****

**Briefing note: National Stalking Awareness Week 2018**

**What is National Stalking Awareness Week?**

National Stalking Awareness Week will run from Monday 16h April until Friday 20th April, with partners across the UK holding events to raise awareness of stalking and the effect it can have on people. National Stalking Awareness Week is spearheaded by the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](https://www.suzylamplugh.org/nsaw), a national organisation which forms part of the National Stalking Consortium. This year the focus is on helping police and support workers recognise the signs of stalking at an early stage, and focusing on the motives of the stalker, not just on specific incidents or behaviour.

**What is Stalking?**

Stalking is unwanted, persistent or obsessive attention by an individual or group towards another person causing fear, harassment, anxiety, emotional or psychological distress to the victim. Stalking behaviours are related to harassment and intimidation and may include nuisance telephone calls, sending excessive emails, regularly sending gifts, following the person or spying on them and death threats. A perpetrator of stalking may be a partner or ex-partner, a work colleague or someone unknown to the victim.

The effect of such behaviour is to curtail a victim's freedom, leaving them feeling that they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct might appear innocent (if it were to be taken in isolation), but when carried out repeatedly so as to amount to a course of conduct, it may then cause significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim.

**The Law**

As of 25th November 2012 amendments to the Protection from Harassment Act have been made that makes stalking a specific offence in England and Wales for the first time. The amendments were made under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The amendments can only be used to deal with stalking incidents that occur after 25th November 2012; stalking prior to this will still be dealt with as ‘harassment’ under sections 2 and 4 of the Protection from Harassment Act.

* There are two new amendments; section 2A stalking and section 4A stalking. To prove a section 2A it needs to be shown that a perpetrator pursued a course of conduct which amounts to harassment and that the particular harassment can be described as stalking behaviour.  Stalking is not legally defined but the amendments include a list of example behaviours which are following, contacting/attempting to contact, publishing statements or material about the victim, monitoring the victim (including online), loitering in a public or private place, interfering with property, watching or spying. This is a non exhaustive list which means that behaviour which is not described above may also be seen as stalking. A course of conduct is 2 or more incidents.
* Section 4A is stalking involving fear of violence or serious alarm of distress. Again serious alarm and distress is not defined but can include behaviour which causes the victim to suffer emotional or psychological trauma or have to change the way they live their life.
* If at the trial of a 4A offence the jury find the offender not guilty, they may still be able to find the person guilty of an offence under 2A.
* Sections 2 and 4 of the Protection from Harassment Act can also still be used to prosecute harassment. Harassment is described in the Act as a course of conduct which (a) amounts to harassment of another and, (b) which they know or ought to know amounts to harassment of another. Sections 2 and 2A are summary only offences and there is a maximum prison sentence of 6 months. Sections 4 and 4A are either way offences with a maximum prison sentence of 5 years[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Impact**

* According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), 20% of women and 9.7% of men aged 16-59 report experiencing stalking (by any person, including a partner or family member) since the age of 16 and 9.4% of women and 2.4% of men experienced stalking in the last year. [[2]](#footnote-2)
* Victims do not tend to report to the police until the 100th Incident.
* 50% of victims have curtailed or stopped work due to stalking.
* 75% of domestic violence stalkers will turn up at the workplace.
* 1 in 2 domestic stalkers, if they make a threat, will act on it.
* 1 in 10 stalkers, who had no prior relationship, if they make a threat will act on it[[3]](#footnote-3).

**Help and Support:** For advice on keeping safe visit <http://paladinservice.co.uk/advice-for-victims/>.

**The Police:** Call 999 if you or someone else is in immediate danger. You can report stalking by calling 101, online at [www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/report-online/report-a-crime/report-harassment-or-stalking/](http://www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/report-online/report-a-crime/report-harassment-or-stalking/) or in person at [your local police station](https://www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/police-stations/)

**Local services**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Portal**  0300 323 9985  [info@theportal.org.uk](mailto:info@theportal.org.uk)  <http://theportal.org.uk/> | If you’ve been affected by domestic or sexual abuse or violence contact [The Portal](http://theportal.org.uk/) to find out more about the help, advice and support available. The Portal is a partnership of leading Sussex Domestic and Sexual Abuse Charities including [cgl](https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/the-portal-east-sussex" \l "tab_1), which also offers a range of services in East Sussex. |
| **Veritas Justice**  01273 766 633  [info@veritas-justice.co.uk](mailto:info@veritas-justice.co.uk)  <http://veritas-justice.co.uk/> | Veritas is an Independent Stalking Advice and Advocacy Service based in Sussex.  Veritas provides guidance and information to anybody residing or working in Sussex who is currently or has previously been affected by harassment or stalking. |

**National services**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Suzy Lamplugh Trust**  0808 802 0300  [www.suzylamplugh.org/](http://www.suzylamplugh.org/) | The National Stalking Helpline is a project run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust. The Helpline provides information and guidance to anyone affected by harassment or stalking. |
| **Paladin NSAS**  0207 840 8960  <http://paladinservice.co.uk/> | Paladin was established to assist high risk victims of stalking in England Wales. Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) ensure that high risk victims of stalking are supported and that a coordinated community response is developed locally to keep victims and their children safe |

**Further information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Find out about help and support at [www.safeineastsussex.org.uk](http://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk) |
|  | Follow us on twitter  [www.twitter.com/SaferEastSx](http://www.twitter.com/SaferEastSx) |
|  | Like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SaferEastSussexTeam](http://www.facebook.com/SaferEastSussexTeam) |
|  | Contact us at [safercommunities@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:safercommunities@eastsussex.gov.uk) |

1. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust (2017) *Stalking,* Available at: *https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/anti-stalking* (Accessed: 20th April 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Office for National Statistics (2017) *Stalking : findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales,* Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/stalkingfindingsfromthecrimesurveyforenglandandwales> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Paladin Service (2017) *Key Facts and Figures,* Available at: *http://paladinservice.co.uk/key-facts-and-figures/* (Accessed: 20th April 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)