

ONLINE TARGETING. REAL HARM. REAL CONSEQUENCES. CRIMINALITY MUST BE ADDRESSED.

Reputational Attacks. Provocation. Exploitation.
It's Not Freedom of Speech – It's Abuse.



**TARGETING INDIVIDUALS FOR PROFIT, PROVOKING HOSTILITY
AND INCITING ABUSE IS NOT JUST HARMFUL – IT CAN BE CRIMINAL.**

KEY ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED FOR CRIMINALITY



1. TARGETED COURSE OF CONDUCT

Was there a pattern of repeated acts directed at specific individuals between 2021–2023 (or beyond)?

At least two incidents are required under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.



2. INTENT OR RECKLESSNESS

Did the perpetrator intend to cause alarm or distress, or know (or ought to have known) their actions would cause such harm?

Knowledge and foreseeability are key to criminal liability.



3. PROVOCATION & INCITEMENT

Was the targeting designed to provoke, inflame, or incite others to harass, abuse or take action?

Encouraging hostility or creating a climate that foreseeably leads to harm is relevant.



4. COMMERCIAL MOTIVE

Was the conduct carried out to gain financial benefit, promote a book, increase followers, or drive engagement?

Exploitation for profit does not excuse criminal behaviour.



5. SERIOUS HARM CAUSED

Has the conduct caused serious alarm, distress, fear, or significant mental health impact and financial loss?

Documented harm strengthens the case for criminal prosecution.



6. ONGOING CONDUCT

Is the harmful material still online and being maintained, promoted, or re-amplified?

An ongoing course of conduct can extend criminal liability beyond the original publication.



POTENTIAL CRIMINAL OFFENCES

- **Harassment – Protection from Harassment Act 1997**
A course of conduct causing alarm or distress. No time limit if prosecuted on indictment (more serious cases).
- **Stalking – Protection from Harassment Act 1997**
Repeated pursuit or monitoring causing fear of violence. No statutory time limit if prosecuted on indictment.
- **Malicious Communications Act 1988**
Sending letters/electronic communications/articles with intent to cause distress or anxiety. 6 month time limit (summary only).
- **Communications Act 2003, Section 127**
Grossly offensive or menacing messages. 6 month time limit (summary only).
- **Encouragement or Assistance of Crime**
Serious Crime Act 2007 – if violence or other criminal acts were encouraged or intentionally facilitated.



EVIDENCE THAT STRENGTHENS CRIMINALITY

- ✓ Screenshots of posts, articles, and comments
- ✓ Timestamps showing pattern and continuity
- ✓ Evidence of provocation, incitement or calls to action
- ✓ Link between content and resulting abuse or threats
- ✓ Mental health records and impact reports
- ✓ Financial loss and business impact documentation
- ✓ Proof of commercial gain (book sales, followers, engagement)
- ✓ Any connection to real world harm (e.g. assault, threats)



WHY THIS MATTERS

Freedom of speech does not protect campaigns of abuse, defamation, provocation or harassment. When targeting is deliberate, harmful and for personal or financial gain, it crosses the line into criminal behaviour. Victims deserve protection, justice and accountability.



WHAT CAN BE DONE

- ✓ Report to Police with full evidence dossier
- ✓ Seek legal advice on criminal and civil options
- ✓ Pursue injunctions to stop ongoing harm
- ✓ Claim damages for financial and emotional harm
- ✓ Hold platforms accountable under the Online Safety Act 2023



No one should have their life, reputation or business destroyed for someone else's profit and attention.

**TARGETING IS NOT CONTENT.
IT'S ABUSE.
IT CAN – AND MUST – BE PROSECUTED.**



If you or your business are being targeted, you are not alone. The law provides powerful tools – but action must be taken. Document. Report. Protect. Prevent. Pursue Justice.



**JUSTICE.
ACCOUNTABILITY.
PROTECTION.**