

Six Golden Rules if you are being stalked: REPORT

1. **REPORT IT AND TELL OTHERS** – report it to the police and ensure other people know about what is happening including your family, friends, neighbours, workplace, children’s nursery/school.

2. **ENSURE YOU GET GOOD PRACTICAL ADVICE** -
Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service 0207 8408960
www.paladinservice.co.uk

3. **PROACTIVE EVIDENCE COLLECTION** – ensure you keep all messages/gifts preserving all the evidence. You can also film or video the stalker to collect evidence and if followed in a car drive to an area with lots of CCTV for example.

4. **OVERVIEW OF WHAT’S HAPPENING- KEEP A DIARY**
- log what is happening including time, date and details of what happened.

5. **RISK CHECKLIST - COMPLETE S-DASH, 11 QUESTION CHECKLIST** If you think you are at risk complete stalking screening checklist <http://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/index.php?page=vs-dash-for-use-in-stalking-cases-by-victims>

6. **TRUST YOUR INSTINCT AND NEVER MAKE CONTACT WITH YOUR STALKER** – always trust your instinct and if you are frightened or worried call the police or go to safe place. Ensure you do not contact or respond to the stalker in any other way.

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National Stalking Advocacy Service



Useful contacts and organisations

Gloucestershire Police

To report crime of stalking and seek advice from police stalking dedicated officer
Emergency phone: 999
Non-emergency phone: 101

National Stalking Helpline

For advice and support. The helpline will operate a triage service for local support and make referrals
Phone: 0808 802 0300
Website: www.stalkinghelpline.org
Email: advice@stalkinghelpline.org

Victim Support Gloucestershire

For referral to support for victims of non-domestic abuse related stalking at standard or medium risk.
Email: Referralgloucester@victimsupport.org.uk
Local victim care team: 0808 281 0112
Out of hours Support line: 08 08 16 89 111

Gloucestershire Stalking Advocacy Service (GSAS)

For advice and referral to Independent Stalking Advocacy Case Worker (ISAC) for high risk cases not linked to domestic abuse
Email: isac@splitz.org
Professionals line: 01452 726567/ 07378414261

Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS)

For advice, referral and IDVA service for stalking cases linked to domestic abuse
Website: www.gdass.org.uk
Email: support@gdass.org.uk
Helpdesk line: 0845 602 9035
Professionals line: 01452 726561

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National Stalking Advocacy Service
For advice and referral.
Phone line: 020 3866 4107
Email: info@paladinservice.co.uk
Website: www.paladinservice.co.uk/

Formal guidance on identifying and responding to stalking is available at www.glostakeastand.com (search under section for professionals)

This guidance provides greater detail on safety planning with victims, and the process for responding to high risk cases.

Stalking and harassment advice leaflet

Stalking became a criminal offence on November 25th 2012. It includes repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and/or contacts on another in a manner that could be expected to cause distress and/or fear in any reasonable person.

For professionals

Stalking is one of the most frequently experienced forms of abuse and can terrify its victims and escalate to rape and murder. It is often misinterpreted and misunderstood to be romantic and complimentary to its victims, but stalking is about fixation and obsession. Stalking is a serious crime, and can destroy the lives of those victimised; it therefore needs to be treated with the seriousness that it deserves in order to better protect victims and address perpetrators behaviour.

Stalking is different to harassment as it relates to fixation and obsession rather than nuisance behaviour.

In order to define stalking more formally, Gloucestershire has adopted the following definition of stalking to support professionals understanding;

“A pattern of unwanted fixated and obsessive behaviour involving the intrusive following, contacting or monitoring of the victim causing fear of violence and serious alarm or distress”

People are most likely to be stalked by an ex-partner, but are also stalked by colleagues, acquaintances, friends, family or even strangers.

The Law

Under the Protection from Harassment Act (PHA) 1997, (amended by Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) it is necessary to prove a course of conduct amounting to harassment (Section 2) or stalking (Section 2a) or fear of violence (Section 4) or stalking (Section 4a) which causes serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on the victim's usual day-to-day activities' which the perpetrator knows or ought to know amounts to harassment or stalking or fear of violence.

A course of conduct is conduct that occurs on at least two occasions. Most stalking cases should be arrested and charged at Section 4a. It also has a power of entry to perpetrator address. Section 2a allows for a warrant to search the perpetrator's home address.

Types of stalking behaviour

Taken in isolation behaviours might seem unremarkable. But in the particular circumstance and with repetition, they take on a more sinister meaning.

Unwanted communications may include telephone calls, letters, e-mails, faxes, sms text messages, sending or leaving unsolicited materials/gifts, graffiti, and/or messages on social networking sites.

Unwanted intrusions include following, waiting for, spying on, approaching, accosting and going to a person's home. In addition to unwanted communication and intrusion, the stalker may engage in a number of associated behaviours including ordering or cancelling goods/services, making vexatious complaints (to legitimate bodies), cyberstalking (use of the internet to facilitate the behaviour), threats, property damage and violence.

What to do if someone tells you that they are being stalked:

DO

- Believe them and take them seriously.
- Ensure you listen carefully and record everything you are told.
- Record the extent of the victim's perception of risk of harm.
- Take disclosures of threats to kill seriously.
- If there has been a relationship ask the victim to complete a DASH risk assessment and 11 stalking screening questions.
- If there has not been a relationship ask the victim to complete the 11 risk screening questions.
- Ask if there is a restraining order.
- Ensure the victims keep a diary of all stalking incidents, retain all messages, gifts etc.
- Seek specialist advice from your local police force. Each force has a Single Point of Contact or other units if required such as the Public Protection Unit.
- Tell the victim to call the National Stalking Helpline

DO NOT

- Think it any less serious if there has been no physical violence.
- Send the person away believing that it is not a serious or say that they are 'lucky' to receive this level of attention.
- Tell them to change their phone number. This will not stop the behaviour – they will find another means of contact.
- Mediate or suggest that the victim talk/meet with the stalker to resolve issues.

Risk Considerations

The context and detail of the behaviours are crucial to understanding the risks posed by a stalker. Stalking can be a very high risk indicator of serious harm to the victim.

Ensure you complete the DASH risk assessment and pay particular attention to the 11 additional questions on stalking:

1. Are you very frightened?
2. Is there previous domestic abuse or harassment history?
3. Have they vandalised or destroyed property?
4. Have they turned up unannounced more than three times a week?
5. Have they followed you or loitered near their home or workplace?
6. Have they made threats of physical or sexual violence?
7. Have they harassed any third party since the harassment began?
8. Have they acted violently to anyone else during the stalking incident?
9. Have they engaged other people to help him/her?
10. Have they had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life?
11. Have they ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history for violence or anything else?