

Safer Places for Women and Girls

Agreement Statement Avon and Somerset

We believe that women and girls have the right to live their lives free from fear and harassment wherever they live, study, work, and travel. Not just in city centres but also in rural villages, market towns and in online spaces. When keeping our communities safe, we believe that agencies in Avon and Somerset are stronger and more effective working together in partnership.

Building upon the national VAWG framework, and local policing strategy, we will create a way of working across all agencies that not only means we will prioritise VAWG but give regard to the safety of women and girls, in our daily business. We aim to:

1. Ensure that VAWG is a system wide priority, visible in all key relevant strategies or plans across Avon and Somerset.
2. Lead the way to long term culture change in our communities by focusing on prevention of VAWG in partnership with a targeted, perpetrator focused, communications strategy across Avon and Somerset. This will be informed by an understanding of how VAWG intersects with discrimination and disadvantage in the lives of women and girls in our diverse communities. Our communications should also emphasise that virtual spaces should also be safe for women and girls
3. Create an improved strategic and tactical response to Avon and Somerset's nightlife with a Nightlife Network and proactive enhanced visibility of agencies to create a safe and welcoming culture for women and girls and present a zero-tolerance policy. In this, create consistency and facilitate collaboration between stakeholders including nightlife businesses, Violence Reduction Units, street wardens and police, security staff, transport, Business Improvement Districts and VAWG agencies.
4. Advocate for policy development amongst employers and local authorities to include the prevention of VAWG. Empower employers to hold any offenders to account both in the workplace and in the community.

5. Seek best practice VAWG interventions and consider together, how we can establish sustainable projects designed to raise awareness of the unacceptability of VAWG.

6. Reach out to our rural communities to create awareness of VAWG and promote available services. We will aim to ensure that women and girls who live in isolated areas or rural communities do not find it more difficult to access services and support when needed.