

# WOMEN'S NIGHT SAFETY TOOLKIT

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FOR HAMPSHIRE & THE ISLE OF WIGHT



**HAMPSHIRE**  
CONSTABULARY

# INTRODUCTION

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This toolkit is about taking practical steps together to make our two counties safer for women at night. Everyone should feel empowered to play their part in creating positive change and whatever your area of work, we encourage you to pledge your commitment to women's safety.

This toolkit is packed full of ideas, prompts and signposts to help make that change. Some will take time, but there will be others you can do today. Some may require additional resources, but many will not.

Whatever steps your organisation is able to take, you can be sure that every step will make a difference. Whether you're already proud of the great work you've been doing for women's safety or are curious about what you could try, read on to find out where to start.

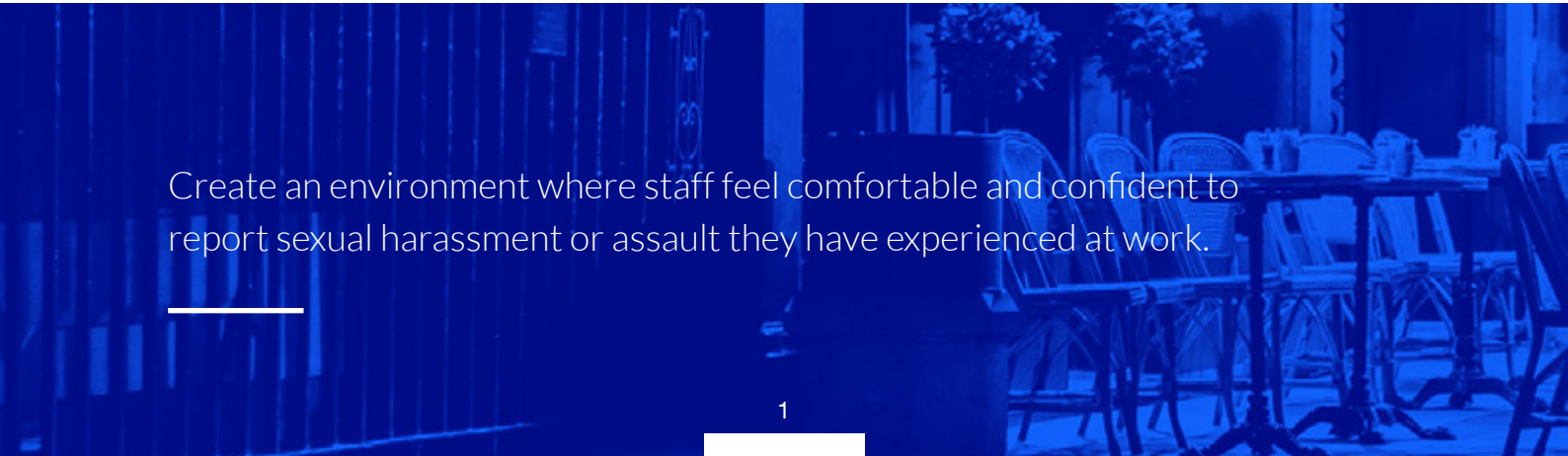
## Overview

Everyone has the right to enjoy the cities and towns in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight after dark, and yet the many thousands of women and girls living here still face many barriers when taking part in life after dark.

The night time environment is one factor that can increase the fear felt by women when out and about.

We know too that sexual offences have the highest levels of under-reporting. This is often because victims fear being blamed or not being believed, or don't know or don't trust the reporting process. Whether she is your employee or your customer, you can help her feel safer when speaking out.

We believe that sexual harassment, in all its forms, is unacceptable and that is why we are calling on businesses, organisations and services that operate in our two counties at night to step up and be part of the solution in protecting women and girls.



Create an environment where staff feel comfortable and confident to report sexual harassment or assault they have experienced at work.

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A YouGov poll of 1,697 women aged between 18 and 24 found that:

Streets and pubs, clubs or bars are the places where harassment is most likely to occur, with over six in ten 18-24 year-old women who say they have been harassed stating that it happened to them in the street (64%) or in a pub, club or bar (61%)

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2017/10/19/most-18-24-year-old-women-have-been-sexually-haras>

The emotional impact shouldn't be understated either. Alcohol awareness charity Drinkaware's 'Drunken Nights Out' Survey asked those who had been on the receiving end of drunken sexual harassment for their emotional responses.

When asked whether they had felt disgust, anger, fear, or surprise at the harassment, the top response for women was disgust (74%) followed by anger (63%). The lowest was surprise (14%).

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/media/frebaa1q/dno-students-survey-writeup.pdf>

Unacceptable behaviour is also high in our places of work.

A ComRes study for the BBC of 2,000 adults found that in British workplaces half of British women and a fifth of men have been sexually harassed. Of the women who said they had been harassed, 63% said they didn't report it to anyone.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-41741615>

The Equality Act of 2010 deems sexual harassment as a form of unlawful discrimination, yet we know that this behaviour is too often laughed off as 'banter.' Wherever sexual harassment or assault happens, we must call it out and ensure this behaviour has clear consequences.

# MAKING A CHANGE

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How you can start making a change is focusing on Responsibility, Report, Respond and Redesign.



## Responsibility

Who is responsible for unacceptable behaviour? The person doing it. It's a simple equation, and yet we know victim-blaming culture still holds sway in too many places of work and play.

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## Report

You can't prevent every single incident but when it does happen, reporting it should be a simple, discreet and hassle-free choice.

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## Respond

Choosing to speak up should be encouraged through promoting a supportive culture that believes those who do come forward. Staff should feel confident and clear on how to respond to these reports in a consistent, professional and empathetic way that prioritises safety and care, not personal judgement.

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## Redesign

We know that alongside experiences of harassment or assault, the perception of 'safety' plays into women's choices when avoiding certain areas, services and businesses. Nightlife spaces should be designed to be welcoming and to minimise the risk of enabling 'opportunistic' perpetrators, who may, for instance, use a lack of clear visibility in a venue to their advantage.

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# SEVEN POINT TOOLKIT FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

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## 1. Champion:

Appoint a women's night safety champion.

A women's night safety champion in your workplace is someone who makes a difference because they are:

- Passionate about helping people understand that women's safety is a shared responsibility
- Able to give time and resources to undertake meaningful activities and advocate for practical and cultural changes
- Willing to engage colleagues constructively and positively when taking action to address women's safety, and encouraging others to do so too
- Keen to spread the word about the commitments you have been able to meet
- Able to empower colleagues to challenge unsafe language, behaviours and practice and support the training agenda
- Many organisations will hopefully choose a member of staff with the time, energy and ability to inspire others to have honest conversations about this issue. Yes, men can be a champions too.

## 2. Communicate

Positive, public/staff facing communications, both online and in your space(s).

The simple act of developing, distributing and displaying a poster or notice about your organisation's values in relation to women's safety and the consequences for unacceptable behaviour can have a hugely positive impact. In doing so, you are naming something that many organisations have traditionally refused to acknowledge.

You might think publicly engaging with the topic could be read as 'we are not a safe place' when in fact, when we look at how common these experiences are, the direct opposite is true. Many women and girls are reassured to know what the values of that space are and who and where they can go to for support.

Too often, sexual harassment and assault is not spoken about due to fear of not being believed, or seen to be a private matter. We know that women's safety should be everyone's issue. Communication campaigns let staff and customers know that you take safety seriously. Naming your values publicly like this helps to create an environment where everyone feels confident to report incidents perpetrators will know that this kind of behaviour will not be tolerated.



Some dos and don'ts for successful women's safety messaging:

**Dos:**

- Use positive language (e.g. "we aim to create a welcome space for all our customers...")
- Focus on the consequences for unacceptable behaviour (e.g. "you will be asked to leave...")
- Include why this is not okay (e.g. "no one should feel unsafe while they are here")
- Summarise the options you're able to offer for reporting (e.g. text, email, app)

**Don'ts:**

- Use sensational language, imagery or humour when describing these offences
- Scaremongering or descriptions of victims or perpetrators
- Use any 'victim-blaming' language (e.g. telling people to stay with their friends and stay alert to their surroundings). While this might seem helpful and well intentioned, women who are targeted should not have to change their behaviour when it is perpetrators who can make a choice not to harass. Further on in the toolkit we have included more examples of victim-blaming language.

### 3. Support your Staff

#### Routes for reporting unacceptable behaviour while at work and supporting cultural change

Create an environment where staff feel comfortable and confident to report sexual harassment or assault they have experienced

at work. Provide signposting to local services and other HR and Employee Assistance resources if they need further information.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault and hate crimes more generally are not experienced in the same way as other offences. This is in part because they target identity, that is, who a person is or is perceived to be. This is very personal. It means that victims often blame themselves and remain silent about what happened, whether due to self-blame, fear of being blamed, of being disbelieved, or being further victimised.

Workplaces should acknowledge these barriers and help to reduce and remove them with a combination of cultural and practical changes.

### 4. Support the Public

#### Routes for reporting unacceptable behaviour while using your service or space at night

Having multiple ways to report will make it easier for people to overcome barriers they may be facing around sharing their experience with you. Accessibility is also an issue. Women with disabilities, including those who are deaf or blind, should feel equally able to make a report.

- Make sure that anyone who experiences sexual harassment or assault in a space you are responsible for is able to report it in a simple, straightforward way.

- Offer a range of reporting methods, for example: in person, email, telephone, or feedback form.
- Take into account how accessible these methods are and how you can make sure people trust these methods

## 5. Training: Responding

### Staff training on the issue, including what to say/do and not say/do, and any relevant policies

Ensure that every team member who is public facing is confident and has been trained in how to take a report of sexual harassment.

The person coming forward has chosen you because they feel able to let you know about what has happened. Most people never speak up due to fear of being blamed or disbelieved, so the first thing you say is vital.

#### Try this fail-safe opener:

Demonstrate belief (e.g. "Thank you for sharing what happened.")

Validate their experience (e.g. "That is not okay.")

Explain their options (e.g. "We have a policy here which is..." and "I'm going to see what I can do to help.")

Check you've understood what you've been told

Ask about any physical injuries or urgent needs

Then if necessary support the person in passing up to the relevant manager or team member to take the report forward. Offer to separately summarise their story on their behalf if they would like you to.

Responding effectively to harmful behaviour can start with focusing your attention and support on the person being targeted. Check in with the person who you think is experiencing unwanted attention, for example by making small talk, eye contact or giving them a discreet signal. This gives them an option to divert the harasser's attention.

## 6. Training: Recording

### Staff training on information sharing and appropriate recording of details

All organisations should follow appropriate discretion and confidentiality. Licensed premises should make use of their log book. If you have a HR team, consider additional training on understanding the dynamics of sexual harassment, assault, gender-based violence.

Staff should know that no matter how minor the incident might seem, it is important that it is recorded – in an appropriate amount of detail and in a factual manner without personal opinions.

Record all incidents and reports, no matter how minor. This helps others to keep up to date with issues and repeated behaviours. Keep your notes clear and stick to facts not opinions.

You can also ask for and record the name of any customer while they are on the premises, but they have the right to refuse to give this information. Remember your CCTV. Don't hesitate to report online, call **101** - or **999** in an emergency.

But remember, the targeted person may prefer not to speak to the police and should never be coerced into doing so. You will be assisting greatly by providing even a general third-party report to the police through **101, 999**, on-line reporting, or your local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

## 7. Designing for Safety

Audit your spaces and adapt them to promote a safer environment and reduce risk of crime

If your organisation manages its own spaces, these should always be designed with health and safety in mind. The additional 'safety planning' that many women report having to undertake on a daily basis to remain alert against unwelcome sexual behaviour tells us that further steps can be taken.

### Questions to consider:

- Does your premises' layout support a woman's ability to move around or leave an area easily?
- Are there sufficiently lit paths and appropriate levels of CCTV and do all staff understand who is responsible for using, maintaining and sharing this data?
- Can you designate a 'quiet' space in case staff or customers need some medical assistance or space to recover from an incident?
- In addition to this, designing for safety can include how you allocate your human resources. Are staff, including any security, positioned equally throughout the spaces you manage?
- How well-lit are the indoor and outdoor spaces you're responsible for?
- Would your CCTV be able to record any incident on site? Do you record sound?
- Can you confidently say your space is accessible for wheelchair users, Deaf people and people with disabilities?
- Can you confidently say that those who would prefer to use a gender-neutral bathroom would be able to find one in your building?



# A CHECKLIST FOR ACTION

This checklist provides ideas, inspiration, information and resources to help your organisation meet the requirements to keep women safe.

Tick off each one as you take more and more positive action, and ensure all your staff members are aware of what you have put in place.

Appoint a 'champion' for women's safety within your organisation and make all your staff members aware of who your champion is so that they can go to them for advice and resources on women's safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate to your staff and customers that your organisation takes women's safety seriously and that you encourage people to come forward to report incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure that anyone who experiences sexual harassment or assault in a space you are responsible for is able to report it in a simple, straightforward way	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a clear written policy and procedure on how your organisation will respond to reports of harassment or assault and what people can expect from the process and ensure all reported incidents of sexual harassment or assault are recorded in compliance with data and confidentiality guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer a range of reporting methods, for example: in person, email, telephone, or feedback form where you can	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make use of your internal and external channels to communicate your zero tolerance policy on unacceptable behaviour and clear options for how to report it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an environment where staff feel comfortable and confident to report sexual harassment or assault they have experienced at work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide signposting to local services and other HR and Employee Assistance resources if they need further information (where applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure your staff believe and support anyone who comes forward to report something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Make sure management support staff by encouraging belief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider providing specialist training for your staff on sexual harassment and assault, with a focus on how to respond and intervene if incidents take place	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check that all CCTV and lighting is functioning correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess your provision of accessible and gender-neutral toilets. Toilets can be a place of actual or perceived risk for women. Cubicle style bathrooms where women have a private safe place is important.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Make sure that anyone who experiences sexual harassment or assault in a space you are responsible for is able to report it in a simple, straightforward way.

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## Why is this important?

When referring to women in this document we are referring to people who self-identify with a female gender identity, this includes transgender women regardless of where they are on their journey of transitioning.

Transgender Women are often at significant risk of abuse and violence in public spaces and they often experience a disproportionately greater impact when they are the subject of degrading treatment.

Please be conscious of the vulnerability of people who identify as Gender Non-binary and Gender Fluid. People who identify as gender fluid or gender non-binary are likely to feel a disproportionately greater impact if they are abused or targeted in relation to gender. Their gender identity will be largely misunderstood by society and to be valued, welcomed and protected in a venue is likely to be very empowering.

For more help and guidance, contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team and Licensing Teams via [www.hampshire.police.uk/contact-us/](http://www.hampshire.police.uk/contact-us/) to network and share best practice.

By creating safe spaces, identifying perpetrators and making it easier for women to make reports, together we can reduce violence against women in Hampshire and the Isle and Wight.

# FURTHER INFORMATION

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Organisations that can help you further. Contact these specialised organisations for information on training, designing safety, accessibility and diversity resources:

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (for training and campaign support)

[www.rasasc.org.uk](http://www.rasasc.org.uk)

End Violence Against Women (for specialist women's support services)

[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)

Yellow Door (Preventing and responding to domestic & sexual abuse) [www.yellowdoor.org.uk](http://www.yellowdoor.org.uk)

Good Night Out Campaign CIC (training and licensed premises accreditation)

[www.goodnightoutcampaign.org](http://www.goodnightoutcampaign.org)

Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)

application <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/alpha2/request-information-under-clares-law/>

Suzy Lamplugh Trust (campaigning, education and support with a focus on stalking)

[www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)

Attitude is Everything (for disability and access advice and guidance)

[www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk](http://www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk)

Design and Access (for disability audits for general buildings)

[www.designandaccess.co.uk](http://www.designandaccess.co.uk)

Galop (specialist support for LGBT+ women) [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

Safer and the City (free street-smart app to safely navigate cities) [www.safeandthecity.com](http://www.safeandthecity.com)

Contact Hampshire Constabulary [www.hampshire.police.uk/contact-us/](http://www.hampshire.police.uk/contact-us/)



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