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National Stalking Advocacy Service

www.paladinservice.co.uk

**AVA Seminar on Coercive Control: Using the Legislation
28th January 2016**

**“How coercive control is an integral part of stalking, both on and offline and how
advocates can support victims”**

Tracey - Interim COO Paladin NSAS

Paladin

- The only National Stalking Advocacy Service for high risk victims.
- Paladin was launched in 2013 following the success of our CEO Laura Richards and others campaigning for a change in the law in regards to stalking.
- 2 ISACs, 2 Senior ISAC's, 1 Office Manager, COO / Team Leader, CEO, Board.
- Over 900 cases supported to date with nearly 500 referrals from Feb 2015 to Jan 2016.
- The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign by the Sara Charlton Foundation, Women's Aid and Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service was spearheaded to change the law to better protect women who experience domestic violence.

Paladin Nation Stalking Advocacy Service

Paladin – someone who fights for a cause.

“champion, fighter, hero, defender, guardian, protector”

Key Objectives:

- Strategic advocacy for high risk victims.
- Scrutinise new law.
- Support network for victims.
- Training.
- Lobbying and campaigning.
- Raise awareness of dangers and risks.

My Experience

- Worked for Paladin for 6 months. Current post Interim COO prior to this Senior ISAC successfully completing the Accredited Independent Stalking Advocacy Casework Training in November 2015.
- Previously worked as a Women's Safety Officer for 7 years with London Probation / London CRC / RISE.
- Experience of supporting women surviving or escaping from domestic abuse and stalking.
- Noted the strong correlation between coercive control and stalking.

Stalking and Coercive Control

- Stalking is the most dramatic form of tracking and the most common behavioural component of coercive control next to assault (Stark, 2007). DV stalkers are most likely to be violent. 1 in 2 stalkers will make a threat and then act on it (Mckenzie, McEwan, Pathé, James, Olgoff 2009).
- Homicide is the ultimate act of CONTROL. Control, abuse, stalking and assaultive behaviours may precede it. It is when an abuser has nothing left to lose and they feel they need to re-assert control over the victim that they harm and, sometimes, murder.

Statistics

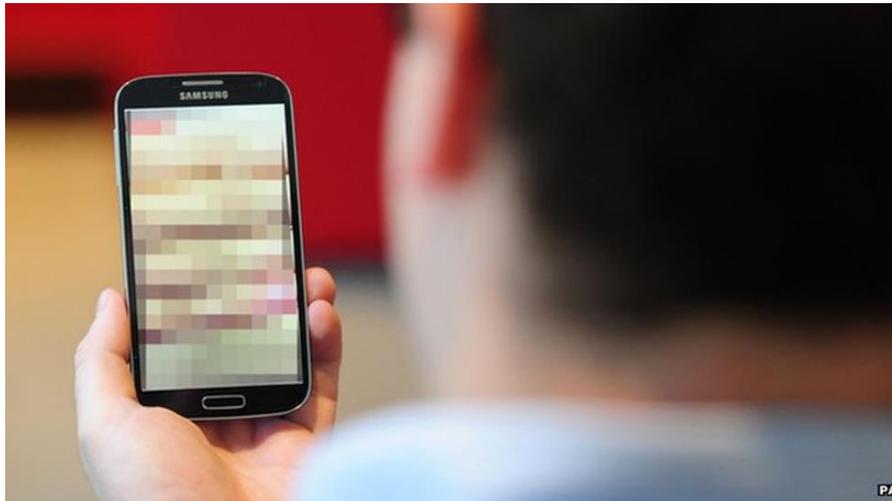
- The Office for National Statistics (2013) states 1 in 6 women and 1 in 12 men will experience stalking in their adult lifetime. We believe this to be underestimated.
- Victims are likely to experience 100 incidents before reporting to the police (Sheridan, 2005)
- Up to 21 people around the victim may be affected (contacted, stalked, used wittingly or unwittingly).

Stalking Behaviour

- Most stalking behaviour is about coercive control and jealous surveillance i.e. psychological abuse / violence.
- Stalking can consist of behaviours that, when taken at face value seem ordinary. However, with repetition and due to the fixated nature these behaviours become menacing, causing victims to feel unsafe and frightened.

Social Media

- Social media – Facebook, Instagram etc, revenge porn*



The Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 defines revenge porn as "photographs or films which show people engaged in sexual activity or depicted in a sexual way or with their genitals exposed, where what is shown would not usually be seen in public".

Social Media

- Advice on monitoring the perpetrator's social media accounts.
- Victims can often be isolated further by being advised to stay offline and change their number. It is better to educate around safer use and look to close the perpetrator down.
- In our experience, stalkers will always find a way round.

Strange but significant

- Much stalking behaviour can be personalised to terrify the victim.
- It is important not to overlook things that seem minor, bizarre or unlikely.
- The victim is not being “paranoid”.
- The victim is reacting normally to an abnormal situation.
- Instinct is very powerful.

Frequent challenges

- Indirect behaviour including threats, are challenging to prove. Proactive collection of evidence to demonstrate the course of conduct is needed e.g. Facebook/Whatsapp/instagram/Twitter status posts eg guns, knives.
- Use of the word harassment, not naming it as stalking.
- Perpetrators can be credible and plausible.
- Stranger cases cannot go to MARAC so we recommend a professionals meetings. Professionals meetings are for stranger cases, structure like a MARAC and offer more time for these complex cases.
- Counter allegations – common.
- When someone's being stalked we see high levels of PTS and this may seem like the victim's the problem.

Case examples

- Case A stalker was living in the loft and could access the victim's home via the neighbours loft.
- Case B stalker would loiter outside at night and leave empty bud bottles and his brand cigarette butts outside – additionally with a dead duck. What's the message to her?

Case examples

- Case C victim thought she was not locking her back door. After some time she then noticed the keys to her french doors kept moving from horizontal to vertical.
- Underwear was going missing, the odd pound coin missing.
- Escalated when she changed the locks and he subsequently tried to kill her.
- Followed her home one night in the car having blocked her route with bollards. In the car was a diagram of how he would kill her, a crossbow, knife, gaffa tape, wrist restraints = murder kit. He was her neighbour.

Safety Planning

- **Paladin's 6 Golden Rules - REPORT:**
- **Report** it as early as possible to the police and tell others what is happening.
- **Ensure** you get good practical advice – [contact us or call the National Stalking Helpline](#)
- **Proactive** evidence collection – keep all the evidence.
- **Overview** of what is happening – keep a diary.
- **Risk Checklist** – complete the [S-DASH 11 screening questions](#)
- **Trust** your instinct.

Safety Planning

- **Effective Gathering of Evidence**
- In order to report to the police, effective evidence gathering is essential.
- Make sure a diary is kept of every incident, tape any phone calls – [Stalking and Harassment Incident Diary Template \(available on our website.\)](#)
- Take screenshots of any emails and save copies of them.
- If safe to do so, take photographs or video of the stalker.
- **Practical Steps to Reduce Risk**

If someone is in fear they are being stalked:

- Tighten up security at home, to and from home, and at work. Change the locks to their home, and if possible,, install a burglar alarm or camera.
- Vary daily routine if walking or driving to work or other places.
- Be careful when giving out personal details when on the phone, dealing with credit card services, and social networking sites.
- Tell people what is happening, particularly at work and at home.

Victim's needs

- Listen.
- Validate.
- Understand.
- Risk assess.
- Risk management and safety planning - e.g. reporting, CCTV, personal alarms, window locks.
- Advocate.
- Promote access to local services.

Types of advocacy

- Email to Police Single Point of Contact / Officer in Charge.
- Follow up with a call.
- Support letter to police.
- Support letter to housing, Children Social Care, Court, extending Restraining Orders etc
- Can highlight a typology e.g. predator. Beware they don't all fit a typology.
- Recommendation – National Stalking Clinic, 1 to 1 sessions with a trained psychiatrist.

Stalking and use of the law

- Two new offences of stalking were introduced on November 25 2012. This was following a hugely successful Stalking Law Reform Campaign in Parliament spearheaded by a team including Laura Richards.
- 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.

Stalking and use of the law

- Incidents / behaviour need to be seen as a pattern and a course of conduct.
- Increase awareness of the stalking law. And promote using the stalking law when there is fixated and obsessed behaviour.
- This will lead to cases being flagged as stalking in court. Only 1% of cases of stalking and 16% of cases of harassment recorded by the police result in a charge and prosecution by the CPS (Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service, 2015).
- This will also lead to Perpetrators being held to account for stalking and this being recognised on their Criminal Record.

Working together

- Paladin have Single Points of Contact (SPoC's) in Police Forces across England and Wales. They are trained and knowledgeable and can filter this knowledge down to Officers in Charge (OIC).
- Proactive policing. The (ACPO) NPCC/CPS protocol: https://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/agencies/stalking_protocol.pdf
- Agencies can phone for advice at any stage in a case.
- Multi-agency approach.
- Pick up the phone.

Feedback from clients

“You saved my life”

“No one understood”

“I would have killed myself that day if I hadn't spoken to you”

“You are the only people who have listened and understood”

Our Campaigns

- Register & 2 new orders with positive obligations for serial stalkers & DV perpetrators.

<http://paladinservice.co.uk/serial-perpetrator-register-and-order/>

- On 5th December 2015 the Home Office announced an 8 week consultation on the Stalking Protection Order, a new order they are planning to introduce to tackle stalking in England and Wales. Whilst we welcome the consultation on stalking to protect victims of stalking, it is important there is a register for serial perpetrators and that there are new orders that place a positive obligation on them to change their behaviour. Currently there is no existing framework to do this. Instead police rely on victims to report multiple crimes and often it is the victim who is forced to modify and change their behaviour, flee their homes and disappear themselves to stay safer online and offline. This must be included if we are to better protect victims of stalking and shift the focus to the perpetrator. The consultation closes on 30th January 2016.

Referring to Paladin

- Use referral form on Paladin Website.
- Victims can refer themselves using our Self-referral form on our website or calling us.
- Complete as much information as possible along with a VS-DASH, also available on our website.
- These forms allow ISACs to make assessment of risk and level of support required.
- We also have developed leaflets for Police, other agencies and victims that are available today and on our website.

Paladin – National Stalking Advocacy Service

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THANK YOU