

Police campaign to raise awareness about the impact of stalking



During National Stalking Awareness Week which runs from Monday 16th until Friday 20th April 2018, Police Scotland will be working alongside partners at events to raise awareness of stalking and the devastating impact it can have on those affected.

#ReportingStalking aims to support victims in the criminal justice system and highlight best practice which effectively targets perpetrators while improving the safety and support for victims and others who raise concerns.

In November 2016, Police Scotland launched an Online Reporting Form to encourage victims of stalking to come forward and report abuse. Since that time more than 200 online reports have been received and acted upon.

The form is designed to encourage people who may be unable or reluctant to attend at a police station, to report their concerns about stalking and ensure those concerns are recorded, assessed and investigated.

The facility also enables concerned third parties, including family, friends or colleagues, to contact police on the

victim's behalf.

Detective Chief Superintendent Lesley Boal, Head of Public Protection in Police Scotland said, "We are committed to thoroughly and robustly investigating every report of stalking we receive. We recognise that stalking can have a devastating impact on the lives of victims, their families and friends. Perpetrators of stalking often employ behavioural tactics which appear routine and innocuous but are actually intended to cause fear, alarm and trauma.

"Along with our partners, our aim is to eliminate this form of gender-based violence. A total of 15,000 officers from a wide range of roles across Scotland have completed a specialist online training programme to recognise the indicators of risk for domestic abuse including stalking and harassment."

The online form is supported by charities, including Action against Stalking. Its founder and CEO Ann Moulds said, "The early identification of stalking cases is critical to victim safety and to prevent the behaviours from escalating to more serious harm.

"While many early staking cases do come to the attention of the police, triggering an affirmative response, victims can often feel reluctant to phone their local police station in the early stages for fear they may not be believed or purely because they are unsure how to report it.

"Not only should the online stalking form make it easier for victims to take that first step in asking for help, the fact it exists delivers a strong message that Police Scotland is reaching out to victims of stalking to encourage them to come forward."