

Understanding stalking - beyond the myths

Stalking is not just about persistent pursuit or romantic obsession, as often portrayed in the media. It involves a pattern of fixated, obsessive, and unwanted behaviour that can cause fear, distress, or alarm to the person targeted. This can include repeated messages, surveillance, threats, or even online harassment.

According to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#), around 1.5 million adults experienced stalking in the year ending March 2021 ([Office for National Statistics, 2021](#)).

Alarming, many cases go unreported due to fear, confusion, or a belief that the behaviour isn't serious enough to involve the police.

The impact on people experiencing stalking

The psychological toll of stalking can be profound. Anxiety, depression, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are commonly reported. Many people feel forced to change their daily routines, move home, or even quit their jobs to escape their stalkers.

The [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#)'s research highlights how the lasting fear and trauma caused by stalking can severely impact a person's quality of life ([Suzy Lamplugh Trust, 2020](#)). It is vital to recognise that stalking is not just a nuisance—it's a dangerous crime with potentially devastating consequences.

Legal protection and support services

In the UK, stalking is a criminal offence under the [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#), with amendments made in 2012 to strengthen. Victims have the right to report stalking to the police and seek protection orders. However, navigating the legal system can be daunting without the right support.

Specialist organisations like the [National Stalking Helpline](#) and [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](#) offer confidential advice, safety planning, and advocacy to help people understand their options and pursue legal action if needed.

For those experiencing stalking from a current or former partner or family member, additional support is available through [Somerset Domestic Abuse services](#), which provide a range of resources to help individuals stay safe and rebuild their lives.

Taking action - what you can Do

If you believe you are being stalked:

- **Trust your instincts:** If you feel scared or uncomfortable, do not dismiss it.
- **Keep records:** Save messages, take notes of incidents, and consider using a stalking log to document behaviours.

- **Reach out for support:** Contact specialist services for advice and safety planning.
- **Report to the police:** Stalking is a crime—report incidents to the police and request a risk assessment.

For immediate threats, always dial 999. For non-emergency support, you can contact:

- [National Stalking Helpline](tel:08088020300): 0808 802 0300
- [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](tel:02038664107): 020 3866 4107
- [Somerset Domestic Abuse](tel:08006949999): 0800 69 49 999

Raising awareness - how you can help

As part of National Stalking Awareness Week this April, we are calling on everyone to help spread the message that support is available. Sharing accurate information, challenging myths, and encouraging open conversations about stalking can make a real difference.

Follow us on social media, share our posts, and use the hashtags:

#StalkingAwareness2025 #YouAreNotAlone #BreakTheSilence
#SomersetStalkingAwareness

Together, we can build a safer, more informed community where those experiencing stalking feel empowered to seek help.

Help and support

If you need support or advice, don't hesitate to reach out to the services mentioned above. Remember, you are not alone—help is available.

Sources:

- [Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics](#), 2021.
- [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#), 2020.
- [Protection from Harassment Act 1997, UK Government](#), 2012.
- [National Stalking Helpline](#), 2024.
- [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](#), 2024.
- [Somerset Domestic Abuse](#), 2024.

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Meta description: Learn about stalking beyond the myths, its impact on those affected, legal protections, and available support services. Discover how you can take action, raise awareness, and access help if you or someone you know is experiencing stalking.

Keyword phrases: stalking awareness, impact of stalking, stalking victims, stalking support services, UK stalking laws, legal protection from stalking, National Stalking Helpline, Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service, Somerset Domestic Abuse, stalking safety planning, reporting stalking to police, stalking myths, stalking prevention, National Stalking Awareness Week, how to report stalking, support for stalking victims, stalking resources, emotional toll of stalking, stalking and PTSD, stalking resources UK, dealing with stalking