

Sexual harassment active bystander toolkit – Safe to Say

A campaign to prevent sexual harassment by encouraging active bystander responses.

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Updated

23 September 2024

Key details

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| Stage of practice | Evaluated locally |
| Purpose | Prevention |
| Topic | Violence against women and girls Stalking and harassment Training and professional development |
| Organisation | Public Health Wales |
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| Region | Wales |
| Partners | Police Health services Voluntary/not for profit organisation |
| Stage of implementation | The practice is no longer being implemented. |

Key details

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Start date | July 2021 |
| Scale of initiative | Regional |
| Target group | Adults Communities General public |

Aim

The objectives of the campaign were to:

- enhance public awareness of sexual harassment in the night-time economy
- allow people to identify inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviours in both the formal and informal night-time economy
- provide individuals with the skills to safely challenge harmful sexual behaviours and support victims on nights out
- enhance access to resources and support services for victims of sexual violence and those who are bystanders to sexual assault and violence

Intended outcome

- Messages on sexual violence and bystander responses are widely seen across South Wales.
- Bystanders can recognise problematic sexual violence behaviours.
- Bystanders know how to safely take action against sexual violence in the night-time economy and beyond.
- Bystanders sign up for specific bystander training to learn more about taking action against sexual violence.
- Victims have access to support and resources.

Description

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) worked with the Good Night Out (GNO) campaign to develop the objectives and key messages of the campaign, with support from Welsh Women's Aid.

The VPU commissioned a design agency to create:

- online advertisements
- offline advertisements
- campaign microsite

The VPU and GNO also co-designed and wrote a downloadable bystander toolkit.

The VPU commissioned a media buying agency to buy advertising space on:

- social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat
- buses
- billboards
- DigiVans
- parking metres

The initiative was run in two phases. Phase one of the campaign ran for four weeks from July 2021 in Cardiff and Swansea, using online and offline channels. The target audience was people aged 18 to 54 who engaged in the night-time economy. The campaign materials directed people to a website where they could download an active bystander toolkit, find information on support services, and find out about active bystander training programmes.

A second phase ran in February 2022 for six weeks, targeting men aged 18 to 35 in Swansea, with the focus on peer interventions.

Evaluation

Evaluation of phase one included a post-campaign poll of the target audience. Findings from 256 responses showed:

- 79% of survey respondents felt the campaign had highlighted the issue of sexual harassment and violence in the night-time economy
- 76% of survey respondents felt the campaign had helped them recognise sexual violence or harassment in the night-time economy

- 22% of survey respondents felt the campaign had helped them take action when they had witnessed sexual harassment or violence
- 62% of survey respondents felt the campaign had increased their confidence to take action when they do witness sexual harassment or violence
- 43% of survey respondents felt that signposting to relevant support services was the most useful information on the campaign website

Overall impact

The evaluation found Safe to Say was an effective method of engaging people in the prevention of sexual harassment and violence in nightlife, by empowering bystanders to act when they witness it.

Overall, the campaign met its four objectives by encouraging prosocial bystander behaviours in response to sexual harassment within the night-time economy.

Survey respondents indicated that the campaign had:

- enhanced their awareness of sexual harassment in the night-time economy
- had allowed them to identify inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviours
- provided them with the skills to safely challenge harmful sexual behaviours and support victims on nights out
- enhanced access to resources and support services for victims of sexual violence and those who are bystanders to sexual harassment and violence

Learning

The evaluation found that future iterations of the campaign should:

- consider revising the layout and fonts used
- engage different age groups and demographics in the design of the campaign
- target the campaign at specific audiences, venues or events

Specifically, the evaluation included the following recommendations.

- The campaign advertisement design should be revisited. Particular focus needs to be on the layout and font used as survey respondents felt these were not as good as the general artwork

used for the campaign advertisements.

- While this may not be suitable for the physical advertisements, social media advertisements could clearly suggest that people click through to the website. This will optimise engagement with the social media advertisements and related website resources.
- More work should be done to engage different age groups and demographics. This could be achieved through workshops with people from the desired demographic, which would allow an understanding of what they want to see from a campaign and what would catch their eye.
- To upscale this campaign, consideration should be given to targeting specific venues or events and adapting the campaign accordingly. For example, music festivals or sports competitions would be unique events where the formal and informal night-time economy thrive.
- Survey recruitment should be amended for future work. Recruitment of respondents should be more representative of the populations within Cardiff and Swansea to fully capture the number of people who can recall seeing the campaign.

Following these recommendations, changes made during phase two included:

- being more specific about the target audience and focusing on highlighting peer interventions between men aged 18 to 54
- revisiting the creative elements of the campaign and adding in motion and audio to the social media ads
- testing the campaign on the target audience through engagement with universities, sports clubs and workplaces
- redeveloping the website and creating a stronger call to action on the advertisements

In phase two, the engagement rate on the campaign advertisements increased from 0.49% (below average) to 5.4% (above average).

Best available evidence

The [crime reduction toolkit](#) does not include any best-available evidence on the impact of bystander programmes on reducing crime. See the [Bystander programmes evidence briefing](#) for a summary of the evidence.

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Tags

Violence against women and girls