



Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre

Safety plan ideas

This is a list of suggested actions that you should take to ensure your ongoing safety. The list is not definitive and you should adapt it to your own personal circumstances.

Recommendations:

Keep a fully charged mobile phone with you at all times (if a Pay-As-You-Go ensure that you have sufficient credit on the phone). On that mobile phone have the correct and up to date contact numbers for your important and emergency contacts such as your GP, your Social Worker; your children's school, childminder and babysitter; your solicitor and the Police emergency number, 999. If you are already engaged with them, also include your local Woman's Aid Refuge, Police Domestic Violence Unit, or the Sunflower Centre. Another useful number is the 24-hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline number, 0808 2000 247. Also try to have at least two local taxi companies.

Change your landline number and make it ex-directory. Use an answering machine to screen your calls. BT Caller Screening provides a similar service in that the caller is required to leave their name for you to listen to before deciding whether or not to accept their call. There may be a small monthly charge imposed by BT for this service.

Change your personal mobile number with your service provider.

Consider changing your work mobile number if your employer provides you with a phone. It may be an ideal opportunity to make your Human Resource department aware of the situation and thereby also limiting access to the offender to your place of work.

Ensure the Police are aware of any changes to your contact numbers, email or address by dialling 101 (the Police non-emergency number). Try to speak to a Police Officer you have spoken to previously, if you cannot recall that Officer's name, quote your previous Crime or Occurrence Number (from April 2016 onwards Crime Numbers will be referred to as Occurrence Numbers). A Crime Number will be in a format similar to 34NC/12345/16; the newer Occurrence Number in a format similar to 18000123456.

Know where your nearest public phones are in case you are forced to flee your house without your mobile phone - you should not need any cash to dial 999.

Change your email address. Try to avoid obvious names, nicknames or references that would be apparent to the offender. Likewise, you should ensure that your new password would not be something that would be readily known to anyone else. Try to use unique passwords for each email/website; one way of remembering unique passwords is to use what is called a rolling barrel password, as described below:

A rolling barrel password should consist of three sections, which we will refer to as section A, B and C.

One of those sections, A for instance, should be numeric, i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc. This section remains the same for every password on every website.

One of those sections, B for instance, should be alphabetic and contain at least one CAPITAL letter, i.e. A, B, C, etc. This section remains the same for every password on every website.

One of those sections, C for instance, should relate only to the website that the password is for.

Therefore, as an example, a person called Jane Smith wishes to set up a unique password for the Amazon shopping website; her password could be:

memorable to the user.

Section B is the alphabetic section and should contain at least one CAPITAL letter – this too will remain the same for every website and should be memorable to the user.

Section C is unique to each website and in this instance it uses the first three letters that appear in the website's name.

The password above is '123jAnama' constructed from using 123 – jAn – ama.

Therefore, you are able to create a unique password for each individual website.

Consider coming off social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, etc. If you are not prepared to come off these sites ensure that you change your passwords and restrict your privacy settings. All of these sites usually have a facility to block an unwanted 'friend' and by doing this you will prevent that person from seeing your social media page. Do not be tempted to view or comment on the offender's social media pages, as they will often leave inflammatory comments in order to provoke you to engage in communication or conversation with them.

Teach your children to call 999 in an emergency from both a landline and your mobile. Teach them to say their name, full address and telephone number. Consider having a predetermined code word with your children, that should they hear you say it they know to dial 999 and ask for assistance.

Try to make it as difficult as possible for an unwanted person to gain access to your property. Keep your front and back doors locked whenever possible. If the offender has left the address, consider having the locks changed. Remember to have the locks changed on all of the external doors that may allow access into the property, such as the patio door, garage, or even a dog flap. Change the alarm code to your home security system – if you are unsure of how to do this then find the manufacturer's name on the front of your keypad control box and then go onto that manufacturer's website or contact their customer service team who will talk you through the process over the phone.

Keep windows closed and locked whenever possible. Have window locks fitted if not already present.

Place padlocks on your garden and entrance gates where practical.

Consider fitting PIR type security lights to your property that illuminate all possible front and rear access routes.

Consider having a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system fitted. Modern versions can transmit the images straight to your mobile phone and you can monitor your property both when you are in it and also when you are elsewhere.

Consider having smoke alarms fitted and have a fire extinguisher to hand. If you are particularly concerned about the threat of fire you can request the Fire Service Arson Task Force to attend your address and fit smoke alarms and an anti-tamper letterbox. This contact can be made directly to the Fire Service on 0800 3899950 or email safetycheck@northantsfire.org.uk, or via the Police non-emergency number 101.

Make your neighbours aware that your partner no longer lives with you and to alert you and/or the Police should they see them nearby.

Make sure your children know that nobody is allowed into your house without your permission and do not allow them to answer your door.

Have a good quality chain fitted to your front door and consider having a security peephole fitted. Alternatively, if a security peephole is not practical, for instance on a uPVC type door, you should consider fitting a small front door security mirror on the wall adjacent to the doorframe on the side that the door opens, so that as you open the front door you are able to see the reflection of the person outside. These front door security mirrors are readily available from most DIY stores.

If you suspect that the offender has gained entry into your house immediately phone 999. If you suspect you are about to be physically attacked, try to place yourself in a lower risk area of the house. Try to avoid areas such as the kitchen or garage where weapons may be readily present, or small confined spaces where you may become trapped. If you have a Safe Room or Sanctuary go to it immediately. Phone 999 immediately and request the Police.

Be prepared to leave your house if necessary.

Are there neighbours or nearby family members you can trust and where you can go in an emergency? If so, tell them what is going on and ask them to phone the Police on 999 if they hear what they believe is a violent/abusive domestic situation.

Have an escape plan. Rehearse your escape plan, so you and your children can get away swiftly in an emergency.

Pack an emergency 'Go-Bag' for yourself and your children. Place it somewhere safe (for example a friend or neighbour's house), but try to avoid mutual friends or your partner's family. Consider including an amount of cash for bus fares or taxis; spare car keys and house keys; medication that you or your children may require including inhalers; at least one change of clothing for you and your children; a small amount of toiletries that you may need including children's nappies and baby food, etc. If possible, also take copies of any documentation relating to the abuse - e.g. Police reports, court orders such as injunctions and restraining orders, and copies of medical records if you have them.

If you have separated from your partner also consider the following points:

Try to avoid any places, such as shops, banks, clubs, cafes, that you used to use when you were together.

Try to alter your routines as much as you can.

If you have any regular appointments that your partner knows about (for example, with a solicitor, counsellor or health practitioner) try to change your appointment time and/or the location of the appointment.

Try to choose a safe route, or alter the route you take or the form of transport you use, when approaching or leaving places you cannot avoid - such as your place of work, the children's school, or your GP's surgery.

Tell your children's school, nursery or childminder what has happened, and let them know who will pick them up. Make sure they do not release the children to anyone else, or give your new address, telephone number, or email address to anyone. (You may want to establish a password with them, and give them copies of any court orders detailing child custody rulings, if you have them). If you already have a password set-up at the school make sure that you change it and only provide the new password to those who essentially need it.

Consider telling your employer or others at your place of work - particularly if you think your partner may try to contact you there.

Your mobile phone could be 'tracked'; this is only supposed to happen if you have given your permission, but if your partner has had access to your mobile phone, they could have sent a consenting message purporting to come from you. If you think this could be the case, you should contact the company providing the tracking facility and withdraw your permission; or remove the tracking app - 'Find my Phone' on iOS devices and

'Lookout' on Android devices being two popular applications; or if you are in any doubt, change your phone and/or SIM card.

It is recommended that users of the Snapchat mobile phone application remove it immediately as it provides the facility for everyone in a friend list to track other associated friends.

Change the password to your iTunes or Google account immediately. If this is not done the offender may be able to buy a similar mobile phone to yours, register it to your account and instantly have access to your email, texts, picture messages and call history.

Try to avoid using shared credit or debit cards or joint bank accounts: if the statement is sent to your ex-partner, or available to them on-line, they will see the transactions you have made.

Make sure that your address does not appear on any court papers. (If you are staying in a refuge, they will advise you on this.)