MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021

STAYING SAFE THIS CHRISTMAS

While Christmas is a time to look forward to, for anyone affected by stalking, it can bring increased tension and worry. A spike in domestic violence and alcohol-related crimes usually occurs during the festive period, and victims of stalking can feel heightened feelings of anxiety.

'Tis the season of unwanted Christmas gifts! If someone stalking you sends you cards or presents, **do not respond**. Instead, save them as evidence. Photograph them where you found them and store the photos in a safe place. Document everything, including cards, photos and letters.

It may be tempting to block all online communication channels such as social media, email, or phone numbers but we don't recommend this as it can lead to the perpetrator trying to make contact in person. We have more information and safety leaflets on our website, just click the 'resources' tab or the link below.

Wishing you all a safe and happy festive season!

https://veritas-justice.co.uk/resources/

Beware of Drink Spiking

We're giving seasonal reminder about the risks of leaving drinks unattended at nightclubs, bars or parties, amid growing concerns about the availability of date rape drugs online. Drugs such as Rohypnol and GBH are hard to detect in drinks, being colourless and odourless, leaving the unsuspecting victim vulnerable to sexual assault. In October Sussex Police investigated six reports of women being *injected* with Rohypnol while on nights out in Brighton (Argus report, 30th October)

Never leave your drink unattended and if you do, it's better to buy another one. Be wary of accepting a drink from a stranger unless you saw the bar staff prepare it and stay together with your friends, looking out for each other. It just takes a moment for someone to tamper with your drink. Be sure to always take it with you!

Veritas
Stalking Advocacy Service

Each month's newsletter will inform you about other services in our *Service Spotlight* feature as well as bringing you tech tips and general wellbeing advice,

Get Home Safely Apps

Thinking about our safety when working alone or going home after a night out is sensible and certainly **not** paranoid. Personal safety apps such as the **Hollie Guard** app, endorsed by UK police forces, can add another layer of protection to help.

The app was created in response to the murder of Hollie Gazzard in 2014 by her jealous ex-partner. She was just 20 years old. Her father, who helped create The Hollie Gazzard Trust in her memory, made a moving video explaining the app's benefits (see link):

https://www.derbyshire.police.uk/police-forces/derbyshire-constabulary/areas/derbyshire-force-content/campaigns/campaigns/2019/hollieguard/

Hollie Guard tracks the app user's location as they make their way home or go about their daily life and gives real-time updates. It has many features, but crucially, it alerts trusted contacts if the user shakes their phone to indicate they are in danger. It also has an alarm feature and a flashing light. It is available on the App Store or Google Play as a free download or from https://hollieguard.com/

Service Spotlight

The Esther Project

The Esther Project (TEP), delivered by the charity Yada, offers tailored practical and emotional support to women in the sex industry, including independent escorts, women working in massage parlours, women engaging in survival sex and victims of exploitation. They want to address the barriers women encounter accessing services and raise awareness of the complex issues that women in the sex industry often face.

TEP aims to increase safety, reduce isolation, and improve wellbeing. They offer regular face to face time with outreach workers, advocacy, and help to access other services. The support includes help with benefits, housing, debt counselling, education, safety, and sexual health information. Free wellbeing packs are available, and tailored practical support with application assistance, attending appointments and emergency food/toiletry parcels.

The Esther Project team also offers free training to front line professionals supporting women who sell or exchange sex and support making positive life changes. For more information, go to www.esther-project.org