



WOMEN'S NIGHT SAFETY CHARTER NI: LISTEN, LEARN, LEAD

To support the Women's Night Safety Charter NI, any organisation that operates at night can sign up to our seven simple pledges inspired by The London Mayor's Night Safety Charter, which was a part of the Mayor's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and London's commitment to the UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces global initiative:

- **Nominate a champion in your organisation who actively promotes women's night safety**
- **Demonstrate to staff and customers that your organisation takes women's safety at night seriously, for example through a communications campaign**
- **Remind customers and staff that Northern Ireland is safe, but tell them what to do if they experience harassment when working, going out or travelling**
- **Encourage reporting by victims and bystanders as part of your communications campaign**
- **Train staff to ensure that all women who report are believed**
- **Train staff to ensure that all reports are recorded and responded to**
- **Design your public spaces and workplaces to make them safer for women at night**

BACKGROUND

In Northern Ireland we believe a night out does us a world of good. We believe in "seeing where the night takes us" whether it be sipping cocktails, hitting the dancefloor, listening to live music, or having a low-key late dinner with friends. We are proud of our culture and the buzz our hospitality venues are famous for and we want to make sure that everyone feels free to enjoy them until the small hours of the morning.

We know that, even in 2022, women still experience disproportionate levels of sexual abuse, harassment, and violence. An investigation by UN Women found that 97% of women aged 18-24 had been sexually harassed. We also know that these figures do not paint a true picture as these kinds of offences are often under reported. If a woman does not feel she will be believed, or she doesn't trust that her story will be taken seriously, she may not feel safe to speak out.

This news will not come as a surprise to many women in Northern Ireland. "Call me when you get in safe" is a common parting plea at the end of the night for women and navigating street harassment and catcalling is sadly an accepted hazard of the walk home.

A young woman said:

"I often think I would love to go into the city centre and enjoy a drink or some food by myself after a stressful day at work, but I worry about hassle from groups of guys and the later journey home seems risky. A solitary moment to relax at the end of the day seems somehow out of bounds for women."

We believe we all have the responsibility and the ability to change this. We need to change how society responds to violence against women and girls. This means that first and foremost we need to listen to the voices of women. We need to inspire a culture of respect and belief.

Violence against Women and Girls starts with ideas, words, and thoughts long before it becomes action- if we are to create a society where women are safe, we must challenge the attitudes and beliefs which can lead to harassment and abuse on nights out being normalised and minimised.

Alcohol is not the root cause of sexual violence. It is, however, often wrongly used as an excuse for these crimes. In drink spiking incidents (where alcohol or drugs are added to someone's drink without their knowledge) the onus is all too often put onto the victim to protect themselves, for example by covering their drink with their hand. However, there are now reports of a new form of spiking which involves the victim being injected in some way without their consent. It has never been more important to take a stance against these crimes, and to continue in our efforts to make venues safe and enjoyable for everyone.

We envision a Northern Ireland in which women and girls live free from violence and the threat of it. This means women and girls taking up space and living their lives to their full potential. It means women heading out for the night knowing they are going to have a great time and get home safe. Signing up to the Women's Night Safety Charter NI and making the seven pledges is an important first step to make this vision a reality.

After signing up to the Women's Night Safety Charter, organisations are asked to commit to making lasting change through staff, policies, and day-to-day work; as well as the important role within the communities in which businesses are based.

WHITE RIBBON NI

White Ribbon is a global movement to end male violence against women. Its goal, unchanged since its inception in 1991, is to send out the message that violence against women in all its forms is unacceptable.

White Ribbon NI was launched in Northern Ireland in November 2021. Through awareness raising and education, White Ribbon NI seeks to end violence against women in all its forms. White Ribbon believes that giving everyone the information they need to challenge the ideas and attitudes which have perpetuated violence against women and girls is a step we can all take towards being part of the solution.

White Ribbon provides 'Listen, Learn, Lead' workshops and action plans which inform, empower, and encourage people to speak out about violence against women and girls.

To help guide you to meet the seven pledges on the Women's Night Safety Charter White Ribbon NI has created a 'Listen Learn Lead' toolkit tailored specifically to the evening economy, which will help you cover all bases using a simple checklist and provides you with the support you need continue ensuring the safety of women in your business.

LISTEN

- Encourage ideas and feedback from all staff members of the organisation on what they would like to see included in the Listen, Learn, Lead action plan
- Encourage and empower all staff to read the seven pledges of the Night Safety Charter and the Listen, Learn Lead toolkit supplied, and discuss any questions they may have.
- Add the sign of the six pledges of the Women's Night Safety Charter NI, and familiarisation with the Listen Learn Lead kit, to staff induction.

Action	Start Date	Lead person responsible	Achieved Y/N

LEARN

- Develop a clear system for reporting, recording, assessing, and dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour within your business (for staff and customers)
- Train staff on noticing and responding to incidents of unacceptable behaviour by providing the material in the toolkit. Additional training is available by contacting White Ribbon NI.
- Train staff on appropriate recording of details of incidents.
- Have good knowledge of organisations locally who support women and girls and know how to signpost to their services.
- Consider your spaces and adapt accordingly to promote safety for all customers.

Action	Start Date	Lead person responsible	Achieved Y/N

LEAD

- Identify, appoint, and support a number (suitable for the size of your business) of Women's Night Safety Champions from your organisation (from various roles and levels of seniority as applicable). These champions will facilitate and implement the objectives on the Women's Night safety action plan to keep women safe.
- Ensure staff induction incorporates the Women's Night Safety pledge, supported by ongoing training and internal communications which challenge the attitudes and beliefs that lead to violence against women in all its forms.
- Ensure that no organisational promotional materials use abusive or sexist imagery.
- Evidence that you have developed a zero-tolerance approach to sexist, harassing or abusive behaviours from staff and/or customers.
- Display your commitment to challenging the attitudes and beliefs which lead to violence, abuse, and harassment of women on a range of settings such as your website, email, and signage.
- Display signed Women's Night Safety Charter NI posters in your premises.

Action	Start Date	Lead person responsible	Achieved Y/N

Name of White Ribbon NI Champion:

Signature:

Name of White Ribbon NI Champion:

Signature:

Name of White Ribbon NI Champion:

Signature:

Name of White Ribbon NI Champion:

Signature:

COMMENTS

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LISTEN: WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Let staff know that as an organisation you intend to sign up to the Women's Night Safety Charter NI. Encourage conversation around this and allow staff to feedback on their own experiences.

That sad fact is that misogynistic attitudes and behaviours exist throughout society, and violence against women in all its forms starts with ideas, words, and thoughts long before they become action. If we are to create a society where women are safe, we must all work hard to create a culture of respect, equality, and safety.

You could:

- Call a staff meeting to discuss the Women's Night Safety Charter NI and 'Listen, Learn, Lead' plan.
- Send a reminder to staff on all policies already in place which offer protection and are designed to make them feel safe at work.
- Encourage staff to give feedback on policies and encourage suggestions for improvement.
- Enlist the support of the leadership team, managers and supervisors and hold discussions on how to help support women already on the team and encourage more women to progress.
- Discuss with your staff team how confident they would feel when challenging harmful misogynous or disrespectful jokes, remarks, or conversation. Discuss the '5 Ds' of bystander intervention (see 'Lead' section for details) and implement further training to upskill if needed or desired.
- Encourage and empower all staff to read the 'Listen, Learn Lead' toolkit supplied and discuss any questions they may have before continuation of the plan.
- Add the signing of the Women's Night Safety Charter NI and familiarisation with the 'Listen Learn Lead' toolkit to staff induction. Listen to any questions, ideas or fears new staff may have. A culture of belief can become part of the ethos within your hospitality team by conversing regularly about women's safety, inclusion, and diversity.
- Staff teams should be encouraged to challenge victim-blaming attitudes and managers should provide and encourage learning opportunities on this topic.

VICTIM BLAMING

Victim-blaming describes the practice of holding victims partly responsible for what has happened to them; blaming someone who has endured abuse, violence, sexual violence, or harassment with either part or whole responsibility for the event.

Often, victim-blaming theories rely on the premise that individuals should recognise the dangers that exist in society and therefore should take the necessary precautions to maintain a certain level of safety. Those who do not take such precautions are perceived as blameworthy for the abuse they have been subjected to.

These perceptions in effect shift the culpability away from the perpetrator of the crime onto the victim. When discussing issues of domestic abuse, violence against women, or sexual assault, we often hear victim-blaming statements such as,

"Why didn't she leave?"

"Why would she put the kids through that."

"She shouldn't have got herself into that state"

“She’s only calling it sexual harassment now because he didn’t want a relationship with her”

“She was leading him on all night, what exactly does she expect”

“She wasn’t complaining when she was getting tipped all night”

Victim blaming only serves to empower the person doing the harm and silence the victim. Throughout our lives we do judge and we do make assumptions, and this is as natural and automatic as our heartbeat.

“A bias is a shortcut, an automatic association, a tool your brain uses to make decisions without using lots of time and energy. It is an automatic association, it is not a choice, and it is not a product of logic, morality, or character.”

“We are not responsible for our first thought, but we are responsible for our second thought and our first action”

- Joe Gerstandt

LEARN: WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Develop a clear system for reporting, recording, assessing, and dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour within your business (for staff and customers).

DISCLOSURES / REPORTS

When you begin speaking out on these issues your team may receive disclosures from other staff or customers. We want to empower you to be able to respond confidently when someone needs help or advice. It is important that every team member is confident and has been trained in how to respond to a disclosure/report initially and react accordingly whether that be recording the incident, signposting the person to an agency for support or simply showing the person they are believed and the harm which has been done to them has been acknowledged.

- Believe. You are not gathering evidence. It is not your job to evaluate what the customer/staff member is saying. If someone isn't believed the first time, and they confide in someone, it may take many years for them to speak about it again or worse still they may never disclose the harm to anyone else.
- Respect the person. Give the person space and do not push for further information. Respect the person's physical and mental space.
- Ask about any physical injuries or urgent needs.
- Listen but do not be presumptive or ask leading questions. The customer/staff member making the disclosure/report should only have to tell their full story once. With the person's permission, record the details in the manner which has been agreed in staff training. This prevents them being retraumatised by having to tell the story again and again. Check you've understood what you've been told and recorded accurately.
- Be honest. Do not offer total confidentiality if you cannot give this and explain who you will have to tell and why (for example, child protection reasons or suicide risk)
- Signpost the person to the correct organisation which can provide help and support. This is why it is important to know which support services are in your community. If appropriate and agreed with the person making the report/disclosure, share the information with management. You may offer to summarise their story on their behalf to the agency you have signposted them to – however reassure that it is completely their choice whether you provide this service.
- Empower. Let them know that everybody deserves to feel safe, and that what is happening/has happened is not their fault.
- Seek support for yourself. The fact that someone has been able to disclose to you means that you have helped them feel safe already. However, after hearing about an incident of harassment or abuse we can often be left with feelings of helplessness, responsibility, or anger. Understand this is normal and seek support for yourself if needed.
- Train staff on noticing and responding to incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Additional training is available by contacting White Ribbon NI. If you have a HR team, consider additional training on

understanding the dynamics of sexual harassment, assault, violence against women and girls in all its forms, domestic abuse, stalking and the legislation which protects women in Northern Ireland.

ASK FOR ANGELA

Hospitality Ulster, in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, have launched the 'Ask for Angela' scheme in Northern Ireland to encourage night time economy businesses to help people enjoy even safer nights out in public.

Ask for Angela is a support mechanism aimed at informing and educating hospitality industry staff about customer welfare and vulnerability. Through a code phrase that can be used by customers to discreetly seek help, 'Ask for Angela' reassures customers that support is available. The code phrase is pointless without proper and straightforward training for your staff, so HU has provided everything you need to get started.

Simply sign up at hospitalityulster.org/askforangela where you can access full training resources to ensure your staff are informed and prepared to act if someone approaches them to 'Ask for Angela'. A list of local businesses and organisations who sign up will be kept on public record.

- Train staff on appropriate recording of details of incidents. Ensure all reported incidents of sexual harassment or assault are recorded in compliance with data and confidentiality guidelines with discretion and confidentiality. Licensed premises should make use of their logbook.
- Ensure that your HR team / manager / management team has appropriate guidelines to discourage the flow of gossip and misinformation if a disclosure has been made by one team member against another. Staff who make disclosures should not be subject to victim blaming or deemed problematic for speaking up.
- Have good knowledge of organisations locally who support women and girls and know how to signpost to their services. (List of services provided at the back of this toolkit)
- Consider your spaces and adapt accordingly to promote safety for all customers.

MAKING YOUR SPACE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE

Check that all CCTV and lighting is functioning correctly and is fit for purpose. Train staff on CCTV policy so they can respond to customers queries confidently and promptly. All staff should understand who is responsible for using, maintaining, and sharing this data should it be required.

Meet and converse with the neighbourhood policing team to discuss women's safety in your hospitality premises.

Make a safe space – a quiet private area where medical attention can be provided, or support can be given to someone who needs it.

Discuss the Women's Night Safety Charter NI and 'Listen, Learn Lead' toolkit with security staff and have a conversation on how to work together to adequately cover the entire space to minimise risk.

Make sure your space is accessible for wheelchair users, deaf people, and people with disabilities.

LEAD: WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Identify, appoint, and support a number (suitable for the size of your business) of Women's Night Safety Champions from your organisation (from various roles and levels of seniority as applicable). These champions will facilitate and implement the objectives on the Women's Night safety action plan to keep women safe.

WHO CAN BE WOMEN'S NIGHT SAFETY CHAMPION?

- Passion, perseverance, and determination are more important than experience in this role.
- The champion should be someone who has the time, energy, and ability to inspire and empower others.
- They will actively promote a culture of respect and belief within the organisation.
- They should be willing to participate in frank and honest conversations about the subject and will be the point of contact for any work done on the issue.
- They will carefully adhere to all guidance applicable to the organisation within this Listen, Learn, Lead kit and ultimately make sure the six commitments of The Women's Night safety are met.

ENSURE THAT NO ORGANISATIONAL PROMO MATERIALS USE ABUSIVE/SEXIST IMAGERY

Evidence that you have developed a zero-tolerance approach to sexist, harassing or abusive behaviours from staff and customers and communicate this to your customer base. Display this commitment to challenging the attitudes and beliefs which lead to violence, abuse, and harassment of women on a range of settings such as your website, email and signage.

Communicating a zero-tolerance policy is extremely important. We must signal to perpetrators that their behaviour will not be tolerated and reassure victims that if they are to report, they will be believed and supported.

In promotional posters, social media channels, staff handbooks websites:

- Use reassuring statements such as "If something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable, you can speak to any member of our specially trained staff who will deal with your report promptly and discreetly"
- Declare the consequences for violating rules clearly
 - "You will be asked to leave immediately if..."*
 - "CCTV footage will be used as evidence"*
 - "We have a zero-tolerance approach to "*
- Do not use graphic images which can be at best off-putting and at worst re-traumatising for victims.

- Do not use 'victim-blaming' language however helpful and well-meaning you intend the communicated guidance to be. Women should not have to change their behaviour on a night out to keep themselves safe. They should be able to relax and enjoy their night. In any incident of harassment or abuse the blame should always be placed firmly on the perpetrator.
- Communicate policy in simple, clear language on posters or social media posts.
- Use social media to make customers aware of any extra training or safety precautions you have put in place. Taking these steps are something your business should be very proud of and letting customers increases trust and confidence in your organisation.
- Proudly display Women's Night Safety Charter in your business. This should be somewhere it is visible to increase the confidence of all customers and pose a stark warning for anyone who's behaviour is dangerous or inappropriate.

THE 5 Ds OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

We can all be bystanders – everyday events of harassment unfold around us at some point in our lives. Everyone can make the choice to actively support anyone who is experiencing harm – we all have the ability to help in some way however small.

When we intervene, we become “upstanders” or “active bystanders” and we signal to the person causing harm that their behaviour is unacceptable. If such messages are consistently reinforced within our community, we can shift the boundaries of what is considered acceptable and change the social norms that have allowed violence against women and girls to continue.

Five steps to help when witnessing a problematic or potentially problematic situation at work or in your personal life.

- Notice the event. Pay attention to what is going on around you.
- Interpret if there is a problem. Err on the side of caution.
- Assume personal responsibility. If not you, then who?
- Know how to help. You do not have to put yourself in harm’s way. Support can be direct or indirect.
- Implement one of the 5 Ds Bystander Intervention tactics.

The 5 Ds of Bystander intervention are designed to be used by absolutely anyone to support someone who is being harassed, emphasise that what is happening to them is not ok and model the kind of leadership in their peer group or workplace that shows everyone has the power to make our society a safer place.

It can also be used in peer groups where someone in the group is using language or expressing ideas that encourage misogyny, sexism, victim blaming or any type of discrimination.

DISTRACT

Distraction is a subtle yet effective way to intervene. Its aim is to derail the incident of harassment, abuse or inappropriate behaviour by interrupting it.

The idea is to ignore the person or group who is harassing and engage directly with the person being harassed.

Do not refer to the incident which is happening. Instead talk about something completely unrelated.

Distract attention away from the person who the subject of the harassment by asking for the time, asking a work-related question, if the person is a stranger pretending to know them.

Change the conversation to another topic if “banter” in a group is becoming inappropriate

DELEGATE

Delegation is asking someone else for help with intervening. Scan the situation to assess risk and delegate task to someone else around you.

This could mean alerting a senior, a manager, a security guard, a bus driver, HR department or another third party – perhaps with more perceived authority to intervene. Or it could be simply asking another friend who is closer to the person causing the harm to step up.

DELAY

If the situation is too dangerous to challenge and your assessment tells you there is a threat of escalation of violence it may be better to wait for the situation to pass.

If there is a victim in the situation who is being subjected to harm it is important to stay with them.

Once it has passed you then have an opportunity to ask the person subjected to the harassment if they are ok and reassure them that what just happened to them was wrong.

You can then report what has happened or gently encourage the person subjected to the harassment to report it.

DOCUMENT

You can document the situation by writing notes, taking screenshots of group conversations, or recording on your phone (although video recording is not recommended in most situations) or by checking CCTV footage is being taken and noting the time of the incident.

If there has been a victim in the incident you are recording, it is important then to ask the person afterwards who has been subjected to the harm what they would like you to do with the documentation.

Carefully consider the information supplied previously around record keeping, disclosures and reports. All staff in an organisation should be trained in appropriate recording of details of incidents and all reported incidents of sexual harassment or assault are recorded in compliance with data and confidentiality guidelines with discretion and confidentiality. It is important that licensed premises make use of their logbook.

DIRECT

You can choose to directly intervene in a situation and speak up firmly and clearly about the harm.

Step in and say or do something to let it be known that you find what's going on to be unacceptable.

If it's a friend rather than a stranger causing the harm it is important to take into consideration that no one likes to be called out in front of their work team or friend group – it can often lead to defensive behaviour which can escalate quickly if alcohol has been consumed. So, wait if possible until you have a moment alone with a friend or work colleague to talk about their behaviour if you feel they have crossed a line.

NOTE: At some point you may feel the need to intervene when someone is a close friend, trusted work colleague or family member, if they are behaving in a way you feel is not ok and not only get them into trouble but influence others to act the same way and cause a lot of harm.

It's ok to let a friend know you are not ok with their behaviour – and just because others in the group don't speak up it doesn't mean that they aren't all thinking the same thing as you.

By intervening you are having a powerful and positive effect whichever method you use.

It is important to let a friend or colleague know if they are about to make a mistake that could impact the way they are viewed by others, their career, or the team you both belong to or in the worst-case scenario – cause a lot of harm to another human being.

You as a friend have a responsibility to let someone know the way they are acting is out of order and give them an opportunity to rethink or stop the behaviour.

LIST OF SUPPORT SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING FURTHER TRAINING

White Ribbon NI: events@whiteribbonni.org

Providing workshops to challenge the attitudes and beliefs which lead to violence against women and girls.

PSNI: www.psni.police.uk/contact-us

Victim Support: www.victimsupportni.com

SOLA: sola@victimsupportni.org.uk

Sexual Offences Legal advisors (SOLAs) are qualified lawyers who can offer legal advice and support to adult victims of a serious sexual offence.

Nexus NI: 028 9032 6803

Nexus work across Northern Ireland to respond to the needs of adults who have experienced sexual abuse, violence, or rape by providing counselling and support services and increasing awareness of the issues

The Rowan - Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC): 0800 389 4424

The Rowan is the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Northern Ireland. They provide support and services 24 hours a day, all year to children, young people, women and men who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped in the past or recently.

Rape Crisis: 08000246991 / www.rapecrisisni.org.uk

A support service for anyone who is 18 and over who has experienced serious sexual assault and rape in adulthood.

24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline: 0808 802 1414

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse helpline is open to women and men affected by domestic abuse or violence. This free telephone service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Onus (NI) Ltd: 028 2568 9450 / info@onustraining.co.uk

A social enterprise offering specialist training and consultancy services on domestic violence or abuse.

Cara Friend: 028 9089 0202

An organisation dedicated to supporting, empowering, educating, and offering friendship to everyone in the LGBT community

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland: 028 9024 9041

A voluntary organisation challenging domestic violence in Northern Ireland - women's Aid provides refuge and emotional support to women and their dependent children suffering from mental or physical harassment within the home.

Belfast Trans Resource Centre: www.belfasttrans.org.uk

A community hub for trans, non-binary and questioning people and their families and friends in the Belfast area.

Rainbow Project: www.rainbow-project.org/counselling

A health organisation that works to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ people and their families in Northern Ireland.

Raise Your Voice: 07483337817 / Contact@raiseyourvoice.community

Explore sexual harassment and sexual violence in workshops and training to challenge root causes of sexual violence and create cultural change.

Equality Commission NI: www.equalityni.org/Home

Labour Relations Agency: www.lra.org.uk

Lifeline: 0808 808 8000

Crisis response line for anyone in distress or despair.

Men's Advisory Project: www.mapni.co.uk/

Support service for male victims of domestic abuse.

The Migrant Centre NI: admin@migrantcentreni.org

Disability Action: 02890297880 / hq@disabilityaction.org