

Raising awareness, challenging myths - Somerset supports nationwide stalking campaign

Somerset is supporting this year's national campaign for Stalking Awareness Week, 21 – 25 April, aimed at raising awareness about stalking, challenging common myths, and providing vital information to support those affected.

The initiative, which is backed by many organisations across the country, seeks to highlight the realities of stalking, offering data-driven insights and practical advice for recognising and responding to this serious crime.

Recent figures from the [Crime Survey for England and Wales reveal](#) that an estimated 1.5 million adults were victims of stalking in the twelve months ending March 2021, with women disproportionately affected.

Despite these alarming statistics, misconceptions about stalking remain widespread, often hindering effective intervention and support for those targeted.

Key myths debunked

The campaign tackles five common myths about stalking:

- **Stalking is rare** – In reality, one in five women and one in ten men will experience stalking in their lifetime.
- **Stalking only happens to celebrities** – Most victims are everyday people, not public figures.
- **Stalking is just persistent pursuit** – It encompasses a range of behaviours, including surveillance, harassment, and online abuse.
- **Stalking is a crime of passion** – It is motivated by control and intimidation, not love or infatuation.
- **Stalking is a victimless crime** – Victims often suffer severe psychological impacts, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
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Support services and resources

The campaign highlights the support available for those experiencing stalking, including:

- [National Stalking Helpline](#): 0808 802 0300
- [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](#): 020 3866 4107
- [Somerset Domestic Abuse](#): 0800 69 49 999

Victims are urged to report incidents online or by calling 101, or 999 in emergencies.

[Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts](#), Lead Executive Member for Communities at Somerset Council, said: "Stalking is a pervasive issue that thrives on myths and misinformation. By supporting this national campaign and dispelling these myths, we hope to empower both survivors and their support networks. Our message is clear: stalking is never the victim's fault, and help is available."

Call to Action

The campaign encourages the public to learn more about stalking and access support by visiting [Understanding stalking – beyond the myths](#) or following the hashtag #SomersetStalkingAwareness on social media.

ENDS

Meta description: Somerset supports a national campaign to raise awareness about stalking, dispel common myths, and provide vital resources for survivors. Learn about the impact of stalking and the support available in Somerset.

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Notes to Editors:

- The campaign is part of ongoing efforts to improve safety and support for people experiencing stalking and domestic abuse across the UK.