

WORKING WITHOUT 24.04.14 FEAR

**NATIONAL STALKING
AWARENESS DAY
NATIONAL STALKING HELPLINE**

A guide for employers on
dealing with stalking in the workplace



0808 802 0300

National Stalking Helpline

The National Stalking Helpline is managed by Suzy Lamplugh Trust and was set up in partnership with Network for Surviving Stalking and Protection Against Stalking in April 2010. It is the first national helpline in the world to specialise in providing information and guidance to people affected by stalking.

Helpline workers are trained to guide victims of stalking through the options they have available and can provide information on topics ranging from the law to personal safety and gathering evidence. Since the Helpline opened we have spoken to over 8,000 people who have been affected by stalking. These individuals have experienced many different types of behaviour for varying amounts of time, from under a month to over 20 years.

The aim of this document

This document has been written by the National Stalking Helpline as part of our 2014 National Stalking Awareness Day campaign, 'Working Without Fear'. It has been produced for the benefit of both employers and employees to raise awareness of how stalking can impact on the workplace and what steps can be taken to ensure that employees who disclose stalking feel supported by their workplace. Research has found that victims of stalking can suffer from reduced productivity, absenteeism or tension arising from their situation with co-workers, adding to their distress and isolation (Mullen *et al* 2006: 177; Stalking Risk Profile 2011). Providing employees with support is therefore not only beneficial to them personally, but can also help them continue to be effective at work.



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What is stalking?

Stalking is repeated, unwanted contact from one person to another which causes the victim to feel distressed or fearful. It differs from harassment in that a perpetrator of stalking will have an obsession with or fixation on the individual(s) they are targeting.

Stalking is a specific criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland and stalking behaviour is against the law in Northern Ireland. The following legislation applies in the following areas:

- England and Wales – [Protection from Harassment Act 1997, amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)
- Scotland – [Section 39 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#)
- Northern Ireland – [Protection from Harassment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#)

Stalking is classified by the Home Office as a crime against women and girls; other crimes that sit in this category includes honour based violence, sexual assault and domestic abuse. These crimes disproportionately affect women however this does not mean that there are not male victims of stalking or that they do not also require appropriate support.

The largest category of stalking victims are those who are stalked by an ex partner. 42% of people who contact the Helpline are being stalked by someone they have had an intimate relationship with. However, both stalking and domestic



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abuse have unique characteristics and require specialist support. A list of support organisations for stalking and domestic abuse can be found at the end of this document.

Stalking in the workplace

Stalking can take place in many forms in the workplace. Some stalkers are colleagues or clients of the victim, others are individuals who are unrelated to the workplace but who make contact with the victim there because of ease of access or to cause them further distress.

Below is a table listing some of the wide-ranging behaviour victims of stalking can experience. Not all victims will experience all of these types of behaviour and they can occur at differing frequencies.

- Nuisance telephone calls
- Being followed
- Death threats
- Making false complaints to employers/police etc.
- Criminal damage
- Blackmail
- Sexual assault
- Sending excessive emails
- Sending gifts or letters
- Monitoring behaviour
- Abuse of and through social networking sites
- Visiting home/place of work
- Physical assault
- Computer hacking



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Stalking Statistics

- In the UK, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men are stalked at some point in their lives (British Crime Survey 2011).
- 77% of people experience 100 incidents or more before contacting the police (Sheridan 2005).
- Of the people that have contacted National Stalking Helpline 79% are female victims and 20% are male victims (1% are a group of individuals being stalked by an obsessive).
- Of the people that have contacted National Stalking Helpline 62% of perpetrators are male and 20% are female.
- Of the people that have contacted National Stalking Helpline 42% of people are being stalked by a previous partner. 90% of people were stalked by someone that they know.



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Why is it important to have a policy to deal with stalking in the workplace?

A stalking policy is important for maintaining a safe environment for all members of staff. It is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 that employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees. A failure to carry out this requirement may expose the employer to litigation.

Research has shown that of those individuals who are not stalked by colleagues, “nearly half of all stalkers will present at their victim’s workplace. Typically, these are cases of the rejected stalker, where the (usually male) ex-lover or spouse harasses his former intimate at her work” (Mullen et al. 2009: 173). This creates risk not only for the victim, but for others who may have to interact with the stalker if they do turn up at the premises. Putting in place an effective policy on stalking will help serve to minimise risk to members of staff and ensure that the stalking behaviour is dealt with appropriately and safely.

Research has also found that 50% of stalking victims have “curtailed or ceased work as a consequence of being stalked” (Mullen *et al* 2006: 177). Those experiencing stalking can display symptoms in line with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression (Mullen *et al* 2009: 276-7). Understandably, this can adversely affect the victim’s ability to perform effectively at work and may result in absenteeism from work as a result of either stress, anxiety or physical injuries. Victims may also require time off work to attend repeated legal



appointments either with solicitors or the police to ensure that the matter can be dealt with as quickly and as effectively as possible.

A stalking policy should therefore include requirements on the support that is offered by the employer to anyone who is being stalked. With the right support in place employees can be encouraged to continue with work while the stalking is ongoing.



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Victims of stalking at work: case studies

Tracey Morgan

Tracey was stalked by a colleague for eight years. He installed listening devices in her sofas, stole items from her home, followed her, stole her keys and copied them to access her property, made silent phone calls, sent unsigned cards and tried to arrange for someone to kill her husband. This had a devastating impact on Tracey's life causing her to move home and end her marriage. Her employer told her "to be mature about it".

Clare Bernal

Clare worked for a department store and briefly dated a security guard who worked there. When the relationship ended he became obsessed with her, following her home, calling her and loitering outside her home. He was arrested and pleaded guilty to harassing Clare. Whilst on bail he purchased a gun which he then used to kill Clare by shooting her four times while she was at work.

Laura Black

Laura Black met her stalker at work and in an attempt to start a relationship with her he began leaving gifts, including letters and home-baked foods, at her desk. Despite her refusals he began to call her every few hours as well as showing up at her aerobics class. He gave false information to the HR department which allowed him to obtain her home telephone number and address. He was dismissed by the company and Laura obtained a restraining order but two years later he returned to the offices and began shooting former colleagues including Laura. He killed seven people and injured four.



Recognising stalking

Stalking can have a hugely detrimental impact on its victims, causing them to feel unsafe wherever they go. This can have a knock-on effect on their physical and psychological wellbeing.

Many of the callers to the National Stalking Helpline are reluctant to disclose what they are experiencing as they fear that others will judge them, be unable to understand what they are going through or be unable to provide them with appropriate, relevant support. It is therefore important that supervisors and managers are aware of signs to note that may identify a victim of stalking.

When someone is being stalked, it is likely that causes for concern to an employer, such as increased absences, arriving late for work, or unexplained poor work performance, will begin to emerge. Changes in a member of staff's productivity may be caused by stalking or domestic abuse and these issues should be explored when deciding how to manage the situation.

Identifying that an employee is experiencing difficulties at an early stage will enable you to offer appropriate support, this will help the victim be able to deal with their situation much more effectively.



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What action can employers take?

A victim is never to blame for stalking but there are some things that may make them more or less vulnerable; and some measures which can be taken to improve their resilience and reduce negative impact.

Any stalking policy should incorporate the following steps:

- If there is concern that an employee is being stalked it is imperative that the subject is raised in a private location and that the senior member of staff asks using non-threatening/indirect questioning, such as *'Could you tell me about your concerns?'* or *'Can you describe the effect that this is having on you?'*

If an employee discloses information about experiencing stalking, their experience must be believed. We know that this is important as many victims are reluctant to share with others what is happening to them through fear of not being believed.

- Employers should listen to the employee and take their disclosure seriously. Do not make comments/judgments regarding the perpetrator's behaviour or the victim's response.
- Employers should respond to a disclosure of stalking by reassuring the employee of confidentiality but highlight the circumstances where confidentiality may be broken and information shared with external agencies.

- Where possible, it is beneficial for a member of staff to be trained in how to handle stalking issues so that employees who disclose can be supported by someone with expertise on the subject. We have listed training providers within the list of sources of support at the end of this document.
- Employers should provide information about specialist stalking and harassment organisations that can offer expert support.
- Employers should offer practical support within the organisation as far as possible and provide ongoing support to ensure the employee's safety and wellbeing are being monitored.
- Employers should ensure that line managers adopt a sensitive and non-judgmental approach when dealing with employees who have experienced stalking and harassment.
- Employers should carry out a risk assessment with the victim and develop a personal safety plan. This should be open to regular reviews. For more information about this, contact Suzy Lamplugh Trust, National Stalking Helpline or Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence.
- A risk assessment should also be carried out for other employees who may also be exposed to harm from the stalker.



- If the stalker is a member of staff and they are prosecuted then appropriate disciplinary action should be taken.



Sources of help

National Stalking Helpline www.stalkinghelpline.org 0808 802 0300
advice@stalkinghelpline.org

An information and guidance line for anyone who is affected by stalking or harassment. The service provides guidance on relevant laws, evidence gathering, personal safety and options that are open to each caller. The Helpline is open Monday-Friday 9:30am-4pm (except Wednesday when the Helpline opens at 1pm).

Suzy Lamplugh Trust www.suzylamplugh.org

Suzy Lamplugh Trust provides advice, information and training about personal safety, enabling people to avoid becoming victims of violence and aggression. They are also able to offer in house and open access courses on personal safety, lone working and stalking.

Stalking organisations

Action Scotland Against Stalking www.scotlandagainststalking.com

Action Scotland Against Stalking was founded by Ann Moulds after she experienced a harrowing stalking ordeal. Ann led the successful campaign for the introduction of stalking legislation in Scotland in 2010. This website provides helpful information for anyone who is being stalked.

Digital Stalking <http://www.digital-stalking.com>

This site provides advice and information about cyberstalking. One of the most helpful and popular documents on this website is called 'Digital Stalking – A Guide to Technology Risks', which provides tips and information about staying safe online. You can access that document at the following link <http://www.digital-stalking.com/victim-advice/digital-stalking-how-to-factsheets/digital-stalking-guidelines-factsheets.html>



Network for Surviving Stalking www.nss.org.uk

NSS is dedicated to supporting victims of stalking. Their website has a lot of useful advice and knowledge. NSS are keen to hear victim's stories and experiences with various agencies or companies so they can raise awareness and campaign for change.

Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service www.paladinservice.co.uk 0207 840 8960

Paladin assists high risk victims throughout England and Wales. A number of Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) ensures high risk victims of stalking are supported and that a co-ordinated community response is developed locally to keep victims and their children safe.

Protection Against Stalking www.protectionagainststalking.org

The goal of Protection Against Stalking is to work with professionals and organisations in partnership to improve the safety of stalking and harassment victims and for perpetrators of abuse to be held to account. Their website contains a lot of useful information and advice.

Domestic Abuse Services

Broken Rainbow www.broken-rainbow.org.uk 0300 999 5428

Broken Rainbow provides advice and support for lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.

Coordinated Against Domestic Abuse <http://www.caada.org.uk/>

CAADA provides practical help to support professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims. The aim is to protect the highest risk victims and their children – those at risk of murder or serious harm.



Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence <http://www.caadv.org.uk/>

CAADV is a leading force in fighting against domestic violence in the UK. They are a group of companies working to raise awareness of the impact of domestic violence in the workplace and provide policies and procedures for member firms and their employees. They also offer training to our members and share our experiences to build a base of best practice reducing the cost of domestic violence.

Men's Advice Line www.mensadviceline.org.uk 0808 8010
327 info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Men's Advice line is a national freephone helpline for male victims of domestic violence and abuse. The Helpline welcomes calls from men in heterosexual or same sex relationships. It also provides advice to frontline workers. Helpline opening times are Monday to Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm.

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

A Freephone 24 Hour a day helpline, run in partnership by Women's Aid and Refuge. It is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) www.ncdv.org.uk 0844 8044 999

NCDV provides a free, fast emergency service to survivors of domestic violence, regardless of race, financial situation, gender or sexual orientation. They work closely with partner agencies and help people apply for an injunction quickly.

Refuge www.refuge.org.uk

Offer a range of services to support women and children experiencing domestic violence.



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Scottish Women's Aid www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk 0131 226 6606

Women's Aid can offer advice and support to anyone experiencing domestic abuse. The national office can provide contact details for your local Women's Aid group.

Welsh Women's Aid www.welshwomensaid.org

WWA is the national umbrella organisation representing local Women's Aid Groups situated throughout Wales. Our member groups provide direct services for women and children who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse.

Women's Aid www.womensaid.org.uk

Women's Aid work to end violence against women and children, supporting over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the country.

Legal information

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) www.citizensadvice.co.uk

A charity that helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice, and by influencing policymakers. They can provide advice about proceedings in the civil courts.

Citizens Advice Scotland www.cas.org.uk

A charity that provides free, confidential, impartial advice about the rights and responsibilities of Scottish citizens.

Sexual Assault

Rape Crisis www.rapecrisis.org.uk 0808 802 9999



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Rape Crisis provides a range of services for women and girls who have been raped or experienced any other form of sexual violence either as adults or children. The national helpline number listed above can also be used by male victims or friends and family of the victim.

Rape Crisis Scotland <http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help/helpline/> 08088 01 03 02

Rape Crisis Scotland offers support and information to female, male and transgender survivors of sexual violence aged 13+ as well as family, friends and workers. Rape Crisis Scotland also offers support to victims of stalking, whether there is an overt sexual element or not.

The Havens www.thehavens.co.uk

The Havens are specialist centres in London for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted in the last 12 months. Their staff are fully trained and hugely experienced. They help men, women, children and young people of all ages. You can use The Havens services without having to report the assault to the police.

Emotional Support

Samaritans www.samaritans.org 08457 90 90 90 jo@samaritans.org

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgmental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

For offenders

National Stalking Clinic www.beh-mht.nhs.uk/nsc

The National Stalking Clinic is a specialist service for the assessment and treatment of stalkers and their victims. It is run by the North London Forensic Service, part of the Barnet Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust. It



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provides a mobile service across the UK to interested parties including the courts, Probation Service, Police, mental health trusts and Social Services.

Respect Phoneline www.respectphoneline.org.uk 0845 112 8609

info@respectphoneline.org.uk

An information and advice line for anyone who is concerned about their violence or abuse towards a partner or ex-partner. Respect also provides advice to frontline workers. Helpline opening times are Monday to Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm

Other

Karma Nirvana www.karmanirvana.org.uk 0800 5999 247

Karma Nirvana provides support to all the victims of honour-based violence and forced marriage. They also run a national helpline that provides support and guidance.

National Offender Management Service Victim Helpline

www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/helpforvictims/ 0845 7585 112

If you are a victim of crime or are related to a victim and have received unwanted contact from a prisoner (by letter or telephone) or are worried about their release from prison, contact the National Offender Management Service Victim Helpline.

Victim Support www.victimsupport.org.uk 0845 30 30 900

A national charity that provides free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, their family, friends and anyone else affected across England and Wales.



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- To include sources of information in our stalking policy that employees who are experiencing stalking can access.
- To assist the employee who is experiencing stalking by keeping their work and personal details out of the public domain.
- _____ will not suggest or encourage mediation between the victim and stalker or ask that the victim talk to the perpetrator.
- If the stalker has a grievance they will be directed to appropriate means of addressing the problem, but _____ will not collude with the inappropriate behaviour or provide means of contact between the victim and the perpetrator.