Centre for Protecting Women Online

Annual Report 2024-25
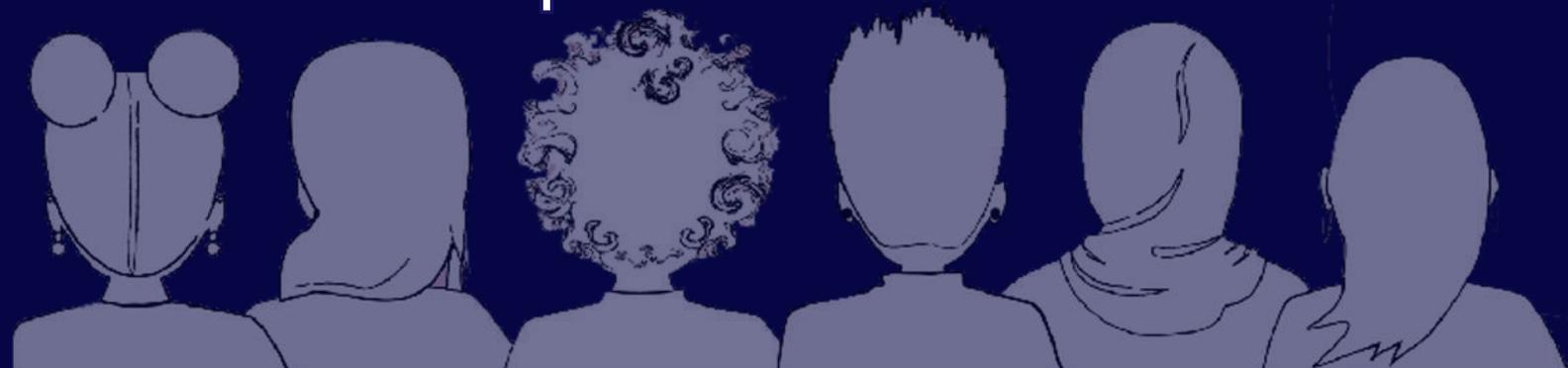
Director's Opening Message

Centre for Protecting Women Online has had an impressive first year. Established in August 2024, the Centre launched at a time when the online safety of women and girls has moved decisively from the margins to the mainstream of public, policy, and international concern. As daily evidence makes clear, online harms are a pervasive reality for women and girls in the UK and around the world. Yet responses have too often been fragmented, inconsistent, and insufficiently grounded in the lived experiences of those most affected.

Our team at the Centre has been prioritising work and research that is designed to disrupt and overcome disconnected responses to online harms. At the heart of our work is promoting a better and more comprehensive understanding of online harms and responses to them, based on cross-disciplinary research and cross-sectoral collaborations. In our first year alone, the Centre's research and expertise have shaped policy at both national and international levels. We have contributed to parliamentary inquiries and calls for evidence in the UK, briefed the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Geneva, and informed global debates on states' obligations in the digital age. I had an immense privilege to act as an Independent Expert to the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on combatting technology-facilitated violence against women and to work with colleagues from around Europe on drafting a new instrument designed to guide states on their international obligations on addressing this pressing issue. The Centre's landmark Landscape Review on policing responses to online and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls has played a pivotal role in shaping discussions both in the UK and internationally on strengthening law enforcement responses in a digital context.

The Centre has also established a strong academic and research profile. In April 2025, we convened the first-ever International Workshop on Protecting Women Online at The Web Conference in Sydney, marking a significant step in building a global research community around this issue. Our collaborative paper, "Building the ontology of gendered online harms," was shortlisted for the Best Paper Award at the 24th International Semantic Web Conference in Nara, Japan—an achievement that reflects both the originality and impact of our work.

Equally important has been the growth of the Centre itself. This year we welcomed new staff, interns, and PhD researchers, and hosted our inaugural cohort of International Visiting Fellows. Their contributions underscore the Centre's deeply collaborative ethos and its reach across borders, disciplines, and sectors. As we enter our second year, we do so with confidence, momentum, and a clear sense of purpose. We remain committed to driving social change and to advancing a shared vision of safer, more equal digital spaces for women and girls. I extend my sincere thanks to our partners, collaborators, and supporters, whose engagement and trust make this work possible.

I warmly invite you to explore this Annual Report and reflect on the Centre's achievements to date—and on the vital work that lies ahead.

 - Professor Olga Jurasz.
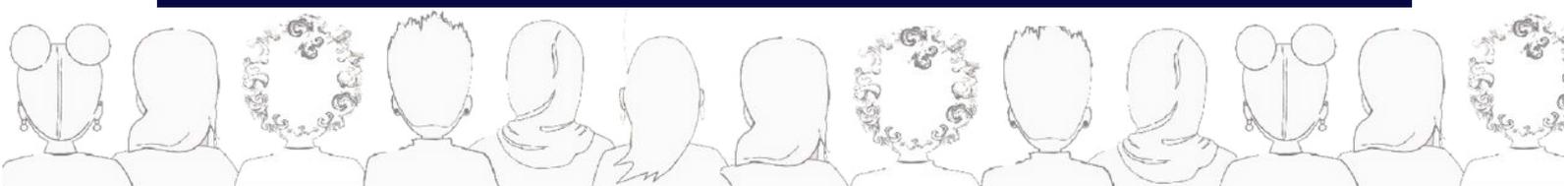
1. Centre in Numbers

7 Consultation responses created

13 International Visiting Fellows

1 year of operation

7 New publications

8 Team awards

23 Official Centre Partners

47 Events and workshops participated in

3,077 Followers on LinkedIn
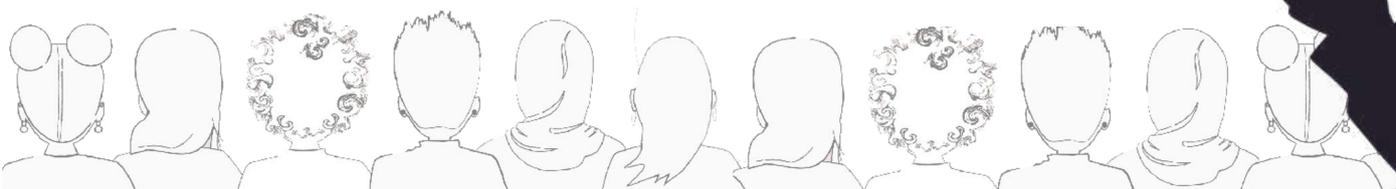
2. Background

The Centre for Protecting Women Online is funded by a £7.7 million grant from Research England and it opened in August 2024. It is a vehicle for understanding and addressing challenges posed to women's safety online through a novel, interdisciplinary and ambitious research agenda. This is combined with cross-sectoral, collaborative outputs and interventions which inform law, policy, technology development and practice to reduce online harms suffered by women and girls; minimise anti-social behaviours online, whilst promoting pro-social behaviours, and help build tech / software that helps ensure accountability, credibility and helps facilitate justice. The Centre is led by Professor Olga Jurasz, Professor of Law and the work of the Centre is delivered through a management of five interwoven Work Streams.

Work Streams:

- Law & Policy
- Human Behaviour
- Policing
- Future of Responsible Tech
- Ethical & Responsible Tech/AI

Research England's Expanding Excellence in England (E3) grant is a capacity building fund to help set up the Centre and fund core academic and professional services staff. The Centre is actively seeking research funding to develop the research activities.

Main Objectives:

1. To reduce online harms suffered by women and girls.
2. To minimise anti-social behaviours online, whilst promoting pro-social behaviours.
3. To help build technology and software that helps ensure accountability, credibility and helps to facilitate justice.
4. To influence law and policy concerning online safety at local, national and international levels.

3. Key moments

August

The Centre for Protecting Women Online officially opened, with its first group of researchers joining the team.

September

The first conference attendance since opening saw Professor Arosha Bandara participate in the 'Safety by Design' panel at the UK Tech Safety Summit hosted by Centre partner Refuge.

October

The Centre was officially launched. The event was attended by 122 people, with a welcome speech by Professor Olga Jurasz, Centre Director, and keynote addresses by:

- ElsaMarie D'Silva, Founder Red Dot Foundation.
- Kurshida Mirza, High Sherriff of Buckinghamshire.
- Kevin Shakesheff, PVC Research at the OU.

November

Dr. Emma Turley, from Central Queensland University (Australia) joined as an International Visiting Fellow to the Centre.

December

The first Centre newsletter was sent out to a subscriber list of 68 people, ranging from scholars, industry experts, policy makers, NGOs.

January

Submitted an evidence-based response to the College of Policing consultation on data ethics and data-driven technologies, highlighting risks around data use, gaps in clarity and consistency, and the absence of a gender-informed approach.
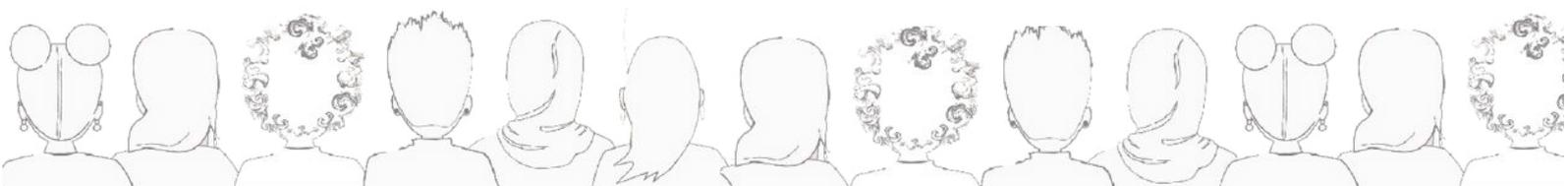
February

Two PhD students were welcomed to the Centre:
Arwa Bukhtiar -
'Alexa, Who's Controlling Me?' Uncovering Legal Gaps in AI-Driven Smart Home Abuse Against Women in England and Wales.
Yihan Huang -
Digital Sexual Violence Towards Women on Dating Apps: Exploring the Intersection of Gender, Power Structure, and Technology.

March

Professor Olga Jurasz participated in multiple events at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in New York, including leading a session with Centre partner Red Dot Foundation.
Submitted evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry on AI in financial services, highlighting impacts on consumer outcomes and fairness, including gender equity.
Provided an interdisciplinary response to the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on technology-facilitated gender-based violence, highlighting gaps and strategies to address this growing issue.

April

The Centre team developed and led the first international workshop on protecting women online as part of the Web Conference 2025 in Sydney, Australia.

May

Submitted evidence to the Home Affairs Committee highlighting the need for dedicated government funding to tackle online violence against women and girls within the UK VAWG Strategy.
Published a landmark landscape review assessing how policing in England responds to technology-facilitated and online VAWG, identifying current practice, key gaps, and priorities to strengthen the police response in a digital context.

June

International Visiting Fellow, Professor Jane Bailey delivered an international, hybrid workshop examining feminist-informed approaches to consent and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

July

Submitted evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee on the manosphere, addressing how online content and influencers contribute to misogyny and identifying strategies to tackle its prevalence.
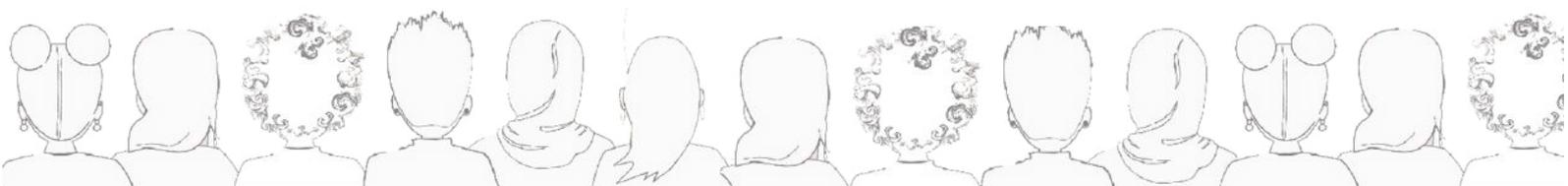
4. Our Streams

Law & Policy

Human Behaviour

Policing
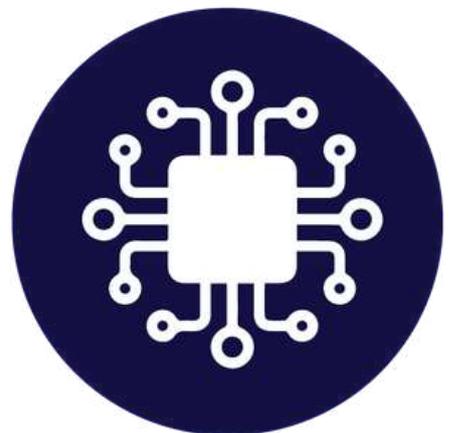
Future of Responsible
Technology
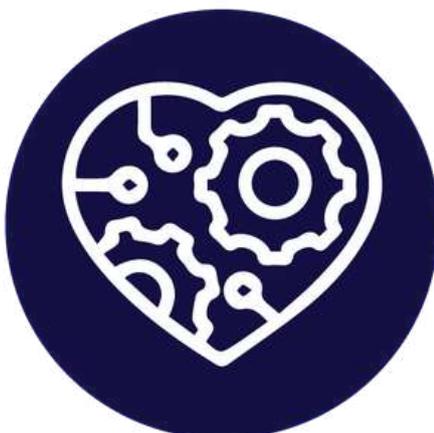
Ethical & Responsible
Tech / AI

Law & Policy

Consultations

⚖ Public Accounts Committee inquiry on tackling violence against women.

⚖ Women and Equalities Committee consultation on Misogyny, the Manosphere and Online Content.

⚖ Public Accounts Committee inquiry on AI in Financial Services.

⚖ Human Rights Council's Advisory Committee questionnaire on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based violence against women and girls.

⚖ College of Policing Consultation on data ethics and data driven technologies authorised professional practices.

⚖ Ofcom's Protection of Children consultation.

⚖ Home Affairs Committee consultation on governmental funding allocation to tackling VAWG.

Commission of the Status of Women (CSW 69)

- Session Moderator – Engaging Government Stakeholders in Women's Safety (with Red Dot Foundation Global).
- Panel & Discussion – The Future of Women's Safety in the Age of AI (collaboration with OU & Red Dot Foundation Global).
- Workshop Contributor - Cyberviolence and its impact on women's societal participation.
- Workshop Lead – Accelerating Progress by Tackling Barriers to Leadership & Democratic Participation (on online violence silencing women's voices).
- Panellist – Section J of the Beijing Declaration: Gains & Reversals (examining women & media since 1995).

Working with Partners: White Ribbon UK

Looking at:
- Prevalence of violence against women & girls.
- The importance of primary prevention.
- Working with children, young people & adults.
- Policy opportunities to prioritise primary prevention.

Project title:
The case for investing in primary prevention for tackling violence against women and girls

CEDAW Committee Briefing

Provided insights on:
- the complexities of tackling technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).
- the economic & democratic repercussions of TFGBV.
- technology & AI as both perpetrators & potential solutions of online harms.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

> "What is absolutely crucial here is education. That is not just education for girls on how to keep safe online or just for boys on how to behave or not behave in a certain way. It is really education for everybody, including parents and society at large, about how to behave responsibly online."

Iona May Todd · 2nd
National Journalist
3mo · Edited · 🌐

+ Follow

🚩 80 women were killed by men in the UK in 2024
🚩 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime.

For the past few months, I've been working on my documentary - Violence Against Women and Girls: The Epidemic.'

In it, I was privileged to talk to some brilliant women. I interviewed Carole Gould from an incredible organisation called Killed Women (KW).

I spoke to Professor Olga Jurasz from the Centre for Protecting Women Online to learn of violence against women online. I then chatted with Anthea Sully from charity White Ribbon UK.

I was lucky enough to then learn more about the topic from photographer and academic Jude Wall, as well as from presenter, best-seller and Women's Aid ambassador Alice Liveing.

It's been an absolute pleasure working on this piece, with my biggest ambition to bring awareness to this subject.

Please take some time to watch it if you can: https://lnkd.in/e2HB4Auc

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ICYMI: OU Professor Olga Jurasz of the Centre for Protecting Women Online attended the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster this week, offering valuable insight to the Committee's short inquiry on ending violence against women and girls. BBC NI reports: https://lnkd.in/e2gm2nTM

📰 'The committee was also told that many women surveyed in Northern Ireland have withdrawn from public participation in online spaces as a result of "online violence".
Olga Jurasz, a professor of law at the Open University and director of the Centre for Protecting Women Online, told MPs that those silencing effects are particularly deeply felt for women in Northern Ireland.
She said the issue of violence against women and girls has been "amplified through technology".
"Misogyny in particular has been popularised - we witness it every day - and it has also been monetised. Quite simply, it is for profit," she added.'

John D'Arcy OBE FIOD FRSA The Open University PolicyWISE Helen Smith

Children accessing 'vile porn' on social media, warns safeguarding chief
bbc.co.uk

Centre for Protecting Women Online
3,282 followers
4mo · Edited · 🌐

Divya Venkataraman, a writer for Marie Claire Australia, investigates the transformation of Hollywood icons into outcasts seemingly overnight in the latest article: "What happens when a much-loved Hollywood star becomes a pariah overnight? Is it just the public reacting to a series of missteps? Or is something more sinister beneath the surface?" Professor Olga Jurasz provided insights on online harms and how these are often used by lawyers as strategies to further silence women. Read the full article 🔗

#OnlineHarms #ProtectingWomenOnline #VAWG #ViolenceAgainstWomen #OVAWG #OnlineViolenceAgainstWomen

HE SAYS / SHE SAYS / THEY SAY
What happens when a much-loved Hollywood star becomes a pariah overnight? Is it just the public reacting to a series of missteps? Or is something more sinister beneath the surface? Divya Venkataraman investigates

1 repost
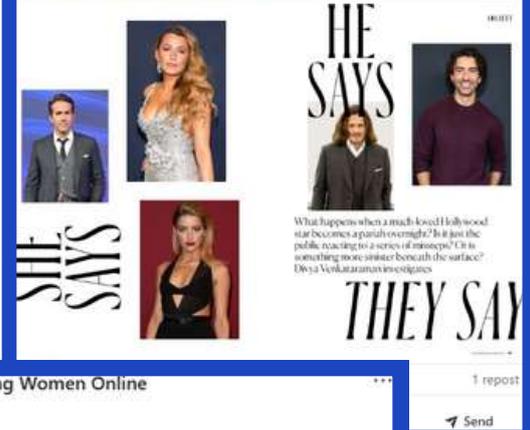
Centre for Protecting Women Online
3,282 followers
4mo · Edited · 🌐

Professor Olga Jurasz's study, "Online Violence Against Women: A Four Nations Study" (https://buff.ly/zL4b2e0), has been referenced in a New York Times opinion article titled "We Underestimate the Manosphere at Our Peril." This article examines themes from the Netflix series "Adolescence," as well as picking up other research studies regarding teenage boys' interactions with social media. You can read the full opinion piece at: https://buff.ly/q7HaoJH.

#OnlineSafety #CPWO #ProtectingWomenOnline #EndVAWG #EndOVAWG

Opinion | We Underestimate the Manosphere at Our Peril
nytimes.com

32   1 comment · 4 reposts

👍 Like   💬 Comment   🔁 Repost   ➤ Send

Centre for Protecting Women Online
3,282 followers
7mo · 🌐

We are thrilled to see our Centre director's research gaining traction, emphasising the critical need to alter behaviours for transforming negative culture, perspectives, and actions. Northern is partnering with White Ribbon UK on a three-year campaign to spread White Ribbon's message to its workforce of 7,000 and its vast customer base. Read the full story here: https://buff.ly/4h3VgUR.

#EndViolenceAgainstWomen #EndVAWG

Train operator vows to help transform culture towards women and girls - Rail UK
railuk.com

14

👍 Like   💬 Comment   🔁 Repost   ➤ Send

Cyber Armour, Podcast

A podcast which champions the voices and safety of women and girls in the digital world. Episodes:
1. The risks and harms of online dating with Dr. Emma Turley.
2. Infrastructural justice: developing safer technologies with Professor Arosha Bandara and Dr. Sarah Robinson.
3. Deepfakes with Professors Arosha Bandara, Rose Capdevila and Liza Lazard.
4. Safety of girls in the digital world with Vicki Shotbolt.
5. Misogynoir - online hate targeting Black Women with Professor Miriam Fernandez and Dr. Joseph Kwarteng.

Publications

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

ONLINE MISOGYNY AS A HATE CRIME
A Challenge for Legal Regulation?

Kim Barker and Olga Jurasz

Online Violence Against Women: A Four Nations Study
Survey Report

The Open University

10
A Europe Fit for the Digital Age
Combating Online Violence Against Women

Olga Jurasz

10.1 Introduction

One of the policy priorities of the European Commission (EC) under its president Ursula von der Leyen (VDL) is building "a Europe fit for the digital age" (von der Leyen 2019). In March 2021 the Commission proposed a "Digital Decade" policy programme, with concrete targets and objectives for 2030, guides Europe's digital transformation," including a "compass" focusing on skills, government, infrastructure, and business (European Commission n.d.). This transformation is directed not only toward the European Union (EU) economy, but also toward a digital transformation of society. The key objective of the Digital Compass is "to pursue digital policies that empower people and businesses to seize a human-centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future" (European Commission 2021). A closer look at this policy field reveals a focus on issues surrounding data protection, the digital marketplace, digital networks and services, and the economy and society. However, there is little to suggest that gender equality is placed within these policy endeavors. The key aim of this chapter is to investigate the gender implications of building a Europe fit for the digital age given, on the one hand, the persistent digital gender gap and, on the other hand, the growing pandemic of...

Centre for Protecting Women Online

Landscape Review: Policing Technology-Facilitated and Online Violence Against Women and Girls

May 2025
Giles Herdale, Dr. Keely Duddin & Prof. Olga Jurasz

Centre for Protecting Women Online   The Open University

Human Behaviour

Conferences

Presentation of Deepfake Scoping Review study and PhD research at the Psychology of Women and Equalities Section (POWES) Conference.

Research poster and a stand at the Open Psychology Research Fiesta.

Participated in plenary panel on *"Safeguarding people in highly digitised lives"*.

Publications

The Racepill: Understanding Black incels through an intersectional lens

Hall, Stephanie

DOI: https://doi.org/10.53841/bpspowe.2025.8.1.23

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This article appears in:
Psychology of Women and Equalities Section Review
Vol 8 Issue 1

Deepfake Technology and Gender-Based Violence: A Scoping Review

Lisa Lazard, Rose Capdevila, Emma J Turley, Kathryn Gillespie, Nelli Stavropoulou

Affiliations + expand
PMID: 41273018   DOI: 10.1177/15248380251184271
free article

Abstract

Online violence against women (OVAW) is a growing global problem with deepfakes in gender-based violence as one manifestation of this that has recently attracted considerable attention. This scoping review aim to explore emerging complexities in current academic understanding of deepfake in relation to its use in gender-based violence. The review considers how these issues impact and shape what is currently known about deepfakes in relation to OVAW. Articles were collected between July and September 2024 and then filtered drawing on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Review guidelines. Six research databases were searched using 32 search terms compiled by three of the article authors. This resulted in a total number of 1148 articles that were filtered to identify 201 articles that were reviewed in full. The subset was further filtered in order to focus on psychology and the social sciences resulting in a total of 64 articles for analysis. As psychology and the social sciences begin to capture the implications of deepfake creation and dissemination. In the context of online sexual violence, there is a need to investigate how deepfakes are used to silence women in public spaces online, as well as empirically acknowledging the inherent gendered systemic discriminations within deepfake technology and its uses. While important, research must move beyond perceived credibility and detection techniques of

Conceptualizing and Measuring Violence: A Feminist Critical Measurement Analysis of Gender-Based Violence Research in a Government Policy-Based Setting

Lucy Thompson, Tanya Frances, Emma Turley, Lisa Lazard, Lois Donnelly

Affiliations + expand
PMID: 40070045   DOI: 10.1177/07100125120586
free article

Abstract

Feminist methodological advances in gender-based violence research have yet to be comprehensively integrated into policy-based research. This article discuss methodological concerns identified when reviewing the UK government's public consultation for its 2021 Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. We apply international feminist perspectives and critical measurement analysis, and discuss two areas of methodological concern: issues with conceptualizations of violence, and issues with the measurement of public experiences, attitudes, and opinions; and implications for the accuracy of the survey. In response, we consider feminist research practices that could address these issues and support feminist gains in policy-based gendered violence research.

Knowledge Exchange

Centre for Protecting Women Online — 4,539 followers · 8mo

Professors Rose Capdevila and Lisa Lazard, who lead our Human Behaviour stream, have collaborated with our partners at Parent Zone for their latest Tech Shock podcast episode. They delve into effective strategies to combat violence against women and girls, including why it is important to incorporate young voices in the dialogue. You can access the complete podcast at the link below.

#CPWO #ProtectingWomenOnline #EndViolenceAgainstWomen #EndVAWG #VAWG #OVAWG

Parent Zone — 2,305 followers · 8mo

As national initiatives try to address violence against women and girls – both online and off – what's actually required for systemic change?

In this episode, Vicki is joined by Rose Capdevila and Lisa Lazard from the Centre for Protecting Women Online to tackle this question: https://ow.ly/ZELs50VWhSl

TechShock parentzone
Season 10 · Episode 8
Violence against women and girls: what's needed for change?

Centre for Protecting Women Online — 4,539 followers · 8mo

Listen to Professors Lisa Lazard and Rose Capdevila, of our Human Behaviour stream, who are exploring themes highlighted within the latest Netflix series, Adolescence, and examining whether social media should be subject to regulation. #HumanBehavior #SocialMediaRegulation #OnlineHarms #OnlineSafety

The Open University — 813,760 followers · 8mo · Edited

Should social media be regulated?

Professors Rose Capdevila and Lisa Lazard, psychology experts and co-leads of the Human Behaviour stream at Centre for Protecting Women Online, explore themes from Netflix's new show Adolescence.

Professor Rose Capdevila and Professor Lisa Lazard

So have you seen that new show Adolescence

▶ 1:41   1x   🔊

- TechShock Podcast hosted by ParentZone talking about deepfakes.

- Reflection on social media regulation in relation to Netflix show, Adolescence.

Policy Engagement

What Next in the Fight Against Image-Based Abuse?, a parliamentary roundtable hosted by the Rt. Hon. Kirith Entwistle MP and GLAMOUR UK.

No Small Change, event for the launch of the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) Snapshot Report 2024 at UK Parliament.

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND ONLINE INTERACTIONS?
HOW DO THEY ENABLE OR HINDER PROBLEMATIC AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR?

TWEETING BACK
HOW DO BYSTANDERS REACT TO ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

INTERACTION OF ONLINE AND OFFLINE BEHAVIOUR
WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE AND OFFLINE PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOUR?

IMPACT ON:
- PERPETRATOR
- WOMEN
- OBSERVERS

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Policing

Awards

- 'Outstanding Early Career Researcher Award'.
- 'Steven Chase Memorial Award'.
- 'Contributions to Women in Policing'.

Publications

Centre for Protecting Women Online

Landscape Review: Policing Technology-Facilitated and Online Violence Against Women and Girls

May 2025
Giles Herdale, Dr. Keely Duddin & Prof. Olga Jurasz

Centre for Protecting Women Online

The Open University

In the media

POLICE PROFESSIONAL

Tackling VAWG through community intelligence

Steve Dodd provides an insight into the criminality that is violence against women and girls, one that the Government has pledged to halve over the next ten years.

Aug 14, 2025

Picture: College of Policing

Policing Insight
20,341 followers
6mo • Edited • 🌐

Last week saw the publication of the landscape review on the police response to online and technology-enabled VAWG in England and Wales, undertaken by the Centre for Protecting Women Online; independent policing and technology expert Giles Herdale, one of the three co-authors of the review, explains the key questions the work addressed, its findings, and what they mean for policing and the Government's commitment to halve violence against women and girls over the next 10 years.

"In common with other crime types, technology has revolutionised the nature and scale of VAWG offending. But this has not yet fed through into police data on recorded crime."

"The comparative lack of prioritisation of public protection for innovation and professionalisation means that digital investigation tools and techniques routinely used in addressing other threat types are still seen as novel in the VAWG context."

"The piecemeal and reactive policing response to this evolving threat may not be surprising, but is further undermining public confidence in the policing response to VAWG, which is already fragile."

"The challenge of addressing online and technology-enabled VAWG needs to be a key objective for the new national policing centre for VAWG and public protection."

https://lnkd.in/eGvV97ZB
#lawenforcement #policing #police

ANALYSIS:

Online VAWG review calls for a national operating model, greater collaboration and improved reporting

Giles Herdale, Independent Police and Technology Advisor

Policy Engagement

UK Parliament POST

POSTnote 758
By Aysha Riaz, Natasha Mutebi
7 August 2025

Violence against women and girls in schools and among children and young people

Summary
Background
Legislation, policy and guidance
Trends and demographic association
Environments of elevated risk and mapping VAWG exposure
Challenges in reducing and preventing VAWG
Opportunities: Interventions and evaluations
Policy priorities and considerations
International case studies
References
Contributors

> "Innovation exists — but the response is fragmented and inconsistent."
> CPWO Landscape Review (2025)

> "Effective prevention of online VAWG requires a whole-system approach that integrates policing, policy, and technology sectors."

Police Force Engagement

Presentation of the Landscape Review to
- Avon and Somerset Police forces to influence the national VAWG Centre specifically regarding online violence.
- Tech UK's Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) and VAWG working groups.
- City of London Senior Officers from City Forum Group.

Future of Responsible Tech
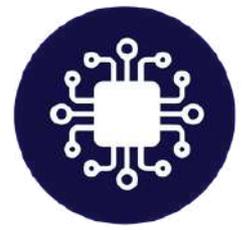
Publications

Labeling Synthetic Content: User Perceptions of Label Designs for AI-Generated Content on Social Media

Dilrukshi Gamage
Department of Computation and Intelligent Systems
University of Colombo School of Computing
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Dilki Sewwandi
University of Colombo School of Computing
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Min Zhang
The Open University
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom

Arosha K Bandara
The Open University
Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

To Protect & Serve: Enabling Responsible Software Engineering for Online Safety

Min Zhang
Centre for Protecting Women Online;
School of Computing & Comms,
The Open University
Milton Keynes, UK

Irum Rauf
School of Computing & Comms,
The Open University
Milton Keynes, UK
Lero, Ireland

Arosha K. Bandara
Centre for Protecting Women Online;
School of Computing & Comms,
The Open University
Milton Keynes, UK

Journal of Responsible Technology

journal homepage: www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-responsible-technology

Infrastructural justice for responsible software engineering

Sarah Robinson, Jim Buckley, Luigina Ciolfi, Conor Linehan, Clare McInerney, Bashar Nuseibeh, John Twomey, Irum Rauf, John McCarthy

Conferences

Panel discussion on how to improve safety by design specifically in relation to online platforms.

CHI 2025
Yokohama, Japan

Presentation of research paper co-authored by the stream and a Centre International Visiting Fellow.

Innovation in the AI age
Stamboliev · Cusomano · Nuseibeh

Keynote address at the Digital Humanism conference, titled: *"Engineering the Social Responsibility"*.

ResponsibleSE 2025
Colocated with ESEC/FSE 2025, 26th June [Thursday] 2025 Trondheim, Norway

Keynote address for the ResponsibleSE conference and presentation of research.

Building software better

Building better software

Knowledge Exchange

STEMinar Series — For International Women's Week 2025

Towards 'Safer by Design' Technologies for Protecting Women Online

The Open University

Presentation exploring how existing technologies perpetuate harm against women and girls and the challenges associated with making online spaces 'safe by design'.

Ethical & Responsible Tech/AI

Awards

- STEM Research Excellence Award.
- MK STEM Award.

Conferences

Delivery of the first international workshop on protecting women online at *The Web Conference*, Sydney, Australia.

Knowledge Exchange

NGO CSW/NY's Social Justice Working Group
- presentation addressing the issue of online violence against women through the lens of technology.

Webinar for Academic Professionals
- presentation on the complex nature of online spaces, and their ability to do harm as well as good.

Capgemini Engineering Women's Network
- presentation on the profound perspectives on the pervasive issues of online hate speech, and the harmful impacts that such toxic online behaviour can have.

Policy Engagement

Profitability and Amplification of Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV)
CEDAW (United Nations)

AI in Finance
UK Parliament Consultation

> *In 2021, researchers found lending AIs penalised women working from home, leading to unfair credit rejections.*

> *Research indicates that misogynistic content can be shown to young males within 20 minutes of creating a social media account.*

> *X is estimated to make $19 million/year from ads on just **ten** toxic reinstated accounts.*

Manosphere and Online Misogyny
UK Parliament Consultation

5. Centre Highlights

The Centre operates under the support of its Research England grant, structuring its work around core themes to drive research, knowledge exchange, and impact. On an annual basis, the Centre focuses on:

   a. **Policy Engagement,**
ensuring evidence-based insights inform decision-making and legislative frameworks.

   b. **Interdisciplinary Collaborations,**
combining expertise from law, technology, psychology, social sciences, and criminology to address online violence against women and girls.

   c. **International Engagement and Collaborations,**
fostering global partnerships to share knowledge and influence policy and practice worldwide.

   d. **Local and National Collaborations,**
working with regional partners to implement practical interventions and co-develop solutions.

   e. **Academic Engagements,**
disseminating research findings through conferences, workshops, and publications.

In addition to these thematic activities, the Centre also undertake a range of initiatives each year to enhance its reach and knowledge exchange, including:

   f.   Maintaining an online presence via the website and LinkedIn.
   g. Producing newsletters.
   h. Cyber Armour podcast series.
   i.   Engaging with media outlets.
   j.   Publishing blogs and academic papers.
   k. Developing funding bids for ongoing research and impact activities.

a. Policy Engagement

Independent Expert to the Council of Europe, Committee of Experts
[January 2025]

Professor Olga Jurasz's appointment as an Independent Expert to the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Combating Technology-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls represents a significant development and a highly prestigious appointment that provides a platform for policy influence at an international level. This role enables direct contribution in an area of critical societal importance, nationally and internationally.

Drawing on her research expertise, Professor Jurasz played a key role in contributing to the forthcoming *Recommendation on Combating Technology-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls*. This Recommendation will provide a comprehensive policy framework to support EU Member States in preventing, responding to, and redressing harms associated with technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Its adoption, scheduled for December 2025, is expected to strengthen victim protection mechanisms and enhance the coherence of policy responses across Europe.

Tech-Enabled Violence Against Women and Girls Roundtable
[28th January 2025]

Professor Olga Jurasz contributed her expertise at a high-level policy roundtable on technology-enabled violence against women and girls, reinforcing the Centre's commitment to evidence-informed policymaking. Chaired by Jess Phillips MP, Minister for Safeguarding Violence Against Women and Girls, and Alex Davies-Jones MP, Minister for Victims and VAWG, the event convened senior policymakers, academics, and civil society representatives to shape ongoing policy development in this rapidly evolving area.

Through her intervention, Professor Jurasz ensured that robust academic research was included within governmental discussions on the nature and impacts of technology-facilitated and online forms of violence. Her contributions highlighted where policy gaps remain and what further actions are needed to strengthen prevention and response mechanisms.

Consultation Responses

The Centre has strengthened its policy engagement profile through a series of evidence-informed submissions to national consultations and parliamentary inquiries. Over the reporting period, the Centre provided seven formal responses addressing key challenges at the intersection of technology, safety, equality, and human rights. These included submissions to:

1. The College of Policing consultation on data ethics.
2. The Public Accounts Committee inquiry on tackling violence against women and girls.
3. The UN Human Rights Council consultation on technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
4. Parliament's Public Accounts Committee inquiry on AI in financial services.
5. The Home Affairs Committee inquiry regarding how governmental funding should be allocated to tackle Violence against women and girls.
6. The Women and Equalities Committee inquiry on Misogyny, the Manosphere and Online Content.
7. Ofcom's consultations, including proposals for the children's code and draft Guidance for technology firms to improve online safety for women and girls.

These interventions demonstrate the Centre's interdisciplinary expertise. The sustained programme of consultation responses emphasises the Centre's strategic priority in ensuring that academic insights and research meaningfully informs public policy at multiple levels.

"What Next in the Fight Against Image Abuse?"
[4th March 2025]

The parliamentary roundtable *"What Next in the Fight Against Image-Based Abuse?"*, hosted by Kirith Entwistle MP and GLAMOUR UK, in partnership with the End Violence Against Women and Girls Coalition, brought together policymakers, researchers, and advocacy organisations to address one of the fastest-growing forms of technology-facilitated violence.

The discussion highlighted both the significant progress made in public awareness, legal recognition, and survivor support, as well as the urgent need for stronger protections, clearer accountability mechanisms, and more consistent enforcement. Engaging in these conversations enables the Centre to support partner organisations in their advocacy efforts and to contribute research evidence that can guide future policy development.

By participating in this event, Professors Lisa Lazard and Rose Capdevila helped ensure that academic expertise was included within a national conversation aimed at driving meaningful policy change.

"No Small Change" event launch
[20th March 2025]

Professors Lisa Lazard and Rose Capdevila represented the Centre at the *"No Small Change"* event in the UK Parliament, held to launch the End Violence Against Women Coalition's 2024 Snapshot Report. Their participation reflects the Centre's commitment to engaging directly with organisations and networks that share its mission to eliminate violence against women and girls, and to ensuring that research-led insights contribute to collective efforts for policy change.

The event brought together a wide network of organisations, practitioners, and policymakers, including Jess Phillips, Minister for Safeguarding Violence Against Women and Girls, and Kirith Entwistle MP, who share a collective mission to improve safety for women and girls. The Centre's presence in those conversations ensures that academic insights and research evidence meaningfully contribute to the development of national policy and practice.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
[30th June 2025]

Professors Olga Jurasz and Miriam Fernandez, together with Dr. Ángel Pavón-Pérez, delivered an expert briefing to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), focusing on the escalating challenges posed by technology-facilitated gender based violence. In their presentation, they highlighted both the economic and democratic harms associated with these forms of violence and examined the dual role of technology and AI, as mechanisms that can both perpetrate online harms and provide innovative solutions.

Engaging directly with this influential committee provided a significant opportunity to ensure that the Centre's research and evidence-led insights help to inform global policy discussions. By contributing rigorous, interdisciplinary research to this high-level forum, the Centre played an important role in shaping international understanding of technology-facilitated violence and influencing broader policy efforts aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
[2nd July 2025]

A briefing with the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee held in Westminster provided an important opportunity to bring the Centre's research directly into parliamentary discussions on ending violence against women and girls. As part of the Committee's inquiry, Professor Olga Jurasz contributed evidence-informed insights grounded in her empirical study, *"Online Violence Against Women: A Four Nations Study"*, a body of work that has already been cited in both national and European policy documents.

By drawing on robust data and interdisciplinary analysis, this engagement helped ensure that policymakers received a clear, research-based understanding of the specific challenges faced across the UK, including within Northern Ireland, in addressing technology-facilitated and online forms of violence. Such evidence is crucial in shaping effective and context-sensitive policy responses.

This briefing illustrates the Centre's commitment to embedding research within policy conversations and supporting decision-makers to develop informed, impactful strategies aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls.

POSTnote: Violence against Women and Girls in Schools and Among Children and Young People
[7th August 2025]

"The Landscape Review: Policing Technology-Facilitated and Online Violence Against Women and Girls" co-authored by Dr. Keely Duddin, Professor Olga Jurasz, and an independent consultant, Giles Herdale, was cited in the August POSTnote, Violence against Women and Girls in Schools and Among Children and Young People. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), an impartial research and knowledge exchange service based in the UK Parliament, produces these briefings to provide MPs and peers with robust, accessible evidence to inform policy scrutiny and development.

The reference to the Landscape Review in this POSTnote highlights the growing influence of the Centre's research in shaping national understanding of technology-facilitated and online violence against women and girls. It ensures that the Centre's evidence directly contributes to the parliamentary evidence base, strengthening policy discussions and supporting the development of informed, research-led approaches to preventing and responding to violence against women and girls.
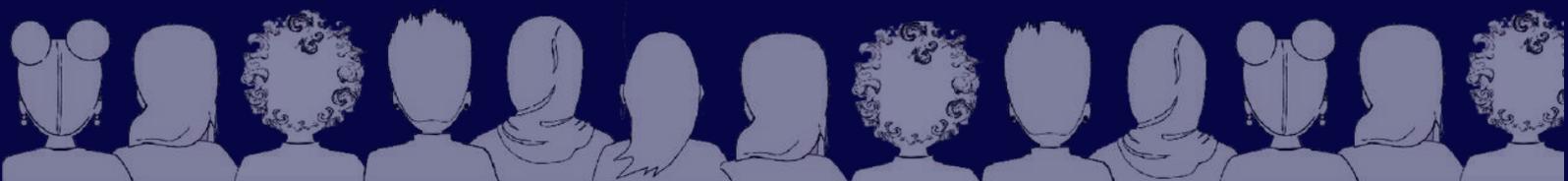
b. Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Ontology of Online Harms

A key innovation of the Centre's interdisciplinary research is the development of an ontology of online harms, led by the Ethical and Responsible Tech/AI stream. This initiative integrates expertise from technology, social sciences, policing, and law research to create a structured framework that maps the relationships between different types of online harm, their enabling contexts, and the mechanisms through which they occur. By combining these diverse perspectives, the ontology provides a holistic understanding of technology-facilitated harms, particularly those affecting women and girls, and the systemic factors that sustain them.

In July, the Centre hosted Professor Oscar Corcho from the Artificial Intelligence Department at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid for a research development workshop to support this ontology development. This collaboration highlights the value of international and cross-disciplinary engagement in tackling complex societal challenges.

The outcomes of this work were presented as a research paper at an international conference later in 2025, exemplifying how the Centre's interdisciplinary expertise can shape global understanding and inform strategies to eliminate online violence against women and girls.

Rethinking Consent in Light of Scientific and Technological Developments Workshop
[17th & 18th June 2025]

In June, the Centre hosted a two-day interdisciplinary workshop, *"Rethinking Consent in Light of Scientific and Technological Developments"*, delivered by International Visiting Fellow Professor Jane Bailey (University of Ottawa). Bringing together experts from law, computing, software engineering, psychology, and social sciences, the workshop explored feminist-informed approaches to consent in the context of sexual assault and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).

Discussions examined the limits of traditional models of consent in the digital era, including online harms such as non-consensual image sharing, and explored how feminist analyses can inform data privacy, algorithmic governance, and policy responses. Through case studies, moderated discussions, and collaborative exercises, participants identified synergies and gaps across disciplines, highlighting how interdisciplinary approaches can strengthen evidence-led interventions and respond to violence against women and girls in digital spaces.

c. International Engagement and Collaborations

International Visiting Fellows

The Centre's International Visiting Fellows programme enabled both an interdisciplinary and global approach to eliminating violence against women and girls. Over the last year, the programme has hosted 13 international fellows from across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia, ensuring that the Centre's work is informed by a diverse and truly global range of expertise.

Fellows contributed to cross-stream work programmes, bringing together perspectives from law, technology, psychology, and social justice. This integrated approach reflects the Centre's belief that no single discipline can adequately address the complexity of online violence against women and girls.

Their contributions, ranging from comparative studies and methodological reviews to specialist workshops on issues such as deepfake harassment and consent in digital spaces, provide valuable cross-cultural and cross-sectoral insights that strengthen the global relevance of the Centre's research. These collaborations extend the Centre's international reach, enrich its methodological diversity, and support the creation of evidence-led strategies capable of informing policy and practice worldwide.

Gender Inequalities in Digital Spaces Open Seminar, Zurich
[5th December 2024]

A seminar in Zurich on gender inequality in digital spaces provided an important platform for advancing evidence-based discussions on how to eliminate online violence against women and girls. As keynote speaker and panel contributor, Professor Olga Jurasz brought research on online violence against women and girls directly into conversations with international policymakers, legal experts, ethicists, and technologists.

In her keynote and during the panel on Policy Responses to Online Gender-Based Violence, Professor Jurasz highlighted persistent gaps in UK law and the broader need for harmonised international legal frameworks capable of addressing the global nature of online VAWG. The panel explored the limitations of purely punitive approaches and highlighted the importance of integrating legal, ethical, and technical perspectives to develop more effective, preventive responses.

Engagements such as this are essential for ensuring that robust, evidence-based research informs global policy debates. By contributing expertise on how online harms manifest and how structural, regulatory, and technological systems can better protect women and girls, the Centre helps shape informed, coordinated strategies for safer digital environments worldwide.

Commission of the Status of Women 69 (CSW69)
[March 2025]

Participation in the Commission on the Status of Women 69 (CSW69) in New York enabled the Centre to bring evidence-based research into globally influential discussions on women's rights and digital safety. Across five high-profile events, Professor Olga Jurasz shared interdisciplinary expertise on online violence against women and girls, ensuring international policymakers and UN stakeholders engaged directly with the Centre's research.

- *Engaging Government Stakeholders in Women's Safety*

Co-moderated by Professor Jurasz and ElsaMarie D'Silva (Red Dot Foundation), this session examined governmental understandings of gender-based violence, with expert contributions.

- *Cyberviolence and its Impact on Women's Societal Participation*

This panel disseminated expert knowledge on the profound effects of cyberviolence on women's civic, professional, and social engagement. Professor Jurasz highlighted the scale and global nature of online VAWG, positioning it as a structural barrier to equality that requires cross-disciplinary and cross-nations action.

- *The Future of Women's Safety in the Age of AI*

In collaboration with ElsaMarie D'Silva (Red Dot Foundation) and Dr. Tracie Farrell (KMI, The Open University), the discussion explored how technology and AI can both exacerbate and help address online harms. The session highlighted the importance of robust data collection and the integration of legal, technical, and policy perspectives to enhance online safety for women and girls.

- *Accelerating Progress by Tackling Barriers to Leadership and Democratic Participation*

This event examined how online violence undermines women's leadership and democratic engagement. Professor Jurasz provided evidence-based insights into the systemic impacts of online abuse, demonstrating how digital harms translate into tangible constraints on women's public participation.

- *Section J of the Beijing Declaration: Gains and Reversal*

As part of a panel reviewing progress since the 1995 Beijing Declaration, Professor Jurasz reflected on developments in media, gender representation, and ongoing online inequalities. While noting increased awareness of gender stereotypes, she emphasised the need for further progress, particularly in digital spaces where online VAWG continues to rise.

Collectively, these engagements highlight the Centre's key role in shaping global understanding of technology-facilitated gender-based violence and the importance of bringing evidence-led, interdisciplinary research into high-level policymaking.

d. Local and National Collaborations

UK Tech Safety Summit
[25th September 2024]

Professor Arosha Bandara participated in a panel at the inaugural UK Tech Safety Summit, organised by Centre partner Refuge, a leading event addressing technology-facilitated abuse, particularly violence against women and girls. The Summit brings together experts, tech companies, policymakers, and survivors to identify emerging threats—such as sextortion, tracking apps, and AI-enabled abuse—and to develop innovative, survivor-informed solutions, including safety-by-design approaches and stronger online regulation.

During the panel, Professor Bandara shared evidence-based insights on improving safety by design for online platforms, emphasising the critical need for technology companies to build safer software and implement best practice throughout development. By contributing research-informed perspectives, the Centre actively supports discussions that shape practical, policy-driven strategies to prevent online abuse and protect women and girls in digital spaces.

The 4th International Symposium on Social Work Practitioner Research
[7th November 2024]

Dr. Nelli Stavropoulou took part in a plenary panel on *"Safeguarding People in Highly Digitised Lives"* at the 4th International Symposium on Social Work Practitioner Research. The event brought together academics, practitioners, and service users to explore the challenges and opportunities of technology and AI in social work.

Dr. Stavropoulou shared evidence-based insights on technology-facilitated harms, including online violence against women and girls, highlighting how digital tools can both enhance service access and create new risks. Her contributions helped integrate research-led approaches into discussions on safeguarding, professional practice, and policy, supporting strategies to protect women and girls in increasingly digital environments.

TechUK Panel
[25th November 2024]

A TechUK panel titled *"Reflections on the Survivors' Journey: Bridging the Gaps"*, held in observance of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, explored the experiences of survivors and the systemic gaps in addressing technology-facilitated violence. Professor Olga Jurasz was invited to join the panel, contributing evidence-based insights that highlighted the importance of research-informed approaches to policy and practice for developing effective strategies to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Cybercrime and Online Harms Practitioner Network Webinar
[9th January 2025]

To strengthen knowledge exchange between researchers and frontline practitioners, Professor Olga Jurasz participated in a virtual meeting of COPRNET—the Cybercrime and Online Harms Practitioner Network. The session brought together practitioners across law enforcement, public services, the private sector, and third-sector organisations, all of whom play a vital role in responding to online crime and harm in Wales.
During the session, Professor Jurasz introduced the work of the Centre for Protecting Women Online, outlining its research, policy-focused initiatives, and opportunities for collaboration. Her contributions helped strengthen connections between academic expertise and practitioner needs, emphasising that embedding robust, evidence-led insights into these conversations is essential for improving online safety and ensuring more effective protection for women and girls facing online violence.

NGO CSW/NY's Social Justice Working Group
[20th February 2025]

Professor Miriam Fernandez contributed to the NGO CSW/NY Social Justice Working Group, an influential forum shaping global civil society advocacy ahead of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Her participation offered a key opportunity to ensure the Centre's evidence-based research informs international conversations on gender equality, digital safety, and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.
Drawing on interdisciplinary research, Professor Fernandez examined how digital platforms, algorithms, and emerging AI systems can both enable and help counter online harms. She highlighted recent technological advances alongside persistent gaps that continue to leave women and girls vulnerable.

VAWG Alliance International Women's Day Panel
[6th March 2025]

The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Alliance, established in 2024, invited Professor Olga Jurasz to join a panel of experts for its International Women's Day 2025 event. The panel included Emily Darlington MP, HHJ Karen Venables, Lisa Ward, and Dr. Liza Thompson, and explored the government's goal of reducing violence against women and girls by 50%, examining root causes, societal impacts, and the effectiveness of current strategies, including approaches to address online violence and technology-facilitated abuse.

Professor Jurasz contributed evidence-based insights on online violence against women and girls, emphasising the need for integrated, multi-agency approaches that reflect the realities of digital harm. The event concluded with an open Q&A session, providing an important space for community members to engage directly with experts, raise concerns, and understand the critical role research plays in shaping effective responses to both offline and online VAWG.

Violence against women and girls: what's needed for change?
TechShock Podcast
[23rd May 2025]

Professors Rose Capdevila and Lisa Lazard collaborated with ParentZone for an episode of the Tech Shock podcast, focusing on strategies to combat online violence against women and girls. Drawing on their research and expertise, they explored the challenges posed by emerging technologies, including generative AI, cyberflashing, and deepfake content, which can perpetuate harassment, misogyny, and the objectification of women.

The discussion emphasised the importance of incorporating young voices into these conversations, recognising their critical role in shaping digital culture and fostering inclusive dialogue. Professors Capdevila and Lazard highlighted the limitations of reactive approaches, advocating for preventative, upstream strategies that combine digital literacy, evidence-based policy, and cultural change to reduce online harms. By translating thorough research into practical insights, the episode demonstrates how interdisciplinary evidence can guide effective interventions to protect women and girls in digital spaces.
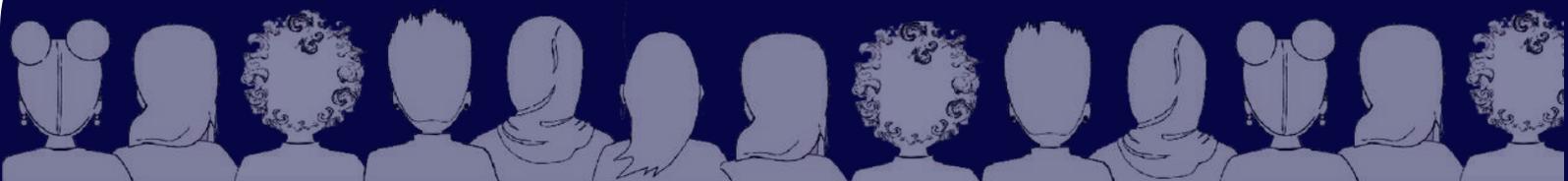
e. Academic Engagements

Online Gender-Based Violence International Conference
[30th April 2025 & 31st April 2025] Zagreb, Croatia.

The International Symposium on Online Gender-Based Violence, held over two days in Zagreb, provided a key forum for global dialogue on technology-facilitated abuse. Professor Olga Jurasz was invited as the keynote speaker, sharing evidence-based insights and research on the persistent issue of online violence against women, a growing concern worldwide. She drew on findings from her study, *"Online Violence Against Women: A Four Nations Study"*, to support her arguments and illustrate the scale and complexity of online abuse.

The symposium brought together participants from multiple countries to explore the challenges of preventing and responding to online violence. Discussions included comparative perspectives on legislative and policy approaches, with Professor Jurasz highlighting the UK's strategies and demonstrating how rigorous, research-led evidence can inform effective interventions and policy development internationally.

Association for Computing Machinery (CHI) Conference
[24th April 2025 - 1st May 2025] Yokohama, Japan.

Dr. Min Zhang attended the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems in Yokohama, Japan, where the Centre's research on AI-generated content and social media was highlighted. At the conference, International Visiting Fellow Dr. Dilrukshi Gamage presented a paper co-authored with Professor Arosha Bandara and Dr. Min Zhang, titled *"Labeling Synthetic Content: User Perceptions of Label Designs for AI-Generated Content on Social Media"*.

The research tested ten different designs for warning labels on AI-generated content, such as deepfakes, to see how they affected users' perceptions. Over 900 participants shared their views on whether content was AI-generated, how much they trusted the labels, and how they engaged with the posts. The study found that labels helped people recognise AI-generated content, though trust varied depending on the design but did not significantly change behaviours like liking or sharing. This work provides practical guidance for designing labels that can help make social media safer and reduce the risks associated with synthetic content.

The Web Conference
[28th April 2025 - 2nd May 2025] Sydney, Australia.

The Web Conference 2025, a leading international forum on the future of the World Wide Web, brought together scholars, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and end-users to explore and shape the evolving digital landscape. In conjunction with the conference, the first workshop on protecting women online, *Towards a Safer Web for Women*, organised by Dr. Ángel Pavón-Pérez and Professor Miriam Fernandez alongside other colleagues, and facilitated by Dr. Pavón-Pérez with Professor Olga Jurasz to address the urgent and growing issue of online violence against women and girls. As digital spaces become increasingly hostile due to hate speech, deepfake abuse, and algorithmic gender bias, the workshop highlighted the importance of international and interdisciplinary collaboration. Researchers from cross-disciplinary backgrounds came together to share knowledge, exchange best practices, and develop strategies to mitigate online harms and promote safer digital environments for women.

Professor Jurasz was also invited to deliver a keynote address for the workshop titled *"Women in Online Spaces: Violence, tech bros and why law (alone) is never enough",* alongside keynotes from Maria Nguyen, presenting on *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: An Australian Perspective*, and Helen Atkins, discussing *Scaling AI from the grassroots using decolonial feminist praxis for violence prevention in Jamaica.* The workshop provided a critical platform for knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary dialogue, reinforcing the need for evidence-led approaches to combat online violence and protect women and girls globally.

Politics and Gender Conference: Expanding the reach of Politics and Gender on its 20th Anniversary
[27th May 2025 - 29th May 2025] New Jersey, USA.

Professor Olga Jurasz presented her paper, *"Online Violence Against Women in Politics: Democratic Harms in the Era of Musk and Trump 2.0,"* at the Politics and Gender 20th Anniversary Conference held at Rutgers University. The conference brought together scholars from across the major subfields of political science to explore questions, issues, and approaches relating to women, gender, and politics. Professor Jurasz examined how contemporary political discourse and high-profile online environments, influenced by figures such as Trump and Musk, continue to amplify online safety for women. Her presentation explored the personal, participatory, and democratic harms posed by hostile online spaces, emphasising how social media can suppress women's voices, threaten freedom of expression, and undermine democratic participation.

Police Federation, Cumberland Lodge Conference
[13th June 2025 - 15th June 2025] London, United Kingdom.

The 43rd Police Foundation Cumberland Lodge Conference, focused on *"New Approaches to Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)"*, provided a key forum for exchanging knowledge and best practice on tackling both online and offline gendered violence. Professor Olga Jurasz was invited to contribute to a panel discussion titled *"How are global and online threats expected to evolve, and how should our response be structured?"*. The discussion explored the impact of misogyny, the spread of misinformation, and the role of social media in escalating threats against women and girls. Professor Jurasz emphasised the importance of making the prevention and response to online VAWG a central priority, highlighting how evidence-led strategies can inform effective policy and practice.

Also during the conference, Giles Herdale, an independent consultant, presented *"The Landscape Review: Policing Technology-Facilitated and Online Violence Against Women and Girls"*, co-authored with Dr. Keely Duddin and Professor Jurasz. The presentation facilitated knowledge exchange between practitioners, and policymakers, providing attendees with evidence-based insights into current policing approaches, gaps, and emerging challenges. By translating research findings into practical recommendations, the session supported collaborative dialogue on how law enforcement can more effectively respond to online abuse, strengthening connections between academic research and frontline practice in tackling digital forms of gendered violence.

Psychology of Women and Equalities Section Annual Conference
[23rd June 2025 & 24th June 2025] Oxford, United Kingdom.

At the Psychology of Women and Equalities Section Annual Conference, Professors Rose Capdevila and Lisa Lazard presented their paper, *"Deepfake Technology and Gender-Based Violence: A Scoping Review."* Co-authored with Dr. Emma Turley (Centre International Visiting Fellow), Kathryn Gilfoyle, and Dr. Nelli Stavropoulou, the paper examines the emerging complexities of deepfake use in gender-based violence, a growing global form of online violence against women (OVAW). Their presentation highlighted current understandings of deepfakes, the implications for gender-based harms, and how these technologies shape risks and responses.

Kathryn also presented her PhD research on non-consensual sexual image sharing, exploring feminist psychological constructs such as women's self-objectification, sexual agency, and the dynamics of engaging men's attention. Together, these presentations offered a key opportunity for knowledge exchange, fostering discussion between academics, practitioners, and policymakers on evidence-based strategies to better understand online gendered harms.

Responsible SE Conference
[26th June 2025] Trondheim, Norway.

The Responsible SE 2025 Conference featured contributions from Professor Arosha Bandara and Dr. Min Zhang. Professor Bandara was invited to deliver the keynote address, *"First, do no harm – realising the potential of transdisciplinary research for Responsible Software Engineering"*, highlighting how transdisciplinary approaches can advance responsible software development. Drawing on examples from the Centre, he showed how this research can help create safer online spaces for vulnerable groups, including women and girls, and also participated in a panel on embedding responsibility into software products and practices.

Dr. Min Zhang presented her paper, co-authored with Professor Bandara, *"To Protect & Serve: Enabling Responsible Software Engineering for Online Safety"*, which explores the role of software in social computing technologies and its link to online violence against women and girls. Together, the presentations emphasised the value of evidence-based, interdisciplinary research in guiding ethical technology development, supporting safer digital environments, and informing policy and practice.
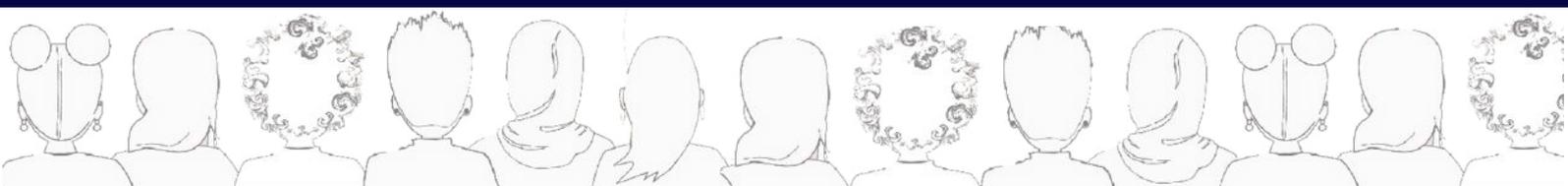
f. Online Presence: Website and LinkedIn

The Centre operates a public-facing website, which went live alongside the Centre's inception in August 2024. The number of visitors to the site is bolstered by a thriving presence on LinkedIn, where a minimum of one post is shared per working day to maintain Centre visibility. Additionally, blog entries keep audiences informed about significant news and advancements the Centre team is pursuing. The LinkedIn stream enhances the website by promoting blog posts and Centre endeavours, conferences the Centre team have presented at, committee briefings, consultation responses posted, sharing key points from Centre partners, spreading CPWO updates and research, and directing visitors to the Centre website for further information. The impact of both the website and LinkedIn is assessed through analytics gathered monthly by the Centre. Key highlights from the Centre's LinkedIn presence include:

- 95 posts shared directly on LinkedIn.
- 215 posts scheduled for LinkedIn via Buffer.
- Total of 310 posts shared between October 2024 - July 2025.

Over **3,000** active users to the website.

1,727 engagements with the Centre's annual conference page on the website.

Reached audiences from **48** different countries across the globe.

Within 9 months of the Centre opening, the Centre reached **2,500** followers on LinkedIn.

By the end of May, there had been **1,414** unique visitors to the Centre LinkedIn page.

An open opportunity to engage with the Centre on research opportunities created **5,595** impressions.

g. Newsletter

The newsletter provides opportunities for people to catch up with key highlights from the Centre team on a quarterly basis. It provides opportunities for individuals to catch up with content they may have missed, and opportunities for the Centre team to reshare the content. By linking the newsletter content to its original source, whether this be a video shared via LinkedIn or a blog post shared via the Centre website, it helps to drive further traffic to the content being produced and shared by the Centre team.

First Centre newsletter was sent to **68** subscribers at the end of December 2024.

By the third newsletter instalment, June 2025, the subscriber list had grown to **151** subscribers.

An average engagement rate of **54.81%**.

h. Podcast and Webinar Series

The Centre has expanded its external engagement through a range of webinars and a podcast series, Cyber Armour, to support the wider sharing of knowledge essential for tackling online violence against women and girls. By making specialist research accessible to diverse audiences, these activities create spaces where practitioners, policymakers, industry partners, and the public can build a shared understanding of the risks, dynamics, and emerging challenges of digital harm.

A Valentine's Day webinar featured Centre International Visiting Fellow Dr. Emma Turley and a representative from Bumble Inc., exploring risks associated with online dating, practical steps users can take to stay safe, and the measures dating platforms are introducing to protect women.

This was followed by an International Women's Day webinar with leading feminist lawyer Dr. Ann Olivarius, who discussed sexual harassment, image-based sexual abuse, deepfakes, and rape culture, drawing on four decades of work in women's rights and her landmark case against Yale University.

Alongside these webinars, Cyber Armour has hosted experts including criminologist Dr. Emma Turley, applied psychologist Dr. Sarah Robinson (Lero), and Vicki Shotbolt, founder and CEO of ParentZone. Episodes have addressed diverse topics such as deepfake harms, online dating, online safety for young girls, and misogynoir. Through these conversations, Cyber Armour strengthens knowledge exchange by translating research into practical insights, supporting professionals, policymakers, and communities working to reduce technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

The Centre's partners are essential to addressing online violence against women and girls from a truly holistic perspective, bringing together expertise across policy, technology, policing, education, and frontline practice. Through local and national collaboration, partners have contributed to Centre videos by sharing their organisational roles, identifying critical gaps in current responses, and offering practical, forward-looking ideas to strengthen women's online safety over the next five years.

Love is in the air? The risks and harms of online dating has been viewed **127** times.

*The Cyber Armour podcast has been officially launched with an initial **5** episodes.*

*Dr. Ann Olivarius's International Women's Day webinar has been viewed **92** times.*
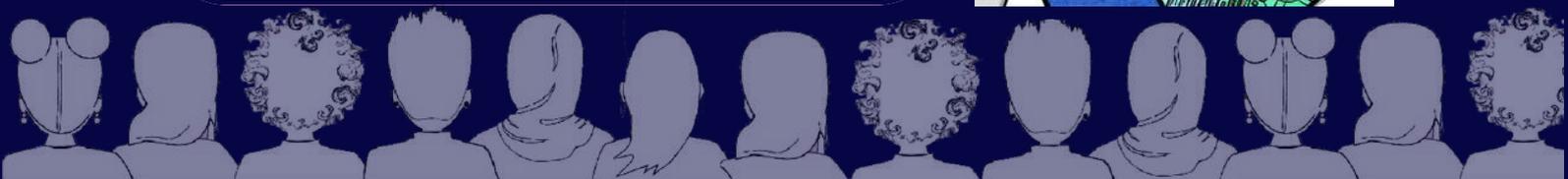
i. Media Presence

The Centre's research on OVAWG has reached wide audiences, with findings and citations featured in leading newspapers, magazines, and national radio. This coverage has helped raise awareness of the urgent need for safer online spaces, and extended the reach of the Centre's work beyond academia to include local communities, policymakers, practitioners and the general public.

Outlet	Format	Date	Title / Topic
MK Citizen	News Article	October 2024	*The Open University establishes new centre for protecting women online following £7.7 million grant*.
Powys Journal	News Article	November 2024	*It Starts with Men this White Ribbon Day*.
Shropshire Star	Newspaper	December 2024	*Powys White Ribbon Walks to support ending Violence against women and girls were successful*.
Chronicle Live	Newspaper	December 2024	*Northern vows to help transform harmful culture towards women and girls across the UK*.
Rail Business Daily	Newspaper	December 2024	*Train operator vows to help transform harmful culture towards women and girls across the North of England*.
Rail UK	Newspaper	December 2024	*Train operator vows to help transform culture towards women and girls*.

Outlet	Format	Date	Title / Topic
New York Times	Opinion Piece	March 2025	*We underestimate the Manosphere at our Peril*.
Marie Claire Australia	Magazine	April 2025	*What happens when a much-loved Hollywood star becomes a pariah overnight?*
BBC Radio Wales	Radio Interview	June 2025	*Discussion on the issue of online abuse on social media.*
BBC News, Northern Ireland	News Article	July 2025	*Children 'accessing vile pornograqphy' on social media*.
The Times	Newspaper	July 2025	*Meet the Met Officer leading the war on violence against women*.
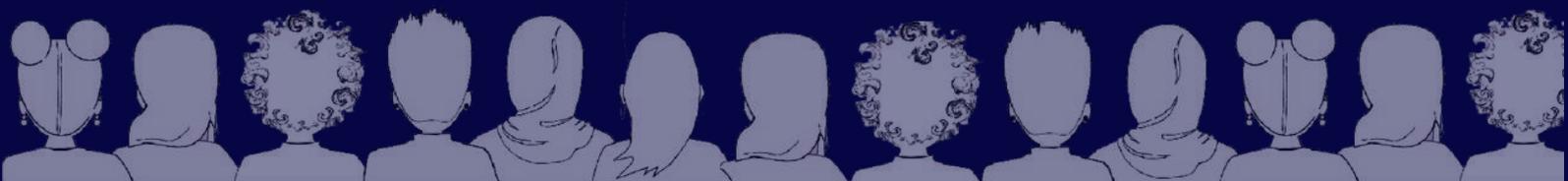
j. Publications

The Centre's research on online violence against women and girls has been published in leading peer-reviewed journals across law, technology, psychology, and social sciences. These publications have advanced scholarly understanding of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, informed interdisciplinary debates, and provided an evidence base that policymakers, practitioners, and advocacy groups can draw on to develop effective interventions and strategies to create safer online environments.

Author(s)	Title of Publication
Zhang, Min; Rauf, Irum and Bandara, Arosha K. (2025).	To Protect & Serve: Enabling Responsible Software Engineering for Online Safety.
Herdale, Giles; Duddin, Keely and Jurasz, Olga (2025).	Landscape Review: Policing Technology-Facilitated and Online Violence Against Women and Girls.
Gamage, Dilrukshi; Sewwandi, Dilki; Zhang, Min and Bandara, Arosha (2025).	Labeling Synthetic Content: User Perceptions of Warning Label Designs for AI-generated Content on Social Media.
Thompson, Lucy; Frances, Tanya; Turley, Emma; Lazard, Lisa and Donnelly, Lois (2025).	Conceptualizing and measuring violence: A feminist critical measurement analysis of gender-based violence research in a government policy-based setting. Violence Against Women (Early access).
Reyero Lobo, Paula; Daga, Enrico; Alani, Harith and Fernandez, Miriam (2024).	Enhancing Hate Speech Annotations with Background Semantics.
Barker, Kim and Jurasz, Olga (2024).	#MeToo, Sport, and Women: Foul, Own Goal, or Touchdown? Online Abuse of Women in Sport as a Contemporary Issue.
Jurasz, Olga (2024).	Online violence against women: A Four Nations study.
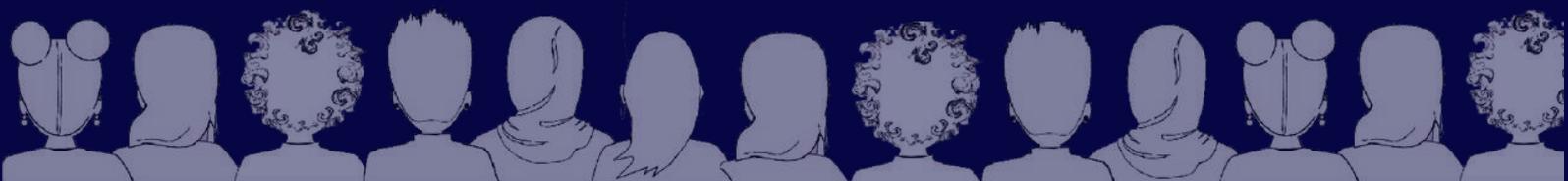
k. Funded Projects

Understandings of #MeToo online

This project examines prevailing social interpretations of the #MeToo movement, focusing on how cultural narratives and public discourse shape responses to sexual harassment and the victimisation of women, particularly in online environments. In collaboration with colleagues from the University of Iceland, the research undertakes a comparative study of the UK and Iceland, offering insights into how differing approaches to gender equality influence understanding and activism around #MeToo. This comparative perspective helps uncover nuanced differences and similarities in social attitudes, digital activism, and victim support across national contexts, and lays the groundwork for future engagement with partners in Spain and Germany.

The project has produced both academic and strategic outcomes. It has strengthened international partnerships, refined knowledge gaps to guide future research, and contributed to a follow-on funding bid focused on digital activism to combat online sexual harassment. Outputs include an accepted publication in Violence Against Women, conference presentations, and evidence that supports the Centre's broader objective of understanding how online interactions can enable or inhibit problematic and violent behaviours.

Q Methodological Literature Review

The Human Behaviour stream has taken a comprehensive approach to understanding online behaviours associated with violence against women and girls (VAWG). Using Q methodology, the team explored the subjectivity underlying online interactions, moving beyond simple classifications to map the range of attitudes and beliefs that shape how individuals experience or contribute to online harm. As part of this work, the team collaborated with Dr. Julia Núñez de la Rosa, a Centre International Visiting Fellow, to review and refine the Spanish translation of the online VAWG survey and to collate relevant Q methodological literature in both VAWG and online behavioural research.

A key outcome of this project is the development of a practical set of guidelines to support the use of Q methodology in studying online harms. The resulting literature review and methodological framework now serve as reusable resources for future research initiatives and funding applications. This work contributes to the Centre's broader goal of understanding how digital interactions can enable or inhibit problematic or violent behaviour, providing a robust, evidence-based foundation for ongoing study and policy engagement.

Deepfake Scoping Report

Deepfakes represent a strategic research priority for the Centre, reflecting both the increasing urgency of the issue and its high visibility in public discourse, media reporting, and industry concern—particularly in relation to platform responsibilities for detection, moderation, and prevention of the creation and dissemination of synthetic media. In response to this growing concern, this project undertook a scoping review aimed at mapping existing scholarship and policy literature on deepfakes, with particular attention to legal and regulatory frameworks within the UK, the Commonwealth, and the EU.

The review was conducted to assess the current state of knowledge in relation to governance, legal instruments, and platform policies, and to identify critical gaps in the literature that warrant further investigation. The outcome of this work was a comprehensive report that explores existing legal and policy responses to deepfakes and proposes a set of directions for future research and regulatory development. The report offers a foundational overview of the field and serves as a document for subsequent empirical and interdisciplinary work.

Open Societal Challenges, Challenge Us!
Collaboration with White Ribbon UK

White Ribbon UK has been awarded an Open Societal Challenges (OSC) grant, in collaboration with Professor Olga Jurasz, to fund the project "*Cost-Benefit Analysis of Primary Prevention to End Violence Against Women and Girls.*" The project examines the financial and social value of early intervention strategies aimed at preventing men's violence against women and girls, both online and offline. By demonstrating how primary prevention can change attitudes and behaviours to disrupt harmful norms, the project provides evidence to support proactive, rights-based approaches to tackling gender-based violence. The resulting co-produced report, "*The Case for Investing in Primary Prevention: Ending Men's Violence Against Women*", launching in the next reporting period, will highlight where current approaches fall short and offering clear recommendations for government policy.

The report is designed to inform policymakers, practitioners, and cross-sector partners, emphasising the adoption of a human rights-based approach to online safety aligned with Council of Europe standards, strengthening regulation of technology platforms, and implementing safety-by-design measures for all users. The Centre will continue to use the findings to influence policy and practice, supporting long-term strategies to prevent violence against women and girls.

Understanding the psychological and socio-legal impacts of deepfake pornography harassment

This project addresses the growing issue of digitally manipulated non-consensual sexually explicit material, such as deepfakes, and other forms of image-based abuse, including sexual extortion. While the technological aspects of deepfakes have been widely studied, there remains limited understanding of their social, psychological, and legal impacts, particularly on women and gender minorities who are disproportionately targeted.

In collaboration with international visiting fellow Dr. Emma Turley, the project conducted a comparative study of the UK and Australian contexts. The study was designed to underpin a larger research grant investigating the psychological and socio-legal implications of deepfake harassment and related abuses.

The project has resulted in the development of new international partnerships, enhancing the Centre's global network and capacity for collaborative research. It also produced a comprehensive scoping review that identified key gaps in current scholarship and practice. This review will directly inform the research questions and methodology of a forthcoming funding bid, ensuring a strong evidence base for further study.

Landscape Review: Policing Technology-Facilitated and Online Violence Against Women and Girls

This project undertook a baseline assessment of policing responses in England and Wales to technology-enabled and online forms of violence against women and girls, aiming to provide a clearer understanding of how law enforcement is addressing this evolving and complex area of harm. Conducted in collaboration with an expert consultant specialising in VAWG, the work is situated within a broader national agenda, reflecting the National Police Chiefs' Council's designation of VAWG as an epidemic and a strategic priority, particularly in its digital forms. The project addresses a critical gap in knowledge regarding the practical steps police forces are taking to respond to this priority, especially given the transformative impact of digital technologies on patterns of abuse and victimisation, and aligns with government objectives to halve VAWG within the next decade.

The project culminated in a comprehensive landscape review, published in May 2025, which has been widely disseminated across policing networks in England and Wales. The report has attracted significant attention, including coverage in Policing Insight and inclusion in expert panel discussions at TechUK, the IPPR policy conference, and the Cumberland Lodge Police Foundation Conference. It now serves as a vital reference point for policy discussions and strategic planning, helping to inform ongoing efforts to enhance institutional responses and preventative measures against technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Evaluating the Design of Deepfake Warnings

This project investigates the design of warning labels for AI-generated content, with a particular focus on deepfakes—an increasingly prevalent form of online harm that disproportionately affects women. In collaboration with International Visiting Fellow Dr. Dilrukshi Gamage, the research explored how content warnings can improve user awareness, reduce the spread of harmful material, and support victims. By combining insights from misinformation studies and user interface design, the project developed and tested a survey instrument to assess how different label designs influence trust, perceived credibility, and the likelihood of resharing content, providing evidence on both functional effectiveness and social impact.

The findings, which have informed a full paper submitted to CHI 2025, contribute to knowledge exchange between researchers, policymakers, and technology platforms. They offer practical insights for developing user-centred interventions, guiding regulatory and platform-level responses, and supporting policy decisions aimed at mitigating the risks of generative AI. This work reinforces the Centre's commitment to evidence-led approaches that protect vulnerable groups and inform broader strategies to combat technology-facilitated gendered harms.

6. External Relationships

The Centre collaborates with a range of partners including charities, NGOs, local council and college, and industry partners. By the end of the first year of the Centre (end of July 2025), the Centre has teamed up with 23 organisations to help us achieve the core objectives. The Centre is open for collaboration opportunities with organisations involved with women's online safety. This includes working alongside tech developers, local partners advocating for safer online spaces or those focusing on community based approaches to online safety.

Together, with the Centre partners, current ongoing work includes:
- Research and project development that can better serve our local communities in addressing fears and harms they are experiencing or witnessing online
- Resources that can be better used to support victims and promote safer online behaviours to help eliminate harms
- Merging research and practice-based approaches
- Networking opportunities to connect with others invested in protection of women online

The Centre's partnership group has doubled since the Centre opened and there are current conversations with a growing number of organisations regarding opportunities for partnership and collaboration.
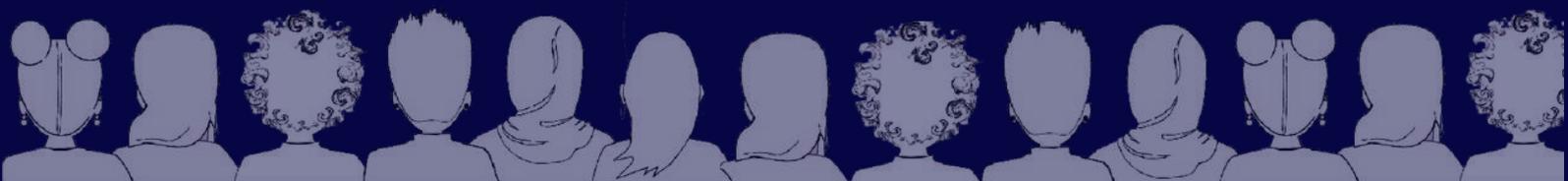
7. International Visiting Fellows

2025 Cohort

Jane Bailey

Raquel De Haro i Perez

ElsaMarie D'Silva

Asia Eaton
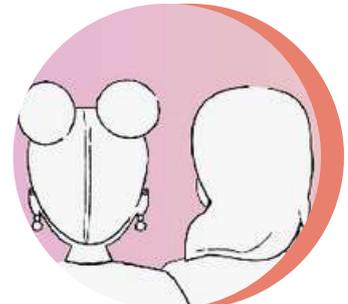
Dilrukshi Gamage

Sarah Hesterman

Dianne Lalonde

Paula Martins

Laura McVey

Julia Nuño de la Rosa

Rida Tahir

Sylwia Spurek

Emma Turley

8. CPWO Members

Centre Team 2024-2025:

Professor Olga Jurasz

Dr. Ksenia Bakina

Professor Arosha Bandara

Dr. Joanna Bhatti

Helen Blacow

Professor Rose Capdevila

Dr. Keely Duddin

Professor Miriam Fernandez

Kathryn Gilfoyle

Professor Lisa Lazard

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Dr. Nelli Stavropoulou

Michelle Stevens

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Joseph Kwarteng

Bashar Nuseibeh

Irum Rauf

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Interns:

Iona Black

Stephanie Hall

Partners:

CGI

CPRL

Deloitte

END Violence Against Women Coalition

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Lawyers for Justice in Libya

LERO

Milton Keynes City Council

Milton Keynes Fawcett

MK:Act

MK College Group

National Centre for Social Research

National Police Chief's Council

Parentzone

Red Dot Foundation

Refuge

Safety Centre Hazard Alley

Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Service

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Thames Valley Police

Voices of Women Milton Keynes

White Ribbon UK
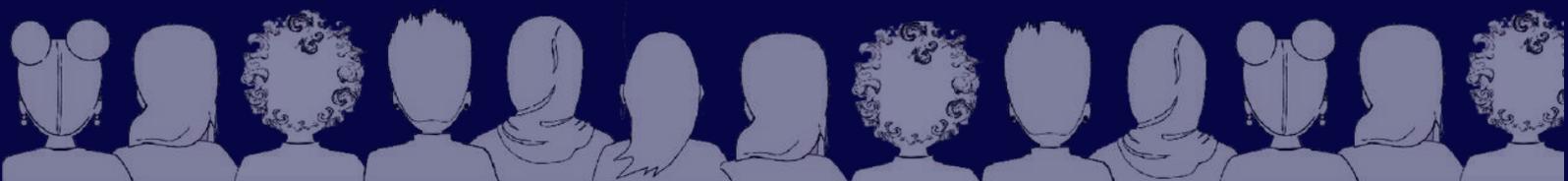
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