



2nd June 2021

To/ **Each Local Authority**

At the Adjourned Ordinary Meeting of Sligo County Council held on 24th May 2021, the following resolution was agreed:

“That this Council call on the Minister for Justice to reconsider her department’s decision not to have a specific offence of stalking introduced on to the statute books, and to not only introduce an offence of stalking but to also introduce longer sentences for the crime than that currently available to prosecutors.”

At present in Ireland, there is no law that defines stalking as a crime. This Council calls on the government to urgently enact clear and concise stalking legislation in Ireland.

On the rare occasion that stalking is prosecuted in Ireland, it is prosecuted under harassment laws. The terms ‘stalking’ and ‘harassment’ are sometimes used interchangeably, but they can be significantly different.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour from someone else that makes you feel distressed, humiliated or threatened. Stalking, however, is more intense, sinister and distressing. Stalking is a pattern of fixated, obsessive behaviour which is repeated, persistent and intrusive. It causes fear of violence or engenders alarm and distress in the victim. Victims of stalking are often at risk of violence from their stalker.

Although stalking has recently been associated with crimes against women it can also be a crime against a man. It can be used against celebrities, politicians and civic leaders and needs to be clearly defined as a crime.

The Law Reform Commission has recommended that stalking be defined as a separate crime to harassment. In the UK, when stalking was made a crime there was an increase in prosecutions - meaning it was necessary and overdue. This Council calls on the Minister for Justice to act urgently and legislate to make stalking a crime in Ireland.

I also ask for this motion to be shared with all other local authorities”.



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