

BE LADS – awareness and safety campaign for men to help women feel safer

An awareness and safety campaign implemented in City of London Police (CoLP) which gives advice to men on measures they can take to help women feel safer when they are walking alone.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence against women and girls Public protection, safeguarding and vulnerability Adults at risk
Organisation	City of London Police
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Region	London
Partners	Police Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2021

Key details

Scale of initiative	National
Target group	Adults General public

Aim

To support the objective of engaging men and boys more positively in violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention, City of London Police (CoLP) implemented the BE LADS campaign as an awareness and engagement initiative.

BE LADS aims to raise understanding of women's experiences and provides practical guidance on how men can contribute to making women feel safer. The approach promotes positive behavioural change without victimising women or vilifying men.

The BE LADS framework is based on six simple, memorable actions that men can use to support women in their communities:

- be visible
- ease the tension by making a phone call
- look away, don't stare
- active bystander
- distance yourself
- share the walk

Intended outcome

Through implementation of the BE LADS campaign, CoLP sought to:

- increase awareness in the workforce of issues impacting women's safety and lived experience
- increase understanding among men of their own behaviours and how to help women feel safer walking alone
- improve public trust and confidence in the police, particularly in relation to VAWG

Description

CoLP first became aware of the BE LADS campaign when force representatives attended a 'HeForShe' conference in April 2023. Having recognised the campaign's alignment with the force's VAWG prevention priorities, the materials and approach were reviewed by the head of inclusion and VAWG leads for potential integration into existing workforce development activity.

Following further engagement with the campaign and its underlying principles, CoLP incorporated the BE LADS approach into its wider programme of work supporting the national VAWG action plan.

As part of its broader equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, the force operates a mandatory Inclusivity Programme requiring all officers and staff to complete two EDI learning modules annually. The programme offers a wide range of topics and learning formats, enabling colleagues to select subjects most relevant to their role and development. The intention is to achieve sustained meaningful change through continuous engagement rather than isolated annual training events.

To support this programme, City of London Police introduced a series of 'Focus on BE LADS' sessions delivered online. Before extending awareness activity externally, the force wanted to ensure that its own workforce had a strong understanding of issues affecting women and girls and felt confident discussing them.

Internal surveys had identified that some male colleagues experienced uncertainty about how they could positively contribute to improving women's safety following the murder of Sarah Everard. The force therefore adopted the BE LADS framework as a constructive means of engaging men and boys, improving understanding of VAWG issues and providing practical actions that could be taken both professionally and personally.

Overall impact

To date, approximately one third of CoLP officers and staff have participated in BE LADS awareness sessions as part of the force's Inclusivity Programme.

Through online training sessions, officers and staff have engaged with the campaign's practical approach to tackling sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, providing positive

feedback on both the content and delivery.

The force has also extended the impact of the initiative through partnership working. CoLP introduced the campaign to the City of London Crime Prevention Association and has worked with partners to promote VAWG prevention activity across the city. The force has additionally supported the delivery of workshops for young people through the Chelsea Football Club Foundation's 'Standing Together' event.

Feedback received from officers, staff, senior leadership and policing partners indicates that the initiative has contributed positively to workforce engagement, awareness raising and broader efforts to challenge misogyny and strengthen the organisational response to VAWG.

BE LADS has also attracted interest from a number of policing organisations across England and Wales, demonstrating wider applicability of the model in supporting VAWG prevention and cultural change.

Learning

CoLP found that having the sessions delivered online increased accessibility and attendance across the workforce. The flexible format enabled officers and staff from different roles and locations to participate more easily while maintaining engagement with the content.

The force also found that the simplicity and practicality of the BE LADS framework made it accessible across the workforce. Initial scepticism from some participants was typically reduced during delivery, as the focus remained on empowering men to become active allies in improving women's safety rather than attributing blame. This approach helped encouraged open discussion and constructive engagement.

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