

# Training to help recognise sexualised or predatory behaviour

Supporting officers to recognise sexualised predatory behaviours early and empowering them to engage with offenders to prevent escalation.

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## Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Crime prevention Drugs and alcohol Operational policing Violence against women and girls Vulnerability and safeguarding
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Region	North West

## Key details

<b>Partners</b>	Police Community safety partnership Local authority Voluntary/not for profit organisation
<b>Stage of practice</b>	The practice is implemented.
<b>Scale of initiative</b>	Local
<b>Target group</b>	Adults Children and young people Communities General public Offenders Victims

## Aim

This initiative aims to train officers to:

- recognise sexualised and predatory behaviours as anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- proactively intervene to prevent possible escalation towards more harmful and criminal behaviour
- be active in supporting safer spaces for all

The initiative also aims to increase confidence in the police through visible action.

## Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of this initiative are:

- reductions in sexual offences in public spaces
- reductions in the number of spiking incidents
- increased public confidence in areas where the intervention is used

- increased use of intelligence to map repeat locations and perpetrators
- training to recognise sexualised or predatory anti-social behaviour
- increased submissions of intelligence through force systems

A further intended outcome is to increase officer knowledge and understanding of:

- anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- harmful behaviours in the context of violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls (VAIWG)
- behaviours associated with anti-social predatory behaviour (ASPB)
- behaviours associated with anti-social sexualised behaviour (ASSB)
- the powers available to proactively deal with ASPB and ASSB
- how to actively respond to recognising vulnerability
- the indicators of increased vulnerability
- scanning for risks and patterns

## Description

There are a number of behaviours that may fall below a clear criminal threshold for prosecution of an offence. However, by recognising specific behaviours as harmful and anti-social, powers can be used to proactively deal with the behaviour and prevent possible escalation. Training has been introduced in Cheshire Constabulary which:

- supports officers to recognise very specific actions and signal-behaviours as ASB
- upskills officers on the appropriate intervention and powers to use when they identify these behaviours
- empowers officers to tap into these powers, for example, in relation to dispersals and requiring details from individuals
- develops confidence and shifts mindsets regarding ASB

The training operates through a 4 P's approach:

- **Prepare:** education and perception shift (through the training)
- **Pursue:** active use of this learning
- **Prevent:** application and use of powers before substantive offences are committed
- **Protect:** diffusion of benefits and deterrence effect beyond the intervention

## Training

The behaviours focused on in the training include anti-social sexualised behaviours such as:

- anti-social conduct of a sexual nature – including gestures and movements
- anti-social sexual comments in the street – like sexual comments/innuendos/repeated unwelcome jokes
- abuse when sexual propositions/comments are rejected – this could be chastisement or belittling
- wolf-whistling or cat-calling
- brushing past or physically getting close to individuals

The training also covers anti-social predatory behaviours (ASPB) like:

- behaviour out of context with the environment in a night-time economy setting
- loitering, for example, outside toilets
- repeatedly approaching groups, including propositions
- targeting/approaching vulnerable persons

The training was developed by a detective inspector in Cheshire Constabulary following a consultation and review process. The review process involved consulting with Rape And Sexual Abuse Counselling (RASAC) stakeholders including survivors. It also involved reviewing incidents associated with the night-time economy (NTE) setting.

The training is delivered by a chief inspector to officers working in beat teams or the night-time economy.

Future plans are to hold weekly review meetings to monitor force performance and provide an opportunity for partnership feedback. This will involve launching in staff briefings to promote and reinforce the approach, increasing confidence in using the appropriate powers.

It is important to recognise that this initiative is focused on behaviours which may be enacted by the whole spectrum of society. It is not directed towards any one group or characteristic. The focus is on observed red-flag behaviours and the victim's response.

The only costs associated with this initiative are the time needed to roll out training. This involves no explicit or specific additional financial cost. There may be costs incurred for the use of communications to highlight intervention activity and results.

## Overall impact

It is currently too early to comment on the impact however, the force would like to see the following impact when the project has been fully implemented:

- an increase in submissions of intelligence
- an increase in the use of dispersals
- an increase in obtaining details of persons identified as engaging in ASSB and ASPB behaviours
- an increase in confidence in the police as a result of the promotional activity which takes place

## Learning

- Buy-in at a force/officer level is crucial to ensure sustained implementation of the learning from training days.
- Senior level support is required for the roll out of the training days and future evaluation.
- Proposed outcomes from the training need to be subject to ongoing monitoring and integration into performance measures at a local and strategic level. This will ensure that any success is sustained beyond one project/initial inception and implementation.
- Weekly reviews are important to maintain buy-in. These reviews should be integrated into briefings and expectations.

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## Tags

Violence against women and girls   Vulnerable people   Operational policing