

Welfare Awareness Topic: Stalking and Harassment

Overview – Stalking can be defined as persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered and harassed. It includes behaviour that happens two or more times, directed at or towards you by another person, which causes you to feel alarmed or distressed or to fear that violence might be used against you. **Harassment** is unwanted behaviour which you find offensive or which makes you feel intimidated or humiliated. It can happen on its own or alongside other forms of discrimination.

Stalking: What makes stalking particularly hard to cope with is that it can go on for a long period of time, making you feel constantly anxious and afraid. Sometimes the problem can build up slowly and it can take a while for you to realise you are being targeted. A lot of people think stalking is something that just happens to famous people who are caught up in an ongoing campaign of abuse due to their media exposure. However it can happen to anyone at any point in their lives.

The problem isn't always 'physical' — stalking can affect you psychologically as well. Social media and the internet are often used for stalking and harassment, and 'cyber-stalking' or online threats can be just as intimidating. If you've been affected by cyber-stalking, you can get more information and safety tips from [Get Safe Online](#). If you're experiencing persistent and unwanted attention, and the behaviour is making you feel fearful, harassed or anxious, then you are a victim of stalking.

Harassment: If you are being harassed, it could look like the following: spoken or written words or abuse; offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites; images and graffiti; physical gestures; facial expressions; jokes. You don't need to have previously objected to something for it to be unwanted. Harassment is unlawful discrimination under the **Equality Act 2010** if it's because of, or connected to one of these things: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The Equality Act calls these things **protected characteristics**. Harassment because of one of these characteristics is called **harassment related to a protected characteristic**.

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Visit the government website [here](#) if to report a stalker, Contact the police if you're being stalked - you have a right to feel safe in your home and workplace.

Call 999 if you or someone else is in immediate danger. Contact your [local police](#) if it's not an emergency. You can get advice from the National Stalking Helpline, their telephone is open Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 4pm, (except Wednesday 1pm to 4pm) and you can call on 0808 802 030, or visit [National Stalking Helpline](#).

There is the [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](#) which has help and advice if you are concerned, and you can use the [Victim and Witness Information website](#) to find support in your local area.

[Additional support is available](#) if you're in Scotland. There is also the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) who have a helpline and resources on what to do if you are being stalked. There is also [My Support Space](#), Victim Support's online resource containing an interactive guide on stalking and harassment.

[Galop](#) have support and helplines for anyone in the UK who is LGBT+ and has experienced domestic abuse or hate crime. [The Proud Trust](#) have resources for LGBT+ young people, and advice on staying safe.

[Citizens Advice](#) have a page with more info about Harassment, and who to contact if you are worried.

Support

If you would like to talk to the safeguarding team about anything you have just read, we will listen without judgement and signpost you to support. If you would like to talk to a member of the Safeguarding Team then please get in touch: safeguarding@bpp.com