

# Welfare Awareness Topic:

## Online Safety: Unwanted Contact and how to deal with it.

*We have all been aware of the importance of keeping safe online over the last year. We know about the importance of protecting our information whilst online and being very careful about the people we interact with. If you would like to know more, please see below for some online safety tips:*

As part of this focus on online safety, its important we cover the issue of unwanted contact/ harassment that can occur when you share details of your life online. This can be very distressing; it can feel threatening and can impact you emotionally/ mentally. It may also feel like as the activity occurs online, you might not have many options in terms of actions to extricate yourself from these attentions.

**You absolutely do have options and should NEVER put up with unwanted contacts and neither should you feel like you should respond to be polite/ minimise any backlash.**

Harassment is a criminal offence, and this includes online harassment. It is prosecutable under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. This was amended this year (Protection of Freedoms Act 2021) to give police more powers to charge perpetrators found guilty of stalking/ harassment.

More info on the [Citizens Advice](#) website, and the [Crown Prosecution Service](#) website.

There is help and support available for you and its important you tell someone.

**If you don't feel ready to speak with the police (999 in an emergency, 101 if a non-emergency), you can speak with Victim Support, here's how they can help:**

*As with all crimes, we can give you both practical help and advice, and the emotional support you need to cope and recover from stalking.*

*Having supported many other people in the same situation, we understand what it's like to be on the receiving end of stalking or harassment, and our staff and volunteers are here to help, for as long as you need them.*

*The most important thing is to recognise that you are being targeted in this way, and take the first steps to deal with it as quickly as you can.*

**Please visit [Victim Support](#) for more information and support about stalking and harassment.**

The important take away from this is that harassment online should be treated in the same way as harassment in person. If it's making you feel uncomfortable, seek help.

As with anything that is causing you distress, you can always contact your BPP Safeguarding Team!