

STOP Stalking and Harassment

Practical Advice



1 in 6 women and 1 in 12 men
are victims of stalking (ONS, 2013)



Lincolnshire
POLICE

policing with **PRIDE**

Are you at risk of Stalking?

If you answer positively to the following questions you may be at risk of stalking. You may wish to take the checklist and your answers with you if you speak to the police or other agencies.

1. Are you very frightened?
2. Is there previous domestic abuse or stalking/harassment history?
3. Has the stalker vandalised or destroyed your property?
4. Has the stalker turned up unannounced more than three times a week?
5. Has the stalker followed or loitered near your home or workplace?
6. Has the stalker made threats of a physical or sexual violence nature?
7. Has the stalker harassed or stalked any third party since the harassment began?
8. Has the stalker acted violently towards anyone else during the stalking incident?
9. Has the stalker engaged other people to help with their activities?
10. Has the stalker had problems in the past year with drugs, alcohol or mental health?
11. Has the stalker attempted/threatened suicide? (signs of finality and commitment)
12. Has the stalker ever been in trouble with the police or do they have a criminal history?

Are you ...

- Having trouble with an ex-partner?
- Scared of someone who won't leave you alone?
- Being hassled by someone who won't take no for an answer?
- Worried that someone has an obsession with you?
- Frightened someone wants to hurt you?

This is not normal behaviour and could constitute stalking or harassment. This behaviour is a crime and can have devastating effects on a victim's life – it can sometimes escalate to even rape or murder.

People can be stalked by...

- Ex-partner
- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Acquaintance
- Stranger

"The Law"

The Harassment Act of 1997 was passed to help prevent cases of stalking, harassment and other similar unsocial conduct. The Act refers to harassment which can take many forms; stalking is one of the more extreme versions of harassment.

What constitutes harassment and stalking?

Harassment can be described as a series of acts which are intended to, or do cause harassment to another person and can include behaviour that puts a victim in fear of violence. The methods used to cause harassment to another are varied and sometimes involve actions, which do not overtly threaten an individual and can appear routine or harmless and therefore not covered by existing legislation. Other actions used against a victim such as threatening, abusive or obscene phone calls, messages, letters, or language and acts of violence can and should be dealt with by existing criminal legislation.

Stalking was added to the Harassment 1997 Act in November 2012 when two offences of stalking were added to the Act – Section 2A and 4A. Section 2A identifies that Stalking is a criminal offence, and Section 4A deals with stalking that has caused fear of violence of serious distress. Stalking behaviour can also have a substantial adverse effect on a victim's day-to-day activity. Stalking behaviour can also involve following someone down the street or sending them flowers, which can seem harmless, however when this behaviour is unwanted and persistent, it can become intimidating and constitutes stalking.

Advice to Victims

- If you fear you are in immediate danger, call **999**
- If you think you are being subjected to stalking or harassment, report your concerns to police, no matter how trivial it may seem. You can call Lincolnshire Police on **101** or tell us online by visiting the Lincolnshire Police website www.lincs.police.uk



"IF YOU COULD JUST REPEAT
THAT LAST ABUSIVE REMARK...
I DIDN'T QUITE CATCH IT."

Help the police help you

By gathering evidence:

- Keep a record of what happened, where, when, every time you were followed, phoned, got post or e-mail messages etc
- If possible, download onto disk and print out a hard copy of e-mails but keep originals for the police
- If you have a mobile phone, do not tamper with or dispose of the SIM-card as it may contain valuable evidence
- The more details you have regarding the offender the better: how they look or sound, what they wear, the make, model, registration, colour of the car etc
- Make notes in a diary as these may be used later at any court proceedings. Write down information as soon as possible while it is still fresh in your mind. Include dates, times and any details of people who may have witnessed what happened
- Find out if any of your neighbours saw what happened, or details of any other witnesses

- Keep letters and parcels as evidence, even if they contain frightening, distressing or upsetting messages. Do not throw them away, keep them stored safely and in a manner that means you don't have to handle them
- If you recognise the handwriting, you can keep the letter or parcel as evidence without having to open it and read the contents
- Record and retain any telephone conversations if possible
- Make sure you keep any stored messages, including texts and any telephone numbers that you have received on your mobile phone and caller ID units
- Use 1471 on your phone and write down and keep any numbers, even if you did not answer the call
- Try to get a photograph or video evidence of the person harassing you, especially if they are someone who has previously been warned by the police regarding actions against you
- Advise your family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues about what is happening and keep notes of anything they see and hear. They can act as independent witnesses and tell you of anything they may see when you're not there
- Retain envelopes as well as contents
- Do not staple, mark or pin any documents
- Place any foodstuffs in a plastic container and freeze
- If you believe something may provide evidence do not move, clean, tidy or disturb it and prevent any other persons or pets from doing so
- If possible do not enter or disturb any areas where you believe a suspect may have been
- If you see any unidentified liquids or substances do not disturb them, but cover the area with a box and show to police
- Inform police if you think it is a hate crime and/or related to your disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or religion

How you can help yourself

- Take a mobile phone when out and about
- Carry a personal attack alarm and learn how to use it - but do not carry anything that is meant for use as a weapon
- Think about improving your home's security, ask the police or district council for advice
- Try to alter your daily routines, ask friends to go with you whenever possible and always try to let someone know what your plans are and if you have to change them
- When out and about, if you feel insecure, look out for places such as 24-hour petrol stations, shops, police stations or other emergency service establishments where you could go for help
- If you are being harassed at a college or university, think about telling a tutor or department head who might be able to put a stop to it. In-house support groups are available
- At banks, building societies and other cash outlets you may be asked for your mothers maiden name as a security password. This name is available to anyone researching public records. It is okay to use something else

If you know or find out whom is harassing you

- Remember not to confront the person harassing you or even engage them in conversation
- Do not, under any circumstances, agree to meet them to talk about how their constant bothering of you, makes you feel
- Do not respond in any way to calls, letters or conversations. If you ignore the phone nine times then pick it up on the tenth you may send the message that persistence pays. Once they have your attention they may be encouraged to carry on



Avoid being harassed on the Internet

- Always remember you are never totally anonymous on the Internet, use your stranger danger instincts
- Use an on screen nickname that doesn't make it easy to guess your real identity, or even your gender
- Never give out your password, even to someone who claims to be from your Internet company
- Do not give out personal information, such as a photograph of yourself or details of telephone numbers and credit cards, to people you talk to in chat rooms or newsgroups
- Be careful if you answer junk mail
- Log off (leave the "room"), if you are uncomfortable with what is being said in chat channels
- It is safer not to meet people you have chatted to on-line. If you do decide to meet them, take a friend and meet in a public place where you feel safe

If you are harassed on the Internet

If you receive offensive, or threatening emails or messages on screen:

- Do not delete the messages, save them onto a disk or print them out
- Keep all paper and hard copies, together with any other evidence and call the police
- You can contact your Internet Service Provider who may be able to block incoming e-mails from specified addresses
- Consider changing your e-mail address



USEFUL WEBSITES

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.ceop.gov.uk
- www.getnetwise.org

Avoiding unwanted phone calls

If someone makes phone calls that are offensive, abusive, threatening or simply worryingly frequent:

- Just say “hello” when you answer your phone, but do not give your name or number
 - Try to remain calm and not show any emotion, many callers will give up if they don’t think they’re making any impression on you or your feelings
 - Try not to encourage the caller with an emotional response, remember its your phone and you are in control
 - Use an answer machine to “screen out” calls and only talk to the people you want to. Caller ID units are another way of ensuring you know who is calling before you answer the phone
 - Ask a friend to record the outgoing message on your answer machine, for example a mans voice (at the residence of a woman) might throw the caller off balance
 - Make sure any message doesn’t make it clear you’re alone or out,
- use “We’re not free to come to the phone right now” as opposed to “I’m not at home”
- Do not enter into a conversation, simply put the handset down and walk away and ignore it for a few minutes before gently replacing it. You do not have to listen to what the caller says
 - If the caller continues to phone you, don’t say anything when you pick up the handset, a genuine caller will speak first
 - Don’t ever give out any details about yourself or your family unless you are absolutely sure you know and trust the caller
 - Dial 1471 and keep a note of any number that called, when and for how long
 - Contact your telephone provider, the operator will be able to tell you who to talk to regarding blocking numbers etc
 - Decide if you wish to change your number to an ex-directory one

Telephone network providers

The company providing you with your phone network service (e.g. BT, NTL), should be able to offer assistance and advice if you are receiving nuisance calls and in extreme cases can also work with the police to trace calls (making malicious calls is a criminal offence in it's own right and callers can be prosecuted).

Phone providers may have nuisance call advisors who can give simple advice on the most suitable action to take. Contact them directly

BT as one of the largest phone network providers offers a range of services to help if you are receiving nuisance calls.

- **Telephone and Fax Preference Service**, if you do not wish to receive direct marketing phone calls or fax's you can register free of charge to block them
0845 0700 707
www.tpsonline.org.uk

- **BT**
'Choose to Refuse'
 - bar last call answered
 - bar numbers at any time
 - BT Broadband barring calls

Anonymous call rejection

0800 800 150 (landline)

0330 123 4150 (mobiles)

Monday to Friday **8am - 9pm**

Saturday **8am - 8pm**

Sunday **9am - 6pm**

www.bt.co.uk

- **Choose to refuse**, a service that allows you to block calls from specified numbers which may prove useful when you have received nuisance or malicious calls

Other network providers may also be able to offer help and advice.



Harassment and minimising risks to children

Ask children to always tell you or someone about their plans, stress the importance of them doing so.

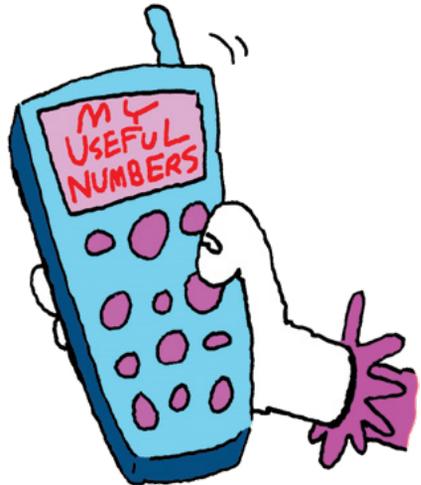
Injunctions

If there is an injunction in force in relation to a child, contact the child's school and notify them about the injunction and who it is against, along with a picture of that person.

The school will then be aware that this person should not contact the child at school, or collect them (unless permission has been granted to do so), but also inform the school of those people who you do allow to pick up the child.

Travel

Make sure a child knows what to do, or who to call if the person they are expecting to collect them does not arrive. This should also be the case if their usual method of transport (such as school bus, taxi etc) does not turn up. If necessary, children should vary their routes to and from schools and out of school activities.



Out and about

Children should be encouraged to stay in small groups, which not only assists general safety but may also provide witnesses if they are subject to harassment. Most youngsters have mobile phones these days, which is a useful tool in an emergency or difficulty encountered by them. Numbers can be stored on the phone of who to call if an emergency does occur.

Make children aware of places they can go to for safety or help if needed such as 24-hour petrol station, shops or emergency service establishments.

End of relationship

When a teenage relationship ends, the rejected party may react badly and start to harass their ex-partner.

If this occurs advise the person being harassed not to respond in any way to any calls, letters, e-mails or conversations as this may encourage that person. Report that contact to the police.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- **HIDEOUT**
www.thehideout.org.uk
- **CHILDLINE**
0800 11 11
www.childline.org.uk
- **NSPCC**
0800 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk
(for adults concerned about a child)
- **THIS IS ABUSE**
www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/

Support groups

Various organisations can offer help and advice on matters of stalking and harassment.

The National Stalking Helpline

Tel: **0808 802 0300**

Web: **www.stalkinghelpline.org**

Practical advice and information to anyone who is currently or previously has been affected by harassment or stalking.

Digital-Trust

Web: **www.digital-trust.org**

Helping people experiencing:

- Digital Abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Trolling

Mankind Initiative

Tel: **01823 334 244**

Web: **www.mankind.org.uk**

Helping men escape domestic abuse.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Tel: **020 7091 0014**

Web: **www.suzylamplugh.org**

This organisation aims to create a safer society and enable everyone to live safer lives. It works for the reduction, and fear of, crime against the person through campaigning for policy and legislative change, research, training and advice.

Victim Support

Tel: **0845 30 30 0900**

Web: **www.victimsupport.org.uk**

Helpline for anyone affected by crime

Paladin NSAS

(National Stalking Advocacy Service)

Tel: **020 3866 4107**

Web: **www.paladinservice.co.uk**

A trauma-informed service established to assist high risk victims of stalking in England and Wales.



01522 524402

www.springlodge.org

**DOMESTIC
ABUSE**
TOGETHER WE CAN STOP IT
IN
LINCOLNSHIRE

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247

www.domesticabuselincolnshire.com

STOP HATE CRIME
0800 138 1625
24 HOUR HELP LINE

www.stophateuk.org



www.digital-trust.org



