Britain’s first nationwide findings on cyberstalking released by Suzy Lamplugh Trust

The first nationwide in-depth British study on the nature and extent of cyberstalking is being released by Suzy Lamplugh Trust in London next week (Wednesday 13th April).

The new study, *The Stalker In Your Pocket*, has found that Britons are increasingly at risk of stalking using online methods and there is now nowhere for victims of stalking to hide.

Director of Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Rachel Griffin, will officially launch the session, with research findings being introduced by researcher and consultant psychiatrist Dr Raj Persaud. Rhory Robertson, a partner at Collyer Bristow LLP, Solicitors, who heads up the cyber investigation unit, will also join the panel together with two survivors of stalking who will share their personal stories.

These shocking new findings taken from an online survey of 4054 adults that has been conducted in collaboration with YouGov are being released ahead of National Stalking Awareness Week (18th – 22nd April) and have uncovered the massive scale of the problem in terms of both offline and online stalking.

“As we are more and more connected online than ever before, victims of stalking are increasingly being targeted using technological means. The tools being used by stalkers are becoming ever more sophisticated.” says Ms Griffin.

These findings provide invaluable insight into how cyberstalking is occurring within Britain.

The launch will provide media with an opportunity to learn about the study’s findings and the increasing trend of cyberstalking in Britain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What:</th>
<th>Launch of <em>The Stalker In Your Pocket</em> (Britain’s first nationwide research on cyberstalking)</th>
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| Vision Opportunities: | Interview with researcher and consultant psychiatrist Dr Raj Persaud  
Interview with stalking survivors |
| Where: | Suzy Lamplugh Trust  
The Foundry, 17-19 Oval Way, London  
SE11 5RR |
| When: | 10.30am – 11.30am  
Wednesday 13th April |

Further information:

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Launch event – Wednesday 13\textsuperscript{th} April 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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| 10.30 - 10.45 am | \textit{Suggested media arrival for interviews and photography}  
                  | Panellists all available for interviews  
                  | Morning tea served                               |
| 10.45 – 10.55 am | Rachel Griffin opening speech                               |
| 10.55 - 11.10 am | Dr Raj Persaud introduces survey findings                   |
| 11.10 – 11.15 am | Survivors share their personal stories                      |
| 11.15 – 11.30 am | Panel question and answer                                   |
| 11.30 am         | Event ends                                                  
                  | Panellists all available for interviews                     |
THE STALKER IN YOUR POCKET
Social media gives victims nowhere to hide

As we are more connected online than ever before, new research has found that Britons are increasingly at risk of stalking using online methods. There is now nowhere for victims of stalking to hide.

A new Britain-wide survey commissioned by Suzy Lamplugh Trust for National Stalking Awareness Week (18th ~ 22nd April 2016) has uncovered the massive scale of the problem in terms of both offline and online stalking.

Conducted online by YouGov, The Stalker in Your Pocket, is a new study in collaboration with consultant psychiatrist Dr Raj Persaud and forensic psychiatrist Dr David James. A representative sample of 4,054 British adults were surveyed by the research, which revealed that nearly a fifth of all British adult women (18%) and 8% of all British adult men had been stalked1.

These latest findings show that social media has become the tool of choice for many stalkers.

Key findings include:

- **There is nowhere to hide on social media**
  - 36.8% of people that have been stalked had been stalked using online methods such as by Facebook or email

- **Victims often respond to stalking by disconnecting from the internet**
  - Of all those who have been stalked, 22.2% have withdrawn from some form online activity and/or social media2
  - Of those who have been stalked online, 43.1% have withdrawn from some form online activity and/or social media3

- **Many victims do not make a police report and the response by police can be mixed**
  - Of all online and offline stalking cases in Britain, only 26.6% had been reported to the police
  - Of those who reported any form of stalking to the police, 43.4% found their response not very helpful or not helpful at all
  - Where online stalking was the sole form of stalking behaviour, only 9.8% of people reported it to the police
  - In 2015, the National Stalking Helpline run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, received over 6,500 calls and emails for help and advice. The Helpline was not able to

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1 Stalking is defined as repeated, unwanted contact or intrusive behaviour from another person(s) which causes fear or distress.

2 Percentages for withdrawal from online activity and/or social media taken from additional questions (see ‘About the research’).

3 Percentages for withdrawal from online activity and/or social media taken from additional questions (see ‘About the research’).
answer all calls because of limited capacity and a year-on-year increase in demand for the service.

- **Victims should not need to change their lives but many feel that they have to**
  - 32.0% felt fearful about their personal safety
  - 9.5% moved home
  - 26% stopped answering their telephone
  - 18.1% stopped answering their front door
  - 11.4% stopped using their mobile phone

- **Despite the laws in place against stalking, it continues to have a huge impact on victims’ lives**
  - Victims are encouraged to report to police however Suzy Lamplugh Trust knows from the work we do with victims of stalking that the response of authorities is not always good enough
  - Although a large and growing number of people are stalked online, many don’t know that there are laws to protect them

The researchers, Dr James and Dr Persaud, say that ease of access to victims by the use of social media has given the stalker a new ‘weapon in their armoury’.

“New methods of communication mean stalking online is something you can never get away from. In effect, you carry the stalker ‘in your pocket’ in the form of any mobile phone. This can be especially traumatising for victims.” said Dr James.

Dr Raj Persaud said, “As a consultant psychiatrist, I have seen many patients who have been stalked. My professional experience and our findings illustrate that stalking is not just a problem for celebrities. People from all walks of life can become victims of stalking whether it be online or offline”.

Director of Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Rachel Griffin, said that victims of stalking are increasingly experiencing abuse through online methods.

“It is incredibly important that we are aware that victims of stalking can be harassed and abused both when they are going about their daily lives and when they are online. The obsession and fixation of stalkers means that they will use any means possible to pursue their victims,” said Rachel.

Victims of stalking are encouraged to seek assistance and can contact the police. They can also contact the National Stalking Helpline on 0808 802 0300.

**Media contact**
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4 Percentages for answering the telephone, answering the front door and using their mobile phone taken from additional questions run (see ‘About the research’).
About the research

This national representative survey was conducted by YouGov. All figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). The total sample size was 4,054 adults, of whom 553 had ever been stalked. Research participants were surveyed online between 18th – 29th February 2016.

Additional questions were carried out between 26th – 29th February 2016 to a total sample size of 2,026 adults, of whom 259 had ever been stalked.

About Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Suzy Lamplugh Trust was set up by the parents of Suzy Lamplugh, a 25 year old estate agent, who disappeared without trace in 1986 after she went to meet an unknown client. The Trust works to highlight the risks people face and to campaign, educate and support people to help reduce the risk of violence and aggression. It runs the National Stalking Helpline, provides education and leads National Stalking Awareness Week 2016 (18th – 22nd April 2016).

Can’t Get You Out of My Head by Dr Raj Persaud

Can’t Get You Out of My Head is the latest book by Dr Raj Persaud reporting many shocking examples of real life cases of stalking. It is being launched as part of National Stalking Awareness Week 2016 (18th – 22nd April 2016). All profits from sales are donated to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

For all book enquiries: Ruth Killick at Ruth Killick Publicity, tel: 01291 680319 / 07880703741, publicity@ruthkillick.co.uk
Suzy Lamplugh Trust
Suzy Lamplugh Trust was set up in 1986 by Paul and Diana Lamplugh after the disappearance of their daughter Suzy. Suzy Lamplugh Trust’s mission is to campaign, educate and support people to help reduce the risk of violence and aggression. In 2010 Suzy Lamplugh Trust launched the National Stalking Helpline, the first national service in the world specifically set up to provide expert support to victims of stalking. Since the Helpline was launched, our expert staff have provided support to over 15,000 people affected by stalking.

Stalking in Great Britain
- ‘Stalking’ in this study is defined as repeated, unwanted contact or intrusive behaviour from another person(s) which causes fear or distress
- 18.1% of women and 7.7% of men have been stalked
- Of those that have been stalked, 18.8% of cases lasted more than a year and 7.9% lasted more than five years

Stalkers can be anyone
- 22.8% of stalking cases involved ex-partners, 22.5% total strangers, 17.4% acquaintances, 10.1% former friends, 8.1% work colleagues and 6.4% family members

Online stalking
- Amongst Britons who have been stalked, 36.8% have been stalked using online methods
- Where online stalking was the sole form of stalking behaviour, only 9.8% of reported it to the police
- People between the ages of 18 and 34 are significantly more likely to have been stalked online
- In cases where online stalking was the only method of stalking, it was significantly more likely to involve complete strangers than those which included both online and offline methods (40.9% vs. 16.3%). It was also not as likely to involve an ex-partner (13.2% vs 33.2%)

Effects on victims
- 28.3% of victims felt concerned about going out in public and 20.4% reduced their social outings
- 18.6% of victims changed their phone number
- 22.4% of victims changed their daily routine
- 23.6% of victims feared they might be physically assaulted
- 9.5% of victims moved home
- 8.7% of victims increased their security at home or work

Stalkers are motivated by different reasons
- In 27% of stalking cases, the main motive involved a grievance or an unexplained desire to hurt
• 20.6% of stalking cases involved a rejected ex-partner, friend or family member seeking revenge or reconciliation
• 21.1% of stalking cases involved someone trying to develop a relationship with the victim
• 6.3% of stalking cases involved the perpetrator falsely believing they were in a relationship with the victim. Other victims did not know why they were being targeted (7.1%).

Seeking advice and support
• In 2015, the National Stalking Helpline run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, received over 6,500 calls and emails for help and advice. The Helpline was not able to answer all calls because of limited capacity and a year-on-year increase in demand for the service.

Reporting to police
• Only 26.6% of stalking cases have been reported to the police, with no significant difference between men and women
• Sadly, 43.4% of those who reported the stalking to the police found the response not very helpful or not helpful at all

How we can all help
• Police need to invest in recruiting and/or training staff to have an understanding of digital crime and digital investigation techniques
• Perpetrators should be made aware that if they stalk online they are breaking the law and they can be found, arrested and prosecuted
• Increased funding is required for services such as the National Stalking Helpline so that victims of stalking can get the help they need to feel safe and supported
• The combined approach of police and psychology as exemplified by the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) should be made available to everyone, not just Downing Street or Buckingham Palace. Dr David James was the lead clinician at FTAC, a specialist joint police-psychiatric unit for the assessment and management of cases involving the stalking, harassment or threatening of public figures in the United Kingdom. It is this unit which is at the centre of Dr Raj Persaud’s new novel, Can’t Get You Out Of My Head, published as part of National Stalking Awareness Week with all profits donated to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

Survey Methodology
All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4,054 adults, of whom 553 had ever been stalked. Fieldwork was undertaken between 18th – 29th February 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

For more information on the survey from YouGov, please contact their press office: 50 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8RT, United Kingdom.
Telephone: +44 (0)207 012 6015 Email: press@yougov.com