

Public Timetable Guidance for Universities and Colleges

Foreword

This document details the guidance that has been developed collaboratively by EmilyTest and Anglia Ruskin University concerning the publication of staff and student timetables within further and higher education institutions.

The need for this guidance arose from an incident in which a student's publicly accessible timetable was exploited to facilitate stalking and intimidation. The ease with which the perpetrator could predict the student's whereabouts highlighted a significant safeguarding concern that requires urgent attention across the sector.

Publicly available timetables can be misused not only by fellow students, but also by members of the public. Inappropriate access to such detailed scheduling information can enable harassment, stalking, or targeted disruptions on campus. Members of the public with no affiliation to the institution could exploit timetable data to track individuals and/or time their access to publicly accessible areas of campus, posing a safety risk to the individual and the wider community.

As a result, this guidance outlines a comprehensive risk assessment that explores the potential risks, harms, and broader implications associated with the public availability of timetables. It also provides practical, safety-focused recommendations that institutions can implement to protect both students and staff from the potential misuse of this data.

We encourage all education providers to thoughtfully engage with this guidance and explore ways to integrate the recommendations into their institutional processes and decision-making. Safeguarding the wellbeing and safety of both staff and students is a shared responsibility, and we hope to see this commitment reflected in approaches to timetable planning and information sharing.

RISK ASSESSMENT	OUTCOMES
Identify the Scope and purpose • Define the objective of the risk assessment • Identify the processes, activities, or areas to be assessed • Determine the regulatory or compliance requirements (if applicable)	The objective of this risk assessment is to enable EmilyTest to understand and evaluate the potential risks associated with course timetables being publicly accessible online and to enhance the safety of students and staff. This risk assessment specifically focuses on students and staff who may be vulnerable or at risk and considers how this unchecked access could be detrimental to their safety and wellbeing while studying and working. The assessment will draw on current research, legislation, and data from the United Kingdom (UK) to examine the risks posed by this access, and the broader implications for institutional policy. Stalking is an offence in the UK under the <u>Protection from Harassment Act 1997</u>. Stalking is considered a form of harassment, where the stalker has an obsession with the person they're targeting, and their repeated, unwanted behaviour can make the victim/survivor feel distressed or scared. Stalking may include: • Following someone • Going uninvited to their home, workplace, or other frequented locations • Waiting somewhere they know the person often visits

	• Identity theft (signing-up to services, buying things in someone's name) • Writing or posting online about someone if it's unwanted or the person doesn't know It's considered stalking if the unwanted behaviour has happened two times or more and made you feel scared, distressed or threatened. These harms do not have to happen in person; they can be facilitated physically and/or digitally. Through this lens, we aim to assess the relevance of stalking in student settings and how institutional practices may unintentionally expose students to harm. In a university or college setting, this may look like: • Turning up to lectures, seminars, tutorials or exam halls • Waiting or attempting to enter the individual's halls of residence, privately rented accommodation or other • Turning up to social events where they know the individual will be
Identify Potential harms • List all possible harms • Consider harms related to people, environment, devices and processes	When it comes to stalking, the list of potential harms is extensive. Although each case may differ, stalking can lead to severe emotional, psychological, and physical distress for victims/survivors. A key concern is the loss of autonomy and constant state of fear experienced by victims/survivors, which can deeply affect their personal and academic lives. Victims/survivors of stalking commonly reported struggling to trust other people, and that the crime led to the breakdown of relationships with those they cared about. Victims/survivors also described the physical exhaustion that stalking caused them,

	as they often felt hypervigilant and alert, even at home. As outlined by Action Against Stalking, the long-term impact of stalking can have a severe impact on a victims/survivors psychological and physical health. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018 asked those affected by stalking about its impact on them: • 94% said they made changes to their life or work patterns • 53% said they changed or left jobs • 39% said they moved home • 83% reported increased anxiety • 75% felt powerless • 74% had experienced disrupted sleep • 55% said they suffered fatigue • 55% had flashbacks and intrusive thoughts • 24% had suicidal thoughts These statistics underline the significant and often hidden toll that stalking can take on a person's life – especially for those already navigating the complexities of Higher and Further Education.
Identify Who or What is at Risk • Assess who (students, staff, contractors, members of the public) could be affected	The Office for National Statistics (2024) published their latest data in stalking, evidencing that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 11 men aged 16+ were a victim of stalking in England and Wales. People aged 16-19 years were more likely to be stalking victims in the year ending March 2024. This was closely followed by those aged 20-24. Additionally, out of 1.5 million stalking victims in the year ending March 2024: • 28% (423,000) were victims of domestic stalking

	• 21% (314,000) were stalked by a partner or ex-partner • 9% (141,000) were stalked by a family member • 42% (635,000) reported online methods, such as electronic communications, being used to harass or threaten them (ONS, 2024).
Evaluate the Risks • Determine the likelihood of each risk occurring • Assess the potential impact or severity of each risk	A 2024 blog by Student Beans found that 381 students from UK universities were accused of stalking and harassment between 2015 and 2018. 51% of those accused were allowed to continue their studies with little repercussions. One high profile case in 2023 involved a Durham University student who harassed a classmate by sending threatening messages from 44 different phone numbers, turning up at lectures uninvited, and sending unwanted gifts. One of his messages read, “I’ll be waiting for you outside your 9am lecture tomorrow.” This incident provides potential evidence regarding how access to a student’s schedule can be exploited to stalk or intimidate. Research by WONKHE (2023) also revealed that 70% of stalking cases involved another student, with 89% of perpetrators being male. As highlighted above, young people are the most vulnerable age group when it comes to stalking, emphasising the significant risk levels posed to students. However, it’s important to acknowledge that stalking is not limited to young people and can happen at any age.

	Given the established links between stalking and domestic abuse – including the statistic that stalking was present in 94% of domestic homicides – this issue must be viewed as a significant safeguarding concern for universities (Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse).
Determine Safety Measures • Identify existing actions that mitigate the risk • Propose additional safety measures	Our research findings suggest that some (not all) institutions have implemented basic protections, such as restricting access to timetables via login credentials to the institution’s online interface. Although a step in the right direction, it is unclear whether these systems limit students to viewing their personal course information only, or if broader access is possible. This lack of clarity and standardisation presents a potential gap in safeguarding. Recommended safety measures include: • Ensuring timetables are only accessible through authenticated logins for enrolled students, not publicly available online • Limiting timetable visibility to each student’s own course, rather than allowing access to every course schedule available in the institution • Applying the same level of restriction to exam timetables and any other sensitive scheduling information • Public detail on social events should be minimised and shared only with students invited to the event By applying these targeted safeguards, we believe institutions can significantly reduce the potential for misuse of timetable information, particularly in contexts involving vulnerable students.

Next steps	This risk assessment of publicising timetables highlights the potentially serious consequences to victims'/survivors' emotional and physical wellbeing, particularly in the context of stalking and harassment. Given the prevalence of stalking among students and the availability of digital tools to exploit personal information, it is crucial for institutions to treat timetable access as a matter of student and staff safety. By aligning safety measures with safeguarding practices, institutions can play an active role in preventing harm and creating a learning environment where all students and staff can feel safe and supported.
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Action Against Stalking - Supportive Statement

Action Against Stalking works to establish a world where everyone has a right to live without fear of psychological or predatory threat.

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“Stalking is a serious psychological crime with a devastating and lasting impact on victims. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of both students and staff is a critical responsibility. Action Against Stalking fully supports the guidance developed by EmilyTest, which helps institutions carefully consider when and how to share information which may be exploited by perpetrators to locate victims. We are committed to supporting any institution that seeks to deepen its understanding of stalking and take meaningful steps to protect its community.”

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Support Services:

Action Against Stalking (Scotland specific)

Action Against Stalking is a Scottish registered charity that aims to establish a world where everyone has a right to live without fear of psychological or predatory threat.

Email: Support@actionagainststalking.org

Phone: 0800 820 2427

Suzy Lamplugh Trust (UK wide)

Suzy Lamplugh Trust works to reduce the risk and prevalence of abuse, aggression, and violence - with a specific focus on stalking and harassment - through education, campaigning, and support.

Phone: 0808 802 0300

References:

- ['I feel like I am living someone else's life': one in seven people a victim of stalking - Office for National Statistics](#) – ONS 2024
- [Stalking and Harassment - Reducing the Risk](#) – Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse
- [Stalking and harassment | Police.uk](#) – Police UK
- [The impact of stalking | Action Against Stalking | Scotland](#) – Action Against Stalking and The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018
- [We need to address student experiences of domestic abuse and stalking | Wonkhe](#) – WONKHE article
- [We Need To Do Something About Stalking & Harassment At Uni - Student Beans Blog](#) – Student Beans blog