



<b>Subject:</b>	Women's Night Safety Charter
<b>Date:</b>	25 October 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Damien Martin, Strategic Director, Place and Economy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jamie Uprichard, Business Research and Development Manager

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

**Insert number**

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To advise members about the Women's Night Safety Charter which is spearheaded by Hospitality NI (as part of the Safer Socialising initiative) and supports the campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), led by The Executive Office (on which a

	separate report will be considered by the committee); and seek approval for the council to sign-up to the Charter.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve Belfast City Council’s involvement with the Safer Socialising initiative and agree to the council signing the Women’s Night Safety Charter.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, the Licensing Committee considered a motion which had been brought by former Councillor Peter McReynolds to the Council meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018. The final (amended) motion read as follows:</p> <p><i>“This Council is concerned at the number of people in Belfast that feel they have been the victim of sexual harassment. Accordingly, the Council will undertake to meet with our universities, hospitality sector and the PSNI to explore any industry led initiatives that we can support, to tackle sexual harassment within our nighttime economy, keeping in mind that this is a global societal issue that needs tackled.”</i></p>
3.2	<p>After discussion, it was agreed that Building Control would undertake research and report back to Committee, inviting Hospitality Ulster (HU) and any other stakeholders keen for an industry-led initiative to deter sexual harassment to the meeting. Due to resource constraints and then the Covid-19 pandemic followed by the closure of hospitality venues, progress on the motion was delayed. Nevertheless, at its meeting on <a href="#">12<sup>th</sup> April 2023, the Licensing Committee</a> welcomed Mr. C. Neill (HU) and Detective Superintendent L. Fisher (PSNI) to provide further information on a range of initiatives to address safety within the night-time economy, particularly for women and girls. These initiatives included Ask for Angela, White Ribbon NI and the Women’s Night Safety Charter.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Ask for Angela</u></p> <p>The PSNI, in partnership with Hospitality Ulster are providing training to registered bars in Northern Ireland to help people enjoy even safer nights out in public spaces. Ask for Angela is a support mechanism aimed at informing and educating hospitality industry staff about customer welfare and vulnerability. Through a code phrase that can be used by customers to discretely seek help, 'Ask for Angela' reassures customers that support is available.</p>
3.4	<p><u>White Ribbon NI Charter</u></p> <p>White Ribbon NI was launched in Northern Ireland in November 2021. Through awareness raising and education, White Ribbon NI seeks to end violence against women in all its forms. White Ribbon believes that giving everyone the information they need to challenge the ideas and attitudes which have perpetuated violence against women and girls is a step we can all</p>

take towards being part of the solution. The Lord Mayor, Councillor Ryan Murphy [signed the White Ribbon NI Charter on behalf of Belfast City Council on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.](#)

3.5 Women's Night Safety Charter (WNSC)

Hospitality Ulster and White Ribbon NI have joined forces to adopt the Women's Night Safety Charter and support its rollout in Northern Ireland. The charter is a commitment by organisations and businesses operating at night to support the campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Initially established in London and now operating in several regions across the UK, the WNSC includes support from White Ribbon NI via a ['Listen, Learn, Lead' toolkit](#), offering simple ideas, inspiration, information, resources, and guidance on potential actions to create safer environments for women across all venues and workplaces. The Charter's seven pledges include:

1. Nominate a champion in your organisation / business who actively promotes women's night safety;
2. Demonstrate to staff and customers that your organisation takes women's safety at night seriously, for example through a communications campaign;
3. Remind customers and staff that Northern Ireland is safe, but tell them what to do if they experience harassment when working, going out or travelling;
4. Encourage reporting by victims and bystanders as part of your communications campaign;
5. Train staff to ensure that all women who report are believed;
6. Train staff to ensure that all reports are recorded and responded to; and
7. Design your public spaces and workplaces to make them safer for women at night.

3.6 The Charter forms part of the Safer Socialising initiative and supports the campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), which is led by The Executive Office (TEO). Hospitality Ulster have previously corresponded with councils via SOLACE encouraging all local authorities in Northern Ireland to sign the Charter. The Solace NI representative on the Safer Socialising Steering Group and EVAWG has advised that nine councils and a number of other public sector organisations have committed to signing the Charter.

3.7 Should members agree to sign-up to the Charter, the Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Corporate Services has agreed to champion the initiative within council and actively promote women's night safety and will oversee and lead a cross-departmental programme of work to implement and deliver the remaining pledges. This work is aligned to a number of council notices of motion and work overseen by the City Centre All-Party Working Group linked to the evening and nighttime economy.

3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Any additional costs associated with the Charter's pledges will be met from existing departmental budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report, however should members approve the council's sign-up to the Charter, the initiative will be subjected to an equality screening.</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	None