

STALKING FACT SHEET

Definition

- Stalking is repeated harassment causing fear, alarm or distress (i.e. on at least two occasions). It can include:
 - Waiting at the victim's workplace, home or neighbourhood.
 - Persistent phone calls, text messages, emails, letters or sending of 'gifts'.
 - Contacting people who know the victim; searching public or personal records for information.
 - Persistently watching the victim, using cameras, audio equipment, phone tapping.
 - Manipulative behaviour e.g. threatening to commit suicide in order to coerce the victim to respond.
- As of 25th November 2012, amendments were made to the Protection from Harassment Act to create two new stalking offences in England and Wales: Stalking and Stalking Involving Fear of Violence or Serious Alarm or Distress. Stalking is not legally defined but the amendments include a list of example behaviours; 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 legislation sits alongside the existing offences of harassment in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Key Drivers and Risk Factors

- Stalking is a crime of power and control. Stalkers tend to obsess about their victim. They may make many plans for the future that involve their victim. Stalkers tend to have very weak social skills, see nothing wrong with their behaviour and don't believe they are threatening or intimidating. Most stalkers see their actions simply as attempts to get closer to their target, help them, or to gain their love. They can refuse to believe the victim does not want a relationship with them.
- The risk of stalking victimisation is highest for individuals who are divorced or separated and women are at greater risk than men from stalking. There are strong links between Domestic Abuse and Stalking. Nearly 3 in 4 stalking victims know the offender in some capacity. Women aged 16-19 or 20-24 were more likely to be victims of stalking (7.9% and 7.3% respectively). Women with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of stalking (6.5%) than those without (3.7%).

Local and National Picture

National

- In 2013/14, 4% of women and 3% of men reported having experienced stalking. Of all the measures covered by the Crime Survey England and Wales module, stalking had the largest annual decreases (2013/14 compared to 2012/13) in prevalence for both men (from 6.3% to 2.7%) and for women (from 6.6% to 4.2%).
- Home Office research in 2004 showed that 37% of cases of aggravated stalking (with violence additional to the stalking) against women were by a partner/former partner, 59% by other known persons and 7% by strangers.
- Research by Protection Against Stalking estimated that 14 in every 1,000 persons age 18 or older were victims of stalking in a year. About 46% of stalking victims experienced at least one unwanted contact per week and 11% of victims said they had been stalked for 5 years or more. Approximately 1 in 4 stalking victims reported some form of cyber-stalking such as e-mail (83%) or instant messaging (35%). Electronic monitoring was used to stalk 1 in 13 victims (i.e. GPS monitoring, bugs, phone tapping, video).

Local

- From 25th November 2012 to 30th September 2014, there were eighteen recorded offences with twelve individual victims and nine individual known suspects (one unknown). Eight of these were of Stalking Involving the Fear of Violence.
- Seven of the victims were female and five were male. One of the suspects was female and eight were male. All but one of the victims were over 18 and all suspects were over 18. Six of the suspects were known to the victim, 4 of these were somebody the victim had previously been in a relationship with.

Resources for Professionals

- Joint Protocol on the Appropriate Handling of Stalking Offences: Joint protocol by Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers setting out the principles governing the investigation and prosecution of stalking offences under sections 2A and 4A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and covers all forms of stalking. Available [here](#).
- S-DASH (2009): Risk Identification Checklist For Use in Stalking and Harassment Cases. www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk
- Stalking Advice Leaflet: Advice leaflet for all agencies from Paladin. Available [here](#).
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Helpline: 24 hour helpline offering advice and support for anybody with concerns about a child. 0800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk

Services for Victims

- National Stalking Helpline: Provides information and guidance on the law, how to report stalking, gathering evidence, staying safe and reducing the risk. www.stalkinghelpline.org
- Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service: Assists high risk victims of stalking throughout England and Wales. www.paladinservice.co.uk
- Protection Against Stalking: Campaigns for early and effective risk identification, assessment and management to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators to account. www.protectionagainststalking.org
- Childline 24 hour helpline for young people. 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk
- Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse Services: Provides a specialist Information Line, outreach and accommodation services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. www.gdva.org.uk
- Her Centre: Provides support and advocacy for victims residing in Royal Greenwich. 0203 260 7772 or www.hercentre.org
- Metropolitan Police Service Community Safety Unit: Every London borough has a team of specially trained officers whose task is to investigate crimes of domestic abuse. Available [here](#).
- Victim Support: Provides emotional support and practical information for all victims of crime. 0808 1689 111 or www.victimsupport.org.uk

Further Information

This information has been taken from the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2015-18. For more information contact the Safer Communities Team on 020 8921 8396 or community-safety@royalgreenwich.gov.uk