

# WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE BEDFORDSHIRE SAFER



# WHY

# VAWG?

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is defined by the Home Office as acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. This includes rape and sexual offences, stalking and domestic abuse.

But we know there are other behaviours which affect women and girls - catcalling, inappropriate contact, misogyny, explicit messaging and groping, to name a few.

These behaviours may not all meet a criminal threshold, but they could be precursors for further offending. Either way, they make women and girls in Bedfordshire feel unsafe.

While initiatives in the programme are committed to ensuring that any victim will receive a sensitive and appropriate response according to their needs, gender based violence is predominately a pattern of behaviour carried out by men against women.

This does not mean that men are never victims of violence, or that women are not sometimes perpetrators. However, local and national data reveals a clear disproportionality along gender lines.

## PUBLIC SAFETY SURVEY COMMENTS

“Men have no idea of all the adjustments women make to try and keep safe on a daily basis. I wear shoes I can run in when returning home late, I prefer to drive or get a cab.”

“I get approached by men who don't leave when asked to please leave me alone.”

“Men need to step up and realise how women feel. Men need to see women as equal and respect them.”

# WHAT IS



The Home Office unveiled Safer Streets in January 2020. The project aims to help Police and Crime Commissioners, local authorities, and their partners to secure extra funding to support initiatives to make the streets of England and Wales safer.

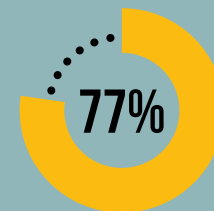
Last year it was announced that the Bedfordshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had been successful in a bid to secure just over £700,000 to target Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in public places across the county. It was expected that this would also have an indirect impact on other areas such as anti-social behaviour, serious violence, robbery, gangs and criminal exploitation.

The Safer Streets project has funded specialist youth workers to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls and the attitudes that underpin it, as well as an educational programme across schools and colleges in the county.

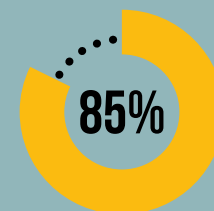
The April 2022 Bedfordshire Women and Girls Safety survey suggested that many women felt that education was the only long-term solution to addressing Violence Against Women and Girls, with one respondent wanting us to **“listen to women's safety concerns. Take misogyny seriously as it's a first step to more abusive behaviour.”**

Collectively the Safer Streets initiatives aim to reach and support the largest number of victims, perpetrators and communities across the county, with the aim of educating, raising awareness, improving the feeling of safety in public spaces, and increasing reporting of Violence Against Women and Girls.

### BEDFORDSHIRE WOMEN & GIRLS SAFETY SURVEY 2022



77% OF PEOPLE IN BEDFORDSHIRE HAVE WITNESSED A VAWG RELATED INCIDENT



85% DIDN'T REPORT TO THE POLICE AS THEY DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD CHANGE ANYTHING



# HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT



You can report suspicious activity and crime to Bedfordshire Police via 101 or their website.

**ALWAYS CALL 999 IN AN EMERGENCY**

## STREETSAFE

StreetSafe is a police service for anyone to anonymously report public places where they have felt or feel unsafe, whether that's because of environmental issues or because of someone's behaviour. Please note StreetSafe is not for reporting crime or incidents.

**CrimeStoppers.**  
Speak up. Stay safe.



You can report crimes or concerns about criminal activity 100% anonymously and in confidence through Crimestoppers or their youth brand Fearless.

☎ **0800 555 111** ✉ **crimestoppers-uk.org**

## childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME  
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they are going through. Their trained counsellors are here to support you. Childline is free, confidential and available any time, day or night.

☎ **0800 1111** 💬 **1-2-1 counsellor chat** ✉ **via childline.org.uk website**



Download the FREE Flare app to anonymously report incidents of inappropriate public behaviour such as stalking, spiking or catcalling. Information submitted via Flare will allow Bedfordshire Police to make data driven decisions about patrols and initiatives to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls across the county.

# SUPPORT SERVICES



## VICTIM SUPPORT

Free 24/7 confidential national support line for any victim of crime and traumatic incidents.

☎ **0808 1689 111**

## BEDFORDSHIRE VICTIM CARE SERVICES

Offers tailored support to victims of crime, even if you have not reported the incident to the police.

☎ **0800 0282 887 - open Mon-Fri 8am-6pm**

✉ **info@bedfordshirevcs.com for self referral**



## EMERALD CENTRE

Offers free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people of all ages in Bedfordshire that have experienced sexual assault, including rape, in their lifetime.

☎ **0330 223 0099 24 hours a day, every day of the year**

## EMBRACE

Embrace aims to help children, young people and their families recover from their experiences of crime.

☎ **0345 60 999 60 - Monday-Friday 9am-5pm**



## LUTON ALL WOMEN'S CENTRE

Offers advice, information, practical and holistic support services for women and girls living across Bedfordshire.

☎ **01582 416 783**

## BOBBY SCHEME

The Bobby Scheme provides home safety checks and can provide and fit home safety devices such as new locks, door chains and door viewers, free of charge for elderly (over 65) and vulnerable victims of crime/domestic abuse.

☎ **01234 842 619** ✉ **BobbyScheme@beds.police.uk for self referral**



**Safer Streets** BEDFORDSHIRE

SCAN THE QR CODE ON THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE INFO AND ONLINE SERVICES

# Staying Safe



Walk confidently when you are on your own and avoid being distracted by things like your phone or listening to music



Don't be afraid to say no to strangers



Your safety is more important than your belongings



Try and remain calm. Fear can cloud your judgement



Call for help if it is safe to do so and if you have a personal safety alarm, use it

# SPIKING ADVICE



- Difficulties communicating
- Memory loss or confusion
- Breathing issues
- Vomiting
- Loss of feeling across your senses
- Loss of inhibition
- Feeling nauseous or more drunk than usual



- Avoid leaving your drink unattended
- Use anti-spiking drink covers where possible
- If you do accept a drink from a stranger, accompany them to the bar and take it from the bartender yourself

## THINK YOU'VE BEEN SPIKED?

- Alert someone you trust - a friend, member of staff or host
- Do not leave where you are by yourself, go to a safe place with someone
- If the symptoms get worse, call an ambulance immediately
- Alert the police after any suspected incident of drink spiking
- **In an emergency, always call 999**

**LOOK OUT FOR YOUR FRIENDS  
REMEMBER, YOU WILL NEVER BE JUDGED,  
SO IF YOU ARE IN NEED, ALWAYS REPORT IT.**

Downloading this app could save your life.



Hollie Guard is a personal alarm, deterrent, evidence catcher and more. **Download the app for free today**



[hollieguard.com](http://hollieguard.com)

**NONE OF THESE ARE OK IN TODAY'S SOCIETY.**

- Aggressive staring
- Unwanted touching
- Drink spiking
- Catcalling / wolf-whistling
- Inappropriate gestures
- Online abuse

Report incidents anonymously to combat VAWG in your local area. Download the Flare app for free today.



**flare**



**Safer Streets** BEDFORDSHIRE

SCAN THE QR CODE ON THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE INFO AND ONLINE SERVICES

**“ I’ve had enough of my mates harassing women on the street so I call it out ”**

## HOW TO BECOME AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Being an active bystander means being aware of when someone's behaviour is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to challenge it.

This might be things like comments made by a friend that you feel are inappropriate, or where you spot someone being harassed at a party or club.

Here are some top tips to be an active bystander and help improve public safety in Bedfordshire.

### STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

It is safer to call out behaviour or intervene in a group. If this is not an option, report it to others who can act.

### CARE FOR THE VICTIM

If it is safe to do so, talk to the person who you think may need help and ask them if they are OK.

### REMEMBER THE FOUR D'S:

<b>DIRECT ACTION</b>	Call out behaviour in a calm and polite way - <b>don't aggravate the situation.</b>
<b>DISTRACT</b>	Interrupt, start a conversation or come up with an excuse to <b>get the victim out of the situation.</b>
<b>DELEGATE</b>	If you don't feel comfortable doing it, get someone else to step in such as <b>venue staff or security.</b>
<b>DELAY</b>	If the situation is too dangerous - such as if you are outnumbered or there is the threat of violence - you don't need to intervene straight away. Hanging around, <b>reporting it and checking the victim is ok are all brave and positive interventions.</b>

**IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL THE POLICE ON 999. AND REMEMBER, NEVER PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER. ONLY INTERVENE IF SAFE TO DO SO.**

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust offers free bystander training to help you stand up against street harassment.

Scan the QR code on the back page for further information on bystander training.

## WORKING TOGETHER



The Bedfordshire Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) is a network of different agencies and groups aiming to tackle the root causes of things like gang membership and prevent young people becoming involved in all aspects of child criminal exploitation.



As part of the Safer Streets project YouTurn (Direction+) is working with people who have been violent towards women to change their behaviour and reduce reoffending.

Bedfordshire Police and their partners are working together to tackle perpetrators of violence or abuse against women and girls and have a number of initiatives to tackle this.

**“ Rape and serious sexual offending are among the most serious and high impact crimes. There is a clear drive within our force to ensure that we pursue the most serious offenders whilst ensuring that we provide robust support for victims, ensuring their voice is heard throughout. ”**

**Detective Chief Superintendent Zara Brown**  
Head of Crime and the Public Protection Unit



Project Firefly's night time economy initiative aims to improve the safety and confidence of women and girls, while relentlessly pursuing those who commit the most serious crimes. Police will patrol our communities and deter those whose behaviour falls short of what is respectful and acceptable.



We are working with community groups to raise awareness of Violence Against Women and Girls among diverse communities and break down barriers to reporting.



Police are working with charities and other agencies to support rather than criminalise vulnerable women and girls who come into police custody.



Bedfordshire Police is giving survivors of rape and domestic abuse a platform to speak out and have their voices heard, in a bid to raise awareness and encourage others to come forward.



# GETTING INVOLVED TO HELP YOUR COMMUNITY



THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO HELP MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY SAFER. SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO GET INVOLVED

## WATCH SCHEMES

Join one of the following watch schemes and help make a difference in your local community. Speed, Dog, Horse, Street and Neighbourhood watch schemes operate across the county.

Join one of our volunteer community panels and help provide independent scrutiny of how stop and search and use of force powers are applied across Bedfordshire.

## SCRUTINY PANELS

## INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS

Independent custody visiting is a well-established system whereby volunteers attend police custody suites to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed.

Special constables are volunteer police officers, sometimes known as specials. They take part in frontline police work and have the same powers as regular officers whilst contributing to their local communities.

## BECOME A SPECIAL CONSTABLE

## SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

You can support the force's Education and Diversion team's engagement with primary schools to raise awareness of police priorities and help keep children in Bedfordshire safe. For further information please email [volunteering@beds.police.uk](mailto:volunteering@beds.police.uk)

Age 13-18? Become a Police Cadet and support local policing through volunteering and assisting in community and crime prevention events. You can also follow Beds Youth Council on Instagram and help shape Bedfordshire Police's policies involving young people.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

# COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS IN BEDFORDSHIRE



Bedfordshire is made up of three local authorities.

### Bedford Borough Council Central Bedfordshire Council Luton Council

Each area has a community safety partnership (CSP) which brings together different agencies to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area.

Over the last three years each of the Bedfordshire CSPs have worked with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver Safer Streets initiatives, working with local communities to improve safety and promote support services.

Community engagement forms an important part of the partnerships' work to identify local priorities and understand our communities' perception of safety.

Each of the three community safety teams across the county have been delivering Safer Streets pop up events.

For links to your local CSPs please scan the QR code on the back page.



Luton



Safer Streets BEDFORDSHIRE

SCAN THE QR CODE ON THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE INFO AND ONLINE SERVICES

# BEDFORDSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP (BDAP)

Domestic abuse can take many forms - it's not just physical violence. It can also include emotional, sexual and financial abuse, stalking and harassment, coercive and controlling behaviour, forced marriage, 'honour' based abuse, and female genital mutilation and other harmful practices.

The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP) is made up of key agencies in Bedfordshire - including all three local authorities and Bedfordshire Police - who work to raise awareness about domestic abuse and deliver services to support those affected.

Everyone has the right to live free from violence and fear. On the BDAP website you will be able to find out about different types of domestic abuse, as well as contact details for a variety of support services for anyone experiencing domestic abuse.

VISIT: [WWW.BEDSDV.ORG.UK](http://WWW.BEDSDV.ORG.UK)

**24 HOUR NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE FOR WOMEN: 0808 2000 247**

**MEN'S ADVICE LINE: 0808 8010 327**

**LGBT+ DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE: 0800 999 5428**

**CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR?**

**RESPECT PHONELINE: 0808 802 404**



# DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT HUBS

**ANYONE, REGARDLESS OF AGE, GENDER, ETHNICITY, ABILITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, CIRCUMSTANCES, BACKGROUND OR CULTURE, CAN BE A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE.**

But not everyone has a safe space to go to when they need to get away from abuse and access support. That's why we have a network of Support Hubs across Bedfordshire.

Our Support Hubs are designated spaces within a building that display information about local and national domestic abuse support services. Anyone experiencing domestic abuse can use this area and be safe to make a confidential call or use the internet to get help. Numerous organisations and businesses have signed up to be Support Hubs, including:

**LIBRARIES, PHARMACIES AND CHEMISTS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.**

The BDAP website has a directory of businesses who offer Support Hub spaces, so anyone experiencing domestic abuse can find somewhere to go for support.

**TO SEE A FULL LIST OF SUPPORT HUBS ACROSS BEDFORDSHIRE, VISIT:  
[WWW.BEDSDV.ORG.UK/BDAP-SUPPORT-HUBS](http://WWW.BEDSDV.ORG.UK/BDAP-SUPPORT-HUBS)**



“ I wanted to be a voice for victims.  
 I wanted to safeguard the vulnerable.  
 I wanted to help stop discrimination.  
**I wanted to make a positive difference.** ”



**START YOUR CAREER IN POLICING  
 DISCOVER YOUR POTENTIAL**



**Bedfordshire Police**  
 Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

# SCAN THE QR CODE FOR LINKS TO ALL THE SAFER STREETS ONLINE SERVICES

An electronic accessible version of this document is available at:  
<https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/safer-streets-household-booklet>



## CONTACT US

✉ [saferstreets.bedfordshire@beds.police.uk](mailto:saferstreets.bedfordshire@beds.police.uk)

## FOLLOW US

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