

Northamptonshire Women's Charter – strengthening safety and inclusion for women and girls

The Northamptonshire Women's Charter brings organisations together to create a safer and more inclusive environments for women and girls.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence against women and girls Community engagement
Organisation	Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
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Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police Business and commerce Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	December 2025
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Communities Workforce

Aim

The aims of the Northamptonshire Women's Charter are to:

- promote a culture that does not tolerate harmful language, behaviour, or attitudes towards women and girls
- ensure reports and disclosures of harassment, violence, or intimidation are taken seriously and handled appropriately
- support Northamptonshire's ambition to be a safe and inclusive place for all women and girls

Intended outcome

The intended outcome of the Northamptonshire Women's Charter is to improve the overall feeling of safety for all women and girls across the county.

Description

The Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) is committed to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). In response, an action plan has been created to support women and girls across the county.

The Northamptonshire Women's Charter is supported by the chief constable and the chief fire officer. The Charter was developed in-house with the purpose of supporting organisations by:

- highlighting the issues women face in the workplace, society and at home
- creating safe environments for all women and girls
- outlining policies that can be implemented to support women and encourage them to report VAWG incidents

Northamptonshire Women's Charter's principles

The principles of the Charter follow a pyramid structure:

- Northamptonshire OPFCC (base) – responsible for leading on the implementation of the Charter
- Northamptonshire Police and partner agencies such as Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service (middle) – acting on reports or disclosures of harassment, violence, or intimidation
- Northamptonshire residents (top) – engaging with the Charter to promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards all women and girls

Consultation process

Prior to the launch, Northamptonshire OPFCC, consulted with the following organisations:

- Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- Greatwell Homes
- London Northwestern Railway
- Brackmills Industrial Estate business improvement district (BID)

The purpose of the consultation was to gauge whether organisations supported the Charter and to understand how it could benefit businesses. The feedback showed clear support and organisations indicated that they would benefit from training on VAWG offence types.

Northamptonshire Women's Charter launch event

Once Northamptonshire OPFCC's offer was established, partners involved in the consultation were invited to the launch event, where the pledge was presented to stakeholders.

During the launch event, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner outlined plans on how to make the county safer by introducing a Charter toolkit. This includes e-learning content and guest webinars. The Charter is hosted on the Northamptonshire OPFCC website.

When an organisation signs up to the Charter, its credibility is reviewed by a dedicated point of contact before membership is approved. As part of the sign-up process, organisations must commit to:

- taking reports seriously
- listening to the concerns of women and girls
- creating respectful and inclusive spaces

For the participating organisations, they have free access to the Charter toolkit which includes:

- survey support – guidance on how to conduct surveys to gain insight into existing cultures and identify areas for improvement
- crime prevention advice – using survey results to help organisations understand how they can improve physical security, environmental design, and surveillance
- support directory – a local and national directory to signpost staff to relevant help and service
- bespoke training – a catalogue of training developed by organisations within the county, such as domestic abuse awareness training commissioned by Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service

While the Charter was initially marketed to businesses, any reputable organisation with female employees, volunteers, students, or members is eligible to join.

The Charter's launch event was communicated to the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police, and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service through intranet platforms and internal staff emails. Additionally, the communications team supported the launch by providing publicity on the day, including a media release sent to local print and broadcast outlets, and social media content featuring Charter members.

Overall impact

The Northamptonshire Women's Charter has continued to gain traction, with over 100 organisations committed to making Northamptonshire a safe place for women and girls.

- one public safety partner has adopted the Charter within their five-year domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy
- one organisation has implemented a workplace survey to help managers understand how safe their employees feel at work

- Northamptonshire Police's neighbourhood policing teams have supported an organisation by helping them conduct a staff survey at a summer event

Northamptonshire OPFCC is committed to growing the Charter, and the communications team aims to achieve this by:

- media releases with influential and strategic partners
- social media coverage
- targeted LinkedIn posts for Northamptonshire businesses
- engaging with businesses, supported by crime prevention experts and police

Learning

- Buy-in from organisations is essential. This has been achieved by conducting research to shape a clear offer, which was then tested with businesses and organisations.
- The Charter has encouraged Northamptonshire OPFCC to engage with individuals and communities with whom the organisation previously had limited or no interaction.
- Northamptonshire OPFCC acknowledges that more can be done to engage individuals and communities across the county. To address this, the organisation is considering creating a role responsible for signing up organisations, developing new programmes, and bringing Charter members together.

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