



Institute For  
Addressing  
Strangulation

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IFAS Strategy 2026–2029

# Addressing Strangulation in the UK

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OUR MISSION

To address strangulation in the  
UK.



Institute For  
Addressing  
Strangulation



Faculty of Forensic  
& Legal Medicine  
of the Royal College of Physicians

Funded by the  
UK Home Office

# About the Institute for Addressing Strangulation

Strangulation and suffocation became standalone offences in England and Wales through the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and were implemented in June 2022. Legislation was an important step, but lasting change depends on professionals and organisations translating legislation and knowledge into consistent evidence-based practice. IFAS was established in October 2022 to raise awareness and lead work to strengthen the UK response to strangulation.

Funded by the Home Office, IFAS has driven change by building the UK evidence base on the prevalence of strangulation and increasing national recognition of a form of violence that is often hidden, minimised or misunderstood. Our survivor group has shaped training and resources so that professionals encounter real experiences and respond with greater understanding, empathy and urgency.

From 2026 to 2029, IFAS will work across government, statutory organisations and specialist support services, with an aim to scale effective approaches, strengthen weaker parts of the system and respond to changing evidence and experience. This includes addressing violence against women and girls, recognising the experiences of men and boys, and challenging the normalisation of strangulation in relationships.

**Our goal is simple: to ensure that every person affected by strangulation receives an informed, consistent and effective response, wherever they are in the UK.**

This strategy sets out how IFAS will address strangulation in the UK from 2026 to 2029. It defines the four changes we seek to achieve, the six delivery areas through which we will act, and the foundations that will enable safe, sustainable and effective delivery.

## OUR MISSION

# To address strangulation in the UK.

IFAS addresses non-fatal strangulation through leadership, survivor engagement, partnership and evidence-based action. By combining clinical and forensic expertise, survivor-informed approaches, high-quality research, strategic influence, alongside professional training delivered in collaboration with our partners SafeLives, we help frontline workers, organisations and decision-makers deliver safer, more effective responses for victims and survivors and increase recognition of strangulation as a serious form of harm.

We recognise that strangulation can occur in different relationship, peer and cultural contexts. Our work will address its reported normalisation in some sexual contexts and among some young people without conflating consensual behaviour with abuse, while remaining clear about the potential risks and the importance of informed, respectful relationships.

Together, these commitments support our goal of ensuring that every person affected by strangulation receives an informed, consistent and effective response, wherever they are in the UK.

### **To deliver our mission, we will:**

- 01** Keep strangulation visible as a serious public health issue and a form of violence against women and girls, while recognising and responding to the experiences of men and boys.
- 02** Improve clinical, forensic, criminal justice, health and wellbeing responses to strangulation across the UK.
- 03** Ensure survivor experience directly influences how services, policies and resources are developed.
- 04** Build the evidence needed to understand, prevent and respond to strangulation effectively.
- 05** Challenge the growing normalisation of strangulation through education, awareness and public engagement.
- 06** Support organisations and professionals to implement evidence-based responses that improve safety, justice and recovery for victims and survivors.

## FOUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# IFAS Strategy 2026–2029

To achieve our mission of addressing strangulation in the UK, the IFAS Strategy will focus on four strategic priorities that define the change we seek across policy, practice, education, research and public understanding.

01

## National Leadership — Taking a Whole-System Approach

We will work to ensure that addressing strangulation remains a priority, influencing policy, legislation, professional standards, and commissioning so responses are consistent, effective, and survivor-focused across the UK.

We will promote a whole-system response across criminal justice, healthcare, specialist support and education.

We will promote evidence-based, trauma-informed clinical and forensic practice, supporting professionals to identify strangulation, assess risk, enhance survivor safety, and improve the quality of evidence available to the justice system.

02

## Survivor-Informed Change

We will place survivor experience at the heart of our work so that policy, practice, education and resources reflect lived experience of strangulation. We will strengthen resources for victims and survivors, continue to advocate for change and improve the responses they receive.

03

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Building on our research, we will translate evidence on the prevalence, risks and harms of strangulation. Working with key stakeholders, we will use this knowledge to identify effective prevention and early intervention strategies to inform policy and practice across the whole system.

We will work with educators and academics to improve understanding of strangulation through education, training and public engagement. By challenging myths and promoting healthy, respectful relationships, we will work with partners to prevent harm before it occurs.

04

## Pursuing Perpetrators — Turning Evidence into Action

We will support criminal justice agencies to implement evidence-based policies, pathways, and interventions that improve safety, justice, and recovery for victims and survivors and hold perpetrators to account.

**Together, these priorities help create a future where strangulation is recognised, prevented and responded to effectively wherever it occurs.**

## MISSION

**Address strangulation in the UK**

01

**National Leadership — Taking a Whole-System Approach**

Influence policy, standards and commissioning; connect justice, health, specialist support and education; strengthen trauma-informed clinical and forensic practice.

02

**Survivor-Informed Change**

Place lived experience at the heart of policy, practice, education and resources, improving support and advocacy for victims and survivors.

03

**Prevention and Early Intervention**

Translate evidence on prevalence, risk and harm; develop prevention strategies; improve education and challenge myths to promote respectful relationships.

04

**Pursuing Perpetrators — Turning Evidence into Action**

Support criminal justice agencies to use evidence-based pathways and interventions that improve safety and justice and hold perpetrators to account.

## OUTCOME

**Strangulation is recognised, prevented and responded to effectively wherever it occurs.**

# How Our Delivery Areas Support the Four Strategic Priorities

At IFAS, we take a whole-system approach to addressing non-fatal strangulation. We bring together expertise from survivors, practitioners, researchers, policymakers, clinicians, forensic specialists and criminal justice professionals to drive meaningful change.

The four strategic priorities define the change IFAS seeks to achieve. Our interconnected workstreams describe how we will advance those priorities in practice. Each workstream contributes to more than one priority, while operational oversight will provide the governance, people, resources and systems needed across the whole strategy.

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## DELIVERY AREA

### Leadership and Strategy

Position IFAS as the national centre of expertise on non-fatal strangulation, providing clear leadership, evidence-informed direction and practical influence across policy, practice and public understanding.

IFAS will use its expertise to influence national and local systems, support delivery of the wider ambition to reduce violence against women and girls, and ensure non-fatal strangulation remains visible within prevention, safeguarding, criminal justice, health and education agendas.

- Provide strategic leadership on non-fatal strangulation across policy, practice, research and public education.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with government, statutory agencies, specialist organisations, academics and survivor networks.
- Use evidence, professional expertise and lived experience to inform national conversations and practical system improvements.
- Strengthen IFAS's organisational resilience, sustainability and readiness for future growth.

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**DELIVERY AREA**

## Forensic and Clinical Excellence

**Promote consistent and trauma-informed responses to non-fatal strangulation across forensic and clinical practice.**

IFAS will support practitioners and services to recognise the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation, understand the clinical and forensic implications, and respond in ways that improve survivor safety, evidence capture and professional confidence. We will continue to develop guidance, training and practice resources that bridge clinical and forensic practices.

- Develop accessible guidance and tools that support recognition, assessment, documentation and referral pathways.
- Strengthen links between forensic medicine, healthcare, criminal justice, and safeguarding responses.
- Promote medico-legal responses to non-fatal strangulation that strengthen forensic and evidential opportunities while protecting survivor safety, dignity and choice.
- Champion continuous learning through training, reflective practice and emerging evidence.

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**DELIVERY AREA**

## Survivor Engagement

**Ensure IFAS's work is meaningfully informed by survivor experience while maintaining safe, ethical and trauma-informed boundaries. We will create clear, respectful and accessible opportunities for survivors to shape research, resources, policy messages and professional learning, while being transparent that IFAS is not a direct support service. Our approach will prioritise safety, informed consent, emotional containment, accessibility and choice.**

- Maintain a clear survivor engagement framework with agreed purpose, boundaries, safeguarding arrangements and routes to support.
- Embed lived experience into resources, training, public messages and policy influencing where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- Regularly review engagement activity to ensure it remains ethical, purposeful and beneficial to IFAS's wider mission.

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**DELIVERY AREA**

## Research and Evidence

**Build, translate and share the evidence base on non-fatal strangulation so that research informs policy, practice, education and public understanding.**

IFAS will continue to identify evidence gaps, support research activity and translate findings into practical learning for professionals and communities. We will prioritise research that improves understanding of prevalence, risk, harms, context, professional responses and prevention, including work with young people and wider public education. Evidence will be communicated in ways that are clear, responsible and usable beyond academic audiences.

- Develop a clear research programme aligned to IFAS’s strategic priorities and stakeholder needs.
- Translate research findings into accessible briefings, training content, practice resources and policy recommendations.
- Work with academic and sector partners to strengthen the quality, relevance and reach of the evidence base.
- Use evidence to challenge myths, inform prevention and support safer professional and public responses.

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**DELIVERY AREA**

# Communications

**Strengthen IFAS’s profile, reach and influence through clear, accessible, evidence-led and survivor-informed communications.**

IFAS will communicate with confidence and care, ensuring that complex and sensitive issues are explained in ways that are accurate, non-judgemental and useful. Communications will support professional understanding, public awareness, stakeholder engagement and policy influence through media, digital content, professional networks, conferences and partnership activity.

- Strengthen IFAS’s profile, reach and influence by building its visibility and authority as a leading voice on non-fatal strangulation through strategic, evidence-led communications, media engagement and thought leadership.
- Grow and deepen stakeholder and public engagement by using targeted communications, partnerships and an appropriate mix of channels. We will engage professional and policy audiences while broadening our reach to younger and more diverse audiences and communities beyond our existing networks.
- Translate evidence and survivor expertise into accessible, impactful communications. We will communicate IFAS research, clinical expertise and survivor-informed work clearly, safely and accessibly to strengthen awareness, understanding, policy and practice.
- Develop audience-specific resources that turn clinical, forensic, research and survivor-informed knowledge into clear, practical messages for professionals, policymakers, survivors and the public.

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**FOUNDATION**

## Operational Oversight

**We will ensure IFAS has the governance, systems, resources and internal clarity needed to deliver its strategy safely, sustainably and effectively.**

IFAS sits within the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM) and reports to the UK Home Office.

Strong operational oversight will enable IFAS to make the best use of its expertise, protect staff wellbeing, manage risk and demonstrate impact. Operational decisions will support IFAS's values and strategic purpose while recognising the realities of operating as a small specialist organisation.

- Maintain clear governance, accountability and decision-making structures.
- Strengthen financial planning, funding readiness and risk management.
- Support staff wellbeing, role clarity, supervision and reflective practice.
- Use monitoring, evaluation and impact evidence to guide priorities and demonstrate value.

### Implementation and accountability

IFAS will translate this strategy into delivery plans with clear activities, responsibilities, timescales and measures of progress. Progress will be reviewed regularly through governance and management arrangements, informed by evidence, partner feedback and survivor insight. We will adapt our activity where learning, emerging evidence or changes in the wider environment indicate the need for a different approach.

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## OUTCOME

# Strangulation is recognised, prevented and responded to effectively wherever it occurs.

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