

UK Femicide Census
Information for CEDAW Special Rapporteur

Femicide Census Data: 2016-2017

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigning-and-influencing/femicide-census/>

<http://www.niaendingviolence.org.uk/>

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1. About the UK Femicide Census

The information provided below comes from the **UK Femicide Census**, a database containing information on over twelve hundred women killed by men in England and Wales since 2009 (and now including Northern Ireland and Scotland). It is a ground-breaking project which aims to provide a comprehensive picture of men's fatal violence against women by allowing for detailed tracking and analysis.

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

The Femicide Census was launched in February 2015. It was based on information collected by Karen Ingala Smith and recorded in her blog Counting Dead Women. The project has to date published two reports: *Redefining an Isolated Incident* (UK Femicide Report 2009-2015) and the *Annual Report on Cases of Femicide in 2016*. The 2017 Annual Report is currently in production and due to be published in early December 2018, during the UN 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign.

The census aims to provide an accurate picture of men's fatal violence against women, committed by male partners, ex-partners, relatives, acquaintances, colleagues and strangers, to aid the prevention of femicide and shed light on patterns and trends in male violence against women and girls.

Men killing women has continued each year at a substantial rate since our data collection started in 2009. The Femicide Census collates the details of women killed 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 men killing women, from the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, to the context of the violence and method of killing and indeed 'overkilling'¹, 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.

For further background information on the census and to access the two published reports, please see:

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigning-and-influencing/femicide-census/>

1.1 Definitions and data

Femicide is generally defined as women being killed by men because they are women, though some definitions include any killing of women or girls by men². The UK Femicide Census uses this broader definition. 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 first UK Femicide Census report.

The UK Femicide Census collects and analyses cases of femicide in England, Wales, and more recently Northern Ireland and Scotland, and is compiled where possible from verified information sources, such as Freedom of Information requests to police forces, coroners' reports and judge's sentencing remarks. Where these are not available, a range of cross-referenced media sources are used. Drawing on these sources, the Femicide Census is able to provide information on UK femicide cases for 2016 and 2017.

¹ 'Overkilling' is the term used to refer to excessive violence used, beyond the force necessary to kill someone.

² World Health Organisation

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf;jsessionid=995A0BB525F2D46A417A9619CAD17B45?sequence=1

Information for 2018 cases is not yet available, but please see the *Counting Dead Women* website for current known 2018 cases³:

<https://kareningalasmith.com/2018/03/10/2018/>

The Femicide Census gathers information on women and girls aged thirteen years and over who have been killed, and where the principal arrested, charged or convicted perpetrator is a man. The census includes all known femicides that have taken place in the UK where there has been at least some progress in criminal justice processes and outcomes (e.g. a male suspect has been arrested, charged, is awaiting trial or has been found guilty of murder or manslaughter). The Femicide Census does not currently include unsolved cases, cases where male suspects have been released or cleared, cases where women have been killed by dangerous driving (unless there was intent to kill) or cases where women from the UK are killed abroad. The names of these victims are recorded in census reports⁴, but they are not included in the database.

The Femicide Census is an ongoing project rather than a static document. Information provided on 2016 and 2017 cases is based on currently available data sources and may be subject to change as new information emerges. At the time of writing, a number of cases remain unsolved; in some cases the criminal justice outcome is unclear; some are still under investigation and some information is exempt from disclosure via police Freedom of Information (FOI) Act requests. It is therefore believed that the total number of femicide cases is in fact likely to exceed the numbers provided below.⁵

³ Please note however that this list is not exhaustive and subject to change as information has not yet been received from police forces in relation to 2018 femicides.

⁴ Women killed by men through dangerous driving are not currently included, though this is an area that could be considered in future reports.

⁵ At the time of writing, new FOI responses were still being received from various police forces, therefore some of the figures and statistics provided may be subject to further change.

2. Information on femicides: 1 January – 31 December 2016⁶

No of femicides: In 2016, **113 women were killed by men** in the UK.

2.1 Age Bands

The Femicide Census collects data on women aged 14 years and over. The table below shows the percentage of women killed in 2016 per age group. Women between the ages of 46 and 55 constituted the largest group of victims in 2016 (n=28):

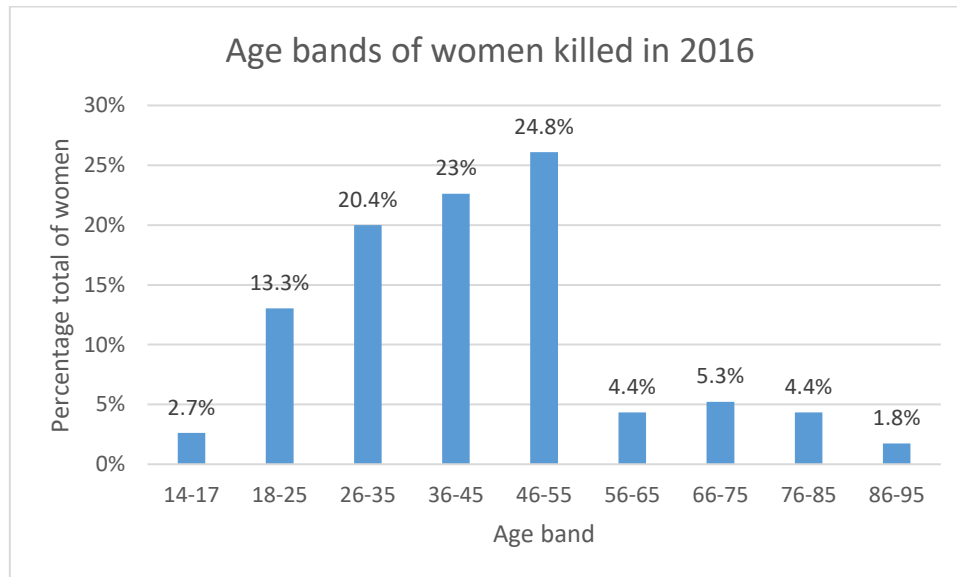


Figure 1: Age bands of women killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.

2.2 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.

2.3 Race and ethnicity

The race and ethnicity classifications are collected via FOI requests to the police. As seen in **Table 1** 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. The lack of reliable data provided in this area continues to result in a significant gap in the femicide database.

⁶ Data may be subject to change, as noted in previous section.

2016 Race (categories assigned by the police)	Grand total
White	26
White British	23
Not recorded ⁷	12
No FOI response (Met Police)	12
White North European	12
Details not provided in FOI response ⁸	9
White European	5
Unknown ⁹	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
Total	113

Table 1: Race/ethnicity of women killed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2016.

2.4 Women aged 66+

Intimate partner femicide

In 2016, 13 women aged over 66 were killed by men in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹⁰ The largest group of these women, 46.2% (n=6) were killed by their partner or spouse.¹¹ 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 36 and 45, and one was aged between 46 and 55.

⁷ 'Not recorded' is the terminology used in FOI responses when there is no record of the victim's race and ethnicity on their system.

⁸ 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'.

⁹ '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/>

¹⁰ A breakdown of this age group can be found at the beginning of this report under Age Bands.

¹¹ This figure combines three women killed in the context of 'domestic – intimate partner violence', two women killed by their partners in the context 'mercy' killing' and one woman killed by her partner in the context 'assisted suicide or suicide pact'.

2.5 Femicide and prostitution

Women involved in prostitution and/or pornography are subjected to high rates of violence by men. 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 ‘prostitution/pornography.’

2.6 Context of violence and perpetrator’s relationship to victim

Table 2 below sets out the primary context in which each victim was killed (intimate partner violence, sexually motivated violence and so on). This is recorded against the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim.

Primary context of violence		Perpetrator's relationship to victim					
Primary context of violence	Number of women	Partner/ex-partner	Son	Any other male family member	Known (non-relative, non-partner) ¹²	Stranger	Unknown
Domestic - Intimate partner violence	75	75					
Unknown ¹³	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					
Grand Total	113	78	3	5	14	9	4

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.

¹² Perpetrators in this category include a friend, acquaintance, neighbour, colleague, client, and the partner/ex-partner of a relative or friend.

¹³ A femicide is contextualised as ‘unknown’ when a motive and/or the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator has not been established.

2.7 Post-separation femicides

31 women were 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 2** 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 twelve months as a whole shows that 77.4% (n=24) of these women were killed within the first year post-separation.

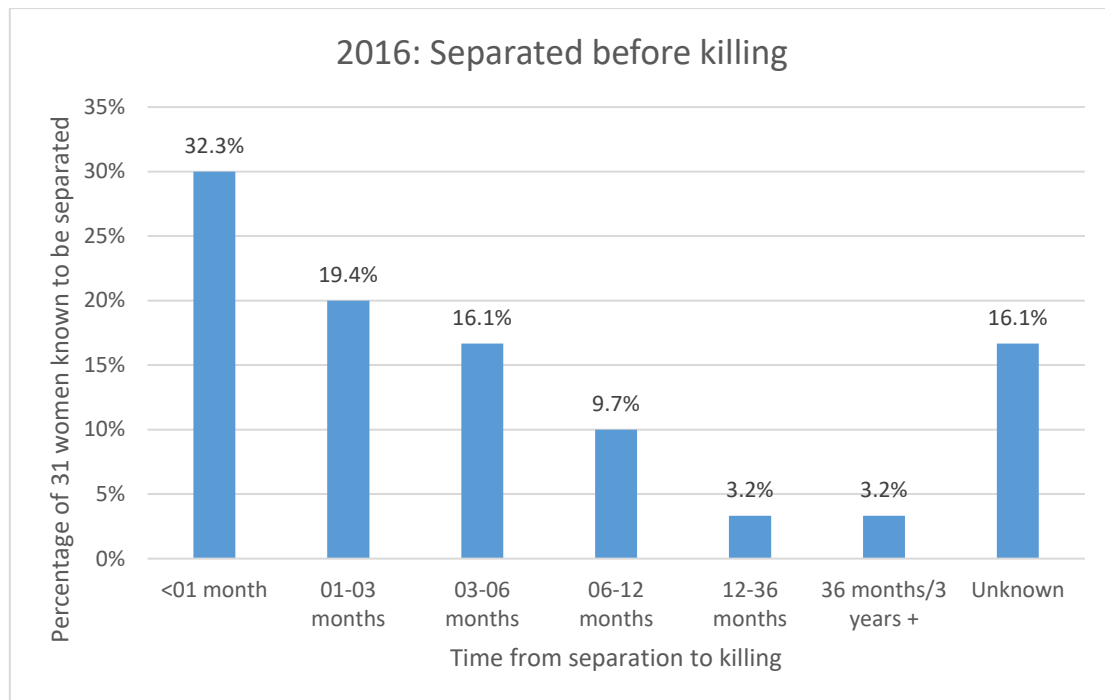


Figure 2: The length of time between separation and killing for 30 women killed in 2016.

2.8 Location of incident

As presented in **Figure 3** 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).

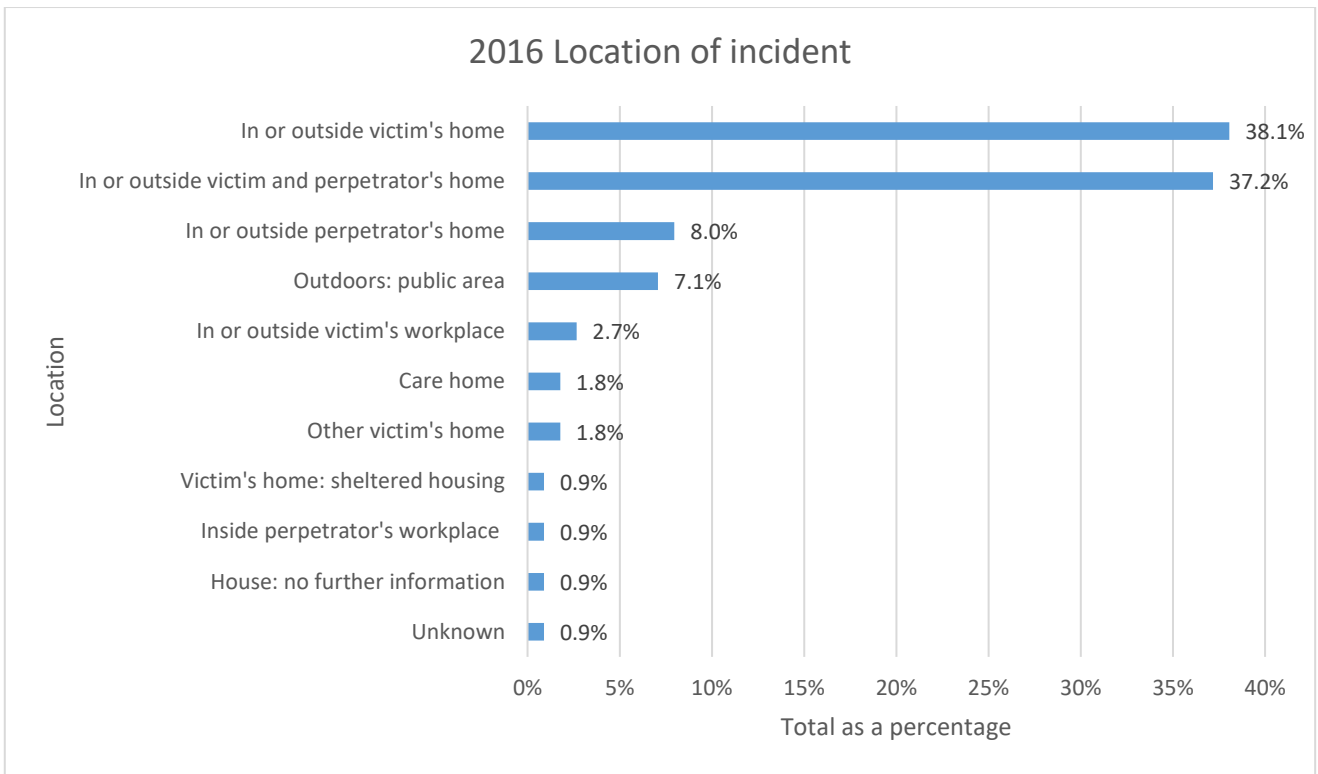


Figure 3: Location of incident of femicides committed in 2016

Figure 4 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.

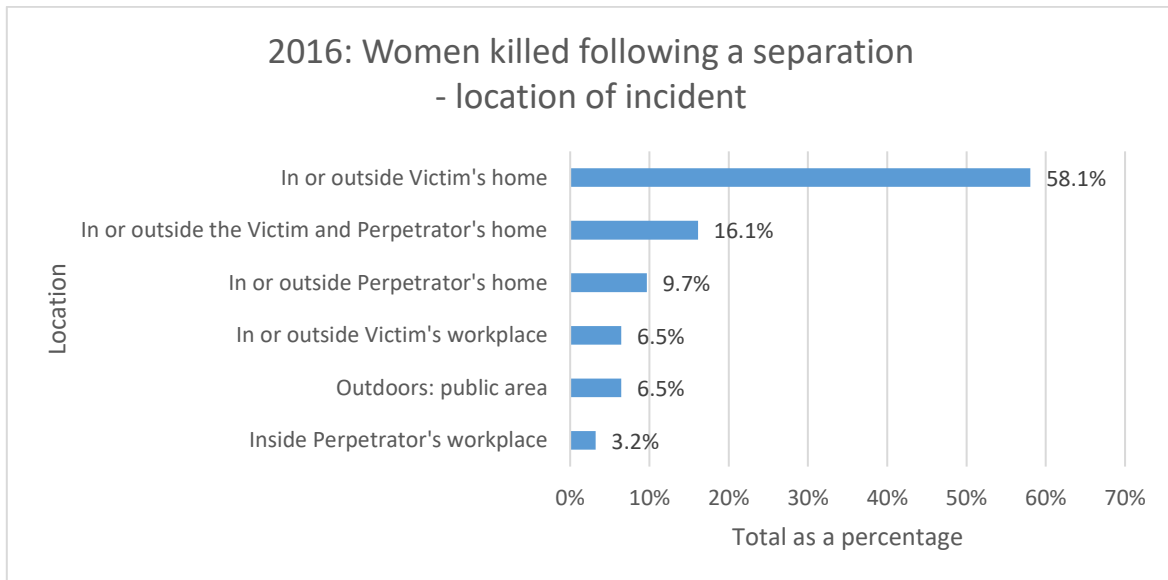


Figure 4: Location of incident of femicides committed by an ex-partner in 2016.

2.9 Method of killing

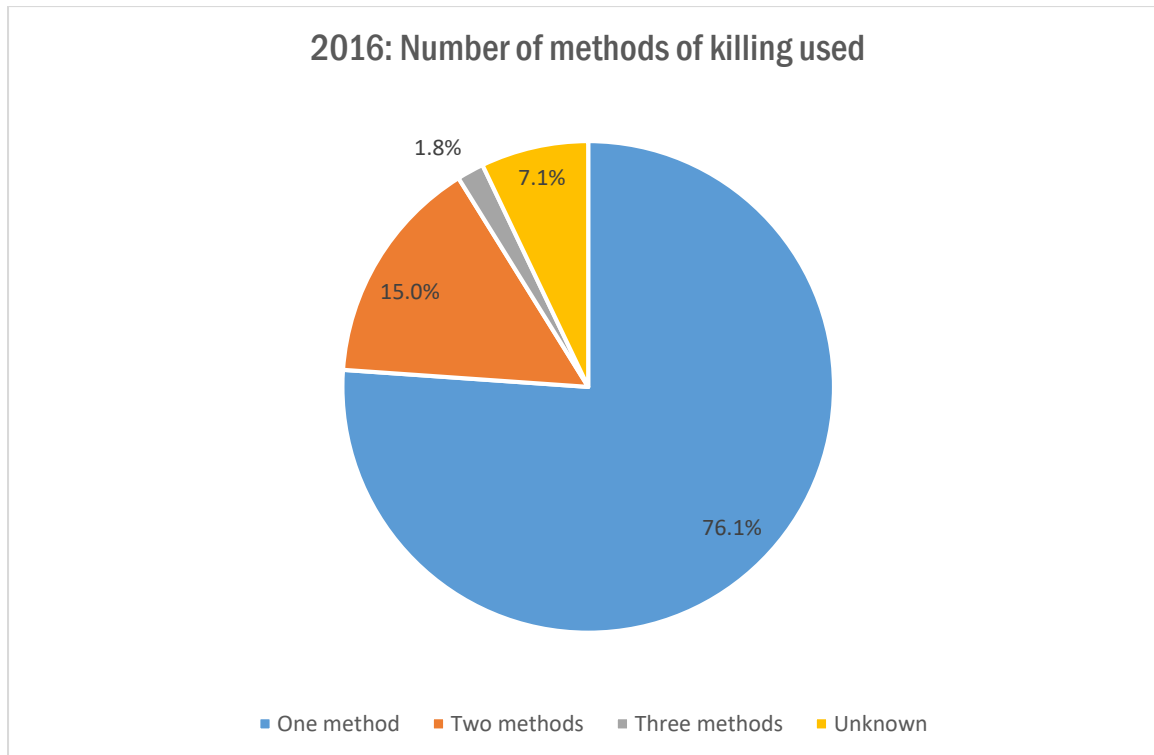


Figure 5: The number of methods of killing used in femicides committed in 2016.

Men generally killed their victims via one method (76.1%, n=86), with a sharp instrument being the main single method used (n=47). However, as presented in **Figure 5** above, three methods of killing were used in two cases (1.8%) and two methods were used in 17 cases (15%).¹⁴ Other methods of killing used by men included strangulation/asphyxiation in 25 cases, kicking or hitting without a weapon in 18 cases, and a blunt instrument was used in 14 cases.

'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.¹⁵ The findings on multiple methods of killing evidence the fact that in some cases 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.

¹⁴ In eight cases of femicide in 2016 the method of killing is unknown.

¹⁵ Mitchell, C., Anglin, A., (2009) *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*, p. 325, Oxford University Press.

3. Information on femicide prosecutions and convictions: 2016

3.1 Criminal justice outcomes

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.¹⁶

Crime	Culprit	Victim
Murder	50	50
Guilty of murder - multiple women	2	4
Guilty of murder - multiple women & 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
Murder victims		63
Murder plus other crimes total culprits	61	
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
Manslaughter total culprits	21	
Manslaughter total victims		22

¹⁶ 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.

Grievous bodily harm with intent	1	1
Death by dangerous driving	1	1
Awaiting trial	5	5
Total	89	92
Suicide	15	16
Died before trial	4	4
Acquittal as a result of self-defence plea		1
Total	19	21
Total culprits/Total victims	108	113

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

3.2 Pleas and sentencing

2016 was the first year in which the Femicide Census captured data on the minimum sentence handed down to perpetrators of femicide. Additionally, data was 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 was 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 was wide and extended 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.

4. Information on femicides: 1 January – 31 December 2017¹⁷

Number of femicides: In 2017, **143 women were killed by men** in the UK.

4.1 Age bands

The age bands of women killed by men are set out below. The data shows that men kill women of any age, with 9 (6.3%) young women falling in the 14-17 age band and 19 (13.3%) women falling in the 66+ age band. The majority of women killed by men in 2017 were aged between 26 and 55 years old (85 women, 59.4% of total).

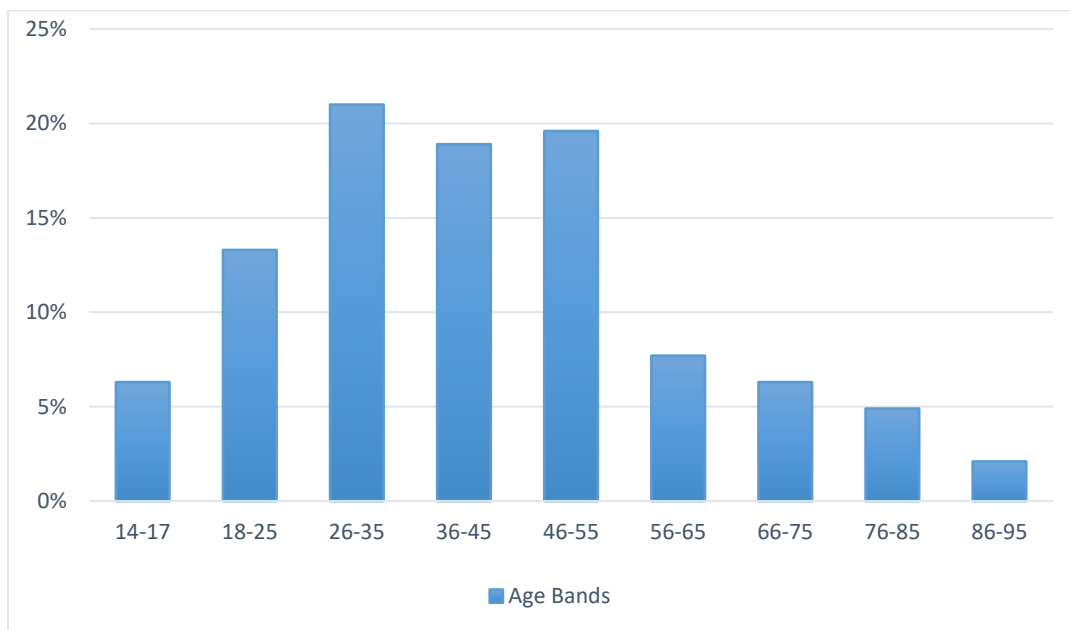


Figure 6: Age bands of women killed in UK in 2017.

14-17: **9** women killed (6.3%)

18-25: **19** women killed (13.3%)

26-35: **30** women killed (21%)

36-45: **27** women killed (18.9%)

46-55: **28** women killed (19.6%)

56-65: **11** women killed (7.7%)

66-75: **9** women (6.3%)

76-85: **7** women (4.9%)

86-95: **3** women (2.1%)

¹⁷ Data may be subject to change, as noted in previous section.

4.2 Children and pregnancy

A significant number of women, 41 (28.7%) had a child or children under the age of 18 when they were killed. In 10 (14.3%) cases, it was unknown whether the woman had a child or children under 18. The census relied on press reports for this information, so there is some possible undercounting. Data on adult children has not been collected. One woman was identified as having been pregnant when she was killed.

4.3 Race and ethnicity

Very little meaningful data was received from police forces in relation to race and ethnicity¹⁸. Only nine forces submitted responses under this category, and the information was sparse and inconsistently collected across the different forces. Data on race and ethnicity have not been taken from press reports, as they were very seldom specified, and would have involved potentially inaccurate assumptions. However, it is clear from a range of indicators that diverse ethnicities are represented in UK femicides.

Lack of information in this area prevents the census from capturing important data on race and ethnicity of victims, which in turn prevents use of the data to identify other issues, such as potential risk factors, contexts of violence, specific disadvantages and barriers to support. Without common terminology for the classification of race and ethnicity across UK police forces accurately and consistently recorded, it will continue to be impossible to obtain an accurate assessment of the race and ethnicity of victims of femicide.

Data relating to immigration status is also frequently lacking. This is a major omission because as mentioned earlier in the report, women with insecure immigration status, women with no recourse to public funds, refugee and asylum-seeking women, women who are 'over-stayers' or cannot show that they are legally here, face increased levels and severity of abuse and decreased access to support services, safety and justice. Perpetrators, and sometimes also their extended families, who are aware of a woman's dependent or uncertain immigration status will use this as an additional means of controlling, intimidating and terrorising victims: the state can therefore in fact be complicit in, and facilitating, the abuse of women. The "hostile environment" combined with the austerity agenda, which has disproportionately impacted on women, combined with the "Prevent extremism" agenda, together result in impeding women's routes to safety and justice when facing violence.

4.4 Women aged 66+

In 2017, 19 women aged over 66 were killed by men, including 3 victims aged over 85.¹⁹ Mothers were killed by their sons in seven cases; men killed their female partners / spouses in five cases; women were killed by strangers in two cases, a further two were killed by acquaintances, a neighbour killed one woman and a grandson killed his grandmother. In one case, the relationship of the perpetrator to victim was unknown.

Killed by sons

The largest group of women in this age band (n=7) were killed by their sons, with sons now exceeding partner / spouses as the primary perpetrators in this category. In two of these cases there was evidence of

¹⁸ CPS VAWG report highlights repeated calls to police for improved data on gender, ethnicity, nationality of perpetrators and victims but finds no improvement and cites this is a major weakness and as an area for improvement <https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/cps-vawg-report-2018.pdf>

¹⁹ A breakdown of this age group can be found at the beginning of this report under Age Bands.

'overkill', with one son stabbing his mother 17 times, and another punching and kicking his mother before setting fire to her. One victim, aged over 90, was killed by her grandson.

Spouse / partner killings

Female spouses or partners in this age bracket were killed by their partner in five cases, with victims' ages ranging from 67 to 88. There was evidence of 'overkill' in four of these cases, with multiple methods of killing being used in three such cases.

Killed in the course of a robbery or burglary

Of the three women killed during the course of a robbery or burglary, two were aged over 70 (the other woman killed in this context was aged 56-65). In both cases, the perpetrator lived locally and had 'befriended' the victim, doing odd jobs for payment. In both cases, the perpetrator raped the victim as well as murdering and stealing from her.

4.5 Femicides and prostitution

In 2017, at least one woman was killed by a buyer in the context of prostitution, being subjected to a 'brutal and sustained' knife attack²⁰. Seven further cases involved possible indicators of prostitution/sexual exploitation – brevity of acquaintance, transactions in relation to substances, economic hardship, sexual violence and 'overkilling' - though clear evidence was not established.

4.6 Context of violence and relationship

Femicides have been recorded according to the context in which men killed their victims, such as intimate partner violence, terrorism, sexually-motivated killings and prostitution. There is of course no suggestion that such contexts in any way constitute a 'reason' 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 and identifying the primary context has inevitably involved a degree of judgement. Further work is being carried out to record all contexts of violence relevant in each case across the census, in order to help identify possible patterns, trends and risks.

The primary context of violence has been cross-referenced with the perpetrator's relationship to the victim, as shown in **Figure 7**.

In 2017, 66 (46.2%) of the total 143 women were killed in the context of 'Domestic - intimate partner violence' by their current or former male partner or spouse. As in previous years, this category accounts for the majority of victims.

The second largest group of victims of femicide in 2017 were killed by strangers (29, 20.3%). The number in this category is more than triple that in 2016 (9), due to the number of women killed in the context of terrorism (21) in 2017. This category also includes four women killed by men in the context of sexually motivated killings. Two of these victims had met the perpetrators only hours beforehand, and both perpetrators claimed that the women died as a result of asphyxiation during 'consensual' sex. The normalisation of sado-masochistic practices in relation to femicide contexts, defences and sentencing is an area that merits further research.

²⁰ <http://www.kilburntimes.co.uk/news/crime-court/man-sentenced-to-life-imprisonment-for-murder-of-queen-s-park-escort-1-5253616>

Twenty three (16.1%) women were killed by men known to them but of no familial or intimate relationship, such as a friend, neighbour, social or business acquaintance, housemate or 'sex buyer' in the context of prostitution. These men killed women in a range of contexts, including sexually motivated killings and financial gain.

Ten women (7%) were killed by their sons: more than triple the number (3, 2.9%) killed in 2016. A further seven women (4.9%) were killed by other male family members: two women were killed by grandsons, one by a step-grandson, two by brothers, one by her father and one by her uncle who in addition to being convicted of her murder was also convicted of kidnapping and raping her, and of the kidnapping, rape and attempted murder of another woman. One grandson subjected his grandmother to particularly brutal, extreme and mutilating violence.

Perpetrators' use of pornography was referenced in several media reports and trials. In a number of cases, the perpetrator had been viewing extreme, violent pornography prior to killing the victim; in one case the perpetrator stabbed his wife to death after she confronted him about images of child sexual abuse she had found on his computer. Media reports also made reference to perpetrators' use of social media and dating websites in relation to the femicides.

The context 'other' accounted for 13 (9.1%) femicides. 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. These include a number of apparently vengeful killings involving grudges held by the perpetrator against the victim, including work-based grudges, perceived disputes or where victims had challenged anti-social behaviour. Femicides in this category included some of the most brutal killings involving multiple methods of killing with multiple injuries inflicted.

The context 'unknown' accounts for 5 (3.5%) femicides. Very little information was available about these cases at the time of writing.

Primary Context of Violence	Grand Total	Perpetrator's relationship to victim					
		Partner/ex-partner	Son	Any other family member	Known (non-relative, non-partner)	Stranger	Unknown
Domestic - Intimate partner violence	66	66					
Terrorism	21					21	
Other	13				10	3	
Domestic - Child-parent	10		10				
Sexually motivated	9			1	4	4	
Unknown	5				1		4
Other - Mental health	4			1	1	1	1
Domestic - Extended family	3			2			1
In the course of other crime - robbery or burglary	3				2	1	
Domestic - Sibling-sibling	2			2			
Authority figure - known	1				1		

Domestic - Parent-child	1			1			
IPV collateral	1				1		
Other - Mistaken victim	1					1	
Other - Financial gain	1				1		
Prostitution/Pornography	1				1		
Revenge against victim's family member	1						1
Grand Total	143	66	10	7	22	31	7

Figure 7: The number of women killed per respective context of violence and the corresponding perpetrator relationship category, for women killed in the UK in 2017.

4.7 Post-separation killings

In 2017, 22 women had separated or taken steps to separate when they were killed by their ex-partner. Over half (55%, n=12) of these women were killed within the first month of separation, and 19 (87%) were killed within the first year of separation. **Figure 8** shows the 22 women known to be separated at the time of the killing and the duration of their separation before the killing.

In 70 (49%) of the total femicide cases, the category of 'post-separation' was not relevant, as the perpetrator was not an intimate partner or ex-partner: this number is particularly high due to the number of female victims killed in terror attacks in 2017. In 47 cases there was no evidence that the victim had taken steps to separate from the perpetrator, and in three cases it was not known whether she had taken steps to separate.

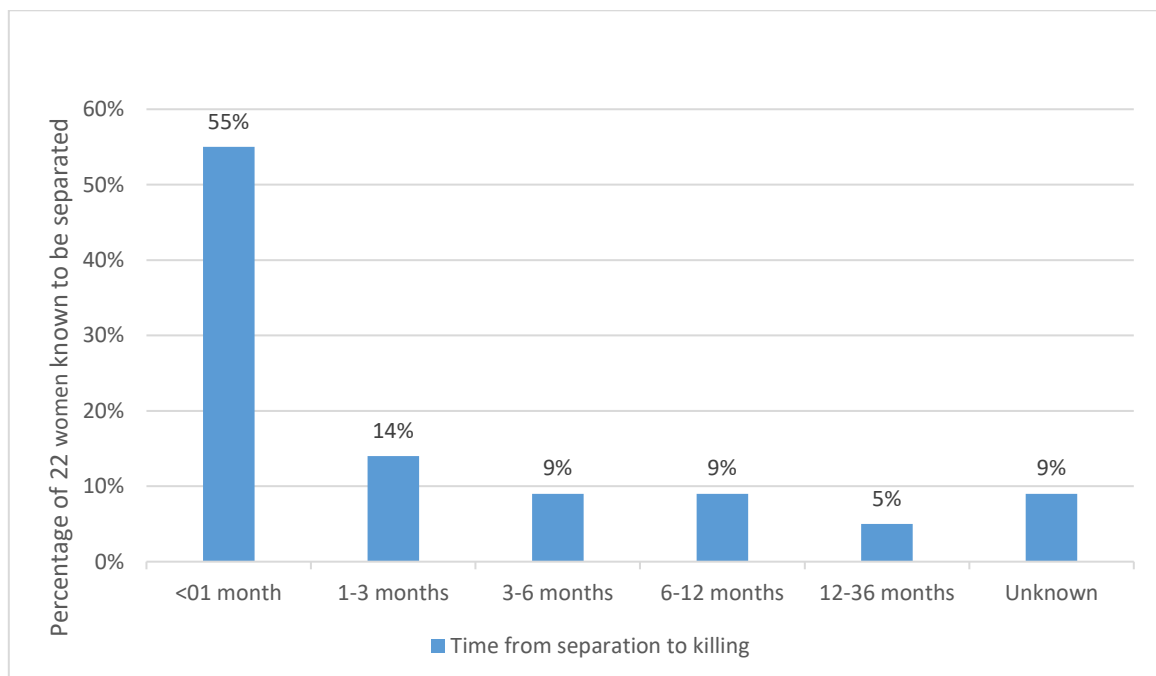


Figure 8: The length of time between separation and killing for 22 women killed in 2017.

No. %

Less than 1 month	12	55
1-3 months	3	14
3-6 months	2	9
6-12 months	2	9
12-36 months	1	5
Unknown length of time	2	9
Total	22	101

4.8 Location of incident

2017 is the second year that the Femicide Census has collected details on the location of the act of femicide. The data indicates that in 2017 the most dangerous place for a woman was the home that she shared with her male partner, ex partner or son.

As presented in Figure 9 below, 31% of women killed in 2017 were killed at the home that they shared with the perpetrator; in the majority of cases their partner or spouse. 27% were killed where they lived independent of the perpetrator. The percentage of women killed in outdoors / public spaces (22%) was significantly higher than in 2016 (7%), mainly due to the number of women killed in terror attacks.

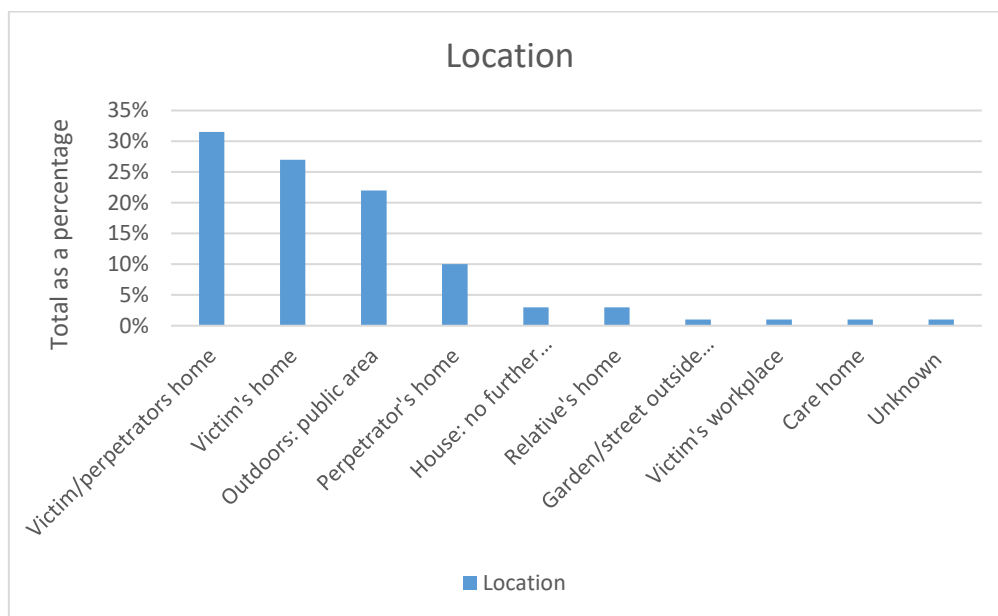


Figure 9: Location of incident of femicides committed in 2017

Location	No. of women	Percentage
Victim/perpetrators home	45	31.5%
Victim's home	38	26.6%
Outdoors: public area	31	21.7%
Perpetrators home	15	10.5%
House: no further information	5	3.5%
Relative's home	4	2.8%
Garden/street outside victim's home	2	1.4%
Victims workplace	1	0.7%
Care home	1	0.7%
Unknown	1	0.7%
Grand total	143	100.1%

Table 4: Location of incidents of femicides committed in 2017

Figure 10 shows the location of incident for the 22 women killed by their ex-partner following a separation in 2017. The majority of these women, 45.6% (n=10), were killed at their own homes. The second largest group of women, 31.8% (n=7), were killed in the home they still shared with their partner following a separation.

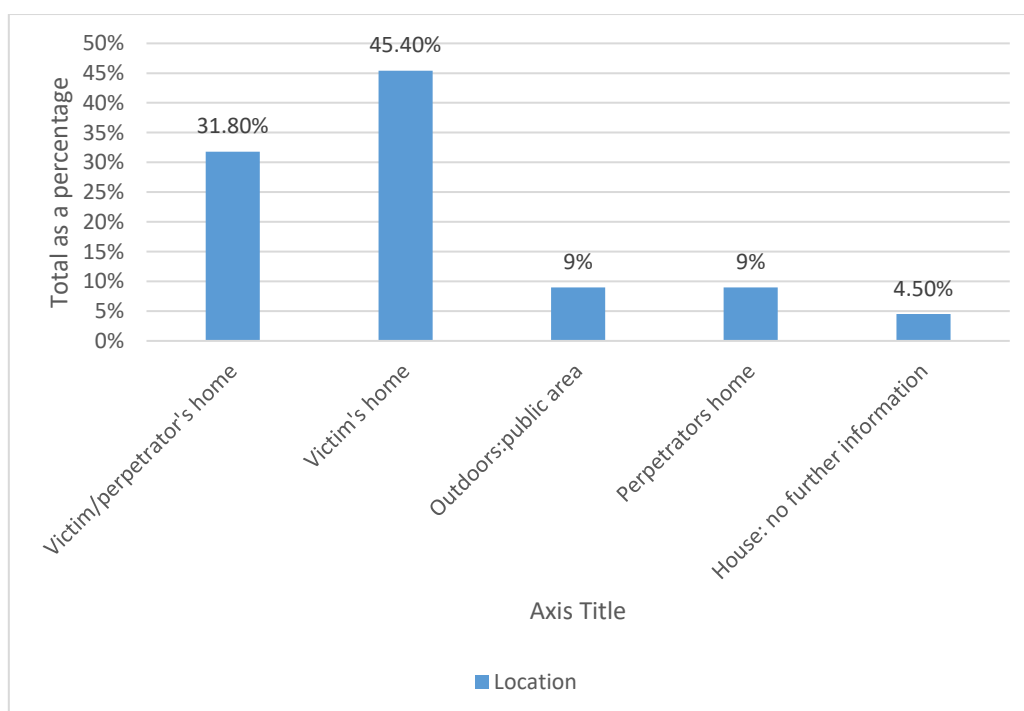


Figure 10: Location of incident of femicides committed by an ex-partner in 2017.

4.9 Method of killing

In the 143 incidents of femicide committed in 2017 there were 14 methods of killing used. As presented in **Figure 11** below, one method was used in 120 (83.9%) cases; two methods were used in 13 (9.1%) cases; three methods were used in four (2.8%) cases; four methods were used in one (0.7%) case; and in five (3.5%) cases the method(s) used were unknown, generally because of the length of time elapsed before the body was discovered.

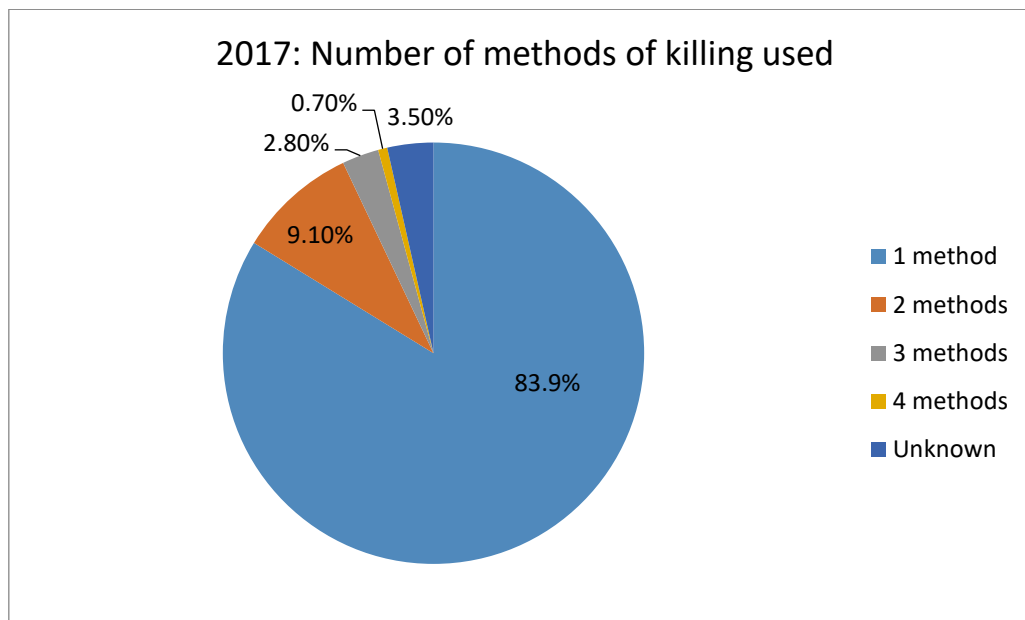


Figure 11: The number of methods of killing used in femicides committed in 2017.

As in 2016, men most commonly used a sharp instrument to kill women: this was used in 66 (46%) 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. Other methods men used to kill women in 2017 included: strangulation/asphyxiation (28 cases, 19.6%); explosion (16 cases, 11.2%); blunt instrument (15 cases, 10.5%); other – head injuries (12 cases, 8.4%); kicking or hitting without a weapon (11 cases, 7.7%); arson – setting fire and causing death by fire (4 cases, 2.8%); motor vehicle (3 cases, 2.1%); burning or scalding (2 cases, 1.4%); secondary cause resulting from assault (2 cases, 1.4%); causing to fall against a hard surface (1 case, 0.7%) and poisoning via alcohol or drugs (1 case, 0.7%). In 5 cases (3.5%) the method of killing was categorised as ‘unknown’, and in 3 cases (2.1%) as ‘other’. As illustrated above, men sometimes used more than one method of killing.

In a number of cases the method of killing involved the use of everyday household objects – one woman was battered over the head by her partner with a wooden vase her son had made for her, another woman was strangled by her partner using the cord of her hair straighteners. The mundane and personal nature of these “weapons” gives a sense of the constant insecurity and danger surrounding women who are being subjected to violence in their own home.

Overkilling

'Overkilling' is the term used to describe the use of excessive force that goes further than that necessary to cause the victim's death.²¹ In total, overkilling was evident in 58 (40.6%) cases. In addition to the 18 (12.6%) cases where perpetrators used multiple methods to kill their victims, there was evidence of overkilling in 40 (28%) cases where a single method had been used. Killings were frequently described in court and media reports in terms of involving a 'frenzied' or 'ferocious' attack. For example, where men killed women solely with a sharp instrument, they frequently stabbed victims multiple times: thirteen specific references were made to men stabbing women over 20 times, with one victim reportedly stabbed 175 times. Similarly, where a blunt instrument was used, several victims were variously reported as being 'hit 40 times with an axe', 'bludgeoned repeatedly', 'battered virtually beyond all recognition' and suffering 'catastrophic head injuries'. Where men killed through hitting or kicking without a weapon, they inflicted multiple and extensive injuries on several victims (36, 59, 60, 'more than 60' and 70 injuries were specified in reports).

In a number of cases, perpetrators subjected victims to violence including rape, torture and sexual violence prior to killing them. There was also evidence in a number of cases of perpetrators further violating victims' bodies after killing them, through dismemberment, mutilation, desecration, means of disposal and prevention of lawful burial.

²¹ Mitchell, C., Anglin, A., (2009) *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*, p. 325, Oxford University Press.

5. Information on femicide prosecutions and convictions: 2017

5.1 Criminal Justice Outcomes

Figure 12 shows the number of arrests, charges, convictions, and types of criminal justice outcomes or progress for perpetrators of femicide in 2017, sourced predominantly through publicly available information.²² Although there were a number of women reportedly killed in 2017 where the perpetrator and criminal justice outcome remains unknown (see below),²³ where progress has been made in terms of suspects, arrests and charges this has been recorded. The outcomes in the table refer specifically to the femicides; further crimes such as rape, attempted murder or burglary relating to the same incident have not been included.

In 2017, 73 perpetrators were found guilty of murder (for femicides committed in 2017). This includes one perpetrator who died in prison while awaiting sentence. The two perpetrators found guilty of culpable homicide²⁴ include one who was found guilty of this crime on the basis of diminished responsibility. Two of the seven perpetrators charged with murder have been deemed medically unfit to stand trial: in one of these cases the trial has been delayed, in the second a 'trial of issue'²⁵ will take place instead of a criminal trial. One of the two perpetrators arrested has been detained under the Mental Health Act.

Criminal Justice Progress/Outcome	Total
Guilty of murder	73
Guilty of manslaughter	17
Committed suicide at time of offence	12
Charged with murder	7
Arrested	2
Unsolved, male suspects**	6
Committed suicide after offence	4
Shot dead by police	4
Charged with culpable homicide	2
Charged with manslaughter	2
Died in prison	1
Guilty of culpable homicide	2
Grand Total	132

** 6 unknown male suspects still have not been found or charged since the murder of victim

Figure 12: List of convictions, charges and types of criminal justice outcomes or progress for perpetrators of femicide in 2017.

²² As of XX, when this report was finalised, the criminal proceedings against XX perpetrators had not been concluded or were unclear as to conclusion. The database will be updated on receipt of further information.

²³ These cases were not included for analysis in this report. See Methodology, [page 8](#)

²⁴ **Culpable homicide** is a verdict applied in Scotland. It is committed where the accused has caused loss of life through wrongful conduct, but where there was no intention to kill or 'wicked recklessness'. This may also be considered where in law the accused is found to be of "diminished responsibility" because of some mental illness, or where there was provocation.

<https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2004/12/20339/47561>

²⁵ The 'trial of issue', will seek to establish whether the individual has caused the unlawful deaths of the victims, rather than whether he is guilty of a crime.

Unsolved / cleared cases

A number of suspected femicides have not been included in the database, due to cases remaining unsolved or inconclusive outcomes regarding any suspects involved. These include one case where a woman died as a result of substance toxicity, one where a woman had been tied up and stabbed to death, one where the cause of the fatal injury was not established and one where no information was available.

There were three further cases where men were cleared of murder or manslaughter, but whose actions would appear to have at least contributed to the woman's death. In one of these cases, the perpetrator was found guilty of coercive control, actual bodily harm, assault by beating and possessing a prohibited weapon. The judge commented in his sentencing remarks that the perpetrator had driven the victim to take her own life.

5.2 Pleas and sentencing

Pleas

For the second year running, data has been collected on pleas entered in court by the perpetrators of femicides. 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. (See Figure 16: Pleas and outcomes)

In 34 cases, perpetrators pleaded not guilty to murder but 28 went on to be found guilty of murder, two were found guilty of manslaughter, 3 remained charged with murder and one with perverting the course of justice.

In 27 cases, perpetrators pleaded guilty to murder and were found guilty of murder.

In 27 cases the perpetrator pleaded guilty to manslaughter, 15 of these did so on the basis of diminished responsibility. Of the 27 manslaughter pleas, 12 were found guilty of murder, 14 were found guilty of manslaughter and one was charged with murder.

Sentencing

Sentences were broad ranging, with the lower range including seven years in a manslaughter case in which a man reversed into a woman, then drove over her and left the scene after she had intervened to try to keep the peace in a row between him and her son. The higher end of the murder sentencing scale included sentences of over 30 years, the highest being two whole life sentences for two men who subjected their victim to an horrific, prolonged ordeal of rape and torture before murdering her by placing her near lifeless body in a car and setting fire to it. A man who abducted, raped and murdered his niece and abducted, raped and attempted to murder her friend received a 40 year minimum sentence.

A substantial proportion of the sentences were in the higher range (see figure 17 below). The generally higher rate of sentencing perhaps reflects the still relatively high proportion (41) of perpetrators who attempted unsuccessfully to plead not guilty to murder or manslaughter. These higher sentences are also a welcome recognition of the gravity of the offences and may relate to the findings made earlier of the frequent occurrence of both overkill in the killings and of disrespectful treatment of bodies after the woman had been killed.

Plea	No.	Verdict / Outcome	Notes
Not guilty to murder	34	28 guilty of murder 2 guilty of manslaughter 3 (remain) charged with murder 1 charged with perverting the course of justice	The two remaining charged with murder have been deemed unfit to stand trial (see previous section)
Guilty to murder	27	27 guilty of murder	
Guilty to manslaughter (diminished responsibility)	15	7 guilty of murder 8 guilty of manslaughter	
Guilty to manslaughter	12	6 guilty of manslaughter 6 guilty of murder	
No plea	4	2 guilty of murder 1 charged with murder 1 charged with culpable homicide	
Not guilty to manslaughter	2	1 guilty of manslaughter 1 charged with manslaughter	
Guilty to culpable homicide	2	1 charged with murder 1 guilty of murder	
Guilty to culpable homicide with diminished responsibility	1	1 guilty of culpable homicide with diminished responsibility	
Guilty to assault	1	Guilty of assault	Perpetrator had originally been charged with murder; this was changed to charged with assault
N/A	29	This category includes: 21 deceased 2 arrested 6 suspects	'Deceased' includes perpetrators who committed suicide at the time of or after the event, who were shot by the police or died in prison
Total			This does not reflect the total number of perpetrators, as not all cases have reached that stage

Table 5: Pleas and outcomes

It has not been possible to examine the consistency of sentencing in this report but future reports might look into this to see whether particular characteristics of the victim or perpetrator or particular relationships between victim and perpetrator may be influencing sentencing, alongside usual considerations of mitigating and aggravating factors.

Guilty of murder		Guilty of manslaughter	
Minimum sentence (years)	Perpetrators	Minimum sentence (years)	Perpetrators
11+ 67 days	1	5	1
12	1	7	1
14	3	8	1
15	2	9.3	1
16-16.5	7	10	2
17 – 17.5	6	10 (+5 on licence)	1
18 - 18.5	8	11	1
19	3	12	1
20	6	13	1
21	2	13 (+5 on licence)	1
22	3	17	1
23	3	Indefinite hospital order / Detained under MHA	4
24 – 24.5	5		
26	2		
27	2		
28	2		
29	1		
30	2		
31	4		
32	1		
33	2		
35	1		
37	1		
40	2		
Whole life sentence	2		
Total	72	Total	16

Table 6: Sentencing outcomes