

**femicide census**  
profiles of women killed by men

The Femicide Census: 2016 findings  
**ANNUAL REPORT ON CASES  
OF FEMICIDE IN 2016**



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## Dedication

2016 saw another 113 women killed<sup>1</sup> by men in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This report is dedicated to the women who have been killed by men, last year, and in years previously. Again, we hope this report can be a voice for the women whose stories were absent or not fully reflected in news reports and courtrooms. This report is also dedicated to the families and friends who lost a woman from their lives at the hands of a man. We are calling on the government, police and all those involved in the criminal justice system to do more to protect women from femicide, and to provide the vital specialist services they need to enable them to escape. Listen to women and believe them. Ensure women are safe and hold all men guilty of killing women to account.

All quotes in this report have been taken directly from news reports on cases of femicide occurring or reported on in 2016. Names, and other details relating to the identity of victims and perpetrators, have been removed. Please note that some of these quotes contain explicit details on abuse (physical, mental, emotional, verbal and sexual) and methods of killing/excessive violence which may distress the reader.

<sup>1</sup> At the point of publication of this report, a number of cases of femicide from 2016 could not be included as criminal proceedings were ongoing. It is therefore believed that 113 is not the total number of cases of femicide for 2016.

# The women killed in 2016 to whom this report is dedicated

Agnieszka Szymura	Darlene Horton	Helen Fraser	Leanne Wall	Natasha Wild
Albertina Choules	Dawn Green	Hilary Milner	Leigh Anne Mahachi	Nicola Haworth
Aleksandra Mrozik	Dawn Rhodes†	India Eve Chipchase	Lenuta Haidemac	Nicola Woodman
Alice Ruggles	Deeqa Ibrahim	Iris Owens	Linda Ordinans	Nijole Sveteckiene
Alison Farr-Davies	Donna Williamson	Jacqueline Pattenden	Lisa Reynolds	Norma Bell
Alison Muncaster	Elidona Demiraj	Jade Hales	Lisa Skidmore	Pardeep Kaur
Amina Begum	Elizabeth Hudson	Jean Constant	Lucy Jones	Rose Hill
Andraya Louise Lyons	Ellia Arathoon	Jean Irwin	Lyndsay Smith	Sarah Nash
Andrea Lewis	Emma Baum	Jean Ryan*	Lynne Braund	Shana Grice
Angela Best*	Ernestine Tindall	Joanna Trojniak	Lynne Freeman	Sheila Jefferson
Anne Marie Nield	Fay Daniels	Jodie Betteridge	Mandy Gallear	Sonita Nijhawan
Annie Besala Ekofo*	Fiona Southwell	Julie Archer	Margaret Mayer	Sophie Smith
Asia Tufail	Gemma Stevens	Julie Cook	Maria Byrne	Sophie Taylor
Becky Morgan	Georgina Symonds	Julie Hitch	Maria Mbombo	Sylvia Stuart
Belen Tripp	Geraldine Newman	Julie Parker	Marie Johnston	Tracy Cockrell
Bethany Hill	Gergana Prodanova	Karen Arnold	Marina Erte	Tracy McPartland
Caroline Andrews	Gina Lander	Karen Hales	Maylyn Couperthwaite	Umida Eshboboeva
Carrie Ann Izzard	Guida Rufino	Katrina O'Hara	Melinda Kirosi	Victoria Bance
Charlotte Hart	Hanna Pearson	Kelly Machin	Nasreen Khan	Xixi Bi Llandaff
Christine James	Hayley Dean	Kerry Gascoigne*	Natalie Hemming	Zoe Morgan
Claire Hart	Hayley Wall	Khabi Abrey	Natasha Bradbury	Zofia Sabowska
Claire Nagle	Helen Bailey	Laraine Rayner	Natasha Ellis	
Coleen Westlake	Helen Joanne (Jo) Cox	Laura Marshall*	Natasha Wake	

\* As of 20th November 2017, when this report was finalised, the criminal proceedings against the perpetrator had not been concluded or were unclear as to conclusion. The database will be updated on receipt of further information. As a result, the number of women known to have been killed by men in 2016 may change.

† Dawn Rhodes's husband was acquitted of murder but we have included her name because his plea of self-defence was accepted by the jury, meaning the physical act of killing is inherent in the defence.

# The Femicide Census

Since the first Femicide Census report *Redefining an Isolated Incident* was published in December 2016,<sup>2</sup> the Femicide Census project has continued collecting and analysing cases of femicide in England, Wales and, more recently, in Northern Ireland. This report summarises findings on cases of the 113 femicides committed in 2016, and adds to global calls for more research on femicide. In particular, it has been noted by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women (UN SRVAW) that the comparability and availability of data is key to defining and understanding femicide, and its manifestations, causes and consequences. The Femicide Census was recognised by the UN SRVAW as a good practice model in this regard.<sup>3</sup>

Femicide is generally defined as the killing of women by men because they are women, though some definitions include any killing of women or girls by men.<sup>4</sup> A more in-depth look at the term 'femicide' and further reading on men's fatal violence against women and girls can be found in the 2016 report *Redefining an Isolated Incident*.

The Femicide Census was developed by Karen Ingala Smith and Women's Aid Federation of England working in partnership, with support from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP and Deloitte LLP.

The census aims to provide a clearer picture of men's fatal violence against women, committed by partners, ex-partners, male relatives, acquaintances, colleagues and strangers, to aid the prevention of femicide.

The killing of women has continued each year at a substantial rate since our data collection started in 2009. The Femicide Census collates the details of femicides committed by men to explore where lessons can be learnt by viewing these cases together. By demonstrating, once again, that there are trends in cases of femicide, from age range, to method of killing, to relationship between the victim and perpetrator, this report shows the need for state agencies and stakeholders to engage with the census and its findings. An urgent approach to preventing femicide is needed to reduce the number of women killed by men.

2 Available online at: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/femicide-census>

3 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (2016) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/297/08/PDF/N1629708.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 16th October 2017).

4 World Health Organisation (2012) *Understanding and addressing violence against women*, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77421/1/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.38\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77421/1/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf) (accessed 16th October 2017).

## Key Findings

113 women were killed by men in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2016. At the point of publication of this report, a number of cases of femicide from 2016 could not be included. These cases are still under investigation and information was exempt from disclosure via police Freedom of Information Act requests. It is therefore believed that 113 is not the total number of cases of femicide for 2016.

### Victims:

- 69% (n=78) of women were killed by a current or former intimate partner.
- 7.1% (n=8) of women were killed by a male family member, i.e. a son, father, brother, nephew or grandson.
- 12.4% (n=14) of women were killed by a man they knew, but who was of no intimate or familial relation to them.
- 7.9% (n=9) of women were killed by a stranger.
- The greatest number of femicides occurred within the London Metropolitan, South Wales and Greater Manchester police force areas.
- 75.2% (n=85) of women were killed at their own home, or the home they shared with the perpetrator.
- 77.4% (n=24) of women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse were killed within the first year that followed that separation.<sup>5</sup>

### Perpetrators:

- 27.5% (n=30) of perpetrators were aged between 36 and 45.
- In 47 cases, perpetrators used a sharp instrument to kill their victims.
- 19 men suspected of killing a woman either killed themselves or died prior to trial.
- 37 perpetrators pleaded not guilty to murder, 28 of whom were found guilty of murder.
- 84 perpetrators were found guilty of murder, manslaughter or of causing death.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This figure is of those women known to have separated from their partner/spouse only.

<sup>6</sup> At the end of November 2017, five perpetrators are awaiting trial.

# Key Recommendations

Femicide has been described by the UN SRVAW as constituting “the most extreme form of violence against women and the most violent manifestation of discrimination against women and their inequality”.<sup>7</sup>

The UN SRVAW has called on all governments to set up a Femicide Watch to collect data as a crucial tool for the development of effective strategies to address this serious human rights violation, and for that data to be published annually. The Femicide Census provides such data and could assist the government in identifying commonalities and learnings to help reduce and prevent femicide.

## Key recommendation for the government

The UK government should put reducing femicide at the centre of its work to reduce violence against women, including the proposed Domestic Abuse and Violence Bill and wider review of the violence against women and girls strategy.<sup>8</sup>

## Key recommendation for the police

The police should nominate a specific senior officer for each police force area responsible for responding to the Femicide Census and building a strategy to prevent future deaths.

## Key recommendation for the judiciary

Review the range of sentencing for femicide across England and Wales to identify the reasons for the significant variation in sentences (from 12 years to 28 years for murder) and establish if further guidance on the trial and sentencing of femicide cases is necessary to ensure all perpetrators are equally held to account and victims’ families can see justice done.

## Key recommendation for employers

Employers should ensure they have appropriate policies and procedures to support and protect employees and provide training and guidance to line managers and colleagues.

7 UN General Assembly (23rd September 2016) *Violence against women, its causes and consequences*, A/71/398 (accessed 1st October 2017).

8 The Home Office (March 2016) *Strategy to end violence against women and girls: 2016 to 2020*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-to-2020> (accessed 24th October 2017).

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# Methodology

The Femicide Census gathers information on women and girls aged 14 years and older who have been killed, and where the principal charged, alleged or convicted perpetrator is a man.<sup>9</sup> The census is constantly being updated and currently contains information on over 1000 women killed since 2009. This report is based on our most complete 2016 data thus far, comprising femicides committed between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2016 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Four cases of women reportedly killed in 2016 have not been included in this report as there were insufficient details on the victim or perpetrator provided in the Freedom of Information Act request, or no further details available in online news reports. Information has been collected on both the victim and perpetrator: on their age, occupation, relationship, health status, the method of killing, other victims, the context of violence (i.e. intimate partner violence, for financial gain, child-parent, sexually motivated) and in which police force area the woman was killed. When the child(ren) of a victim is/are also killed, the information is stored on the database. This data has not been analysed in this report. Since the first report, *Redefining an Isolated Incident*, new data has been collected, such as information pertaining to previous incidents of abuse or convictions for violence against women by the perpetrator, the sentences handed down, the location of the incident and any reported evidence of sexual violence.

Data on the Femicide Census is primarily collected via Freedom of Information requests (FOI request). This data is supplemented with information gained from publicly available information such as news reports, and through the data collected on Karen Ingala Smith's blog *Counting Dead Women*.<sup>10</sup> The detailed framework of the Femicide Census project methodology and information on the Freedom of Information Act are outlined in the first report.<sup>11</sup>

## Limitations

The Femicide Census database will always be a work in progress. The data in the census will only ever be as complete as the information that is available publicly and is provided by the police and other authorities.<sup>12</sup> Again in 2017, and since the beginning of the Femicide Census project, not all police force areas responded in full to FOI requests. The London

Metropolitan Police Service has yet to provide any detailed data. As such, information in FOI responses on some of the names of women killed, their race and ethnicity and other details remain absent. When new information on victims of femicide becomes available the census database is updated.

As of mid-2017, data from Northern Ireland has been collected on femicides committed in 2016. It is hoped that the research can also be expanded into Scotland in order to create a UK-wide picture of femicide.

Each death referred to in this report has been categorised through the identification of what we believe is the primary contextual factor. Information on other relevant contexts is now also being collected. For example, the murder of a woman by her son could also be contextualised as a “mercy” killing’ and ‘domestic child-parent’.

9 Four women and one transgender woman are known to have been sentenced or charged, alongside male perpetrators, for their involvement in the killing of women in 2016. Details on their name, age and criminal verdict have been recorded on the census but are not analysed in this report.

10 K. Ingala Smith, *Counting Dead Women*, <https://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/>

11 Available online at: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/femicide-census>

12 The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), in particular, encourage the police to support the work of the Femicide Census project. Recommendation 6 of the 2015 HMIC report *Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse* noted: “[The Home Office] should also consider how forces can contribute effectively to and access the information held within the Femicide Census.” There has been limited progress on this recommendation.

# Findings

This section introduces the findings on 113 femicides committed in 2016. We begin with an overview of the relationship categories, followed by an introduction to the demographics of the women on the census, including their age, country of birth, ethnicity, where they were from and where they were killed. The section that follows gives details on the contexts of violence and the perpetrator's relationship to the victim, findings on the method of killing, the location of incident and post-separation femicides. Finally, findings on perpetrators of femicide are presented.

## Incidents of femicide and relationship of perpetrator to victim

**The following figures give a breakdown of the 113 femicides in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between 1st January and 31st December 2016:**

### Women killed by their current or former partner

78 women<sup>13</sup> in 2016. This totals **69%** of all women killed in 2016.

### Women killed by their sons

Three women in 2016. Representing **2.7%** of all femicides in 2016.

### Women killed by any other male family member

Five women were killed by a male member of their family, such as a brother, father, grandson or nephew in 2016. This accounts for **4.4%** of all femicides in 2016.

### Women killed by someone known to them (non-relatives, non-partners)

14 women were killed in 2016 by a man they knew but who was of no intimate or familial relation to them, e.g. by a friend, colleague, neighbour or the partner/ex-partner of a friend or relative.<sup>14</sup> This totals **12.4%** of all victims of femicide killed in 2016.

### Women killed by a stranger

Nine women were killed by a stranger in 2016. **7.9%** of all femicides in 2016.

### Women killed – relationship yet to be established

The relationship between the victim and perpetrator, if any, is yet to be established for four women killed in 2016. **3.5%** of all femicides in 2016.

<sup>13</sup> This figure includes 75 women killed in the context of 'domestic – intimate partner violence', two women killed in the context of "'mercy' killing' and one woman killed in the context of 'assisted suicide/suicide pact'.

<sup>14</sup> Femicides committed in the context of 'prostitution/pornography' (i.e. where the perpetrator was a client) are included in these figures. Femicides committed in the context of 'intimate partner violence – collateral' (i.e. where the perpetrator was the partner/ex-partner of a friend or relative) are also included here.

# Victims

## Police Force Area

The number of women killed by men per police force area in 2016 is presented in **Figure I** below.

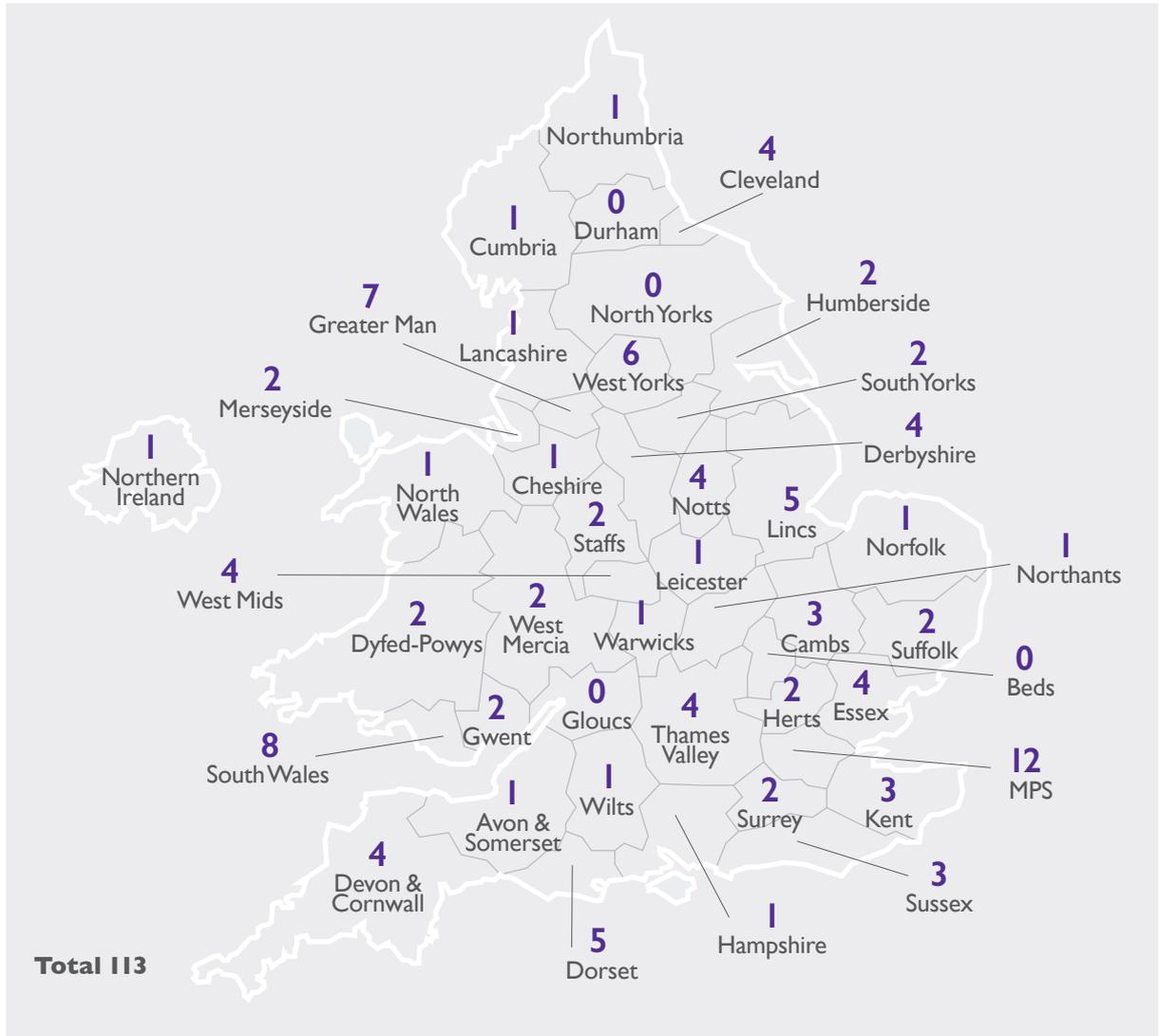


Figure I: Total number of femicides per police force area in 2016.

In 2016, within populations served by the London Metropolitan, South Wales and Greater Manchester police forces, the highest number of femicides occurred (n=12, 8 and 7, respectively). The findings from South Wales stand out as the population is

significantly smaller than those within the London Metropolitan and the Greater Manchester police force areas. The Metropolitan police serve the largest population in England, Greater Manchester serve the third largest, and South Wales the 17th largest.<sup>15</sup>

## Rate of Femicide

To highlight the proportion of femicides per area in 2016, the rate of femicide per 100,000 population has been calculated and presented on the map below, **Figure 2**.<sup>16</sup>

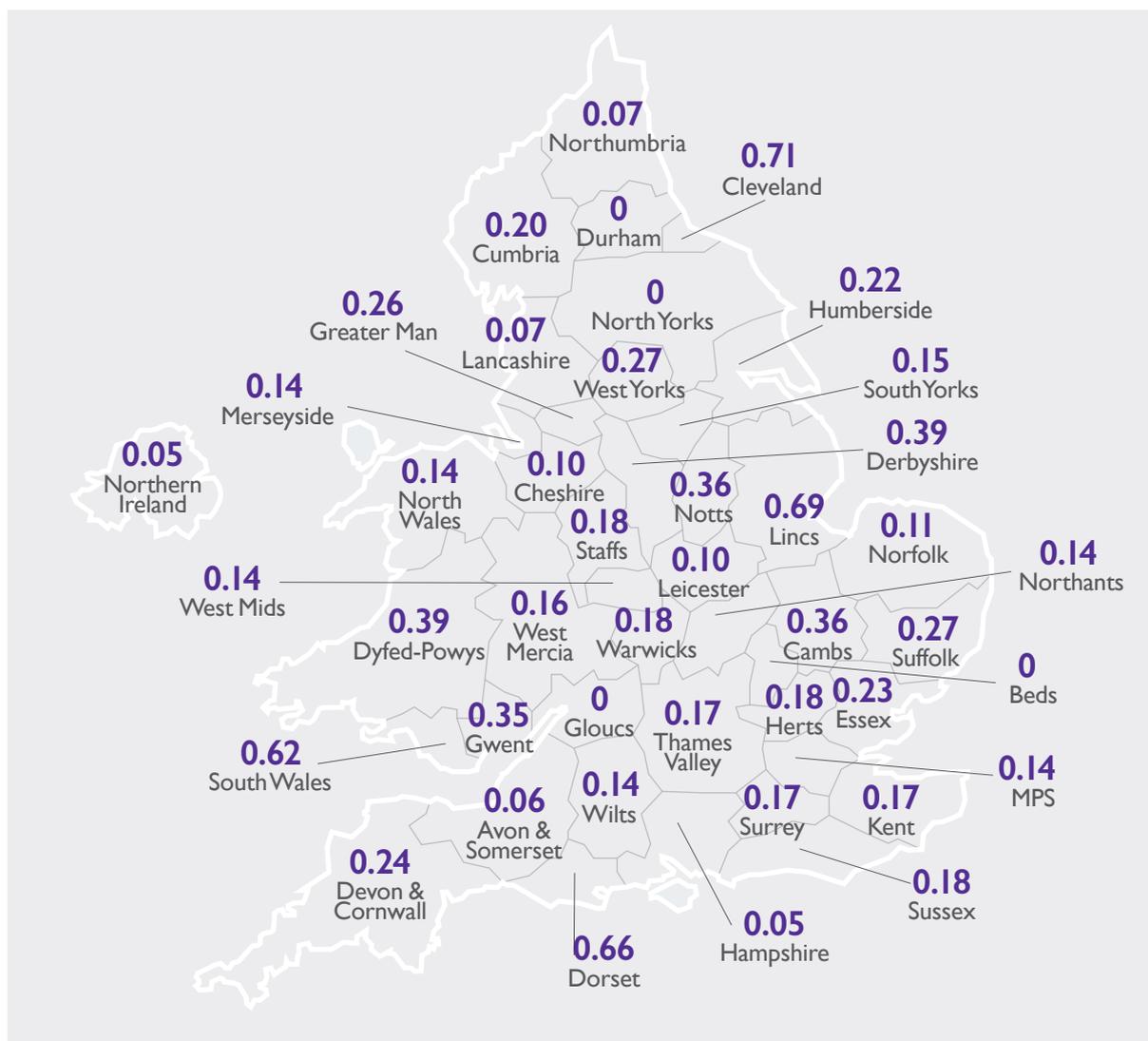


Figure 2: Rate of femicide per police force area per 100,000 population in 2016.

<sup>15</sup> An average of the population was calculated for each police force in England, Wales and Northern Ireland based on mid-year population estimates between 2010 and 2016. Sources: The Office for National Statistics (ONS), 'Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland', <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland> (accessed 12th October 2017). The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), 'Statistics: Population', <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population> (accessed 13th October 2017).

<sup>16</sup> The femicide rate has been calculated by dividing the total number of femicides per police force area by the average population of the police force area. This result was then multiplied by 100,000.

For example:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of femicides in Surrey (n=2)} \times 100,000}{\text{Surrey police force area population (n=1,151,915)}} = 0.173624$$

The five police force areas with the highest femicide rate in 2016 are presented in **Figure 3** below. While South Wales had one of the highest numbers of femicide in 2016, it does not in fact hold the highest rate of femicide per population for that year. Examination of femicides committed under the administration of the South Wales police force shows that six of the eight femicides committed in 2016 were intimate partner femicides. Further examination towards an explanation of the high rate of femicide is recommended, particularly by the police force areas with the highest number of women killed and those with the highest number of women killed per population. South Wales and Dorset are in the top five police force areas for both of these categories.

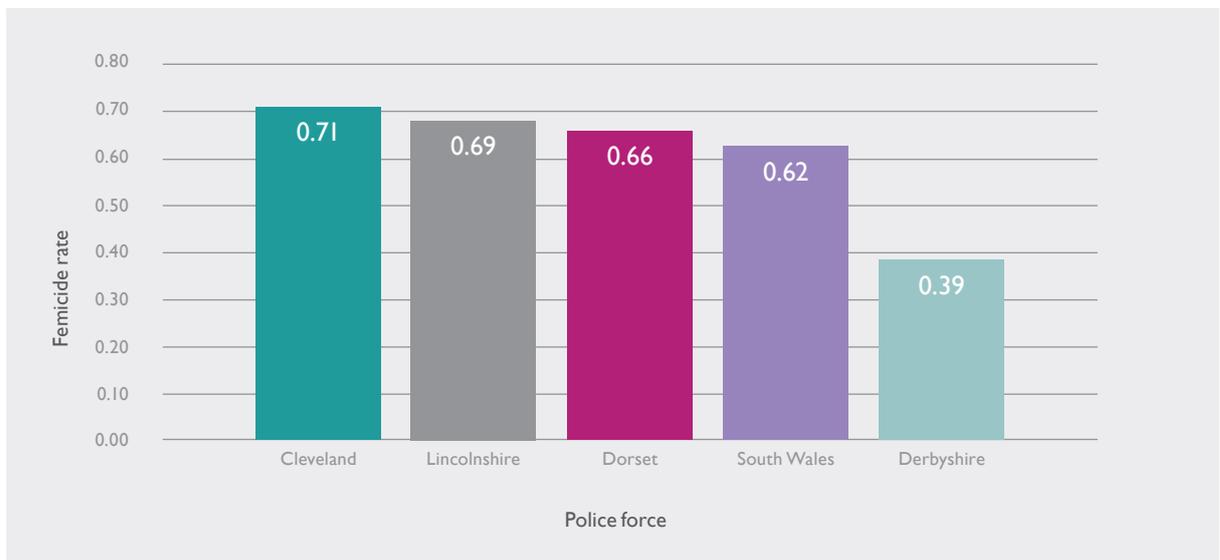


Figure 3: Police force areas with the largest femicide rates per 100,000 in 2016.

## Country of Birth

"[The victim] had been living [here] with her partner and their two children after moving to the UK in 2015."<sup>17</sup>

Unless stated otherwise in publicly available information, it is assumed that a victim was born in the UK. While the majority of victims are believed to have been born in the UK, reflecting the population, femicide was an issue also facing migrant women in 2016. The countries of birth of women killed in 2016 are presented in the map below (Figure 4). After women born in the UK (n=93), the second largest

group of women killed in 2016 were born in Poland (n=4). In time, and with resourcing, we would hope to be able to compare data on the countries of birth of women killed by men in the UK to population data so that we could identify whether women born in a specific country were over-represented and therefore should perhaps be considered as being at greater risk.

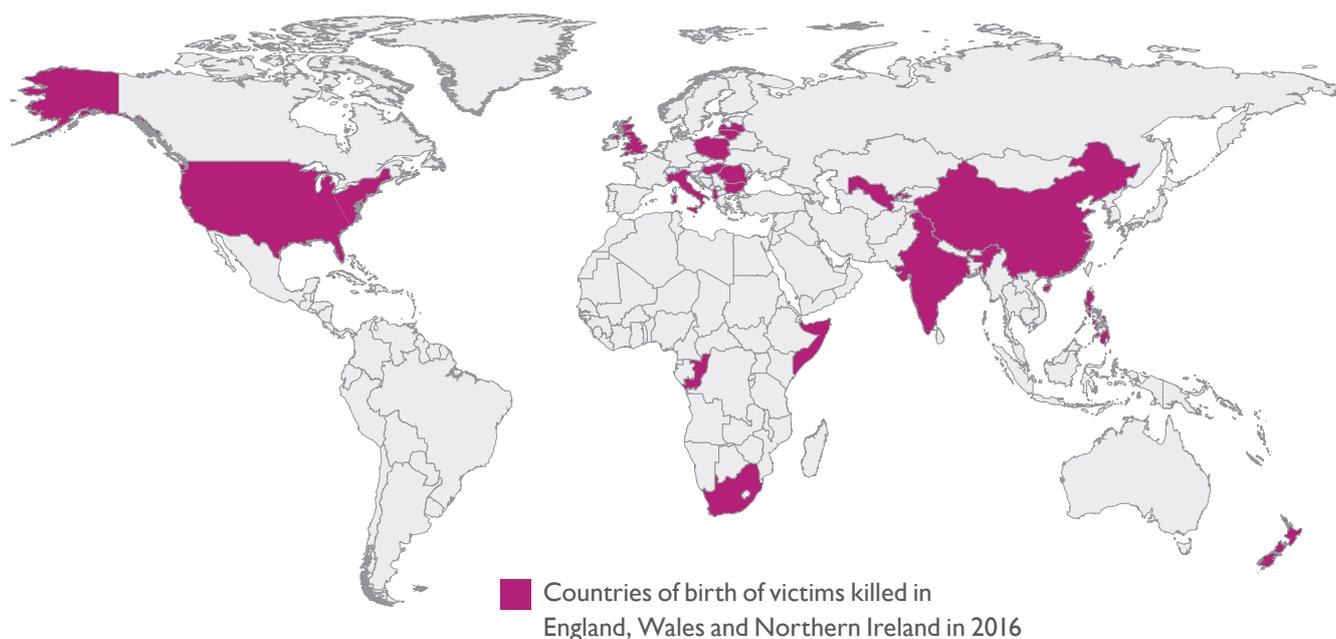


Figure 4: Countries of birth of victims killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> 2016 femicide reported in 2017, source: <https://www.bostonstandard.co.uk/news/>

<sup>18</sup> This map was created using Mapchart.net. The full list of countries of birth of women can be found in the appendices at the end of this report.

## Race and Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity classifications are collected via FOI requests to the police. As seen in **Table I** there is a lack of consistency in the assignment of classifications across police forces; categories such

as ‘White North European’, ‘White European’, ‘White British’ and ‘White’ could potentially be combined providing different totals to those found below.

Table I: Race/ethnicity of women killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.

Race (categories assigned by the police)	Total
White	26
White British	23
Not recorded <sup>19</sup>	12
No FOI response (Met Police)	12
White North European	12
Details not provided in FOI response <sup>20</sup>	9
White European	4
Unknown <sup>21</sup>	2
Any other white background	2
Asian	2
Black	2
Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian background	2
White – Polish	2
Asian – Pakistani	1
Other – Any other ethnic group	1
Chinese	1
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>113</b>

Without detailed responses from the Metropolitan Police Service to FOI requests, these findings fail to show the ethnicity and race of women killed in the most ethnically diverse area in England and Wales.<sup>22</sup> Our research on countries of birth of victims found that 58% (n=7) of women killed within the Metropolitan police force area in 2016 were born outside the UK. The lack of detailed responses from the Metropolitan Police Service prevents the census

from capturing data on the race and ethnicity of women in this region in particular, which in turn prevents use of the data to identify, for example, risk factors. Without common terminology for the classification of race and ethnicity across police forces in England and Wales (and indeed Scotland and Northern Ireland) accurately recorded, it will be impossible to obtain an accurate assessment of the race and ethnicity of victims of femicide.

## Age Bands

The Femicide Census collects data on women aged 14 years and over. In the first report on femicide, *Redefining an Isolated Incident*, the age group 66+ was inclusive of all women aged 66 years and over. This year that age band has been broken down and

analysed further, and the data shows that femicide can affect women at any age. **Figure 5** below shows the percentage of women killed in 2016 per age group. Women between the ages of 46 and 55 were the age group most affected by femicide in 2016 (n=28).

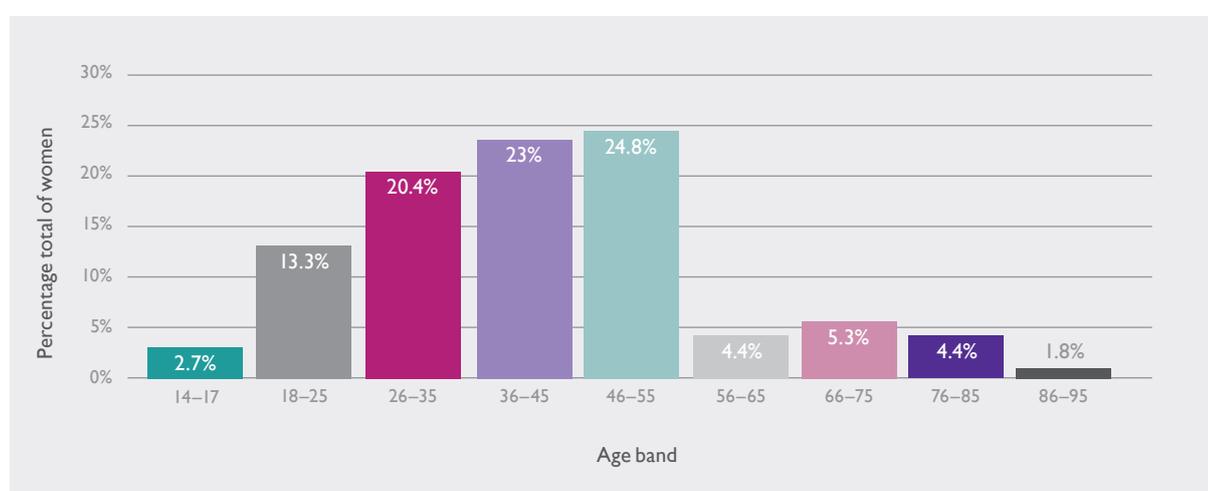


Figure 5: Age bands of women killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.

## Children and Pregnancy

In 2016, 39 women had a child or children under the age of 18 when they were killed.

In 2016, three women have been identified as being pregnant when they were killed.

19 'Not recorded' is the terminology used in FOI responses when there is no record of the victim's race and ethnicity on their system.

20 When police forces provided very limited information in the FOI response, for example a link to a news website only, this has been recorded as 'Details not provided in FOI response'.

21 'Unknown' refers to cases of femicide that were not provided in FOI responses but were found through publicly available information such as *Counting Dead Women*. K. Ingala Smith, <https://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/>

22 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) *Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales: 2011*, 2011, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11> (accessed 15th October 17).

## Context of Violence and Relationship

“Resentful [perpetrator] murdered woman who took his job in vicious knife attack.”<sup>23</sup>

This section looks at the context of violence and the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

The Femicide Census gathers data on all women killed by men. These killings have been contextualised by their violence to help with answering questions such as: Was the perpetrator motivated by financial gain? Or was the perpetrator known to the woman?

The primary context of violence has been assigned to each case of femicide, frequently referring to the primary relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, or, where known, the main identified or suspected motive of the perpetrator. Work is now being carried out to collect any additional relevant contexts for all cases on the census, for example ‘sexually motivated’ and ‘in the course of other crime – robbery or burglary’. Table 2 outlines the number of women killed per respective context in 2016. Presented in the adjacent columns is the perpetrator’s relationship to the victim per respective context of violence.

Every year women killed by their partner or ex-partner represent the majority of femicides, as shown in Table 2. This is true again for 2016 when 69% (n=78) of women were killed by a current or former intimate partner. This figure totals the combined number of women killed by their partner/ex-partner in the contexts of ‘intimate partner violence’ (n=75), “‘mercy’ killings” (n=2) and ‘assisted suicide/suicide pact’ (n=1).

Three women were killed by their son, or 2.6% of all femicides in 2016. A further five women, or 4.4% of all victims, were killed by any other male family member (in the case of 2016 femicides, by a brother, father, nephew or grandson).

The second largest group of perpetrators of femicide in 2016 are situated in the ‘known’ relationship category.

This means that after intimate partner femicides, 12.4% (n=14) of women were killed by a man known to them but of no familial or intimate relationship, such as a friend, neighbour, the partner/ex-partner of a relative or friend (intimate partner violence – collateral<sup>24</sup>), or a sex-buyer (in the context of prostitution/pornography). Three women were killed by their daughter’s partner or ex-partner in 2016. At least one woman who knew her perpetrator was killed in a sexually motivated attack.

Nine women are known to have been killed by a stranger in 2016. At least four of those women were killed in a sexually motivated attack.

In three of the cases of ‘sexually motivated’ femicides, the perpetrators were found guilty of rape in addition to a murder conviction. In three cases, according to media reports, the police found items in the perpetrator’s home, or at the scene of the crime, indicating the perpetrator was a ‘fantasist’ or ‘porn/sex-obsessed’.

The context ‘other’ accounts for 5.3% (n=6) of femicides in 2016. This context is used to refer to cases where the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator may be known but the motive is unclear or it does not fit into the other categories. An example of a case contextualised as ‘other’ was the killing of a woman by her neighbour who had subjected the victim and her daughter to years of bullying and intimidation.

The context ‘unknown’ accounts for 5.3% (n=6) of femicides and this is partly due to the proximity of this report’s release date to the year under examination. As court proceedings are currently ongoing for a number of femicides committed in 2016, it is not yet possible to obtain information on the perpetrator’s relationship to the victim, or his motive.<sup>25</sup>

23 2016 femicide reported in 2017, source: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/)

24 The context ‘intimate partner violence – collateral’ describes the killing of a woman’s friend or family member by her partner or ex-partner.

25 The database will be updated when more details are found.

Table 2: The number of women killed per respective context of violence and the corresponding perpetrator relationship category, for women killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.

Primary context of violence		Perpetrator's relationship to victim					
Primary context	Number of women	Partner/ ex-partner	Son	Any other male family member	Known (non-relative, non-partner) <sup>26</sup>	Stranger	Unknown
Domestic – Intimate partner violence	75	75					
Unknown <sup>27</sup>	6				2		4
Other	6				5	1	
Sexually motivated	5				1	4	
Domestic – Extended family	3			3			
Domestic – Child-parent	3		3				
IPV – Collateral	3				3		
In the course of other crime – Robbery or burglary	2				1	1	
Other – Mental health	2					2	
Other – 'Mercy' killing	2	2					
Prostitution/ Pornography	1					1	
Other – Financial gain	1				1		
Domestic – Parent-child	1			1			
Revenge against victim's family member	1				1		
Domestic – Sibling-sibling	1			1			
Other – Assisted suicide or suicide pact	1	1					
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

<sup>26</sup> Perpetrators in this category include a friend, acquaintance, neighbour, colleague, client and the partner/ex-partner of a relative or friend.

<sup>27</sup> A femicide is contextualised as 'unknown' when a motive and/or the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator has not been established.

## Women Aged 66+

### Intimate partner femicide

In 2016, 13 women aged over 66 were killed by men in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.<sup>28</sup> The largest group of these women, 46.2% (n=6), were killed by their partner or spouse.<sup>29</sup> The fact that older women were mostly killed by a partner or ex-partner – and that this mirrors the femicides of younger women – proves the need for support for women of all ages to live free from domestic abuse and violence.

### Killed in the course of a robbery or burglary

Both of the women killed in 2016 during the course of a robbery or burglary were aged between 76 and 85. One woman was killed by someone she knew, and the other woman was killed by a stranger.

### Child-parent killings

Child-parent killings in 2016 were more prevalent in age bands below 66 years than over it. One woman killed by her son in 2016 was aged between 66 and 75, one woman was between 46 and 55, and one was aged between 36 and 45.

## Prostitution

Women involved in prostitution and/or pornography are subjected to high rates of violence by men. We know at least two of the women killed in 2016 were involved in prostitution and/or pornography: one woman was killed by her partner (this femicide was contextualised as ‘intimate partner violence’), and one woman was killed by a stranger in the context of ‘prostitution/pornography’.

## Post-separation Killings

31 women are known to have been separated when they were killed by their ex-partner in 2016. For these women, the Femicide Census shows that it is during the immediate months following a separation that perpetrators pose significant risk. However, risk also continues beyond this timescale. This finding is presented in the pattern in Figure 6 below. In 2016, 32.3% (n=10) of the 31 women separated were killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse within the month that followed separation. Combining the first 12 months as a whole shows that 77.4% (n=24) of these women were killed within the first year post-separation.

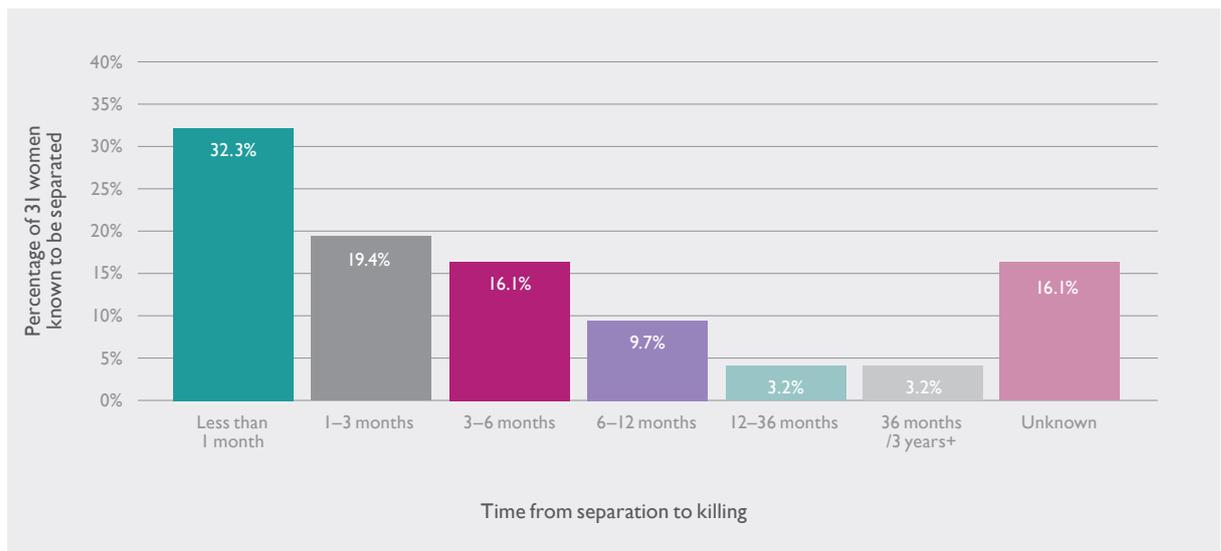


Figure 6: The length of time between separation and killing for 31 women killed in 2016.

28 A breakdown of this age group can be found at the beginning of this report under Age Bands.

29 This figure combines three women killed in the context of ‘domestic – intimate partner violence’, two women killed by their partners in the context of ‘‘mercy’’ killing’ and one woman killed by her partner in the context of ‘assisted suicide or suicide pact’.

## Location of Incident

“[The perpetrator] subjected his ex-girlfriend to a campaign of stalking and harassment before he broke into her house and killed her.”<sup>30</sup>

For the first time the Femicide Census has collected details on the location of the act of femicide.

As presented in **Figure 7** below, 38.1% (n=43) of the 113 women killed in 2016 were killed at the home they were living in, independent of the perpetrator. 37.2% (n=42) of women were killed at the home they shared with the perpetrator (in the majority of cases

their partner or spouse). While the majority of women were killed in or outside a home, it is useful to identify that four women have been killed in or outside their workplace or the perpetrator’s workplace. Employers should have appropriate policies and procedures to support and protect employees, and provide guidance to line managers and colleagues.

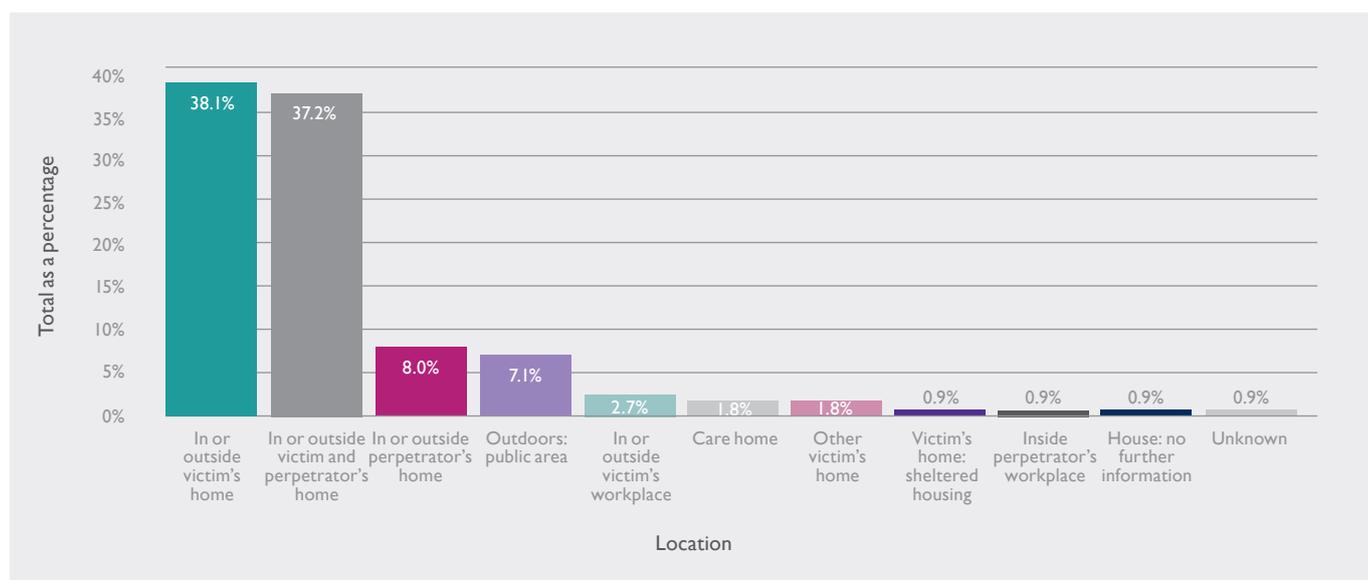


Figure 7: Location of incident of femicides committed in 2016.

30 2016 femicide reported in 2017, source: <http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/>

Figure 8 shows the location of incident for the 31 women killed by their ex-partner following a separation in 2016. The majority of these women, 58.1% (n=18), were killed at their own homes. The second largest group of women, 16.1% (n=5), were killed in the home they still shared with their partner following a separation. These findings highlight some significant issues. Criminal and/or civil orders (such as domestic violence protection orders, non-molestation orders and occupation orders) need to be in place and enforced, and breaches criminalised to protect women

in their homes from an abusive partner or ex-partner. The intention to consolidate these orders through the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill is a welcome government initiative as it provides opportunities to better safeguard against femicide. Crisis refuge support to enable women and their children to escape is also essential. Currently this is under threat. Safe, specialist accommodation options need to be available to women fleeing domestic violence, which requires sustainable, long-term funding for refuges, and allowing women to access refuges in different local authority areas.<sup>31</sup>

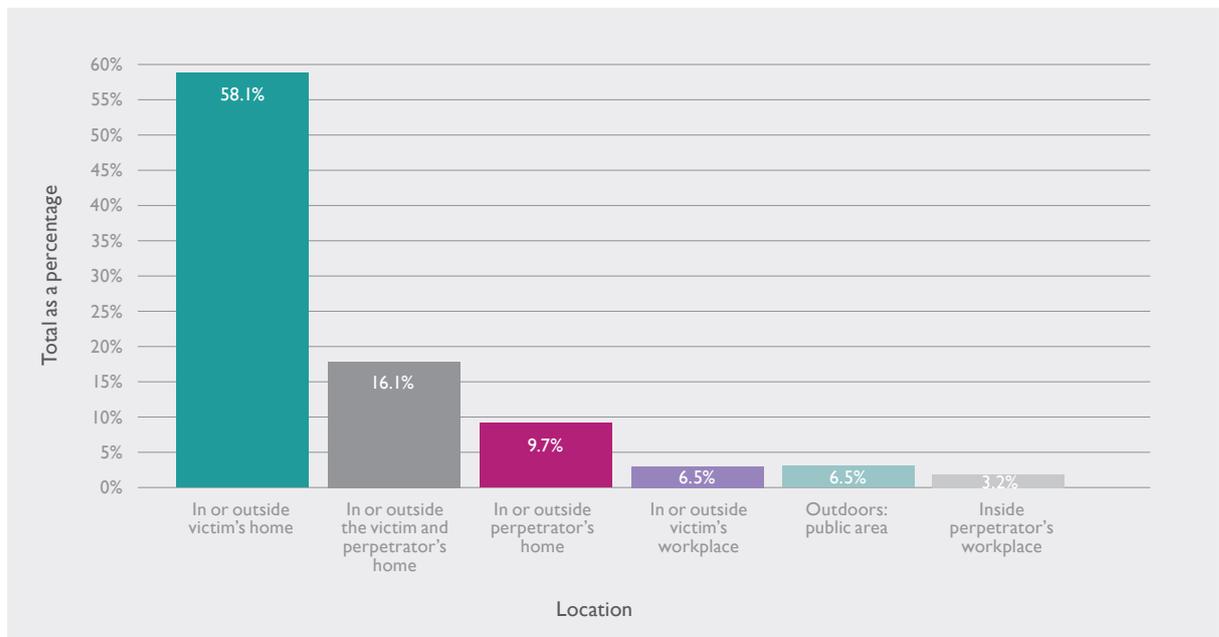


Figure 8: Location of incident of femicides committed by an ex-partner in 2016.

<sup>31</sup> The Women's Aid Annual Survey 2016 found that about two-thirds of women and children in refuge came from a different local authority area – yet commissioners are increasingly saying refuges can only accommodate local women. March, 2017, <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/research-and-publications/annual-survey-2016/> (accessed 16th October 2017).

## Method of Killing

"[The perpetrator] inflicted blows to her head, neck, chest, abdomen, back, torso, arms, legs and genitals."<sup>32</sup>

In the 113 incidents of femicide committed in 2016, there were 126 methods of killing employed. As presented in **Figure 9** below, three methods of killing were used in two cases (1.8%), two methods were used in 17 cases (15%), and in 86 cases of femicide one method of killing was used (76.1%).<sup>33</sup> In total, a sharp instrument was used in 47 cases of femicide committed in 2016, strangulation/asphyxiation in 25

cases, kicking or hitting without a weapon in 18 cases, and a blunt instrument was used in 14 cases. The high rate of using a sharp instrument to kill women indicates that the commonly held perception of knife crime as a youth issue needs to be revised. Data collected and analysed on victims of fatal knife crime should be disaggregated by sex.

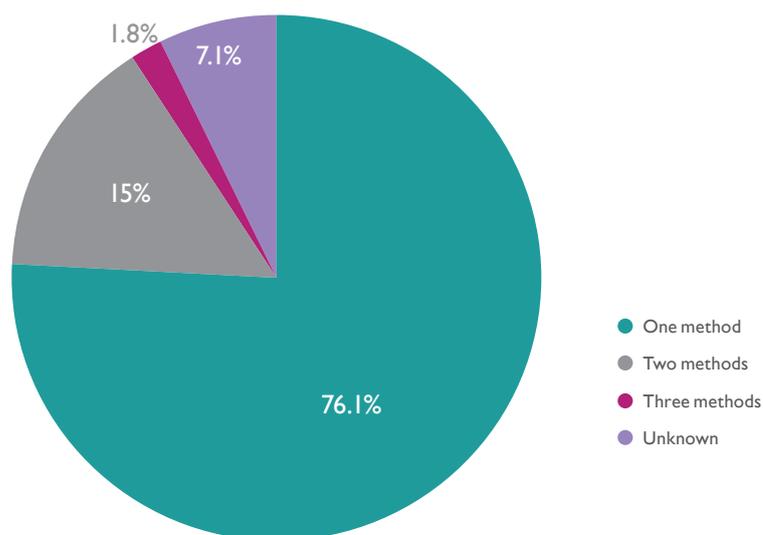


Figure 9: The number of methods of killing used in femicides committed in 2016.

'Overkilling' is the term used to describe the use of excessive force that goes further than what was necessary to cause the victim's death.<sup>34</sup> The findings on multiple methods of killing evidence the fact that perpetrators of femicide overkill victims.

However, in cases where one method of killing was used there has also been evidence of overkilling. News reports have described details from coroner reports and court cases on the multiple injuries inflicted with the same knife or without any weapons at all.

<sup>32</sup> 2016 femicide reported in 2016: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/)

<sup>33</sup> In eight cases of femicide in 2016 the method of killing is unknown.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell, C., Anglin, A. (2009) *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*, p. 325, Oxford University Press.

# Perpetrators

## Demographics

There were 109 perpetrators of femicide in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during 2016. Four of the 109 perpetrators killed two women thus accounting for the 113 victims of femicide in 2016.

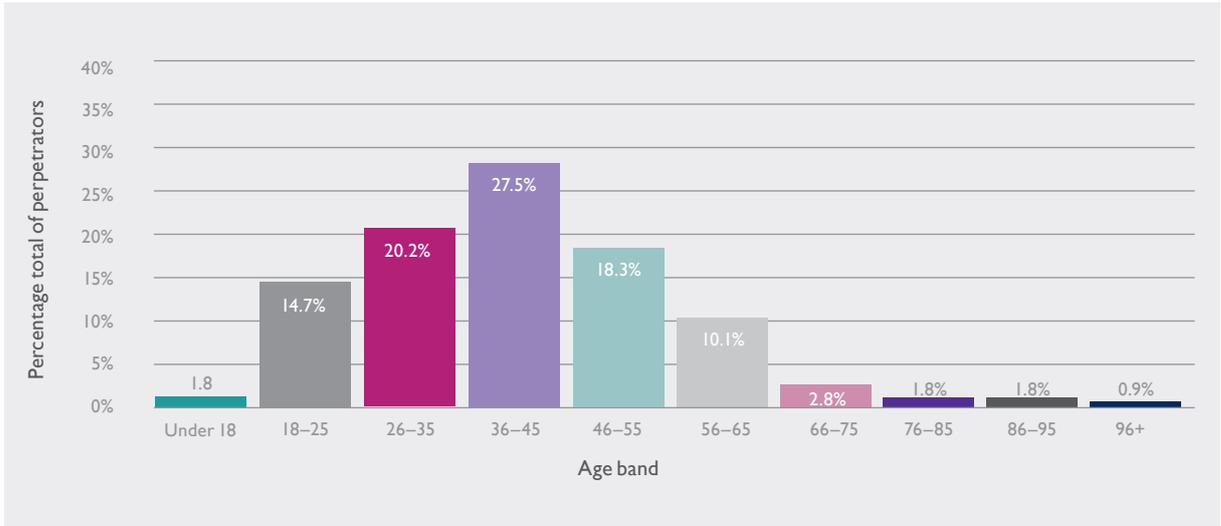


Figure 10: Age bands of perpetrators of femicide in 2016.

## Age Bands

Of the 109 perpetrators of femicide, the largest group, 27.5% (n=30), were aged 36–45. While only 7.4% (n=8) of perpetrators were aged 66 and over, 11.5% (n=13) of victims were aged over 66. This reflects the significant number of older women killed by their son or a male family member and, to a lesser – yet noteworthy – extent, by intruders during a burglary.

## Criminal Justice Progress/Outcome

“A man who attacked his wife with an axe and knife more than 120 times after she asked for a divorce... was cleared of murder but found guilty of manslaughter.”<sup>35</sup>

**Table 3** shows the number of convictions, charges and types of criminal justice outcomes or progress for perpetrators of femicide in 2016, sourced predominantly through publicly available information.<sup>36</sup> Although there were four women reportedly killed in 2016 where the perpetrator and criminal justice outcome remains unknown,<sup>37</sup> it is still positive to note that there has been action taken by the police to bring perpetrators of femicide to court. All but one of the 86 perpetrators who remained alive and were taken to court were found guilty of either murder or

manslaughter, or another crime that indicated their involvement in the killing. This could be an indicator of good policing (albeit after the event), and that in most cases the victim was known to the perpetrator. It can be regarded as a positive criminal justice outcome. Unfortunately this contrasts with criminal justice outcomes for other forms of non-fatal men’s violence against women, in particular sexual violence, harassment, stalking and domestic abuse, which can be a precursor to fatal violence.

35 2016 femicide reported in 2016: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

36 As of 20th November 2017, when this report was finalised, the criminal proceedings against five perpetrators had not been concluded or were unclear as to conclusion. The database will be updated on receipt of further information.

37 These cases were not included for analysis in this report. See Methodology, page 8.

Table 3: List of convictions, charges and types of criminal justice outcomes or progress for perpetrators of femicide in 2016.

Crime	Culprit	Victim
Murder	50	50
Guilty of murder – multiple women	2	4
Guilty of murder – multiple women and men	4	4
Guilty of murder and rape	2	2
Guilty of murder and arson	1	1
Guilty of murder and attempted murder	1	1
Guilty of murder, arson, attempted murder and rape	1	1
<b>Murder total victims</b>		<b>63</b>
<b>Murder plus other crimes total culprits</b>	<b>61</b>	
Manslaughter	7	7
Manslaughter through diminished responsibility – sentenced	7	7
Manslaughter through diminished responsibility – hospital order	4	4
Manslaughter through diminished responsibility – multiple hospital order	1	2
Manslaughter and arson	1	1
Manslaughter – gross negligence	1	1
<b>Manslaughter total victims</b>		<b>22</b>
<b>Manslaughter total culprits</b>	<b>21</b>	
Grievous bodily harm with intent	1	1
Death by dangerous driving	1	1
Awaiting trial	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>92</b>
Suicide	15	16
Died before trial	4	4
Acquittal as a result of self-defence plea		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Grand total culprits/Grand total victims</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>113</b>

## Pleas and Sentencing

“Jail sentence of double killer referred [to Attorney General] for being ‘too lenient.’”<sup>38</sup>

For the first time the Femicide Census has captured data on the minimum sentence handed down to perpetrators of femicide in 2016. Additionally, data has been collected for the first time on pleas entered in court by the perpetrators of femicides committed in 2016. As with the criminal justice outcomes and convictions, this information has been sourced through publicly available information and not through the FOI requests to the police.

The average minimum sentence perpetrators received for femicide was 19 years. However, the spectrum is wide and extends from as little as one year to a maximum ‘whole life’ sentence. Four indefinite hospital orders were also handed down in 2016.

Amongst some of the findings on pleas entered in court for femicides committed in 2016 are:

- 37 perpetrators pleaded not guilty to murder, 28 of these were found guilty of murder, four were found guilty of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility, four remain charged with murder, and one was found not guilty of murder.

- 23 perpetrators pleaded guilty to murder and were therefore convicted of murder.
- 16 perpetrators who entered a plea of guilty to manslaughter (12 on the grounds of diminished responsibility) had their pleas accepted.
- Nine perpetrators who entered a plea of manslaughter (two on the grounds of loss of control and four on diminished responsibility) were found guilty of murder.
- One perpetrator pleaded not guilty to manslaughter and was found guilty of manslaughter.

Minimum sentences for murder over 2016 ranged from 12 years to 28 years, yet all the women died violent deaths. While there are, rightly, mitigating and aggravating factors to take into account in each case, we are concerned that this may reflect inconsistencies in the application of the law and the relevant sentencing guidelines. We are undertaking further research and would welcome a review by the judiciary and further dialogue with the Crown Prosecution Service and the judiciary on the application of minimum sentencing across the country.

38 2016: [www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/)

## Conclusion – Preventing Femicide?

“You’re thinking is this woman going to die if we turn them away. It’s awful.”<sup>39</sup>

Speaking at the expert roundtable on the Femicide Census in February 2017, Frank Mullane, the director of Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse, rightly pointed out that when femicide is discussed it tends to be presented as historical. As the Femicide Census shows, women are being killed by men week in, week out; this will happen next week, we just don’t know their names yet.<sup>40</sup> What the 2016 findings (so far) and the findings in the previous report show, is that there are a vast number of similarities in femicides, and through this data we can already know details about some of the women who will be killed and the men who will kill. Women are most likely to be killed between the age of 46 and 55 (24.8%), although women at any age can be a victim of femicide. Perpetrators of femicide are most likely to be aged between 36 and 45 (27.5%), but men at any age can be a perpetrator. Women are most likely to be killed by their partner or ex-partner (69%), and a significant number of women will be killed by someone they know but of no familial or intimate relation to them (12.4%). The majority of women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse will be killed within the first year that follows the separation (77.4%). Women are most likely to be killed at their homes (38.1%) or the home they share with the perpetrator (37.2%). A sharp instrument will be used in most cases of femicide (47 cases). Victims of femicide in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have come from 17 different countries across the world. More perpetrators will plead ‘not guilty to murder’ than enter a guilty plea.<sup>41</sup>

All those involved in the criminal justice system and other public sector organisations, including health and social services, have a duty to learn from these patterns and to make deeper strides in preventative work.

They must:

- take women’s concerns and experiences of abuse and violence seriously – women must be heard and believed when they raise concerns and report abuse;
- ensure frontline staff have a good understanding of violence against women and how to act to keep women and their children safe;
- adequately prosecute men’s violence;
- make early interventions that meet the needs of women;
- ensure sustainable and long-term funding for refuges and specialist services so that women experiencing men’s violence and abuse can safely escape;
- recognise that the killing of over a thousand women by men in the last eight years is far, far too many; and
- use the upcoming Domestic Abuse and Violence Bill as an opportunity for all public sector organisations to recognise their role in preventing abuse and femicide.

The Femicide Census will only ever be as powerful as the use that is made of it. Establishing a state Femicide Watch has been recognised by the UN SRVAW as a means of increasing awareness of gender-based violence and of galvanising actions for its prevention, and she has pointed to the Femicide Census as a model of good practice.<sup>42</sup> It is vital now that commitments are made and actions are taken on the eradication of men’s fatal violence against women and girls.

The Femicide Census Partnership encourages all stakeholders to make use of this data. By working together and sharing learning, we can work to reduce the number of women who are being killed by men.

39 Clare Phillipson, manager of a refuge in Sunderland speaking in *The Independent*, ‘Women’s refuge budgets slashed by nearly a quarter over past seven years’, October 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/women-refuge-budget-cut-quarter-domestic-violence-victims-children-support-a8003066.html> (accessed 17th October 2017).

40 Mullane, F., Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse, speaking at the *Expert Roundtable on The Femicide Census: Recommendations, Responses and Where to Next*, hosted by Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, London, 27th February 2017.

41 Preceding findings based on 2016 totals only.

# Recommendations

The following are recommendations for ways in which state and public policymakers can take steps to address and prevent femicide:

## Recommendations for the UK government

- Put reducing femicide at the centre of its work to reduce violence against women, including the proposed Domestic Abuse and Violence Bill and wider review of the violence against women and girls strategy.<sup>43</sup>
- Ensure that state agencies (including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the judiciary, coroners, the NHS and Social Services) are aware of – and use – the findings of the Femicide Census and contribute to its development to better inform how they deal with violence against women.
- Encourage police and crime commissioners to include femicide in their strategies and hold their police force accountable for providing data to the Femicide Census. They should use the learning from it with the specific aim of reducing the local rates of femicide within each police force area.
- Protect the lifesaving refuges and services for women and children escaping abuse. Only by creating a long-term and sustainable funding model for a national network of refuges and services can we ensure that every woman and child can safely escape domestic abuse.<sup>44</sup>

## Recommendations for the police

- Nominate a specific senior officer per police force area to be responsible for responding to the Femicide Census and building a strategy to prevent future deaths.
- Support the work of the Femicide Census through sharing of data, including timely and comprehensive responses to FOI requests. Where possible under the regulations of the Freedom of Information Act, release detailed responses to our requests for data.

- Ensure all data on violent crimes is disaggregated by sex, relationship of perpetrator to victim, age and whether there has been repeat victimisation.
- Establish common definitions of race and identity that are used across all police force areas and ensure accurate data on race and identity is always collected.
- Review the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) recommendations made to other police forces following the death of a woman by men's fatal violence.
- Always signpost victims to specialist services and provide access to protection systems, such as panic alarms and flagged address.

## Recommendation for the Crown Prosecution Service and the judiciary

- Ensure training and learning from the findings of the Femicide Census and Domestic Homicide Reviews for staff at all levels.

## Recommendation for the judiciary

- Review the application of minimum sentencing for femicide across England and Wales to identify the reasons for the significant variation in sentences (from 12 years to 28 years for murder) and establish if further guidance on the trial and sentencing of femicide cases is necessary to ensure that all perpetrators are equally held to account, and that victims' families can see justice done.

## Recommendation for employers

- Employers should ensure they have appropriate policies and procedures to support and protect employees and provide guidance to line managers and colleagues.

42 United Nations (October 2016) *Third Committee of the General Assembly*, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gashc4166.doc.htm> (accessed 16th October 2017).

43 The Home Office (March 2016) *Strategy to end violence against women and girls: 2016 to 2020*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-to-2020> (accessed 24th October 2017).

44 In November 2017, the government proposed changes to supported housing that will remove the last secure form of supported housing for refuges, forcing them to reduce provision or even face closure, leaving even more women and children with nowhere to turn.

## Appendices

Table 4: The total number of femicides per police force area.

Police force area	Total femicides	Police force area	Total femicides
Metropolitan Police Service	12	Staffordshire	2
South Wales	8	South Yorkshire	2
Greater Manchester	7	Dyfed-Powys	2
West Yorkshire	6	Gwent	2
Dorset	5	Hampshire	1
Lincolnshire	5	Cheshire	1
Thames Valley	4	Norfolk	1
Derbyshire	4	Lancashire	1
Nottinghamshire	4	Avon and Somerset	1
West Midlands	4	Northumbria	1
Cleveland	4	Wiltshire	1
Devon and Cornwall	4	Leicestershire	1
Essex	4	Warwickshire	1
Sussex	3	Cumbria	1
Kent	3	Northamptonshire	1
Cambridgeshire	3	North Wales	1
Hertfordshire	2	Police Service of Northern Ireland	1
West Mercia	2	Bedfordshire	0
Merseyside	2	Durham	0
Surrey	2	Gloucestershire	0
Humberside	2	North Yorkshire	0
Suffolk	2	<b>Grand total</b>	<b>113</b>

Table 5: The rate of femicide per police force area per 100,000 population.

Police force area	Rate of femicide per 100,000	Police force area	Rate of femicide per 100,000
Cleveland	0.71	Kent	0.17
Lincolnshire	0.69	West Mercia	0.16
Dorset	0.66	South Yorkshire	0.15
South Wales	0.62	North Wales	0.14
Derbyshire	0.39	Wiltshire	0.14
Dyfed-Powys	0.39	Merseyside	0.14
Cambridgeshire	0.36	West Midlands	0.14
Nottinghamshire	0.36	Metropolitan Police Service	0.14
Gwent	0.35	Northamptonshire	0.14
Suffolk	0.27	Norfolk	0.11
West Yorkshire	0.27	Cheshire	0.10
Greater Manchester	0.26	Leicestershire	0.10
Devon and Cornwall	0.24	Northumbria	0.07
Essex	0.23	Lancashire	0.07
Humberside	0.22	Avon and Somerset	0.06
Cumbria	0.20	Police Service of Northern Ireland	0.05
Sussex	0.18	Hampshire	0.05
Warwickshire	0.18	Bedfordshire	0
Staffordshire	0.18	Durham	0
Hertfordshire	0.18	Gloucestershire	0
Surrey	0.17	North Yorkshire	0
Thames Valley	0.17		

Table 6: List of countries of birth of women killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.

Country of birth	Total
Believed to be UK	93
Poland	4
Lithuania	1
Latvia	1
Somalia	1
Hungary	1
India	1
Italy	1
China	1
Romania	1
Bulgaria	1
Philippines	1
South Africa	1
New Zealand	1
United States of America	1
Albania	1
Republic of Congo	1
Uzbekistan	1
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>113</b>

# Glossary

FOI request Requests submitted under the framework of the Freedom of Information Act

IPCC Independent Police Complaints Commission

IPV Intimate Partner Violence

NHS National Health Service

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

UN SRVAW United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women

### Karen Ingala Smith

Karen Ingala Smith is Chief Executive of nia, a London-based charity championing an integrated approach to addressing all forms of men's violence against women and girls.

Karen has been recording and commemorating UK women killed by men since January 2012 in a campaign called *Counting Dead Women*.

### Women's Aid

Women's Aid is the national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. We keep survivors at the heart of our work, working with and for women and children by listening to them and responding to their needs. We are a federation of over 220 organisations that provide more than 300 local lifesaving services to women and children across the country. We provide expert training, qualifications and consultancy to a range of agencies and professionals working with survivors or commissioning domestic abuse services, and award a National Quality Mark for services which meet our quality standards. Our campaigns achieve change in policy, practice and awareness, encouraging healthy relationships and helping to build a future where domestic abuse is no longer tolerated. The 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (run in partnership with Refuge) and our range of online services, which include the Survivors' Forum, help hundreds of thousands of women and children every year.



women's aid  
until women & children are safe

