

# Empowering Survivors, Making Scotland Safer Together

22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2024

National Stalking Awareness Week

Action Against Stalking

NATIONAL  
**STALKING**  
AWARENESS  
WEEK 2024

## Empowering Survivors, Making Scotland Safer Together

Scottish National Stalking Group



## Scottish National Stalking Group Member Input

### Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)

COPFS, Scotland's independent prosecution service, is pleased to support National Stalking Awareness Week 2024. The event puts this insidious and damaging crime at the top of the news agenda.

This year's theme is a timely reminder that the crime of stalking cannot be tackled without effective cooperation and collaboration between criminal justice agencies and our partner agencies in the third sector.

Stalking has been a specific offence in Scotland since 2010 and prosecutors regularly receive reports of this crime from Police Scotland. In 2022-23 alone, 921 stalking charges were reported to COPFS. COPFS works closely with Police Scotland both to make sure individual cases are comprehensively reported, and to ensure police and prosecutors are trained in the nuances and complexities of this crime.

Tailored support is crucial, and it is here that third-sector agencies, such as Action Against Stalking and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, are invaluable. COPFS is committed to working with these agencies, through shared engagement such as the Scottish National Stalking Group and input on the Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC) training course.

COPFS recognises that people who have faced trauma can find the justice process a difficult experience. Every victim in a stalking case is referred to COPFS's Victim Information and Advice Service (VIA) where our specialist staff provide updates and can signpost to relevant organisations and support for victims, to help them navigate the justice process.

COPFS is pleased to join Action Against Stalking in highlighting NSAW and the importance of working together to combat stalking. Those who are subject to this destructive crime must be confident that they will be taken seriously, and COPFS is determined to work to ensure stalkers are brought to justice.

### Police Scotland

Police Scotland is a supporter of National Stalking Awareness Week and has been for several years. Police Scotland works collectively with agencies to support survivors and proactively pursue perpetrators. Prevention is key, along with changing societal attitudes towards stalking.

Police Scotland works with Action Against Stalking and other support agencies to shape the training that is provided to initial response officers and specialist investigators to ensure officers have a structured response to stalking cases.

Image Caption: image with white background, with text on left "Empowering survivors, making Scotland safer together" and an outline of Scotland on the right with the logos of Action Against Stalking, Police Scotland, Rape Crisis Scotland, Victim Support Scotland, Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Rights Centre, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Suzy Lamplugh Trust connecting to show collaboration.

This joint training allows victims voices to be heard within police training which is powerful in focusing the minds of police officers towards a victim's perspective.

As Police Scotland moves forward, the opportunity to deliver joint training and continuous personal development days for officers will continue due to its success.

This joined up approach highlights that survivors' voices are being heard and that change is happening. Police Scotland strives to provide the best possible service so use Action Against Stalking as a 'critical friend' to bring attention to missed opportunities and review these for service improvement.

Police Scotland will use National Stalking Awareness Week as a tool internally to supply officers with the tools and guidance so that they can provide the best possible service.

You can hear more about Police Scotland's work on the [Surviving Stalking Podcast](#)



## Scottish Womens Rights Centre (SWRC)

FollowItApp was developed by Rape Crisis Scotland and the Scottish Women's Rights Centre in partnership with Media co-op. The app was developed through consultation with survivors of stalking and Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid, Police Scotland and COPFS (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service).

The app is designed to make it easier and safer for survivors to record incidents of stalking, and aims to enhance investigations by providing a clear, concise record of incidents. FollowItApp was developed as a means by which to record information quickly, accurately, and securely. The app is designed to compliment Scots law but can be used regardless of whether the user chooses to report to the police.

The app is currently available to any woman living in Scotland who is 18 years old and above. During the sign-up process, there is an opportunity to link women into advocacy, legal or support, especially if this is the first time a survivor has spoken about their experience.

SWRC can provide reports if requested by users or the police, with the user's permission. The report is a single document of all the incident logs which have been completed. To do this, we require 2 forms of ID. This means the user can have a PDF of everything they have logged, either for their own records or to take to the Police or their solicitor should they wish to report anything. This should mean they don't have to hand over their phone for the duration of a police investigation which takes time.

Users of FollowItApp can sign up to differing levels of consents in terms of their data. They can consent for their anonymised information to be used for research to improve our knowledge and understanding of stalking. They can also opt out of this and still access FollowItApp. The Privacy Agreement makes clear that women can change the level of consent at any time while using the app.

The app has a covert name when downloaded for security purposes, this is explained during the sign on process. There is pin code protection, and the data is stored on a secure server, not on user's own mobiles. Users can add a Safe word to their profile, this would be requested when communicating with the FollowItApp support team to confirm the user's identity.

Alongside the technical team behind the app, SWRC regularly update the support features and safety features to ensure the highest level of security. The app now has the option of signing up agency workers as demo users to the app. This means workers can access the stage version of the app and go through it with the survivor before they decide if it's the right option for them.



FollowItApp

## Victim Support Scotland (VSS)

In 2023, Victim Support Scotland and Action Against Stalking had a joint team morning so that staff could connect and see how the services could work together.

Since then Action Against Stalking staff were invited to a court visit to learn more about the supports VSS provide to clients.

Both services have worked collaboratively with many clients including 'James' who has been part of the 'Surviving Stalking' podcast sharing his story and highlighting the positive impact of services working together to support stalking victims.

## Scottish Womens Aid

Scottish Women's Aid has championed co-ordinated responses to stalking since our work supporting the introduction of the offence into what became the 2010 Act. We have, since then, worked with colleagues in Action Against Stalking, the Scottish National Stalking Group and across many sectors raising awareness on stalking in the context of domestic abuse and the importance of appropriate criminal justice responses to this abusive behaviour, both during the relationship and, importantly, when the parties separate, and in the wider area of violence against women

In December 2023, Scottish Women's Aid took part in the Surviving Stalking podcast to raise awareness of stalking in the context of domestic abuse for the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

**You can hear the full interview on Spotify at [Surviving Stalking](#)**



# Action Against Stalking



Action Against Stalking (AAS) established and hosts the Scottish National Stalking Group (SNSG) which brings organisations together that support victims.

Action Against Stalking and the University of the West of Scotland have, in joint partnership, established the Centre for Action Against Stalking, which encourages more academic research focused on stalking and bringing awareness to this crime.

Throughout the years the charity has worked with organisations to provide training, some of these joint training sessions have been with Police Scotland to train officers.

AAS have worked with Paladin to co-design an additional input to their comprehensive ISAC training course featuring contributions from Police Scotland and the COPFS. This focus on the Scottish legal system will help AAS to continue to improve support for victims in Scotland and taking part in the course will ensure the charity aligns with colleagues and services across the U.K.

The charity launched the award-winning 'Surviving Stalking' podcast which is successful due to the many collaborators such as victim-survivors, Police Scotland and Scottish Womens Aid.

The charity has built connections with Victim Support Scotland via a joint team meeting day and continuously works with them to ensure victims are supported.

The charity is also part of a number of working groups including the National Stalking Consortium, the VOCFS and more.

The charity has worked on joint social media collaborations with The Egalitarian as well as supported them with training.

Action Against Stalking have also attended a number of higher education student events. These include all West College Scotland campuses and City of Glasgow College.

The charity has attended many networking events including hosting a stall at the EmilyTest conference, a guest speaker session at Crime Con UK in 2023 and in April 2024, have become a partner of Crime Con UK.



## Other Collaborations

Picture Caption: A group of people helping piece a white jigsaw together on top of a wooden table, highlighting team work.

### The Cyber Helpline

The Cyber Helpline is a charity that offers free, confidential help from cybersecurity experts to victims of cyber crime.

Action Against Stalking and The Cyber Helpline have an established referral pathway to create a seamless support journey for cyberstalking victims.

In 2023, both charities collaborated on a joint session at CrimeCon UK in Glasgow to raise awareness of cyberstalking and the available support.

The Cyber Helpline have also been guest speakers at Action Against Stalking's International Conference in 2021 discussing how stalkers are using technology and how it impacts victims.

### Paladin

Paladin have worked in partnership with Action Against Stalking and over the past two years have supported each other around social media platforms and looked at ways in which we can work together more effectively.

More recently we are working together to up-skill our Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker's (ISACs) in both services. To ensure we are covering the legislation in England, Wales and Scotland, Action Against Stalking have arranged training to up-skill both sets of ISACs across the two teams around the Scottish legislation.

We hope to continue to support Action Against Stalking through Paladin Trained ISAC Hub in the future.

### The Egalitarian

At the end of 2023, Action Against Stalking partnered with The Egalitarian to create a joint social media campaign focusing on offering guidance to friends and family of stalking victims and linking these to the festive period.

Action Against Stalking was involved with advising on the organisations training materials to include stalking.

Due to its success, in the future the services aim to continue this collaboration with further joint digital campaigns.

## Want to collaborate with us?

To learn more about Action Against Stalking's work or to get in touch to collaborate please visit [www.actionagainststalking.org](http://www.actionagainststalking.org), sign up to our newsletter or email us on [enquiries@actionagainststalking.org](mailto:enquiries@actionagainststalking.org)

You can also follow us across social media to keep up to date with our work.

Facebook: @ActionAgainstStalking

LinkedIn: @ActionAgainstStalking

TikTok: @ActionAgainstStalking

X: @ActionStalking

Instagram: @ActionAgainstStalkingAAS



Picture caption: a group of people joining hands like a team handshake.