

# Safer Places for Women and Girls

Charter & Toolkit



**Violence  
Reduction  
Alliance**  
Stoke-on-Trent  
and Staffordshire

Violence Reduction Alliance  
May 2022  
C/O PFCC  
Staffordshire Police HQ  
Weston Road,  
Stafford,  
ST18 0YY  
[www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk)

Enquiries  
Email: [ssvra@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk](mailto:ssvra@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk)  
Copies of this Charter are available at:  
**[www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk)**

This Charter and Toolkit are supported by an online toolkit  
which can be found at **[www.SPWGCharter.tillr.io](http://www.SPWGCharter.tillr.io)**

This charter is inspired by the pledges  
created for the Mayor of London's  
Women's Night Safety Charter.

The text of this toolkit is based on work  
commissioned by the Mayor of London  
from the Good Night Out Campaign, as  
part of London's Women's Night Safety  
Charter programme.



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# Introduction

Violence against Women and Girls is a national and local priority.

All women and girls have the right to enjoy Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent both during the day and at night. However, we know that they experience challenges, meaning this isn't always possible.

Women and girls still face much higher levels of sexual harassment, violence, assault, and verbal abuse coupled with lower reporting levels, especially in the case of public space harassment.

A recent local survey highlighted 67% of female respondents had experienced harassment, intimidation, or violence in a public place, with 87% stating they did not report it to the police. 92% feared walking down subways or alleyways, followed by 90% feared walking in poorly lit areas in the night-time economy.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent multi-agency Violence Reduction Alliance (VRA) believes that harassment and violence in any form is unacceptable. It is committed to creating safer public spaces for all, and particularly for women and girls, along with others who might find themselves vulnerable when using such spaces.

The VRA is calling on all businesses and organisations operating in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to work together to reduce violence against women and girls in public spaces and to improve feelings of safety in the day and at night, including the night-time economy.

# Women and Girls views and experiences in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

A local survey undertaken in June 2021, highlighted the following views and experiences of women and girls in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire:

"Women should not be feeling like this in the 21st century, as an older lady I don't feel secure going out after 9pm and no one should feel like this."

"Getting told by police or government spokespeople after a woman in the area has been murdered or assaulted that 'not going out at night' is a precaution we should take is insulting. Is that really the best society can do for us? We're adult women; we're not children. We shouldn't have a 'be home by...' time."

"As a young female I always feel on my guard if I am out alone, even during the day time. Even 'harmless banter' can feel intimidating, which comes down to re-educating that this is not acceptable."

"I think that more should be done in the workplace, some men of a certain generation can't see that women may feel unsafe, senior management don't take this seriously."

"In the town where I work it would be alleyways and empty streets My daughter works in a pub and is frequently subjected to harassing comments and attention that is unwanted and sexual in nature."



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"It's really important that while moves are made to protect the safety of everyone in public, we acknowledge that male violence is responsible for the majority of public harm and focus on shaming and inculcating fear in THEM for their behaviour, creating change, rather than on women being forced to adapt even more."

"I am so angry that at 57 years old I am still being told it is up to me to be aware, to be careful where I go, when it is men who assault women who should be thinking about their own behaviours and its impact on us. As long as the clear message is be afraid, don't get into trouble it is a green light for men to behave however they like towards women."

"A male friend of mine said he never had to ask himself if it was safe to go out alone but from a small child I was always warned about "strange men" and have grown up accepting that there are certain things a woman can't do, like going out alone at night. This can't be right, why do we accept this curtail of our freedom? Because that's how it's always been and a woman who ventures out on her own at night is viewed partly at fault if anything happens to her, "why was she out so late on her own" is the usual comment."

"Girls and women will only be safe when the consensus is that street harassment is unacceptable and to be condemned by all those who see it as well as experience it."

"Why don't I have the same freedom as my boyfriend and my father to walk in my own area without being harassed? I am an adult woman. I shouldn't have to take someone with me. I've been harassed in broad daylight at 9.00am in the morning going to work in a business suit. It's happened at workplace, at school, whilst running. It doesn't matter what you wear or what you're doing - it happens anyway."



# Safer Places for Women and Girls Charter

The Charter is part of the VRA's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls, bringing together a range of partners and businesses to take responsibility and practical steps to make their area a safer place.

The VRA encourages you and your organisation to pledge your commitment to women's safety.

As part of the Safer Places for Women and Girls Charter an online interactive toolkit has been developed –

[www.SPWGCharter.tillr.io](http://www.SPWGCharter.tillr.io)

The interactive resource will assist the Charter signatories in meeting the six commitments of the Charter as well as signpost to best practice, information, and other useful resources.

This will include:

- Best practice examples from local businesses and organisations in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent to be shared with signatories to use rather than re-creating the wheel;
- New and existing campaigns on a national level and as well as from the Violence Reduction Alliance;
- National video campaigns - **#Haveaword** <https://youtu.be/qbk3iJqmjNU> and **Don't be that Guy** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf-rOrOXoRI> and **Home Office enough campaign** - <https://enough.campaign.gov.uk/>

Businesses and organisations can support significant progress with their colleagues, day to day business, policies and processes as well as supporting safer places in their communities. No matter what size step you take, every step taken makes a difference.

## Signing the Charter – What does it mean?

The Safer Places for Women and Girls Charter is a voluntary pledge to show you and your organisation take women and girl's safety seriously. By signing the Charter\*, you show your acknowledgement of the issue and that you're ready to get proactive in improving women and girl's safety and experience. We're building a strong network dedicated to making a positive change to women and girl's experiences across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

This Toolkit provides ideas, inspiration, information and resources to help your organisations meet the six commitments. Whatever your organisation, there will be something you can do to better support women and girl's safety.

\*When you sign up to the Charter, you will be provided with a poster, window decal or social media content to identify that your organisation/business is a Charter signatory



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# Charter Commitments

We have drawn together a number of commitments to support the safety of women and girls in public places. We are asking businesses and local organisations to;

- 1 Champion**  
Appoint a named person to lead the Charter commitments.
- 2 Communicate**  
Positive public and staff facing communication campaigns both on line and in your space.
- 3 Support Staff**  
Provide a mechanism which enables your staff to report unacceptable behaviour whilst at work.
- 4 Support Public**  
Provide a mechanism which enables the public to report unacceptable behaviour whilst using your service or space.
- 5 Training**  
Develop understanding, skills and confidence to identify vulnerability, respond, record and share information appropriately.
- 6 Designing out crime**  
Create a safer environment to reduce the risk of crime.



# Actioning the Commitments

## 1. Champion

- a. Appoint a Champion for women's safety within your organisation / business.
- b. Ensure all staff members are aware of your Champion.
- c. Network and share best practice through the VRA.

A Champion is someone who makes a difference because they:

- Are the point of contact for all work undertaken on this issue;
- Ensure the Charter commitments are met by the organisation/ business;
- Keep all staff updated on the Charter and its implementation;
- Commit to helping all staff understand that women's safety and vulnerability is a shared responsibility;
- Give the time and resources to advocate for practical and cultural change;

- Engage with colleagues positively when taking action to improve the safety of women and girls, and encourage others to do so;
- Empower colleagues to challenge unsafe language and behaviours;
- Support the embedding of relevant policies and procedures.

The Champion will also be the main point of contact for the Charter and will have access to the on-line Toolkit - [www.SPWGCharter.tillr.io](http://www.SPWGCharter.tillr.io), which provides potential best practice to help achieve the commitments of the Charter.

# Communication

## 2. Communication

- a. **Communicate to staff and the public that your organisation/business has a zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour.**
- b. **Promote channels to raise awareness of and encourage the reporting of unacceptable behaviour.**

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.

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.

Communication campaigns let staff and customers know that you take their safety seriously and creates an environment where everyone feels confident to report incidents and perpetrators know that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

A range of local campaigns have been developed to support the prevention of violence against women and girls, these include:

### Make No Excuses

A campaign to highlight behaviour and encourage change, provide a daily insight into those who experience harassment, have experienced unsafe environments, empower people to make change and help others without putting themselves at risk.



### Unite Against Harassment

An empowerment campaign aiming to support, advise and help to educate against harassment in everyday situations including work, home, social and leisure spaces.



### Safer Nights – including Signs of Spiking

A campaign to support, advise and help to educate everyone to have a great night out in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.



The campaign resources, including posters, key messages and social media content can be found at: [www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk)

## National Campaigns

A number of national campaigns have been developed to support this work and resources can be found in the 'Further Information' section of this Charter.



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# Support Staff

## 3. Support Staff

- a. **Establish a positive workplace where staff are comfortable and confident to report unacceptable behaviour, e.g. harassment or assault.**
- b. **Communicate company policies on work ethics and unacceptable behaviour.**
- c. **Signpost to company HR and local support services should they be required.**

Unwelcome sexual jokes, comments, staring, wolf whistling and inappropriate touching are all forms of harassment.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault and hate crimes more generally target identity and can be very personal. Victims often blame themselves, remaining silent about what happened. Reports are often not made due to fear of being blamed, of being disbelieved or being further victimised.

Workplaces should address these barriers with a combination of cultural and practical changes;

- Communicate the company policy to all staff and online;
- Make sure all employees and management understand what all forms of harassment are;
- Reporting is confidential and taken seriously;
- Staff and management meetings regularly discuss and plan ways safety of women and girls could be prioritised;
- Invest in staff training (incl. harassment, vulnerability etc.);
- Ensure a harassment free workplace.

# Example Policies/ Guidance

The Health and Safety Executive have produced guidance and an example policy to reduce work-based violence towards staff:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/policies.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/examplepolicy.pdf>

These can be adapted to include employee related violence and to cover gender-based violence.

<https://www.template.net/business/policy/workplace-violence-prevention-policy/>

Gender-based violence policies:

There are various template policies available related to gender-based violence and a simple web browser search will provide these examples.



# Support the Public

## 4. Support the Public

- a. **Policies and procedures on harassment (defining how your organisation / business will respond to reports of unacceptable behaviour.**
- b. **Clear, simple reporting mechanisms for anyone experiencing harassment such as written, telephone, email, social media.**

Harassment can cause fear, alarm and distress. The repercussions of not challenging unacceptable behaviour can negatively influence culture whilst having a knock-on effect of impacting business and local economies.

It is critical that organisations / businesses have policies in place to ensure that the public can recognise unacceptable behaviour and understand how complaints will be dealt with.

Policies should have a clear statement that your organisation / business is committed to providing a safe environment for the public, free from discrimination on any ground and from unacceptable behaviour including harassment. A zero-tolerance policy is operated; all incidents will be treated seriously, respectfully and confidentially, with a prompt investigation on allegations

made. No one will be victimised for making a complaint.

It is now more important than ever to fight the stigma and ensure victims are listened to, believed, and supported.

### Examples

The policies highlighted in Commitment 3 of this Charter – Support Staff can be inclusive to address this Commitment - Support the Public.

# Training

## 5. Training

- a. Provide initial and ongoing staff training to improve understanding, skills and confidence to identify vulnerability, respond, record and share information appropriately.
- b. Staff are fully aware the organisation/businesses reporting procedures for unacceptable behaviour.
- c. Staff support and signpost those who report unacceptable behaviour.

Well trained staff naturally improve the overall performance of your business and can also help to create a safer environment for both colleagues and the public.

### Benefits to training

- The organisation/business environment becomes safer;
- Organisation/business culture is strengthened;
- Staff will have the skills and confidence to identify vulnerability, handle difficult situations and pro-actively respond;

- Staff and the public are better protected and supported;
- Defines and develops appropriate behaviour / culture;
- Creates a safe and welcoming environment the public are more likely to revisit.

### Local Training

Re-Solv in partnership with the Violence Reduction Alliance have developed Vulnerability Awareness Training. This training can be delivered face to face by contacting [SSVRA@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk](mailto:SSVRA@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk) and is also available at:

A webinar version of this training can be viewed at [www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk)

A short induction into this training can be viewed at [www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk)

### National Training

Good Night Out Campaign (training and licensed premises accreditation) [www.goodnightoutcampaign.org](http://www.goodnightoutcampaign.org)

### Welfare and Vulnerability

**Engagement – WAVE** is a training session which aims to increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of those working in licensed premises focusing on identifying vulnerability and making appropriate interventions [www.safersounds.org.uk/wave](http://www.safersounds.org.uk/wave)



# Crime

## 6. Designing-out Crime

- a. Check lighting and CCTV are in working order.
- b. Audit internal and external buildings and spaces.
- c. Attend local meetings (with organisations such as PABCIS, Police etc.) to share best practice and local initiatives.

Daytime and night-time economy spaces should be designed to be welcoming, minimising the risk of enabling 'opportunistic' perpetrators, who may use a lack of clear visibility in a venue or outside space to their advantage.

Your business / organisation should always be designed with health and safety in mind.

Consider:

- Premise layout;
- Lighting;
- CCTV;
- Designated safe space;
- Security.

### Partnerships against Business Crime in Staffordshire (PABCIS)

PABCIS is a partnership, working to tackle business crime in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. PABCIS is a membership-based organisation, which in the main is a voluntary membership. The Partnership is focussed on preventing and reducing crime and disorder affecting retail and night time economy businesses, in town and city centres throughout Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

PABCIS carries out many functions and empowers businesses by imposing sanctions on individuals who impact on our communities, and have updated their nightlife exclusions policy to support local businesses in their aim to reduce violence against women and girls.

For further information or to join PABCIS, please go to [www.pabcis.co.uk](http://www.pabcis.co.uk).

### National Resources:

Police Crime Prevention Initiatives - [www.policecpi.com](http://www.policecpi.com)

Licensing Savi (security and vulnerability initiative for licensed venues) - [www.licensingssavi.com](http://www.licensingssavi.com)



# Charter Checklist

**1**

## **Champion Action List**

- a. Appoint a Champion for women's safety within your organisation / business.
- b. Ensure all staff members are aware of your Champion.
- c. Network and share best practice through the VRA.

**2**

## **Communication Action List**

- a. Communicate to staff and the public that your organisation/ business has a zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour.
- b. Promote channels to raise awareness of and encourage the reporting of unacceptable behaviour.

**3**

## **Support Staff Action List**

- a. Establish a positive workplace where staff are comfortable and confident to report unacceptable behaviour, e.g. harassment or assault.
- b. Communicate company policies on work ethics and unacceptable behaviour.
- c. Sign post to company HR and local support services should they be required.

**4**

## **Support the Public Action List**

- a. Establish a positive workplace where staff are comfortable and confident to report unacceptable behaviour, e.g. harassment or assault.
- b. Communicate company policies on work ethics and unacceptable behaviour.



## 5

### Training Action List

- a. Provide initial and ongoing staff training to improve understanding, skills and confidence to identify vulnerability, respond, record and share information appropriately.
- b. Staff are fully aware the organisation/businesses reporting procedures for unacceptable behaviour.
- c. Staff support and signpost those who report unacceptable behaviour.

## 6

### Designing-out Crime Action List

- a. Check lighting and CCTV are in working order.
- b. Audit internal and external buildings and spaces.
- c. Attend local meetings (with organisations such as PABCIS, Police etc.) to share best practice and local initiatives.



# Other Initiatives/ Campaigns



## Ask for Angela

The safety initiative 'Ask for Angela' is for people who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened and can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff that they require help with their situation and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them. This might be through reuniting them with a friend, seeing them to a taxi, or by calling venue security and/or the police.

<https://www.areyouok.co.uk/im-a-professional/campaign-materials/ask-for-angela/>



## Hollie Guard

Hollie Guard is an app that can track a person's location as they make their way home, as they're out jogging or cycling, or simply going about their day-to-day tasks. If they feel unsafe, all they need to do is shake their phone to send an alert to a group of contacts to warn them that they may be in danger. Once the phone has been shaken, it will then start recording both audio and visual footage of what's happening around them.

This will be saved and sent to their contacts so they can see what is happening and call the police or ambulance service if they are required.

If the phone is shaken again, a flashing light and high-pitched beeping will start coming from the phone to alert people nearby that person may be in danger.

<https://hollieguard.com/>



# Further Information

Staffordshire Women's Aid  
[www.staffordshirewomensaid.org.uk](http://www.staffordshirewomensaid.org.uk)

The Survivors Trust (Rape and Sexual Violence Services) -  
[www.thesurvivorstrust.org/](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/)

Sarac (Sexual abuse and rape advice centre) - [www.sarac.org.uk](http://www.sarac.org.uk)

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner – [www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/initiatives/](http://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/initiatives/)

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 and general buildings) -  
[www.designandaccess.co.uk](http://www.designandaccess.co.uk)

Good Night Out Campaign (training and licensed premises accreditation) -  
[www.goodnightoutcampaign.org](http://www.goodnightoutcampaign.org)

End Violence Against Women (for specialist women's support services) -  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk.uk)

Police Crime Prevention Initiatives -  
[www.policecpi.com](http://www.policecpi.com)

Partnership against Business Crime in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent -  
[www.pabcis.co.uk](http://www.pabcis.co.uk)

Suzy Lamplugh Trust (Campaigning, education and support focusing on stalking) - [www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)

Licensing Savi (security and vulnerability initiative for licensed venues) -  
[www.licensingsavi.com](http://www.licensingsavi.com)

StreetSafe - to anonymously report public places where you have felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues, e.g. street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours, e.g. being followed or verbally abused.

[www.police.uk/pu/notices/streetsafe/street-safe/](http://www.police.uk/pu/notices/streetsafe/street-safe/)

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance -  
[www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionalliance.co.uk)

Mayor of London - #Haveaword  
<https://youtu.be/qbk3iJqmjNU>

Police Scotland – Don't be that guy  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf-rOrOXoRI>

Sussex Police – Do the right thing  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=642113260253363>

Home Office – Enough is Enough: Be part of the change  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_f-SY0EOzrk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_f-SY0EOzrk)

Zero Tolerance -  
<https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/>





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