

# Increase in reports of stalking and sexual offences in Wiltshire reflects changes in crime classification and public confidence

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30 Jul 2025

Hi Claire,

Please see the latest media release from the OPCC.

Kind regards,

Amy

Increase in reports of stalking and sexual offences in Wiltshire reflects changes in crime classification and public confidence



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New figures show a rise in reported stalking, harassment, and sexual offences across Wiltshire, which may reflect both improved recording practices and increased public willingness to report these crimes.

According to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics, stalking and harassment offences in Wiltshire rose to 4,126 in the year ending March 2025, up from 3,822 the previous year—an 8% increase. Reported sexual offences also rose by 10%, from 1,926 to 2,116 cases.

While these increases are concerning, they may also indicate that more victims are coming forward and that changes in how crimes are recorded are having an impact.

Wiltshire Police have introduced internal training to improve the classification of offences, particularly distinguishing stalking from harassment to improve the service victims receive, which may account for part of the rise.

Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Wilkinson said: “While any increase in stalking, harassment, or sexual offences is concerning, it’s important to recognise that rising numbers can also reflect improved awareness, better recording practices, and growing confidence in the support systems available.

“We’ve worked hard to build trust in our services—whether that’s through training frontline officers and staff, funding specialist support roles, or improving access to services. The fact that more individuals are coming forward may indicate that those efforts are beginning to resonate.

“It’s also worth noting that changes in how stalking is recorded—ensuring it’s correctly identified rather than grouped under harassment—mean victims are receiving more accurate recognition and tailored support. That’s a crucial step in making sure people feel heard and protected.

“Behind every statistic is a person who has made the difficult decision to speak out. We still have work to do, but these figures help us understand where progress is being made and where further improvements are needed.”

The OPCC continues to fund a range of specialist services aimed at supporting victims and improving access to justice, including:

- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) – Supporting victims of sexual violence through the criminal justice process and beyond.
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) – Assisting those at high risk of harm from domestic abuse with safety planning and advocacy.
- Stalking ISVA – Providing tailored support to victims of stalking.
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – Offering 24/7 medical, forensic, and emotional support in a safe, confidential environment.

Detective Chief Inspector Claire Smith said: "As an organisation, we have been working hard to develop our understanding of offences such as stalking, harassment and sexual offences - to ensure that they are correctly identified at the earliest opportunity and robustly investigated.

“We know that such crimes are significantly under reported, we have made great strides to improve public understanding and to develop greater trust and confidence of the public in reporting such offences.

“We hope that these latest figures reflect, in part, the greater willingness of victims to engage with us.”

For more information about the services funded by the OPCC, visit the Victim and Witness [Hub](#).

## **Contact Information**

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