

Don't Suffer in Silence - REPORT IT

REPORT - 6 Golden Rules

Report it as early as possible to the police and tell others what is happening. Tell your family, friends, neighbours, workplace, children's nursery and school.

Ensure you get good practical advice - call Paladin.

Proactive evidence collection - keep ALL the evidence, including messages and emails.

Overview of what is happening - keep a diary - including time, date and details and how it made you feel, available on Paladin website.

Risk Checklist - complete the S-DASH 12 screening questions: paladinservice.co.uk/advice-for-victims

Trust your instinct. Always. Never make contact with the stalker. If you are frightened or worried, call the police and/or go to a safe place.

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 999

Unwanted communications may include calls, letters, emails, text messages, sending or leaving unsolicited materials/gifts, graffiti, and/or messages on social networking sites.

Unwanted intrusions include following, waiting for, spying on, approaching, accosting and going to a person's home. In addition to unwanted communication and intrusion, the stalker may engage in a number of associated behaviours including cancelling goods, making vexatious complaints, cyberstalking, threats, property damage or violence.

Useful Contacts and Organisations

Paladin has a unique team of accredited Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) supporting high risk victims of stalking from England and Wales. The ISAC's ensure that a co-ordinated community response is developed locally to keep victims and their children safe. Paladin also has a specialist Young Persons ISAC supporting young people aged 16 to 25 funded by the Tudor Trust.

Each police service in England and Wales now has a single point of contact (SPOC) for stalking cases. Find out who yours is and contact them if you need further advice.

Refer/signpost victims to Paladin. Contact us, we may be able to assist. We can also help with training, policy and practice. There's lots of information on our website.

You can also refer to NPCC and CPS guidance.

Paladin
www.paladinservice.co.uk

College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice
www.app.college.police.uk

CPS Guidance
www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/legal_guidance/stalking-protocol.pdf

CPS Guidance on Cases involving Social Media
www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a-to-c/communications_sent_via_social_media

If you or the victim require further practical advice contact:


Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service


(T): 0203 866 4107

(E): info@paladinservice.co.uk

(W): www.paladinservice.co.uk

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National Stalking Advocacy Service



STALKING ADVICE LEAFLET FOR ALL AGENCIES

- Stalking became a criminal offence in 2012.
- Stalking is different from harassment as it involves fixated and obsessive behaviour.
- Stalking includes repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and/or contacts on another in a manner that could be expected to cause distress and/or fear in any reasonable person.

Stalking was present in 94% of 358 cases of homicides assessed by Gloucestershire University, 2017.

Legislation:

Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, when a course of conduct amounting to stalking is identified use:

Section 2A Offence - Stalking

Section 4A Offence - Stalking involving fear of violence or serious alarm or distress

Course of Conduct - Section 7 defines a course of conduct as being on at least two occasions.

Taken in isolation, behaviours might seem unremarkable. With repetition they take on a more sinister meaning.

Paladin's definition of stalking:

'A pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress.'

What do we know about stalking?

According to the Crime Survey of England and Wales (2011/2) 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experienced stalking. We also know from research that:

- On average victims will suffer 100 incidents before they report it.
- Many victims will experience multiple, repeated stalking behaviours before they report this to the police.
- The majority of stalkers are known to their victims either as ex-partners or acquaintances, but some people are stalked by someone they do not know.
- Around 80% of stalkers are male. However, stalkers and their victims can be of any gender.
- Stalkers come from all backgrounds and do not form one 'type'. Stalkers are not homogeneous and the motivation for stalking can vary.
- Understanding the motivation is important when assessing the risks the stalker may pose.
- Stalking is life changing. It is frequently injurious to victims' psychological, physical and social functioning, irrespective of whether they are physically assaulted.

On average 21 people connected to the victim will be contacted by the stalker, therefore secondary victims will be identified. Stalkers will involve third parties for a number of reasons including to upset the victim, obtain information, remove perceived obstacles and/or punish those perceived as helping or shielding the victim.

The ability of a stalker to pose as another person, both on and off-line should never be underestimated. Paladin finds that in many cases stalkers will set up fake social networking and online accounts. When sexual abuse imagery is identified, professional curiosity should dictate further investigation into whether stalking is also present.

Stalking and Mental Illness

Currently stalkers do not routinely get assessed once they come into contact with the criminal justice system. If there is no appropriate mental health intervention the management of their behaviours cannot begin which is detrimental, costly and dangerous to those they stalk, as well as to themselves.

If someone says they are being stalked:

DO

- Believe them and take them seriously.
- Ensure you listen carefully and record everything you are told.
- Record the extent of the victim's perception of risk of harm.
- Take disclosures of threats to kill seriously.
- If there has been a relationship ask the victim to complete a DASH risk assessment and 12 stalking screening questions. If there has not been a relationship ask them to complete the 12 questions.
- Ask are there any protective orders i.e. restraining order in place.
- Ensure the victims keep a diary of all incidents and retain all messages and gifts.
- Seek specialist advice from Paladin.
- Seek advice from your local police force. Each force has a Single Point of Contact or other units if required such as the Public Protection Unit.
- Consider is a stalking protection order appropriate

DO NOT

- Do not think it any less serious if there has been no physical violence.
- Do not send the person away believing that it is not serious or that they are 'lucky' to receive the attention.
- Do not tell them to change their phone number. This will not stop the behaviour and they will find another means of contact.
- Do not mediate or suggest the victim talk/meet with the stalker to resolve issues.

Risk Considerations

The context and detail of the behaviours are crucial to understanding the risks posed by a stalker. **Research shows that those who are at highest risk of assault are ex-intimates who have been threatened, where the stalking has continued for more than two weeks.** Many stalkers will devote hours each day to their stalking campaign and are capable of stalking their victims for many years. Stalking rarely takes place at a distance.

Research shows that those stalkers who visit the victim's home, workplace, or other places frequented by the victim more than three times in a week are those who are most likely to attack. Stalkers frequently threaten their victims, either directly or indirectly. **1 in 2 of domestic stalkers, when they make a threat, will act on it. 1 in 10 of non intimates will act.** Threats have been found to be even stronger predictors in cases of very serious violence. Use the full DASH Risk Assessment (dashchecklist.co.uk) in ex-intimate cases and the further 12 questions (S-DASH) which give an indication of the victim(s) risk of future psychological and physical harm. The further 12 questions (S-DASH) should be used with ALL cases.

If the answer is "yes" to any of these 12 questions, report the matter to the police and call Paladin for further support and practical advice.

1. Is the victim frightened?
2. Is there a history of previous domestic abuse or stalking/harassment?
3. Has the stalker vandalised or destroyed property?
4. Have they turned up unannounced more than three times a week?
5. Have they followed the victim or loitered near their home or workplace?
6. Have they made threats or physical or sexual abuse?
7. Have they stalked any third party since the stalking/harassment began?
8. Have they acted violently to anyone else during the stalking incident?
9. Have they engaged other people to help them?
10. Have they had any problems in the past with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life?
11. Have they threatened or attempted suicide? Do they have nothing to lose? Consider finality
12. Have they ever been in trouble with the police or do they have a criminal history?