged marriage is one where, however the parties may have been introduced, they both gave their full, free and informed consent. However, it is widely accepted that the distinction is often very unclear in practice.



## 1.4 Age bands

A boy has been detained for life for the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl in a park. [...] Jurors heard Lithuanian-born [victim] was lured to West Park late at night after being contacted by her killer on Facebook Messenger. Once there, the pair met at a pavilion referred to as the “black house”, where [the victim] was struck over the head at least 21 times causing multiple fractures to her skull and spine.<sup>24</sup>

The Femicide Census collects data on women and girls aged 14 years and over. Figures 6 and 7 below show that men kill women of any age, with the youngest victim aged 14 and the oldest victim 100 years old. Most victims (65%, n=96) were aged between 26 and 55 years old, with over a quarter (27%, n=40) of victims aged between 26 and 35 years old. Victims in this age band were also subjected to the

highest levels of ‘overkilling’ (see Section 2). Twenty three (16%) victims were aged over 66: these cases are discussed in more detail in Section 2. In a number of cases, there were substantial age gaps between the perpetrator and victim: for example, seven victims over the age of 66 were killed by a son, son-in-law or grandson, whereas in at least eight cases of intimate partner femicide the perpetrator was older than the victim by 10–20 years.

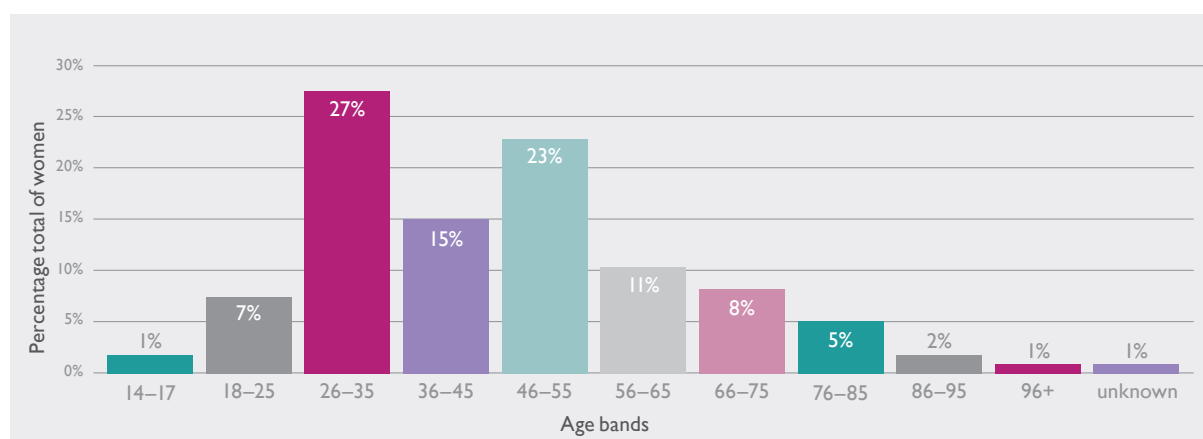


Figure 6: Age bands of women killed in UK, 2018

Age band	No. of victims	%	Age band	No. of victims	%
14-17	2	1	66-75	12	8
18-25	11	7	76-85	7	5
26-35	40	27	86-95	3	2
36-45	22	15	96+	1	1
46-55	34	23	Unknown	1	1
56-65	16	11	<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>99</b>

Figure 7: Age bands of women killed in UK, 2018

24 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-47331397>

### 1.5 Children and pregnancy

“I have to listen to my grandchildren hold each other and cry for their mother every day. How do I explain to a three year old that her mother is dead? That my child is dead?”<sup>25</sup>

[The victim] sustained catastrophic internal injuries and died while her unborn son – her sixth child – was delivered by caesarean section and survived. [. . .] [The victim’s husband] added: “She was a very loving mother and we did everything together. [The perpetrator] has finished everything. We all feel lost now. The kids are missing their mum too much.”<sup>26</sup>

Approximately a third (34%, n=50) of victims had a child or children under the age of 18 when they were killed. In approximately a quarter (23%, n= 34) of cases, it was unknown whether the woman had a child or children under 18. The Femicide Census relied on press reports for this information, so there is some possible undercounting. Data on adult children have not been collected.

In five cases, children were killed alongside their mothers; in 12 further cases children witnessed the killing (see Section 2). Two women were pregnant when they were killed; in one of these cases the baby was delivered and survived the attack.

#### Children under 18

Yes	50 (34%)
No	65 (44%)
Unknown	34 (23%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>149 (100%)</b>

Figure 8: Women killed in UK with children under 18, 2018

25 <https://metro.co.uk/2019/04/05/chilling-999-call-husband-confesses-strangling-wife-scarf-9119501/>

26 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/nov/29/man-jailed-for-crossbow-of-pregnant-ex-wife-illford-london>

## 1.6 Health, problematic substance use and disability

A tenant stabbed his flatmate to death with a kitchen knife and tried to burn her body because he was angry about her leaving the front door open in case the TV was stolen, a court heard today. [. . .] [The victim] began living there in 2006. She and [the perpetrator] both suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, and she also suffered from depression and diabetes.<sup>27</sup>

A number of victims were reported as having physical or mental health issues, a disability and/or problematic substance use issues. However, it is difficult to establish a clear picture of prevalence as health and disability issues are not consistently reported on. Some victims were reported as having more than one health issue or disability<sup>28</sup>. Some perpetrators seemed to target the victim deliberately because of her health or disability; in one case, victim and perpetrator shared sheltered accommodation, and in another the victim met the perpetrator at a mixed rehabilitation service. The mother of this victim has now started a campaign for separate rehabilitation facilities for women and men.<sup>29</sup>

Victims were recorded as having health issues where these were mentioned in press reports; the UK legal definition of 'disability'<sup>30</sup> was used in identifying disabilities where possible. In the case of mental illness, this was recorded as a disability only where there was a medical diagnosis, e.g. of schizophrenia.

Health issue	No.	Disability	No.
Mental health	11	Mental illness (diagnosed condition)	5
Problematic substance use: alcohol	11	Chronic disease	3
Physical health	10	Physical impairment	3
Problematic substance use: illegal drugs	6	Learning impairment	2
Other	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
Problematic substance use: prescribed drugs	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>		

Figure 10: Disabilities of victims, 2018

Figure 9: Health issues of victims, 2018

## 1.7 Sexual orientation

A man who murdered his ex-partner's new girlfriend by cutting her throat at her workplace has been jailed for a minimum of 26 years. [. . .] [The perpetrator was] heard to have made remarks to the effect that [the victim] "had it coming for what she had done to his family".<sup>31</sup>

As Section 2 shows, most victims (63%, n=95) were killed by men in the context of a heterosexual relationship, date or encounter. Two of the victims (1%) were lesbians: one was killed following an incident of anti-lesbian harassment by the perpetrators; the second was killed by the male ex-partner of her current female partner.

27 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6479949/Tenant-51-stabbed-flatmate-56-death-kitchen-knife-TV-row.html>

28 Percentages have not been provided as tables present occurrences of health issues and disabilities, rather than number of victims.

29 <https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/lauras-killer-should-never-met-16835077>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07mdc4l>

30 Under the UK Equality Act 2010, an individual is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities: <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

31 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-43699004>

## 2. Femicides

### 2.1 Victim’s relationship to perpetrator

“I don’t want anyone saying they were a lovely couple or he wasn’t responsible for his actions — because he was. He killed that poor, defenceless woman.”<sup>32</sup>

A man was jailed for life after admitting the “brutal” murders of his ex-partner and her mother. [...] In a victim impact statement, [the victim’s sister] said: “The list of broken hearts goes on and on. That night this killer played god and he destroyed an entire family.”<sup>33</sup>

Relationship of victim to perpetrator	No.	%
Spouse (incl. former spouse)	42 (5)	28 (3)
Intimate partner (incl. former intimate partner)	49 (14)	33 (10)
Mother (incl. step-mother)	12 (1)	8
Stranger/no known relationship	9	6
Friend/social acquaintance	6	4
Acquaintance (incl. ‘handyman’)	5 (1)	3
Mother-in-law (incl. ex mother-in-law)	5 (2)	3
Unknown	5	3
Neighbour	4	3
Housemate	2	1
Casual/on-off/ongoing contact	2	1
Prostituted woman/‘escort’	2	1
First contact (sexual)	2	1
Aunt	1	1
Grandmother	1	1
Niece	1	1
Partner of perpetrator’s ex-partner	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>9</b>

As can be seen in **Figure 11**, women were most frequently killed by men in the context of heterosexual relationships: by husbands, ex-husbands, partners, former partners, men with whom they were in casual ‘on-off’ relationships or men they encountered in a dating or sexual context. Combined, men in these categories carried out 63% (n=95) of all femicides. Sons formed the next biggest category, with 12 (8%) victims being killed by a son or step-son; a further five (3%) women were killed by a son-in-law or ex son-in-law. Seventeen women (12%) were killed by male acquaintances, social acquaintances, neighbours or housemates.

Only nine (6%) femicides were committed by a stranger, or where there was no known relationship between victim and perpetrator; these included women killed as collateral in revenge attacks on other family members, in arson attacks and in the course of a theft or burglary<sup>34</sup>. In a further five (3%) cases, the relationship between victim and perpetrator was not known; these cases had usually not yet gone to trial, and no such information was available in either police FOI responses or media accounts. In two cases, the relationship between victim and perpetrator appeared to be ‘casual’ or ‘on-off’ rather than falling clearly into either the ‘intimate partner’ or ‘former intimate partner’ category. In two further cases, the victim was killed in the context of a first date or first sexual contact with the perpetrator.

Figure 11: Relationship of victim to perpetrator, 2018

32 <https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/3470026/stirling-murder-suicide-carbon-monoxide-poisoning-sheena-alex-jackson-death-son-alexander/>

33 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-46017400>

34 See for example: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/smiling-killer-small-heat-grandma-15663480>; <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/our-lives-changed-forever-man-1347537>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-49294931>

## 2.2 History of abuse experienced

[W]hen the victim repeatedly tried to end it [the perpetrator] sent a host of text messages, at first threatening to kill himself and then threatening to kill her. Although frightened, the mother-of-three opted to keep [the perpetrator] calm, and the family together decided not to report matters to the police because they did not think him capable of violence.<sup>35</sup>

*[F]riends of [the victim] soon became concerned [the perpetrator], who admitted murder, was exhibiting controlling behaviour. In March, [the victim] confided in a friend that she no longer loved [the perpetrator] and had only £4,000 left of her £24,000 savings. In the days before the murder, a fellow worker at the betting shop noted [the perpetrator] had lost hundreds of pounds on bets, the court was told.<sup>36</sup>*

There was evidence of previous abuse or violence in over half the cases where the perpetrator was known to the victim (52%; 69 out of 133 cases). In these 69 cases where the perpetrator was known to the victim, (49%, n= 34), his abuse had been reported to the police in 49% cases (n=34). In nine of these (13%) cases, it appeared that the victim had only informed friends or family of the abuse.<sup>37</sup>

History of abuse reported where perpetrator known to the victim	No. of victims	%
Yes – reported to police	34	49
Not known whether reported	25	36
Yes – reported to family/friends only	9	13
Yes – reported to statutory services	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>99</b>

Figure 12: History of abuse reported where perpetrator known to the victim, 2018

The abuse took a number of forms, as set out in the table.<sup>38</sup> As the table indicates, victims experienced an extensive range of abuse, including physical violence and ongoing harassment by text message,<sup>39</sup> jealous and controlling

behaviour, including previous strangulation,<sup>40</sup> physical and emotional violence.<sup>41</sup> In one case, police returned house keys to the perpetrator after he had raped the victim.<sup>42</sup> The table represents victim experiences rather than number of victims, as clearly one victim may have experienced more than one type of abuse. As with other categories, data were gathered from press reports and police FOI responses, which do not always provide consistent information in this area. The findings are therefore not comprehensive and the true number of incidences is likely to be much higher.

Where media reports made non-specific reference to prior abuse, it has been categorised as 'unknown'.

Nature of previous abuse	No.
Emotional and psychological	40
Coercive control	37
Physical	33
Stalking and harassment	17
Threats	11
Unknown	10
Financial	6
Sexual	3
Forced/arranged marriage <sup>41</sup>	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>

Figure 13: Nature of previous abuse, 2018

35 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5866475/Romanian-man-stabbed-ex-girlfriend-death-outside-Ilford-east-London-home-jailed-life.html>

36 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-46021699>

37 Given that only a small number of police forces provided information on this category and media reports tend not to provide extensive information in this area, these figures are indicative rather than definitive.

38 The categories used are standard categories used by domestic violence services. In some cases, media reports specifically cited terms such as 'stalking', 'threats' and 'coercive control'; in other cases, judgement was used in categorising abuse from the information available.

39 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/london-stabbings-killing-katrina-makunova-knife-handbag-fell-boyfriend-dada-jailed-a8756481.html>

40 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-47897018>

41 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-47976835>

42 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7385473/Husband-battered-wife-death-hammer-two-weeks-accused-raping-her.html>

43 See footnote 22.

### 2.3 Context of violence

In the table in **Figure 14**, femicides have been presented according to the primary context in which men killed their victims, such as intimate partner violence, financial or material gain, sexually-motivated killings and prostitution. There is of course no suggestion that such contexts in any way constitute a reason or justification for a perpetrator killing a woman: rather, they have been provided in order to help identify patterns in relation to circumstances, motivation and relationships.

In some cases, more than one context is relevant – for example, femicides categorised as ‘intimate partner violence’ may also have been committed within the context of financial gain, as in cases where the perpetrator expected to inherit an insurance payout or gain access to the victim’s savings. There is inevitably an element of judgement involved in identifying the primary context of the femicide. In the future, we hope to record all contexts of violence relevant in each case across the Femicide Census, in order to help identify possible patterns, trends and risks.

As noted above, the majority of femicides occurred within the context of heterosexual intimate partner relationships, and extended family relationships. Nine femicides were committed in the pursuit of financial gain, or in the course of theft or burglary. In the former case, elements of ‘befriending’ or deliberately targeting women with perceived vulnerabilities were sometimes evident. One financially-motivated offence, where perpetrators caused an explosion in order to receive an insurance payout, resulted in the deaths of three women, along with two male victims.<sup>44</sup> In six cases, perpetrators killed their victims within the context of a dispute, grudge or revenge, whether this grudge was held against the victim herself or one of her family members.

Where the context was unknown, this is generally where the case has not yet gone to trial, and very little information was available. In some cases, there are strong indicators of particular contexts, such as prostitution, robbery or sexual motivation, but these have not yet been established.

The category ‘Symbolic woman’ refers to femicides where the perpetrator apparently perceives the victim as representing a particular woman, or women more generally.<sup>45</sup> In this case, the perpetrator appeared to perceive the victim – who was a complete stranger to him – as representing his former partner, shouting “You left me, now f\*\*\* your family”, as he subjected her to an horrifically violent attack.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly, all femicides occur within the context of inequality between women and men. Some femicides are committed within the context of wider inequalities such as race, age, disability and economic inequality. While several of these inequalities are addressed elsewhere in this report, the Femicide Census does not as yet collect data on economic inequality, and there are obvious challenges in such an endeavour. However, we recognise that economic inequality can have an impact on access to support, how victims are perceived and criminal justice outcomes<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-46383673>

<sup>45</sup> A very high profile case illustrating this phenomenon is that of serial killer Levi Bellfield, who reportedly ‘hated blonde women’: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/levi-bellfield-hated-blonde-women-2302339.html>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/breaking-lakeside-murder-man-jailed-14099541>

<sup>47</sup> See Section 4 for an example of the possible relationship between homelessness and criminal justice outcomes. <https://www.worthingherald.co.uk/news/crime/sussex-man-convicted-of-killing-homeless-woman-who-was-found-in-a-seafront-shelter-1-8721008>

Primary context of violence	No. of victims	%
Domestic – Intimate partner violence (including 3 claimed ‘mercy killings’)	91 (3)	61
Domestic – Son-mother	11	7
Domestic – Extended family	6	4
Financial/material gain	6	4
Unknown	6	4
Dispute/grudge/revenge	5	3
Sexually motivated	5	3
Mental health	4	3
In the course of other crime – robbery or burglary	3	2
Resulting from an offence of arson	3	2
Prostitution/pornography	2	1
Rejected advance/sexual harassment	2	1
Assisted suicide/suicide pact	1	1
IPV collateral	1	1
Other	1	1
Revenge against victim’s family member	1	1
Symbolic woman	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 14: The number of women killed in UK per respective context of violence, 2018

**2.3.1 Women aged 66+**

*A mugger who killed a 100-year-old widow in a handbag robbery has been jailed for 15 years. [The victim] suffered a broken neck in the attack and died of pneumonia brought on by her injuries on 6 June.[...] Nazi prison camp survivor [name] was robbed near her home in Empress Road on 28 May 2018.<sup>48</sup>*

*[The Detective Chief Inspector] said it was “an abhorrent case where a man who should have been caring for his elderly, vulnerable mother instead neglected her and ultimately took her life so he could be free of his perceived burden of caring for her”.<sup>49</sup>*

In 2018, 23 (15%) women aged over 66 were killed by men, including four victims aged over 85.<sup>50</sup> The oldest victim was 100 years old.

Women in this age band were most frequently killed by husbands or intimate partners: three such femicides were reported as ‘mercy killings’. Five victims were killed by sons: in two cases the perpetrators had mental illness diagnoses; another case was described by the judge as a ‘mercy killing’ and the perpetrator received a suspended jail term, even though he had thrown his 79-year-old mother head-first from the fire escape of the care home where she resided.<sup>51</sup> A grandson stabbed his grandmother more than thirty times before slitting her throat<sup>52</sup> and another perpetrator doused his former mother-in-law in flammable liquid and set her on fire.<sup>53</sup> Both of these perpetrators had a history of problematic cocaine use. Where the perpetrator was a stranger, neighbour or acquaintance, the context of violence was most frequently a theft or burglary, or other form of financial gain.<sup>54</sup>

A combination of misogyny and ageism was frequently evident in the killing of older women. One 80 year-old woman was killed by a stranger who – while reported in the press as behaving erratically and dangerously in an apparently random way – specifically targeted women, particularly elderly women, to attack.<sup>55</sup>

Relationship of perpetrator to victim (women aged 66+)	No.	% (of victims over 66)
Husband/intimate partner (incl former husband, former intimate partner)	9	39
Son	5	22
Stranger/no known relationship	4	17
Acquaintance (incl. ‘handyman’)	2 (1)	9
Grandson	1	4
Neighbour	1	4
Son-in-law	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>99</b>

Figure 15: Relationship of perpetrator to victim where women aged 66+, 2018

48 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-47240030>

49 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-46521909>

50 A breakdown of this age group can be found at the beginning of this report under Age bands

51 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-esssex-49768542>

52 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-45914020>

53 <https://metro.co.uk/2019/01/27/drug-addict-set-mother-in-law-on-fire-after-police-failed-to-deal-with-his-violent-behaviour-8400453/>

54 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-49294931>; <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/16/handyman-jailed-for-of-85-year-old-woman-in-romford>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-46573163>

55 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/crazed-devil-80-year-old-13327205>



### 2.3.2 Prostitution and the sex industry

*A 29-year-old student turned sex worker who failed to turn up for her own birthday party was bludgeoned to death with a pestle, a court has heard. [...] [The prosecutor] told jurors [the perpetrator] stayed in the flat for 12 hours after [the victim] died, sending pornographic pictures and films to another sex worker and pretended to be unconscious when police broke down the door.<sup>56</sup>*

Five (3%) victims were known to be involved in prostitution or other aspects of the sex industry, including webcam performing, acting as a dominatrix and managing a ‘massage

parlour’. There was evidence of ‘overkill’ (see Section 2.6.1) in four of these five cases. In a further five (3%) cases, clear evidence of prostitution/sexual exploitation was not established, but possible indicators included: brevity of acquaintance, transactions in relation to illegal substances, economic hardship, sexual violence, location, last sightings and the perpetrator’s previous criminal history of targeting prostituted women. It is likely that killings of women involved in prostitution are not being adequately identified, whether through decisions not to report on this or a lack of definitive evidence.

Involvement in prostitution/sex industry	No. of victims	% of total victims
Yes	5	3
Indicators	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

Figure 16: Victim involvement in prostitution/sex industry, 2018

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-46530081>

## 2.4 Post-separation killings

A man who murdered his ex-girlfriend by stabbing her more than 20 times has been jailed for a minimum of 20 years. [...] The couple separated when they returned [from a holiday], but [the perpetrator] sent her a text message saying “I cannot live without you. Wherever you go, I will find you.” On the day of the attack he caught a taxi to her home in King’s Lynn, where he hid in the garage until she tried to put her bike away at 10pm.<sup>57</sup>

The court had been told their five-year marriage had ended on February 12, 2018 – approximately a month before the murders. [The judge] added: “Your relationship with [the victim] had broken down. She wanted you to leave her alone. She behaved with dignity and decency over that month. All she wanted you to do was go away and leave her in peace. You began a campaign to hurt her.”<sup>58</sup>

At least 37 (41%<sup>59</sup>) victims had separated or taken steps to separate from their male partners prior to being killed by them. Victims were identified as having ‘taken steps’ when there was evidence beyond simply perpetrator accounts that she was planning to leave him; this evidence includes conversations stating intent. Five victims were recorded in this ‘taken steps’ category, although the actual figure is likely to be higher. Figure 17 illustrates women are at the greatest risk in the first month post-separation: where the length of time was known, 41% (11 out of 27 cases) of femicides occurred within in the first month of separation; 89% (24 out of 27 cases) in the first year. In 10 cases, the length of time post-separation was unknown.

Length of time: separation to femicide	No.	% (where length of time was known)
Taken steps to separate/0–1 month	11	41
1–3 months	6	22
3–6 months	5	19
6–12 months	2	7
12–36 months	1	4
3 years+	2	7
Unknown	10	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 17: The length of time between separation and killing for the 37 women killed following separation from their partner, 2018

57 <https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/former-boyfriend-jailed-for-murder-after-stabbing-ex-girlfriend-more-than-20-times/04/01/>

58 <https://www.hastingsobserver.co.uk/news/crime/st-leonards-murder-trial-judge-tells-craig-savage-he-may-never-be-released-1-8686289>

59 This is a percentage of all femicides carried out in the context of intimate partner violence (n=91).

## 2.5 Location of incident

[The prosecutor] told the court [the victim] had recently moved into the shared four-bedroom property, which had a communal kitchen and bathroom but locked bedrooms. [...] Police attended the flat and found [the victim's] room locked with no reply from inside. They used a spare set of keys in the kitchen to enter her room where they discovered her naked body covered in blood under a duvet.<sup>60</sup>

As in previous years, the data indicate that in 2018 women were most frequently killed in their own home, with 102 (68%) femicides taking place in this location. In 50 (33%) cases, the victim shared the home with the perpetrator. A further eight (5%) women were killed immediately outside their home, in either the garden or street. Most women killed in or outside their home were killed by husbands, partners, ex partners or family members; however, two were killed by housemates (one in sheltered accommodation) and four were killed by neighbours. Of the eleven victims (7%) killed in an outdoors, public area, most were killed by men they knew: four by men with whom they were or had

been in an intimate relationship (one husband; two former partners; one 'casual/on-off/ongoing' relationship), and four by acquaintances or social acquaintances. Three were killed by strangers. As discussed earlier, three women were killed at their workplace; in each case this was a retail environment.

A notable feature of at least three femicides was the perpetrator hiding in order to kill the victim. In each case, the perpetrator was a former partner or spouse: one lay in wait for the victim in a cupboard in their former marital home; one hid in a shed in the victim's garden and one hid in the victim's garage.

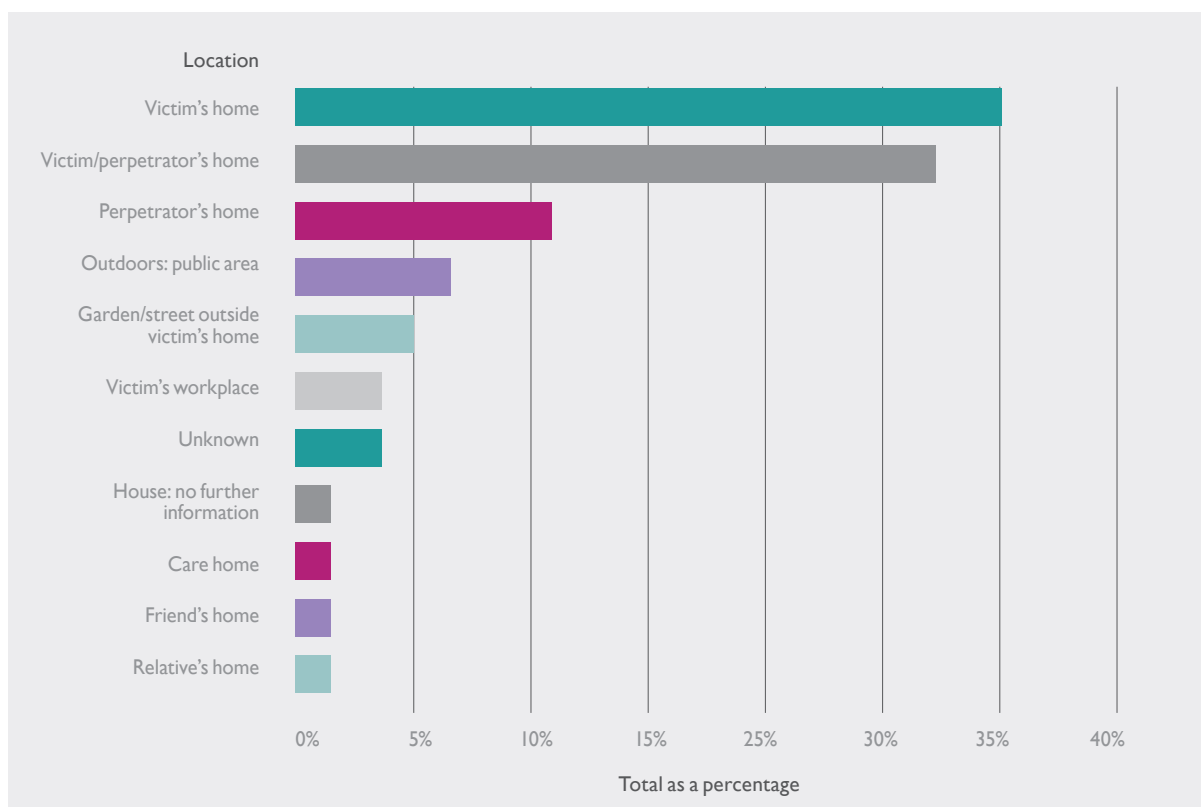


Figure 18: Location of incidents of all femicides, 2018

60 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-46397984>

Location	No. of women	%
Victim's home (including sheltered housing)	52 (1)	35
Victim/perpetrator's home (including sheltered housing)	50 (2)	33
Perpetrator's home	16	11
Outdoors: public area	11	7
Garden/street outside victim's home	8	5
Victim's workplace	3	2
Unknown	3	2
House: no further information	2	1
Care home	1	1
Friend's home	1	1
Garden/street outside victim/perpetrator's home	1	1
Relative's home	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 19: Location of incidents of all femicides, 2018

Figure 20 shows the location of incident for the 37 women killed by their ex-partner following a separation, or steps taken to separate. The number of victims killed in their own home suggest that the perpetrator had pursued the victim after she had ended the relationship. Of those victims killed in the home she shared with the perpetrator; four

had 'taken steps to separate'. The process of separation and moving into separate accommodation frequently involves negotiating legal and financial ties to the perpetrator, which can present particular difficulties for the woman and increased likelihood of violence from the controlling partner.

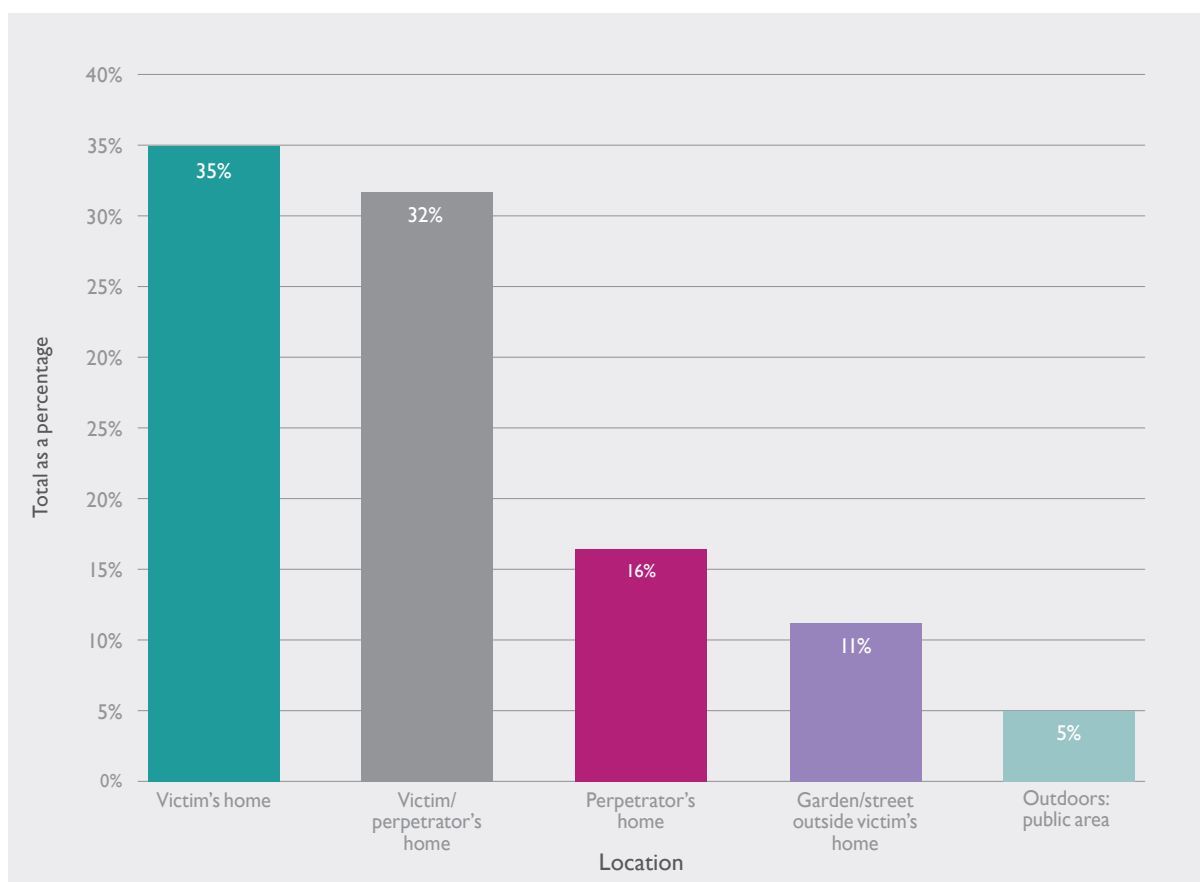


Figure 20: Location of incidents of femicide where victim had separated or taken steps to separate, 2018

Location of incident (victims who had separated/taken steps to separate)	No. of women	%
Victim's home (including sheltered housing)	13 (1)	35
Victim/perpetrator's home	12	32
Perpetrator's home	6	16
Garden/street outside victim's home	4	11
Outdoors: public area	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>99</b>

Figure 21: Location of incidents of femicide where victim had separated or taken steps to separate, 2018

## 2.6 Method of killing

During a trial lasting almost three weeks, the court heard how [the perpetrator] stabbed [the victim] so many times she had injuries to her body, face, neck, arms and legs, and damage to her kidneys, liver, lung and spleen.<sup>61</sup>

As in previous years, the most common method of killing was stabbing, with sharp instruments being used in 69 (46%) 2018 femicides. In total, there were 16 methods of killing used in the 149 femicides; in six cases the methods were

unknown (see below). Causing to fall against a hard surface/ pushed or thrown from a height was particularly evident in the killing of older women, with three of the four victims killed in this way being aged 79, 80 and 100, respectively.

Method of killing	No. of incidences	%
Sharp instrument	69	46
Strangulation/asphyxiation, including:	43 (32/9)	29
• 32 strangulation		
• 9 asphyxiation		
• 2 unspecified		
Blunt instrument	24	16
Kicking/hitting/stamping	19	13
Unknown	6	4
Arson – setting fire and causing death by fire	6	4
Causing to fall against a hard surface/pushed or thrown from height	4	3
Shooting, including:	4 (3/1)	3
• 3 firearm		
• 1 crossbow		
Explosion	3	2
Other – head injuries	3	2
Poisoning – alcohol/drugs	3	2
Motor vehicle	2	1
Burning/scalding	1	1
Drowning	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Figure 22: Methods of killing, 2018

61 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/man-who-stabbed-massage-parlour-13743992>

Some perpetrators subjected victims to more than one method of killing. As presented in Figure 23 below, one method was used in 109 (73%) cases; two methods were used in 25 (17%) cases; three methods were used in eight (5%) cases; and in seven (5%) further cases the number of methods used was unknown, either because of the length of time that had elapsed before the body was discovered or because of lack of available information from either police or publicly available sources.

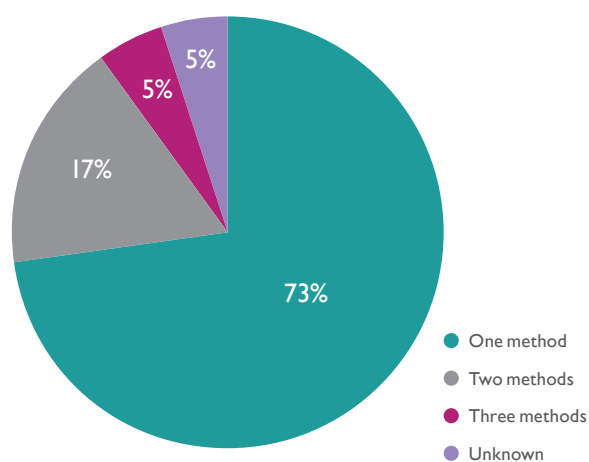


Figure 23: The number of methods of killing used in femicides, 2018

### 2.6.1 Overkilling

*During the attack [the victim], a former teacher, suffered catastrophic injuries including a bleed on the brain, a displaced brain and fractures to the eye sockets, jaw, nose and spine. When arrested [the perpetrator] had blood all over his shoes.<sup>62</sup>*

*[The perpetrator], 41, stabbed his on-off girlfriend [name], 31, more than 70 times when she was in his bed, the jurors heard. The ex-soldier attacked her with a 20cm kitchen knife and repeatedly stabbed her.<sup>63</sup>*

‘Overkilling’ – defined as the use of excessive, gratuitous violence beyond that necessary to cause the victim’s death<sup>64</sup> – was evident in over half (56%, n=83) the 2018 cases; a dramatic rise on the 2017 figure of 42%.<sup>65</sup> Cases involving more than one method of killing were recorded as overkilling;<sup>66</sup> however, in addition many cases involving one method such as sharp instrument, blunt instrument or kicking/hitting/stamping demonstrated multiple repeated use of a single form of violence. The highest incidence of overkilling was among the 26–35 age band, with 68% (n=27) of victims subjected to extreme, gratuitous violence. Media reports frequently described such violence as ‘frenzied’ and resulting from a ‘loss of control’: however, as has been explained in previous reports, femicide is best understood as an act of ultimate control rather than loss of control.<sup>67</sup> In one femicide, the post mortem carried out on the victim established that most of the 70+ stab wounds inflicted were very shallow, indicating a high degree of control and suggesting the perpetrator’s intent to torture the victim before inflicting the fatal wounds.

Evidence of overkilling	No. of victims	% of total victims
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>56</b>

Figure 24: Evidence of overkilling in femicides, 2018

62 <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/pensioner-lesley-davies-stamped-death-2724590>

63 <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/ex-soldier-found-guilty-stabbing-16455705>

64 Mitchell, C., Anglin, A., (2009) *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*, p. 325, Oxford University Press.

65 It should be noted that 21 of the 2017 femicides were carried out in the context of terrorism, which partly accounts for the disparity in rates of overkilling over the two years.

66 One exception was where the perpetrator first drugged the victim before asphyxiating her, as this seemed to indicate intent to lessen rather than increase her suffering.

67 *Redefining an Isolated Incident. Femicide Census 2009 – 2015.* nia and Women’s Aid.

**2.6.2 Evidence of sexual violence**

*[The prosecuting barrister] said [the victim’s] bra was forcibly pulled apart and her breasts were bruised and there were cuts to her vagina and her left buttock.<sup>68</sup>*

Evidence of sexual violence	No. of victims	% of total victims
<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

Figure 25: Evidence of sexual violence in femicides, 2018

In a number of cases, perpetrators subjected victims to rape and/or other forms of sexual violence prior to killing them.<sup>69</sup> There was evidence of sexual violence in at least nine (6%) of the femicides. As in previous reports, we believe that this is likely to be an undercount, as signs of sexual violence can be missed by investigators, not prosecuted and/or not reported in the press. In three of these cases, the perpetrator was the intimate partner of the victim; in two cases he was an acquaintance; in a further two cases the perpetrator was a stranger whom the victim had met only hours before the femicide; in one case the perpetrator was a housemate, and in another he was a client who killed the woman in the context of prostitution.

**2.6.3 Violation of body**

*[The victim’s] body was discovered beside a country lane eight days later, wrapped in a duvet cover, with tape covering her eyes and mouth.<sup>70</sup>*

*“He killed that young lady in the most terrifying circumstances. He undressed her and carried out one act of sexual gratification.”<sup>71</sup>*

There was evidence of violation of the deceased victim’s body in 22 (15%) femicides. The majority of these cases involved attempts to conceal or dispose of the body. In four cases, it was established that the perpetrator had sexually violated the body after killing the victim. The four cases categorised as ‘other’ involved the location and positioning of the victim’s body – for example, the body being dragged to and left on a park bench – and in one case involved the perpetrator taking photographs of the body and trying to upload them to a website.

Violation of body	No. of victims	%
Concealment/disposal	11	7
Other	4	3
Sexual violation	4	3
Setting fire	2	1
Dismemberment	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>

Figure 26: Violation of victim’s body in femicides, 2018

68 <https://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/news/crime/jilted-man-found-guilty-of-murder-after-beating-his-partner-to-death-over-affair-1-987919>

69 Sexual violence has only been recorded where it was perpetrated immediately preceding or as part of the femicide; the figures in this section do not reflect any previous history of sexual violence to which the perpetrator may have subjected the victim.

70 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-46424611>

71 <https://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/17267874.ryan-thornton-murdered-stela-domador-kuzma-at-their-shared-flat-in-bournemouth/>



## 2.7 Other victims

A dog walker told the inquest she recalled seeing a male figure holding the hands of two boys in bright red jackets as they walked away from her. In a statement read by [the coroner], she said: “The children looked tired, they were walking in a reluctant manner – not the way you would expect a child to walk unless they were tired.” The bodies of [the perpetrator] and his sons were later discovered by a photographer.<sup>72</sup>

*Bristol Crown Court heard the couple’s sons, aged six and three, discovered [the victim] lying dead on the floor of the lounge in the morning and called 999. During the call, made at 6.55am on 8 January, the eldest told an operator he believed “mummy was dead as she was covered in blood” and said he and his younger brother had been with her for about an hour.<sup>73</sup>*

There is no femicide that does not include other victims; bereaved families and friends live with the loss of their loved ones for the rest of their lives. The impact of losing a loved one through violent means is incalculable, and the Femicide Census of course makes no attempt to measure such a devastating experience. However, the Census acknowledges other victims of both sexes who were either injured or killed during the femicide, and children who witness the killing of their mothers. In 13 (9%) cases, the perpetrator also killed another victim; in 11 (7%) cases he attacked or injured other victims. In 12 (8%) cases, children witnessed the killing of their mother, and in three (2%) cases, the perpetrator also killed the family pet.

Other victims	No. of femicides	%
Yes – fatal	13	9
Yes – children witnessed	12	8
Yes – non-fatal	11	7
Yes – pets	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>26</b>

Figure 27: Other victims in femicides, 2018

72 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-48199547>

73 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/andrew-tavener-murder-wife-stab-jail-life-claire-somerset-bristol-a8299086.html>

## 3. Perpetrators

There were 147 perpetrators of femicide in the UK during 2018. In a small number of cases, one perpetrator killed more than one woman,<sup>74</sup> and some cases involved multiple perpetrators.<sup>75</sup>

### 3.1 Country of birth

The overwhelming majority (86%, n=126) of perpetrators were from the UK, or believed to be born in the UK. Data relating to the ethnicity of perpetrators have not been included, as in most cases data were not recorded in official records and would have involved unreliable and potentially inaccurate assumptions.

Country of birth	No. of perpetrators	%
UK/believed to be UK	126	86
Romania	5	3
Pakistan	3	2
Afghanistan	2	1
Poland	2	1
Barbados	1	1
China	1	1
Dominican Republic	1	1
Iran	1	1
Iraq	1	1
Mauritius	1	1
Netherlands	1	1
Tanzania	1	1
Venezuela	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>102</b>

Figure 28: Perpetrator countries of birth, 2018

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-46017400>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-46021020>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-46865455>; <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/two-drug-dealers-who-killed-teacher-by-torching-her-home-are-jailed-for-life-a4195356.html>

### 3.2 Age bands

The overwhelming majority (91%, n=134) of perpetrators were aged under 66, with most (68%, n=100) falling within the 26–55 age band. Just over a quarter (26%, n=38) of all perpetrators were in the 26–35 age band. Two perpetrators were under 18 (aged 16 and 17, respectively); the oldest was 88.

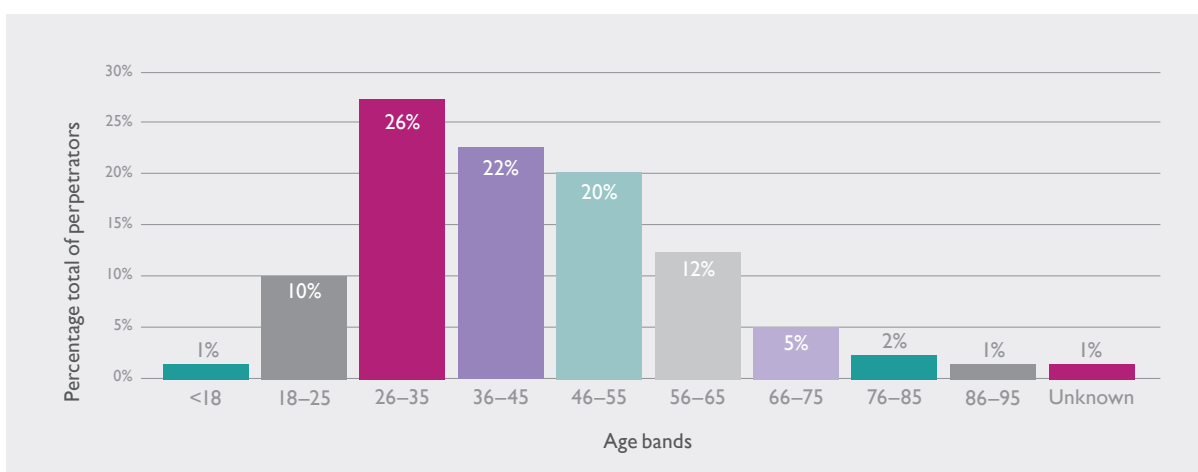


Figure 29: Age bands of perpetrators, 2018

It is notable that only 11 (8%) perpetrators were aged 66 and over, while twice the number of victims (15%, n=23) were in this age band. This reflects the number of older women killed by their son or grandson, or by other younger perpetrators. In a number of cases, there was a considerable disparity in age between victims and perpetrators, with older victims being killed by sons, grandsons or much younger strangers; or with considerably older male partners killing younger female partners or spouses.

Age band	No. of perpetrators	%
<18	2	1
18–25	14	10
26–35	38	26
36–45	33	22
46–55	29	20
56–65	18	12
66–5	8	5
76–85	3	2
86–95	1	1
Unknown	1	1
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 30: Age bands of perpetrators, 2018

### 3.3 Health, problematic substance use and disability

A controlling bully who butchered his vulnerable girlfriend by stabbing her 21 times in a frenzied knife attack in her home has been jailed for life today. [...] He then went on a four-day drink and drugs binge on the run from the police and even flirted with a barmaid saying: "I wish my girlfriend had a body like you."<sup>76</sup>

Said the judge: "Having killed her, the only assistance you sought was for yourself. You never called emergency services. Instead you went with a friend to buy drugs. You then tried to get friends to provide you with money and accommodation, so that you could escape the consequences of what you had done."<sup>77</sup>

A number of perpetrators were reported as having health issues and/or a disability; most frequently these were mental illnesses and problematic substance use issues.

An individual perpetrator may have more than one health issue or disability.<sup>78</sup> In cases of intimate partner femicides, deterioration of either partner's mental or physical health has been recognised as a potential triggering factor.<sup>79</sup> Such 'triggers' and diagnoses obviously need to be understood within the broader context of male violence against women: clearly there is no equivalent phenomenon of women with mental or physical illness diagnoses killing male victims.

Perpetrators were recorded as having health or problematic substance use issues where these were mentioned in press reports; as in the earlier section, the legal definition of 'disability' was used<sup>80</sup> in identifying disabilities, where possible. In the case of mental illness, this was recorded as a disability only where there was a medical diagnosis, e.g. of schizophrenia.

Health issue	No.
Mental health	39
Problematic substance use: alcohol/illegal drugs/prescribed drugs	24
Physical health	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>

Figure 31: Health issues of perpetrators, 2018

Disability	No.
Mental illness (diagnosed condition)	14
Chronic disease	2
Physical impairment	2
Learning impairment	1
Sensory impairment	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

Figure 32: Disabilities of perpetrators, 2018

76 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7050113/Boyfriend-jailed-19-years-murdering-girlfriend-frenzied-pure-butchery-attack.html>

77 <https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/minimum-16-years-prison-man-1988284>

78 Percentages have not been provided, as tables present occurrences of health issues and disabilities, rather than number of perpetrators.

79 Monckton-Smith, J. (2019) 'Inter-partner femicide: Using Foucauldian analysis to track an eight stage progression to homicide'. *Violence Against Women*, August, 2019.

80 Under the UK Equality Act 2010, an individual is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities: <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

### 3.4 Sexual orientation

[The perpetrator], 37, strangled his wife, [victim's name], with a plastic bag after spending five years planning her murder so he could use her frozen embryos to have a family with his [male] lover in Sydney.<sup>81</sup>

One perpetrator was known to be in a relationship with another man, and was a regular user of gay dating websites. He killed his wife with the intent to use her frozen embryos to have a family with his male lover, and also to inherit a £2 million insurance payout.<sup>82</sup> As stated in earlier sections, the vast majority of perpetrators were men who killed women in the context of heterosexual relationships, dates and sexual encounters.

### 3.5 History of violence against women

[The perpetrator], 62, killed [the victim], 66, at her home in Redcar, Cleveland, on 15 August last year. [The perpetrator] had previously been imprisoned for manslaughter in the 1990s after he strangled a girlfriend. [...] [The perpetrator], who has a number of historical convictions for violence against women, initially claimed he did not mean to kill [the victim] but to silence her during an argument. [...] It was revealed on Thursday that he had been sentenced to three years in prison in 1996 for the manslaughter of [the first victim].<sup>83</sup>

*[The perpetrator], a supermarket worker who had been described as a 'violent bully', had already been jailed in 1999 for the murder of his estranged lover [victim], 36. [...] He had previously bludgeoned [the victim] with an iron bar before strangling her at her home in Bramcote, Nottingham, as her two children – one of whom was his – slept nearby.<sup>84</sup>*

Over half the 2018 perpetrators (52%, n=76) were known to have histories of previous abuse and violence against women. 2018 was the first year where data in this area were collected: this is an emerging area which merits further examination beyond the scope of this report. As with other data categories, information was gathered from press reports and police FOI responses, but as information was not always available it is likely that the actual figures and rates are higher.

This section differs from the previous "History of abuse experienced" section (Section two), as information here may involve perpetrators' history of abuse and violence against women, which could be against the victim (identified as 69 cases in Section two) and/or against other women, identified here as 76 cases.

In a third of known cases (24 out of 76), the violence had not been reported beyond family or friends. Where previous violence or abuse had been reported, police outcomes were unknown in a third of cases (25 out of 76) due to lack of information. Three perpetrators had been subject to a restraining order; two to a community order. Fifteen perpetrators had previous convictions for violence against women.

Three perpetrators had killed women before. One had been convicted of manslaughter in 1996 and jailed for three years<sup>85</sup>; the second, who also had a history of stalking, had been released from prison in 2014 having murdered his previous partner in 1999.<sup>86</sup> The third had been convicted of culpable homicide in 1992 and sentenced to 10 years' detention, and had also been convicted of serious violent offences in 2001 and 2010.<sup>87</sup>

Previous abuse/ violence against women	No. of perpetrators	%
Yes – not reported	24	16
Yes – no action taken	7	5
Yes – police outcome unknown	25	17
Yes – restraining order	3	2
Yes – community order	2	1
Yes – convicted (incl. femicides)	15 (3)	10 (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>52</b>

Figure 33: Perpetrators with a history of abusive behaviour towards women, 2018

81 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/dec/05/uk-pharmacist-mitesh-patel-jailed-for-30-years-wife-jessica-murder-premeditated>

82 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/dec/05/uk-pharmacist-mitesh-patel-jailed-for-30-years-wife-jessica-murder-premeditated>

83 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/21/redcar-man-given-life-for-smothering-partner-had-killed-before>

84 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5544951/Killer-accused-stabbing-lover-death-hangs-jail.html>

85 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/murdered-mums-relatives-ask-killer-14042687>

86 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-46398741>

87 <http://www.scotland-judiciary.org.uk/mobile/8/2132/HMA-v-Andrew-Wallace>

### 3.6 Use of pornography and the sex industry

[The perpetrator’s] laptop was examined and several videos of a violent sexual nature were found, one of which was identified as being the video found playing when officers entered his room. In addition, 572 indecent images of children were found on his laptop, including 98 of the most serious Category A images.<sup>88</sup>

[The perpetrator] was a regular user of an adult internet site and paid [the victim] £2,300 to perform sexual acts over three months, according to financial records checked by police. Her family said it escalated into “degrading and dangerous situations”, until her death on 15 March 2018. [...] [The perpetrator] admitted nine charges of possessing extreme pornography of acts that showed a “pre-occupation with strangulation, stabbing, torture, asphyxiation and death”. [...] “the worst images it is possible to imagine.”<sup>89</sup>

*[The perpetrator], 17, contacted [the victim] online and lured her to a Wolverhampton park, where he subjected her to horrific levels of violence in a two-hour attack before dumping her body on a bench. [...] Sentencing [the perpetrator], [the judge] said the teenager carried out the “truly shocking” attack after watching pornography and carrying out internet research.<sup>90</sup>*

Perpetrators’ use of pornography and women in the sex industry were referenced in media reports in relation to a number of femicides. Given the widespread normalisation and accessibility of pornography, prostitution and other aspects of the sex industry, it is likely that a high number of perpetrators used women in this way; however, this section focuses only on those cases where specific reference was made in relation to the femicide.

At least nine (6%) perpetrators were known to have been regular users of pornography, including extreme, violent pornography; this includes cases where the perpetrator accessed pornography immediately prior to or following the femicide. At least one perpetrator also possessed images of child sexual abuse. Six (4%) perpetrators used women in prostitution or via webcamming; this includes victims and other women exploited prior to or after the femicide. In the case where the perpetrator was accessing the woman through webcamming, police were preparing a file

to consider charging the perpetrator with manslaughter, but he was found dead while in prison. It is believed that this would have been a landmark legal case.<sup>91</sup>

There was also evidence of the influence of other violent media on perpetrators, with elements of role-play and fantasy featuring in a number of femicides. At least two perpetrators used or carried samurai swords alongside other weapons, such as axes or machetes: one perpetrator wore a ‘horror mask’,<sup>92</sup> the other was ‘obsessed’ with watching online videos of beheading, suicide and mass murder.<sup>93</sup> One perpetrator had changed his name to that of a character in a video game and was described as ‘obsessed with knives’.<sup>94</sup>

Use of sex industry	No.	%
Pornography	9	6
Prostitution	6	4
Images of child sexual abuse	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>

Figure 34: Perpetrator use of pornography and sex industry, 2018

88 <https://www.dorset.police.uk/news-information/article/6538>

89 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-48790961>

90 <https://www.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/viktorija-sokolova-rape-murder-wolverhampton-ayman-aziz-a9021351.html>

91 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-48790961>

92 <https://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/joan-hoggett-murder-trial-ethan-mountain-found-not-guilty-murder-and-faces-sentence-manslaughter-after-shop-worker-stabbed-death-78330>

93 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-45522338>; <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/sickening-websites-accessible-click-mouse-15157045>

94 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-47127042>; <https://www.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/torbjorn-kettlewell-murder-kelly-franklin-julie-wass-hartlepool-teesside-crown-court-a8764936.html>

### 3.7 Online dating, social media, cyberstalking and IT

On the same day, [the perpetrator] uploaded an Instagram post, which carried the quote: “My demons are coming back. The lock on their cage in my mind is rattling. They’re reaching through the bars. I don’t know if I’m strong enough to stop them again.” Below the picture, [the perpetrator] added the hashtag #toolate. It was the latest in an alarming series of social media posts, stretching back to April 2017.<sup>95</sup>

A killer husband who filmed his wife’s last moments before stabbing her to death has been given a life sentence. [The perpetrator], 32, recorded himself slapping and verbally abusing [the victim], 30, as she cowered on a sofa at their home. Moments after filming the video, in which he could be heard saying “I’m going to kill you”, [the perpetrator] stabbed his wife 12 times.<sup>96</sup>

Unsurprisingly, new technologies were utilised by perpetrators in a number of ways. 2018 was the first year in which data were collected in this area: it is an emerging area which merits further research to identify patterns and trends. Ways in which perpetrators used new technologies included meeting victims through online dating apps; contacting victims online; using social media to stalk or post comments about the victim; using dating apps to pursue other women immediately following the femicide. At least one perpetrator filmed his victim’s last moments before killing her;<sup>97</sup> another – having brutally attacked his step-mother – tried to upload images of the dying victim to a website specialising in extreme, graphic content, but the uploads failed as he was already banned.<sup>98</sup>

Use of IT in relation to femicides	No. of perpetrators	% of total perpetrators
Social media	5	3
IT	3	2
Online dating	3	2
Cyberstalking	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>

Figure 35: Use of IT in relation to femicides, 2018

95 <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/cassie-hayes-murder-burke-posts-14509317>

96 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-45685705>

97 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-45685705>

98 <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/horrific-details-murder-unfailingly-kind-15151775>

## 4. Criminal Justice Outcomes

### 4.1 Criminal justice charges

The majority of cases (87%, n=128) were charged with murder, 6 (4%) with attempted murder and 5 (3%) with manslaughter. Where known, other charges associated with the femicides have also been presented in the table: the total number of charges is therefore higher than the number of perpetrators.

Criminal Justice Charges	Total	%
Charged with murder (including double or multiple murder)	128	87
Charged with attempted murder	6	4
Charged with manslaughter	5	3
Charged with arson	4	3
Charged with GBH/attempted GBH	4	3
Charged with conspiracy to commit fraud	3	2
Charged with perverting the course of justice	3	2
Charged with possessing an offensive weapon	3	2
Charged with affray	1	1
Charged with assault	1	1
Charged with fraud	1	1
Charged with rape	1	1
Charged with robbery	1	1
Charged with wounding with intent	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Figure 36: Criminal justice charges, 2018



## 4.2 Pleas

[The perpetrator] denied the charge, saying the 46-year-old had killed herself while he visited, and he fled in panic without raising the alarm. [...] The Crown said his explanation was “transparent nonsense” and the defendant had attacked his mother-in-law with a 12in kitchen knife in a rage, then placed the weapon in her hand to make the death appear as suicide. A post-mortem examination found she suffered three major stab wounds to the front of her body and one of them passed through her breast bone and through her heart.<sup>99</sup>

Pleas were usually only reported on in relation to the specific charge of murder or manslaughter, rather than other associated charges such as assault, arson, fraud and so on. It is notable that although 128 (87%) perpetrators were charged with murder, 56 (38%) entered pleas of not guilty to murder and 35 (24%) pleaded guilty only to manslaughter (20 on grounds of diminished responsibility).

‘Rough sex’ defences, diminished responsibility or loss of control, accident and so-called ‘mercy killing’ were common grounds for manslaughter pleas, which were

indeed upheld in a significant proportion of cases (see ‘Criminal Justice Outcomes’). Self-defence was also a common defence argument, with perpetrators making such claims as the victim threatening him with a knife<sup>100</sup> or attacking him with a crash helmet.<sup>101</sup> One perpetrator who claimed that he had acted in self-defence had both strangled the victim and stabbed her 49 times;<sup>102</sup> another had stabbed the victim over 70 times.<sup>103</sup> A number of perpetrators claimed that the victim’s injuries were self-inflicted, having arranged her body to suggest that she had stabbed<sup>104</sup> or hanged herself.<sup>105</sup>

Plea	No.	%
Not guilty to murder	56	38
Guilty to murder	27	18
Guilty to manslaughter – diminished responsibility	20	14
Guilty to manslaughter	15	10
Other – deceased	15	10
No plea	8	5
Unknown	2	1
Guilty to culpable homicide – diminished responsibility	2	1
Not guilty to manslaughter	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>98</b>

Figure 37: Perpetrator pleas, 2018

99 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/arranged-marriage-murder-mother-in-law-rochdale-manchester-muhammed-taf-ham-rahman-begum-a8502116.html>

100 <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2018/07/20/shes-dead-because-i-restrained-her---man-accused-of-netherton-murder/>

101 [devonlive.com/news/man-who-strangled-girlfriend-says-1768858](http://devonlive.com/news/man-who-strangled-girlfriend-says-1768858)

102 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/kema-salum-stabbed-wife-death-murder-jailed-son-haringey-london-leyla-mtum-wa-a8607346.html>

103 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9221572/britains-got-talent-nurse-stabbed-trial-desmond-sylva/>

104 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-45268831>

105 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46136141>

### 4.3 ‘Rough sex’ defence

At his sentencing, Sheffield Crown Court heard [the perpetrator] took “risks during sexual intercourse” and regularly engaged in “bizarre and violent sado-masochistic sexual activity”. He slept with a knife under his pillow to indulge his fantasies with and, after taking the knife out during sex with [the victim], it pierced her artery. She died from substantial blood loss.<sup>106</sup>

A man who strangled his partner then tried to claim she had suddenly “gone limp” during sex, has been jailed for 18 years for her murder. [...] The 44-year-old initially told police that his partner of 15 years had lost consciousness as they had sex. But doctors cast doubt on his version of events after finding [the victim], 55, had suffered a fractured spine, broken ribs, hypoxia brain injury and bruising to her face, neck and arms before her death.<sup>107</sup>

Recent years have seen increasing attempts to present defences based on perpetrator claims that the victim consented to violent and dangerous sexual practices, resulting in her accidental death.<sup>108</sup> References to sadistic sexual practices were evident in eight 2018 femicides, with the so-called ‘rough sex’ defence used by legal defence teams in four such cases<sup>109</sup> and referenced as a partial defence in two further cases.<sup>110</sup> In five of these cases, perpetrators were found guilty of murder and given minimum sentences ranging from 17 to 29 years; in one case the perpetrator was found guilty of gross negligence manslaughter and given a six-year sentence.

No. of perpetrators claiming ‘rough sex’ defence	Charge	Plea	Verdict	Sentence
2	Murder	Manslaughter	Murder	Min 18 years; Min 29 years
3 (including two partial defences)	Murder	Not guilty to murder	Murder	Min 19 years; Min 18 years; Min 17 years
1	Murder	Manslaughter	Gross negligence manslaughter	6 years
<b>Total 6</b>				

Figure 38: Perpetrators utilising ‘rough sex’ defence, 2018

106 <https://www.hulldailyemail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/jason-gaskell-laura-huteson-hull-1883481>

107 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cambridgeshire-man-woman-killed-sex-sawston-robert-simpson-scott-sally-cavender-cam-bourne-a8977836.html>

108 The use of this defence, its sudden recent increase and current campaign actions against it are discussed at: <https://wecantconsenttothis.uk/>

109 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-48788677>; <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/12/richard-bailey-charlotte-teeling-strangled-during-sex-29-year-jail-term> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-46648000>; <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/man-kills-woman-sadomasochistic-sex-stabbing-neck-jail-jason-gaskell-laura-huteson-sheffield-a8486421.html>

110 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46136141>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46468168>

#### 4.4 Criminal justice outcomes

Detective Chief Inspector [name] said: “The lack of public interest in a murder trial is a sad reflection on the plight of scores of homeless people whose lives go on often largely unseen by many who are in a much more fortunate position.”<sup>111</sup>

Sentencing [the perpetrator] to life, [the judge] told him: “This has been a truly tragic case for the entirety of your family. [. . .] “I’m sure in your over-wrought state you lost your temper and took that knife to the bedroom where you used it to stab her a number of times, including twice to the chest and to the head and struck her with a stick with sufficient force to break it.”<sup>112</sup>

Most perpetrators (61%, n=89) were found guilty of murder; a minority (17%, n=25) were found guilty of manslaughter, with just under half of these manslaughter verdicts being on grounds of diminished responsibility. One perpetrator who was found guilty of manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility had battered his wife with an iron bar before smothering her; he was described as a ‘devoted man’ by the judge and given a suspended sentence.<sup>113</sup> In a similar case, a perpetrator who killed his elderly mother by throwing her head-first from the first-floor fire escape of the care home where she resided, was cleared of murder and given a two-year suspended sentence, with the judge telling him: “You are someone who acted out of love and desperation”<sup>114</sup> In another manslaughter case, the perpetrator – who had a history of violence and abuse – received a sentence of just over two years, where the court accepted that the victim had fallen on a knife in her bag.<sup>115</sup>

Criminal justice outcome	Total	%
Guilty of murder (including murder on more than one count)	89	61
Guilty of manslaughter	13	9
Guilty to manslaughter – diminished responsibility	12	8
Committed suicide at time of offence	11	7
Unknown	6	4
Detained under Mental Health Act	6	4
Guilty of arson	3	2
Guilty of attempted murder	3	2
Guilty of conspiracy to commit fraud	3	2
Guilty of possessing an offensive weapon	3	2
Trial ongoing	3	2
Committed suicide after offence	2	1
Died in prison on remand	2	1
Guilty of GBH/attempted GBH	2	1
Guilty of perverting the course of justice	2	1
Died in police custody	1	1
Guilty of affray	1	1
Guilty of assault	1	1
Guilty of burglary	1	1
Guilty of culpable homicide – diminished responsibility	1	1
Guilty of rape	1	1
Guilty of wounding with intent	1	1
Other – deceased	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>115</b>

Figure 39: Criminal justice outcomes, 2018

111 <https://www.worthingherald.co.uk/news/crime/sussex-man-convicted-of-killing-homeless-woman-who-was-found-in-a-seafront-shelter-1-8721008>

112 <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/uk-news/2019/01/24/pensioner-likely-to-die-in-jail-for-murdering-estranged-wife/>

113 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6418557/Devoted-husband-84-avoids-jail-battering-86-year-old-wife-death-iron-bar.html>

114 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-49768542>

115 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-47070501>

## 4.5 Sentencing

As stated above, the majority of perpetrators (61%, n=89) were found guilty of murder. Minimum sentences for murder ranged from 12.5–38 years, with the most frequently issued minimum sentences (46%, n= 41) clustered between 16–21 years. Fourteen perpetrators were given minimum sentences of 30 years or above.

Thirteen (9%) perpetrators were found guilty of manslaughter. Manslaughter sentences ranged from 2–20.5 years; eight were seven years or less. One perpetrator was given an indefinite hospital order and one a suspended sentence.

Twelve (8%) perpetrators were found guilty of manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility. Of these, two were given suspended sentences, five an indefinite hospital order and two were detained under the Mental Health Act.

The three remaining perpetrators were given sentences ranging from 9–9.5 years. A perpetrator found guilty of culpable homicide on grounds of diminished responsibility was given a hospital order.

It is beyond the scope of this report to provide an in-depth analysis of criminal justice outcomes and sentencing across all femicide cases, but such research would be valuable. It is not always clear why a particular charge was brought or dropped, and there can be apparent disparities in sentencing. Data relating to complaints to the Attorney General about unduly lenient sentences indicate similar disparities. There are indications that attitudes and stereotypes in relation to both victims and perpetrators – particularly in the areas of age, class and ethnicity – may play a role at different stages of the criminal justice process, and in relation to outcomes and sentencing.

## Life sentence: minimum tariff (years)

<b>Guilty of murder</b>	12.5	13	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	18	18.5	19	20	21	22	22.5
<b>No. of perpetrators</b>	1	1	4	1	4	2	5	5	5	7	2	5	6	6	3	1

Figure 40: Guilty of murder (minimum sentence)

## Life sentence: minimum tariff (years)

<b>Guilty of murder</b>	23	24	25	26	28	29	30	31	32	33	35	36	38	Awaiting sentence
<b>No. of perpetrators</b>	2	2	2	4	2	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	2

Figure 40a: Guilty of murder (minimum sentence) continued

## Life sentence (years)

<b>Guilty of manslaughter</b>	2	2.5	3.5	4.5	6	6.5	7	14	15	20.5	Indefinite hospital order	Suspended sentence
<b>No. of perpetrators</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

Figure 41: Guilty of manslaughter (sentence)

## Sentence (years)

<b>Guilty of manslaughter (diminished responsibility)</b>	9	9.5	Suspended sentence	Indefinite hospital order	Detained under Mental Health Act
<b>No. of perpetrators</b>	1	2	2	5	2

Figure 42: Guilty of manslaughter, diminished responsibility (sentence)

## Sentence (years)

<b>Guilty of culpable homicide (diminished responsibility)</b>	Hospital order
<b>No. of perpetrators</b>	1

Figure 43: Guilty of culpable homicide, diminished responsibility (sentence)

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

2018 saw the highest number of known UK femicides since first collecting the data in 2009.<sup>116</sup> As in previous years, women were killed predominantly by male intimate partners or ex-partners, or by male members of their family, extended family or social circle. ‘Overkilling’ was evident in over half the cases – a rise on the 2017 data – and over half the perpetrators had a history of previous abuse or violence against women, with three perpetrators having killed women before.

Clearly, there may be variations in patterns and trends of femicides, criminal justice outcomes and sentences from one year to another.<sup>117</sup> However, the fact of men killing women – in numbers ranging from 113 victims (2016) to 149 victims (2018) – remains strikingly constant across the years that the Femicide Census has been gathering data.

Alongside the constant fact of men killing women, societal norms, structures and attitudes serve to minimise, normalise and indeed naturalise male violence against women and

women’s subordinate social status. There is by now an ample and international body of combined knowledge, expertise, experience, research, evidence and lobbying by the violence against women’s sector (practitioners, activists, academics and survivors). It has identified and disseminated information and recommendations about perpetrator risks, patterns, trends, prevention and intervention opportunities, which could save and improve women’s and children’s lives. Yet we continue to see the marginalisation, and indeed, eradication of specialist women’s sectors and women’s voices, and dwindling resources or understanding for male violence against women<sup>118</sup> policy and services.

The current populist and political trends – both nationally and internationally – of an ever-shrinking state, a neoliberalist perspective which fails to recognise structural inequality and discrimination, and a resistance to attempts to scrutinise or challenge the use of power<sup>119</sup> are an additional threat to women’s ability to access justice and safety.

<sup>116</sup> It should be noted that it is only in 2017 and now 2018 that the killings of women in Scotland and Northern Ireland have been included, so this may be a contributory factor to the higher numbers.

<sup>117</sup> In 2020, the Femicide Census will be publishing a report covering 10 years’ worth of data, which will allow for an analysis of trends, patterns and possible aberrations from the cumulative body of data over a longer period.

<sup>118</sup> Note that we distinguish between violence against women and “domestic violence” or even “domestic abuse”, as only a ‘violence against women’ framework incorporates and addresses the root causes of the violence and situates discrimination and sexism as a continued cause and consequence of male violence against women.

<sup>119</sup> Conservative manifesto 2019 promises to review constitution and access to judicial review p48 [https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba\\_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf)

## Recommendations

Previous Femicide Census reports have presented a range of recommendations. It is possible to identify a degree of progress in a few limited areas: an increasing recognition of the nature and significance of coercive control;<sup>120</sup> government commitment to the Domestic Abuse Bill, notwithstanding its limitations; and the increasing prominence of academic research, such as the Domestic Homicide timeline and the Femicide Census. However, in many other areas there is no discernible progress and in some there is actual regression: this includes the erosion of women's access to appropriate women-only spaces and specialist services; barriers to accessing suitable accommodation and public services; victim-blaming language in media reports; and the increased normalisation of sexual violence through pornography and mainstream media.

The Femicide Census will be reviewing its key recommendations in the forthcoming 10-year report. In the meantime, our recommendations are to support initiatives such as:

- Reviving the Domestic Abuse Bill, with amendments regarding 'rough sex' defences and migrant women including women with no recourse to public funds.
- Equalities impact assessments with specialist input from the sector at the earliest stages around all new policies and their potential to discriminate against women or exacerbate the risk of violence and abuse experienced by women.
- Investigating the merits and possible demerits of a stand-alone offence of non-fatal strangulation.
- Collecting, centralising and publicising transparent, searchable and disaggregated data about violence against women and about the findings and implementation of statutory reviews, DHRs, notices to prevent future deaths, along with an action plan to learn from them and hold authorities to account for failings.
- Ensuring access to justice and learning for bereaved families.
- Promotion of relevant up-to-date research and training (e.g. on the Femicide Census, the Homicide Timeline, the impact of pornography on perpetration of male violence and on repeat patterns of abusers).
- Challenging attitudes that normalise male violence and blame victims.
- Funding for specialist and women-only refuges, accommodation, advocacy, legal aid and other elements vital to enable a woman to leave an abusive partner or family member, and remain safe thereafter.
- Building a national oversight mechanism for implementing official recommendations.

<sup>120</sup> In large part due to the high-profile case of Sally Challen: <https://news.sky.com/story/sally-challens-story-driven-to-murder-after-years-of-abuse-11553940>

