

NON-FATAL STRANGULATION



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Non-Fatal Strangulation Toolkit

Partners

Non-fatal Strangulation toolkit (partners)

Introduction

Welcome to the Police Service of Northern Ireland's, understanding non-fatal strangulation or asphyxiation legislation and the support available to victims, toolkit - a series of assets and key messages that we need your help to reach all communities.

We would greatly appreciate your support by sharing our content and key messages on your channels and in your networks, if you feel it is appropriate.

What are we Trying to Achieve?

The Justice (Sexual offences & trafficking victims) Act (NI) 2022 received Royal assent in April 2022, this legislation is introducing a number of new offences and provisions over the coming months to close a number of legislative gaps. The new offence linked with non-fatal strangulation could see attackers facing up to a 14 year prison sentence. This legislation will be operational on Monday 26th June 2023 and we need your help to raise awareness.

The practice typically involves a perpetrator strangling or intentionally affecting their victim's ability to breathe in an attempt to control or intimidate them. Studies have shown that victims of domestic abuse are eight times more likely to be murdered by their partner if there had been non-fatal strangulation beforehand. Over the last 10 years, January

2013 to January 2023, seven people in Northern Ireland were strangled to death.

It has been a challenge to prosecute this offence under previous legislation, as investigating police officers would have to provide evidence of intent to commit an indictable offence. For example, if someone had been strangled in what was believed to be a sexually motivated attack, the officer would have to show that the perpetrator intended to commit sexual assault.

Now it is a standalone offence that takes into consideration not only the physical impact but also the mental trauma and fear experienced by a victim.

We want to:

- Increase awareness of this new non-fatal strangulation legislation across all communities
- Encourage reporting
- Make victims aware of the support available to them

The assets included in this toolkit will be shared across social media. However, we want people to be talking about this offence both online and in person.

What's In The Toolkit?

- Assets
- Key messages
- How to Share
- Contacts
- Support

How to access assets

We have created graphics and a video for you to share on your channels and within your networks.

This includes:

- Short video – what is non-fatal strangulation? From medical expert, Dr Sarah Hull.
- Social media graphics

All of the assets are hosted on a dedicated webpage on the Police Service of Northern Ireland's website and downloadable from here: www.psnl.police.uk/non-fatal-strangulation



Key Messages

Please use the key messages below as guide for when you are talking about non-fatal strangulation.

Non-fatal strangulation is now a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. Over the last ten years, seven people were strangled to death. Non-fatal can turn fatal very quickly. We welcome legislation that recognises how serious this act of violence is. Find out more: www.psni.police.uk/non-fatal-strangulation

What is non-fatal strangulation?

This is when someone strangles or intentionally affects their victim's ability to breathe in an attempt to control or intimidate them. However, it's not just putting hands around a throat.

This legislation also includes:

- Using a ligature like a scarf or belt
- Chokeholds or headlocks
- Hanging
- Drowning
- Smothering

Did you know non-fatal strangulation is now a standalone criminal offence in Northern Ireland?

Under the Justice (Sexual offences & trafficking victims) Act (NI) 2022 attackers are punishable by up to 14 years in prison. If you have been the victim of this crime, police will take this extremely seriously. Report online, via 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Often strangulation is glorified as a gratifying act for both parties in pornography. This is NOT a fun, 'consensual' act. You could face up to 14 years in

prison or worse, you could end somebody's life.

What happens if someone is strangled?

Bottom line: killing someone could take less pressure than shaking their hand. Non-fatal strangulation is a serious crime that could have fatal consequences. Find out more from a medical expert by watching this video here: www.psni.police.uk/non-fatal-strangulation

What happens if I report to Police?

Detectives in the Police's Public Protection Branch are committed to investigating this crime, all reports are taken incredibly seriously. They have specifically trained detectives who will treat you with sensitivity and respect and support you throughout the entire criminal justice process.

New non-fatal strangulation legislation for NI takes into consideration the trauma and fear that the victim experiences. Hundreds of officers and staff have already undergone specialist training.

Help and support is available to victims of non-fatal strangulation. You can find a list of local support services available for you to access here: www.psni.police.uk/non-fatal-strangulation

How To Follow And Share

We would encourage you to share the assets included in this toolkit across your own channels and in local community groups that you may be a member of/host.

Please follow our accounts and tag us when you do post.

Instagram: **@policesservice.ni**

Twitter: **@PoliceServiceNI**

Facebook: **@PoliceServiceNI**

We would also encourage you to use the key messages to start talking about this new legislation and the support available. There is no time limit – keep sharing and having those conversations, on and off line, when and where you can.

Contacts

For any queries about this awareness raising campaign or artwork requests please contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Strategic Communications and Engagement Department. Email: **Natalie.mcfall@psni.police.uk**

Support

You can find more advice and information on the Police Service of Northern Ireland's website: www.psni.police.uk/non-fatal-strangulation

If you have been the victim of non-fatal strangulation or concerned about someone you know, call the Police Service of Northern Ireland on 101.

In an emergency always call 999.



psni.police.uk