# EXAMINING THE VICTIM'S RIGHT TO REVIEW (VRR) BY POLICE IN STALKING AND HARASSMENT CASES: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) FINDINGS & CASE STUDIES

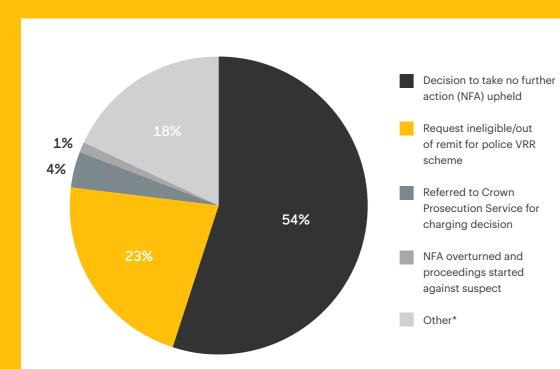
Researchers received data from **27 police forces** on stalking and harassment-related Victim's Right to Review (VRR) requests — **17 forces** were unable to retrieve requested data within FOI time/cost limits.

386

STALKING AND HARASSMENT VRR REQUESTS Received by all forces, 2015-2020 468%

INCREASE IN STALKING AND HARASSMENT VRR REQUESTS
Between 2015-2020

## VRR OUTCOMES



\*includes 8% police making further enquiries, 3% outcomes unavailable/not disaggregated, 2% original NFA decision overturned, subsequently refiled as NFA, 2% NFA overturned, did not succeed to prosecution, 1% VRR request withdrawn by complainant, 1% no further information on record, 1% complaint upheld, disposal decision remained, 1% no response from interested party, so VRR not conducted.

## **STALKING**

We define stalking as a pattern of fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviour which is intrusive and causes serious alarm and distress and/or fear of violence to the victim.

## **POLICE VRR**

The Victim's Right to Review (VRR) came into effect on 5 June 2013, and the scheme was extended to police decisions on 1 April 2015. Under the VRR, crime victims can seek a review of "decisions not to charge, to discontinue or otherwise terminate all proceedings" by lodging a request with their local CPS office or with the relevant force in the case of the police VRR (CPS, 2020).

# IMPACTS FOR STALKING SURVIVORS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Case studies show unsuccessful VRR requests can have severe impacts for survivors:

"When the case was NFA'd in December 2019 I felt like I'd lost a battle. I didn't feel safe knowing that this was 'procedure'."

However, Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC) can support survivors through the process:

"Knowing I had support and someone fighting the same battle with me meant so much for my self-worth during a bleak process." 1.

MORE CONSISTENT POLICE RECORDING

2.

ROBUST
GUIDANCE &
PROCEDURES
TO ENSURE
SURVIVORS ARE
AWARE OF THEIR
RIGHTS

3.

ENSURE THAT
STALKING
SURVIVORS HAVE
ACCESS TO AN
INDEPENDENT
STALKING
ADVOCACY
CASEWORKER

Bird, A., Allen, K. & Adisa, O. (2021) 'Examining the Victim's Right to Review by police in stalking and harassment cases: report of FOI findings'. Centre for Abuse Research (CARe). University of Suffolk.