

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact Details: Steve Watkins 020 8442 6929
Communications Team, St Ann's Hospital, St Ann's Rd,
N15 3TH

Email:steve.watkins@beh-mht.nhs.uk

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LAUNCH OF THE WORLD'S FIRST NATIONAL STALKING CLINIC

***** This press release is strictly embargoed until 00.01 on December 8 *****

The World's first National Stalking Clinic (NSC) will be launched in London today for the treatment, assessment and rehabilitation of stalkers.

Stalking affects millions of people in the UK every year and can lead to rape, serious sexual assault and murder. If stalkers are properly assessed and treated, experts believe, serious crimes can be prevented.

One in five women and one in ten men will be the victims of stalking at some point in their lifetime.

Stalking has been described as 'psychological terrorism' and involves the unwanted intrusion of one person into the life of another, causing fear and distress.

It is a crime which can escalate into tragedy. Stalking is recognised as a component in more than three quarters of cases involving people murdered by ex-partners which is sometimes referred to as 'murder in slow motion.'

Assessing the risk in stalking can help change this. Offenders often receive short prison sentences or community orders. But stalkers, like sex offenders, are repeat offenders and without treatment many will simply return to stalking either the same or a different victim.

Experts say that many stalkers can be effectively treated.

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Dr Frank Farnham, a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist and one of the founders of the National Stalking Clinic, says: "If we can treat stalkers then we can save lives. There is great need for a co-ordinated national service that can provide specialist advice and treatment.

"The psychological impact on victims is corrosive with many suffering months and, in some cases, years of harassment leading to a variety of illnesses including anxiety, depression and post traumatic stress.

"Victims live in a permanent state of hyper-alertness which is physically and mentally draining."

The NSC will assess stalkers referred by other agencies including the Courts, Police, Probation, Service and the National Health Service. It will be run by Barnet Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust which has extensive experience of working with stalkers.

Home Office Minister Lynne Featherstone said: "I'm pleased to support the launch of this unique clinic that aims to prevent stalkers from re-offending. I've made stalking one of my priorities and it's included in the Government's report 'Call To End Violence Against Women and Girls'.

"We're also asking people for their views on how the police should tackle this devastating crime and whether current laws are adequate."

Assistant Chief Constable Garry Shewan, ACPO Lead on Stalking and Harassment, added: "I welcome the launch of the NSC and look forward to working closely with the team of experts. Stalking is a crime which steals lives. The assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of perpetrators is a vital part of tackling stalking and of preventing reoffending."

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The NSC is working with colleagues from the forensic service in Melbourne, the leading centre in the assessment and treatment of stalkers.

Dr. Rachel MacKenzie, senior forensic psychologist in Melbourne said: “With the development of the National Stalking Clinic, the UK is adopting best practice to what is a global problem.

“This puts it at the forefront of the response to stalking. This is a previously absent resource which will reduce harm to victims, both current and future, and support clinicians and professionals working with stalkers and stalking situations across the UK.”

Network for Surviving Stalking, one of the UK’s leading charities supporting victims, has lent its support to the clinic’s work.

Chief Executive of NSS Alexis Bowater said: “The launch of this clinic is a groundbreaking move and makes the UK one of the world leaders in tackling this devastating crime. The treatment and rehabilitation of stalkers is vital if we are to stop lives being lost to stalking.”

Notes to editor:

The National Stalking Clinic will be launched at 1:30pm on December 8th at Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, Westminster, London. SW1P 3RB

Speakers on the day will include:

- Home Office Minister Lynne Featherstone.
- Dr Frank Farnham, Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Founder of the National Stalking Clinic.
- Assistant Chief Constable Garry Shewan, ACPO Lead on Stalking and Harassment.
- Alexis Bowater, Network for Surviving Stalking.
- Sarah Summers. Sarah’s sister Katie Boardman was murdered by her stalker. Since Katie’s death Sarah has campaigned to raise awareness about stalking.

To interview any of people mentioned above ring Steve Watkins on 07875 159648. This can include an interview with Dr David James, the founder member of the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre, a specialist unit specialising in risk assessment and management of stalking of high profile individuals, such as members of the royal family and MPs. See

../User/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary Internet Files/Content.Outlook/NORPTP9A/www.fixatedthreat.comwww.fixatedthreat.com for details.

Additional notes:

1. Definition of stalking:

* Stalking is the repeated, unwanted intrusion of one person into the life of another, causing anxiety or distress.

* Stalking behaviours fall into three general types:

- unwanted communications: telephone calls, texts, e-mails, letters etc.
- unwanted physical intrusion: approaching, following etc.
- interference with services: impersonating the victim and ordering or cancelling services, goods etc.

2. Prevalence of stalking in the UK:

* 1 in 5 women (19.9%) and 1 in 10 men (10.2%) aged 16 or over have been victims of stalking in their lifetime.

Source: British Crime Survey.

3. Stalking before murder:

* A study of women killed by former intimate partners found that 76% had been subject to stalking beforehand. For serious attacks in which the victim was not killed, 85% had been stalked. Source: McFarlane et al (1999) Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide. Homicide Studies.

<http://hsx.sagepub.com/content/3/4/300.short>

4. Some key papers:

* James and Farnham (both from the National Stalking Clinic) (2003) Stalking and Serious Violence. Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law.

<http://www.jaapl.org/content/31/4/432.full.pdf>

* Mackenzie and James (the latter from the National Stalking Clinic) (2011) The Management and Treatment of Stalkers. Behavioural Sciences and the Law.

<http://www.fixatedthreat.com/petch/resources/mackenzie-james-2011-management-and-treatment.pdf>

* Farnham, James and Cantrell (2000). Association between violence, psychosis and relationship to victim in stalkers. Lancet. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673699047066>

5. On Monday November 14th, 2011, the Home Office launched a consultation into stalking. At the time Home Secretary Theresa May said: "I have been clear that ending violence against women and girls is a personal priority for me and this government. I am determined to ensure that victims of stalking have the protection and support they need. "

CASE STUDY:

This is a case study from the Melbourne Unit in Australia.

Jimmy (*) is in his 40s and has been charged with breaching his intervention order twice. In both cases he circulated a series of abusive emails after a relationship break-up. Police intervened and classed the distribution of the emails as stalking. Jimmy is receiving help from Forensicare (The Melbourne Unit) to reduce the chances of him repeating the behaviour. This is his story:

"In the first situation I was seeing a woman I met through business. We were friends moving towards a relationship. We'd go out for lunch and dinner and there was no hint she had a partner. Then someone who realised we were getting close told me she was buying a house with another guy.

I was pretty angry, upset, rejected, depressed ... and I let fly with a heap of emails to people she knew to let them know what she'd done. I circulated them to her colleagues and anyone who dealt with her workplace. I said she'd led me up the garden path.

move ...

She went to the police and I was served with an intervention order. My emails were seen as stalking and later I was charged with breaching that intervention order because I used false email addresses to continue sending emails. Being charged was enough to make me stop and I ended up being put on a good-behaviour bond.

The second episode happened four or five years later. I was going out with someone for four years. I cared a lot about her but her mother was domineering and said 'if you go with him you'll never step across my doorstep again.'

It was a hard decision for her but she stuck with her mother. After all the support I had given her she never told me it was over. The relationship just came to a stop.

Again, I let fly with a series of emails and text messages about her to people she knew and she went to the police and got an intervention order. I sent further emails and was charged with breaching the order. I was angry. I felt I'd been let down and lied to and betrayed. I was put on a community-based order this time and forensic care stepped in.

There really needs to be more of these programs around. Perhaps the health services industry should be supported in running these preventative type programs, similar to what is done with bullying, because in some senses, stalking is also a form of bullying.

Talking to someone about all this has made a hell of a difference to me. I know now that in both instances, what I did was due to anger and being rejected and depressed, but you have to learn boundaries and how to manage your anger. Maybe if I'd got support the first time, the second time might not have happened.

I haven't been in a relationship since, but I don't think I'd do the same thing again. I thought after the last case I'd get on with my life and try to do things properly. But I've lost over \$1 million in contracts because people I did business with somehow found out about the charges and it's ruined my reputation.

When you get a 'stalking' label it's a blanket description that doesn't take into account the history and details of each situation. There's a stigma attached to it and everyone gets tarred with the same brush. You're just seen as a predator."

* Certain names have been changed to protect identities.

Ends