

# *Violence against women reaches epidemic proportions in England and Wales*

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London, July 23 (RHC)-- The number of crimes related to violence against women and girls (VAWG) in England and Wales increased by 37 percent between 2018 and 2023, with an estimated one in every 12 women being a victim every year, according to a national policing statement.

The statement, commissioned by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing, estimated that there would be at least 2 million victims and 2.3 million perpetrators of VAWG per year, and suggested that the actual number is likely higher.

"Violence against women and girls has reached epidemic levels in England and Wales, in terms of its scale, complexity and impact on victims," Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth said. "These are cautious estimates as we know much crime goes unreported, and in policing, we often only see the tip of the iceberg."

The statement said that over 1 million VAWG related crimes were recorded between 2022 and 2023, accounting for nearly 20 percent of all police-recorded crimes.

Five key high harm threats identified in the statement were sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking, Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE), and online and tech-enabled VAWG. It estimated that there has been an "alarming" increase of 435 percent in CSAE offenses between 2013 and 2022 from just over 20,000 to nearly 107,000.

The statement also described online and tech-enabled VAWG as an evolving threat, noting that at least 123,500 VAWG offenses recorded from August 2022 to July 2023 had an online element, and that stalking and harassment account for 85 percent of all online and tech-enabled offenses.

"We need the support and direction of government to intervene and address the current problems within the criminal justice system and lead the way on a whole-system approach to VAWG," Blyth said, adding that VAWG is "a national emergency."

Sophie Francis-Cansfield, head of external affairs at Women's Aid charity, said that such a whole-system approach "includes coordination between the criminal justice system, the government, and experts, and enhanced training and education, delivered by specialist services, to those working in statutory services like the police."

"Without meaningful collaboration and action, women and children will continue to be failed when it comes to be protected and when seeking justice for the abuse they have endured," she added.

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