

PERSONAL SAFETY

Physical Stalking

- Consider carrying a personal alarm.
- Vary your daily routine and take different routes to and from work.
- Know where the nearest safe location is, for instance a police station. But, if there isn't one nearby, you could use a 24 hour supermarket with security guards and CCTV cameras.
- Talk to the police about using CCTV and/or installing a panic button at your home.
- Consider installing an alarm system.
- Ensure all your doors and windows are locked before you leave home or go to sleep.

Cyber Safety

- Get your computer checked for malware and key logging software.
- Change your passwords frequently and don't use the same password for everything.
- Limit the amount of information you share about yourself on social networking sites and check your privacy settings to ensure you are not giving away more information about yourself than you intend to.
- Keep your anti-virus software up to date.
- Report any stalking activity on websites to the administrators. If they won't act, contact the web hosting company.

**NATIONAL
STALKING
HELPLINE**

0808 802 0300

stalkinghelpline.org

**LIVE
LIFE
SAFE**
suzy lamplugh
trust

network for
**SURVIVING
STALKING**



The National Stalking Helpline is run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, registered charity number 802567 and in partnership with Network for Surviving Stalking 1088762 and Protection Against Stalking 1136189. The National Stalking Helpline is freephone including free from most mobiles. Calls to the Helpline are confidential and we do not use recording equipment. For more information please visit our website www.stalkinghelpline.org/confidentiality-policy

Freephone: 0808 802 0300
www.stalkinghelpline.org
advice@stalkinghelpline.org

Open 09:30 to 16:00 weekdays
(except Wednesday 13:00 to 16:00)

The Helplines
Association
Member

Free
from most mobiles

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**ESSENTIAL
INFORMATION
FOR VICTIMS
OF STALKING**

**TAKING
STALKING
SERIOUSLY**



WHAT IS STALKING?

Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviour that causes you to feel distressed or scared. It can be perpetrated by men or women.

Stalking can happen with or without a fear of violence. This means that if you are receiving persistent unwanted contact that is causing you distress but the person has never threatened you, this is still stalking and is not acceptable.

Stalking often has a huge emotional impact on those it affects. It can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety and even post traumatic stress disorder. It can be a psychological as well as a physical crime.

STALKING AND THE LAW

As of 25th November 2012 amendments have been made to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which makes stalking a specific offence. These amendments were made under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

There are now two sections that deal with stalking, 2A and 4A. Section 2A labels stalking as a criminal offence for the first time in English and Welsh Law. Section 4A deals with stalking that has caused fear of violence OR serious distress. Serious distress is behaviour that causes a "substantial adverse effect" on the victim's day to day activity.

Examples of the kind of behaviours that stalking can consist of are provided in the amendments and apply to 2A and 4A. The list includes; following, contacting, publishing material relating to the victim, monitoring, loitering, interfering with property and watching or spying. This list is NOT exhaustive.

Stalking in Scotland is a specific offence under section 39 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing Act 2010. In Northern Ireland stalking is dealt with under the Protection from Harassment Order 1997.

HOW CAN THE LAW HELP?

If you are being stalked, you can complain to the police or apply for an injunction and damages through a civil court.

To get in contact with the police, either go to your local police station, or call the non emergency number and make an appointment. It might help to write down what has happened to you and take that with you as well as any questions you may have so that you don't forget anything you want to include.

If the stalker is arrested, you can talk to the police about whether bail conditions will be imposed. Bail conditions could, for instance, say that the stalker is not to contact you or approach you. If they breach the bail conditions then bail could be revoked and they could be remanded in prison.

If the case is prosecuted in a criminal court the stalker could receive a prison sentence and you could be granted a restraining order.

You can also apply for an injunction against the stalker through a County Court under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 or under the Family Law Act Part IV. An injunction under the Family Law Act is called a Non Molestation Order and you can only get one if you are 'associated' with the perpetrator, for example if you were married or lived together or they were a family member. However, anyone can apply for an injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act.

If the stalker breaches an injunction under either of the above Acts they can be imprisoned by the County Court or prosecuted and imprisoned by a criminal court.

There are differences in the law in Scotland and we produce a separate leaflet containing information for people who reside in Scotland.

If you are ever in immediate danger call the Police on 999

EVIDENCE

It's important to try and gather evidence and document what is happening. Evidence can include phone records, copies of text messages and emails, screenshots of web pages or IM conversations, letters or gifts.

It's also very helpful to keep a diary of all incidents connected to the stalking. You should write about stalking incidents in that diary as soon as they happen or as soon as possible afterwards and include in it details like the time, date, location, what happened, vehicle details and how it made you feel.

When you show your evidence to the police ask that they look at all the incidents together as a course of conduct rather than viewing each incident individually.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Do not engage with your stalker in any way.
- Talk to neighbours, colleagues or your manager about the harassment if you feel comfortable doing so. They may be able to help by collecting further evidence on your behalf or by putting protective measures in place.
- Be aware of how much of your personal information is in the public domain and take steps to protect your data.
- Complete the Stalking Risk Checklist by going to www.stalkinghelpline.org/faq and take it with you if you go to the police.
- Above everything, trust your instincts.
- If you have any questions contact us freephone on **0808 802 0300** or email advice@stalkinghelpline.org