



BEING STALKED?

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Introduction

Being stalked is a distressing and in some cases life-changing situation. However, it is not very common and the majority of Equity members will never be affected. This guide is for those who are dealing with being stalked. It has been produced following a motion to Equity's 2018 Annual Representative Conference from the East of Scotland General Branch.

Stalking is a criminal offence wherever you live in the UK, and in 2017 the maximum sentence was increased from 5 – 10 years. If you are being stalked or think someone is developing stalker behaviour around you, you should contact the police immediately and the National Stalking Helpline (more on these further on).

It is important to note that

ANYONE OF ANY GENDER IDENTITY CAN BE A VICTIM OF STALKING

IF YOU ARE BEING STALKED YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME

WHAT IS STALKING?

Stalking can occur both in the real /physical world and/or the digital world. The independent charity Victim Support, describes stalking as “persistent and unwanted attention that can make 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.”

What the law says:

Stalking is covered by criminal legislation, the main Acts and Orders being:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (England and Wales) Amended in 2012 to specifically make stalking a criminal offence.
- Protection from Harassment Order 1997 (Northern Ireland)
NB: Before the Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved in January 2017, its Justice Committee conducted a Review of the Need for Stalking Legislation in Northern Ireland with a view to strengthening the legal framework.
- Malicious Communications Act 1998 (England and Wales)
- Criminal Justice and Licensing Act 2010 (Scotland)
- At the time of writing this guide there is a new Stalking Protection Bill (2017-2019) going through the UK Parliament. It is a Private Members' Bill put forward by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP and Baroness Bertin and it seeks to improve safety for stalking victims, or as the Bill's summary puts it, to make provision for 'protecting persons from risks associated with stalking; and for connected purposes'. The text has been agreed and the Bill should become law in 2019.

Stalking is not legally defined but the amendments made in 2012 to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (England and Wales), include a number of examples of behaviours associated with stalking. This list (below) is not an exhaustive one but gives

an indication of the types of behaviour that may be displayed in a stalking offence:

- (a) following a person,
- (b) contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means,
- (c) publishing any statement or other material relating or purporting to relate to a person, or purporting to originate from a person,
- (d) monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication,
- (e) loitering in any place (whether public or private),
- (f) interfering with any property in the possession of a person,
- (g) watching or spying on a person.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A STALKER?

If you are being stalked you should take action as soon as possible to end the stalking. Victims often delay because they feel they may be over-reacting; or that they may have encouraged the stalker in some way; or that they will be blamed for the situation.

Remember you are not to blame for your stalker's behaviour and you are not alone in having to deal with this experience.

Tell someone

1. Contact the police immediately. If you feel you are in immediate danger call 999. If it is not an emergency, call 101 and explain what is happening to you. (See the section Going to the Police for more on this).
2. Contact the National Stalking Helpline for advice and to talk about personal safety planning.
Tel: 0808 802 0300
3. Tell your family, friends and any others who should be aware of the stalker's activities e.g. work colleagues; employer; agent; personal manager; fixer; club secretary; venue security; hotel management; flatmates; neighbours; training institution; your children's nursery or school.

4. If you are being stalked by someone in your workplace (cast, crew, company or venue employee etc.) tell Equity and get advice on what the union can do to support you (see Equity' policy on Stalking (What the Union can do to assist members who are being stalked) at the end of this guide.

Keep records

It is crucial to document everything as this helps the police see the extent of the behaviour particularly as stalking typically goes on over a substantial period of time. By keeping records you can show that an occurrence is not an isolated incident but part of a persistent pattern of stalking behaviour. Keep your records in a separate, secure place i.e. not on your laptop as this could be hacked and records altered.

PERSONAL SECURITY

Police Scotland gives the following advice:

- Report it to the police.
- Do not interact with the person stalking you.
- Take a mobile telephone with you when you go out.
- Have your keys ready for when you reach your front door
- Consider fitting a home alarm system or carrying a personal attack alarm.
- Make your online life more secure by changing your passwords regularly, heighten your privacy settings and do not share personal information with a stranger.
- Activate a PIN or password on your mobile devices.
- Turn off GPS and locating tagging on your mobile devices.
- If you become aware that you are being followed, make your way to a public place, commercial premises (such as a retail shop) or your nearest police station.
- Contact your phone service provider who can put in place additional measures to prevent calls from withheld or unknown numbers.
- If you choose to answer the phone, answer →

- by saying 'hello', not your name or number.
- Make use of answer machines and caller identifications to screen calls. Only talk to the people you want to
 - Try to keep calm and don't show emotion. Certain categories of anonymous caller will give up if they don't get a reaction from you.
 - Do not respond in any way to unwanted calls, letters, or conversations.
 - Keep a diary of incidents and save evidence like text messages, emails and screenshots of any online activity.
 - If you are receiving non-threatening letters or gifts, keep them as evidence of unwanted contact. If any of these items contain frightening or upsetting messages, again do not throw them away and handle them as little as possible. It is important that you pass these items to the police.
 - If you have a smart phone or other suitable device, record unwanted telephone conversations.
 - Do not allow the person to emotionally isolate you. Tell your trusted family and friends about what you are experiencing.

GOING TO THE POLICE

In recent years there has been an increased focus on stalking within police forces. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in its 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales showed a 41% increase in reported stalking and harassment offences. The most recent available Scottish Crime and Justice Survey is for 2016/17 and showed a 5% increase in reporting of harassing or intimidating behaviour (which included stalking).

This may indicate that the structures for reporting such incidents have improved.

Always contact the police if you are being stalked.

- If you feel you are in immediate danger call 999.
- If it is not an emergency, call 101 and explain what is happening.
- Every police force in England and Wales has

a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for stalking victims. You can ask for them if you call 101.

- You can go to your nearest police station and ask to speak to someone in person and/or be put in contact with the SPOC. To find your nearest police station in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, its opening times and other contact details go to www.police.uk and put your postcode into the My Neighbourhood box.
- In addition in Northern Ireland the list of police stations with walk-in enquiry offices can be found at www.psni.police.uk/my-area/station-enquiry-office-provision/
- In Scotland you can find the address of any police station on www.scotland.police.uk/police-stations
- In Scotland you can report stalking online at www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/stalking/default.aspx
- When you make a report to the police they will go through a S-DASH (2009) form with you to help identify and assess the risk. You will be asked to make a statement and include in this the impact (emotional, physical, financial or any other) that the stalking is having on you. Make sure you take a note of the name and contact details of the police officer you deal with.
- If you need advice about or help with going to the police, Victim Support can provide this: England and Wales 08 08 16 89 111 Northern Ireland 028 9024 3133 Scotland 0800 160 1985

STAYING SAFE ONLINE

'Cyberstalking' can include the use of social networking sites, chat rooms and other forums facilitated by technology. The internet can be used by a stalker for a range of nefarious purposes. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) gives the following examples:

- To locate personal information about a victim;
- To communicate with the victim;
- As a means of surveillance of the victim;
- Identity theft such as subscribing the victim to services, purchasing goods and services in their

name;

- Accessing the victim's bank accounts, savings and investments;
- Electronic sabotage such as spamming and sending viruses; or
- Tricking other internet users into harassing or threatening a victim.

Guarding against these behaviours is very important. Start by checking to ensure your devices (computer, tablet, laptop, phone etc.) have not been compromised:

- Review all your privacy and security settings. Make sure you are using all the security and safety options available on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. and you know how to report.

Facebook safety resources

www.facebook.com/help/748040478549007?help_ref=faq_content

Twitter safety and security

<https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security#hacked-account>

Youtube policies and safety

www.youtube.com/yt/about/policies/#reporting-and-enforcement

Instagram safety and privacy

<https://help.instagram.com/285881641526716>

- Regularly change your passwords for your online accounts (email, banking, social media, ticket booking sites, shopping sites etc) and keep them somewhere safe.
- Check your online presence and if there is personal information such as your address, phone number, personal email address, images that identify your home, details about your routine, your workplace, your family etc. contact the sites about removing information.
- Avoid public forums
- Ensure that your computer and mobile devices have updated anti-spyware software installed and turned on
- Ensure your wireless hub/router has security turned on.
- Unless you are using a secure web page, do not

send or receive private information when using public WiFi.

- Limit the personal and financial information you share on or offline.
- Tell friends, family and work colleagues about the risks and make sure they don't post pictures or details that can reveal your location or personal information about you.
- Get into the habit of posting information after the event e.g. instead of "on my way to Equity HQ for a meeting this morning" try "had a great meeting with Equity about new agreement for dance"
- Remember real banks, building societies and other financial institutions never ask for account details by email or phone nor will they ever ask for your PIN or for a whole security number or password.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The National Stalking Helpline

Telephone: 0808 802 0300

www.stalkinghelpline.org

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

Network for Surviving Stalking

www.scaredofsomeone.org/

The charity Network for Surviving Stalking represents UK stalking victims and their families. Established by stalking victim Tracey Morgan 9 years ago, NSS listens to the views of victims and professionals and uses their knowledge and experience to help others. NSS helps run the National Stalking Helpline.

Victim Support

For anyone affected by crime.

England and Wales

Telephone: 08 08 16 89 111

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Northern Ireland

Telephone 028 9024 3133

www.victimsupportni.com/



Scotland

Telephone 0800 160 1985

www.victimssupportsco.org.uk

Paladin

<https://paladinservice.co.uk>

The National Stalking Advocacy Service established in 2013. The service aims to provide strategic advocacy to high risk victims of stalking and establish a network of victims who have endured stalking, providing mutual support and empowerment.

Get Safe Online

www.getsafeonline.org

This is supported by the UK government and the police. It provides practical information on how you can protect yourself, your mobile devices and computers against identity theft, fraud, being spied on and much more.

Protection Against Stalking

www.protectionagainststalking.org

Protection against Stalking works jointly with relevant agencies to increase awareness of stalking and harassment to ensure victims receive all the protection and help they need to rebuild their lives and live free of fear.

Action Against Stalking

www.actionagainststalking.org

Action Against Stalking (AAS), formerly known as Action Scotland Against Stalking, is an umbrella charity which champions the rights of stalking victims in the UK and across the globe.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Telephone: 020 7091 0014

Email info@suzylamplugh.org

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.

The Alice Ruggles Trust

www.alicerugglestrust.org

This charity was founded in 2017 and exists to raise awareness of coercive control and stalking, to ensure that relevant legislation is effective and adhered to, and to bring about lasting improvements in the management of perpetrators and the protection of victims.

UK Therapy Guide

www.uktherapyguide.com/issue-type/stalking/istc1040

This is a directory of qualified therapists who are affiliated to the relevant governing body, fully insured and provide proof of qualifications as well as references. They include some therapists who have experience of working with victims of stalking.

ArtsMinds

www.artsminds.co.uk

This site, established by Equity. BAPAM, Spotlight and the Stage, pulls together into one place sources of support for dealing with mental health issues which can arise from being stalked such as anxiety, panic, depression, sleep problems and includes advice on finding counselling for these.

EQUITY POLICY ON STALKING

If you are being stalked you should take action as soon as possible to end the stalking. Victims often delay because they feel they may be over-reacting;

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Stalking is a set of behaviours that cause significant alarm or distress or fear of violence. It is a criminal matter, covered by criminal legislation (including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; The Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order; the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and the Malicious Communications Act 1988, The Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010), and is not a matter covered by the framework of legislation that applies to workers and employees.

If a Member is being stalked in the workplace they should contact the relevant Industrial Organiser. Contact details available on Equity's website.

The Union can actively help Members as follows:

The workplace in Theatre, Dance and Opera

If an Equity Member is being stalked by a member of the same work force, the Member, on contacting Equity, will be advised to immediately report the matter to the police.

Additionally, the Union will advise the engager (employer, hirer, booker, producer etc.) and tell the Member that they must put in a formal grievance using the engager's formal grievance procedures. Equity would also expect the engager to signpost the Member to any additional support services provided by their HR Department during this formal process and other expert services such as the National Stalking Helpline.

In the interim, and whilst the formal grievance is being investigated, the Union will expect the alleged stalker to be immediately suspended from work and/or the engager will have risk assessed and, in consultation with the Member and Equity, put in place all of the actions possible to safeguard

the Member entering or leaving the workplace. It is expected that the engager will advise the alleged stalker that no communications should take place with the Member, and that if any communication takes place using work facilities this will be deemed gross misconduct.

If other interim arrangements are put in place to prevent contact, the Union would expect that any breach of any interim arrangements would result in the immediate expulsion of the alleged stalker. If the engager does not suspend during the investigation, then arrangements would need to be put in place to prevent any contact on stage or backstage or in other parts of the building, including the stage door and provide chaperones etc. If a grievance is brought against a Member they can contact the Union for advice.

The workplace in Film and Recorded Media

The same procedure would apply, modified by practical arrangements that apply to Film and TV sets e.g. shared transport, pick-ups and drop-offs, set security, isolated locations, varying amount of time on set etc.

The workplace in clubs and other venues

The Union would advise the member to immediately report the matter to the police and provide them with information as to any other relevant support services such as the National Stalking Helpline.

The Member would be advised to alert the Club Secretary and club security staff of a possible stalker who could be present in the audience. The member would be advised to locate the best route to the venue, avoiding quiet backstreets and to park their vehicle (if not using public transport) in a well-lit area.

The member would be advised to consider taking a companion to the booking if possible.

Stalker outside of the same workforce / workplace

The Member would first be signposted to both the police and relevant support services such as the National Stalking Helpline. →

If the Member gives permission, the Union would ensure that the engager is aware that a member of their workforce is potentially at risk and, in consultation with the Member, ensure that as many practical steps as possible are taken by the engager to ensure the Member's safety in areas that may be publicly accessed, such as the auditorium, backstage areas, stage door area, studios' entrances and exits and at events that the Member has to attend such as film premieres or awards ceremonies.

At Equity branch meetings

Between Members of Equity branches, Union staff can signpost the person affected to the relevant support services and will encourage the Member to report the matter to the police. The Union can assist in providing support to the member, branch chair and branch secretary to think about practical arrangements that could be made. The Union is unable to oversee branch member meetings.

A Member being stalked away from the workplace, including working from home

If a Member contacts our Harassment and Bullying Reporting Line they will be advised to report the matter to the police and will be signposted to relevant support services.

Please note

Equity is unable to report the alleged stalker to the police or instigate criminal proceedings on a Member's behalf. This must be done by the Member themselves.

Helplines:

Members can contact Equity's Bullying and Harassment Helpline on 020 7670 0268 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 5.30pm), or email harassment@equity.org.uk.

The National Stalking Helpline is the key expert service and operates a telephone helpline: 0808 802 0300 The Helpline is open 09:30 to 16:00 weekdays except for Wednesdays when it is open 13:00 to 16:00. The Helpline is not open on Bank Holidays.



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