

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Women's Safety in the Evening and Night Time Economy and Licensing	
REPORT OF: Director of Recreation & Public Safety	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Licensing Committee	DATE: 15 July 2026
SUMMARY OF REPORT This report provides the Licensing Committee with an update on activity in Camden's evening and night-time economy, with a particular focus on the delivery of Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training. These initiatives form part of the wider Women's Safety in the Public Realm Action Plan and reflect the Camden Community Safety Partnership's commitment to tackling vulnerability and improving safety across licensed venues. Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report. Contact Officer: Shaheda Rahman, Community Safety Programme Manager 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG Tel: 020 7974 4425 shaheda.rahman@camden.gov.uk	
RECOMMENDATIONS That the Licensing Committee consider and note the progress and ongoing activities being delivered as part of the Camden Women's Safety in the Public Realm Action Plan, with a particular focus on initiatives supporting safer licensed premises and the evening and night-time economy.	

Signed: 
 Oliver Jones
 Director of Recreation and Public Safety

Date: 2nd July 2026

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including harassment and misogyny in public spaces continues to be a concern both nationally and locally in Camden. Since 2021 high profile cases, inquiries such as The Angiolini Inquiry and the Government's 'Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy' have ensured that there is continuous focus on gender-based violence.
- 1.2 The Council remains committed to improving the safety of women and girls across Camden. This work is embedded within Community Safety, licensing, public realm design and the wider Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda, with a focus on prevention, partnership working and creating safer public spaces.
- 1.3 The Camden Women's Safety Action Plan (WSAP) is overseen by the Camden Community Safety Partnership Board (CSPB), bringing together key partners including the Council, Metropolitan Police Service, London Fire Brigade, Probation Service and community representatives to coordinate activity and monitor progress against shared priorities.
- 1.4 Camden continues to be a signatory to the Greater London Authority's Women's Night Safety Charter and remains committed to delivering its principles across the borough. This includes ongoing investment in initiatives such as WAVE and Ask for Angela training, the Camden Safety Bus, Safe Havens, targeted spiking awareness campaigns and partnership work with licensed premises to improve safety within the evening and night-time economy.
- 1.5 During 2025/26, Camden further expanded its women's safety programme, increasing the number of licensed venues trained through WAVE, growing the Safe Haven network and strengthening engagement with businesses, universities and community partners to support women and girls to feel safer in Camden's public spaces.
- 1.6 The WSAP remains focused on the three objectives:
 - Tackling Offending Behaviour - The Council works closely with the police and partners to target offending behaviour, reduce reoffending through interventions, early engagement, and effective enforcement where necessary.
 - Licensing & the Evening & Night-Time Economy (ENTE) - Camden supports a safe, vibrant, and well-managed evening and night-time economy by working with licensed premises, providing training such as

WAVE and Drug Awareness, as well as promoting initiatives like 'Ask for Angela'.

- Public Space Management – The Council collaborates with a range of services to ensure Camden's public spaces are safe, welcoming, and accessible for all, addressing issues like anti-social behaviour and vulnerability.

1.7 The Council's Women's Safety Action Plan is designed to ensure that women and girls feel safe in public spaces across the borough, particularly in the nighttime economy. In the context of licensing, the plan reinforces the Council's commitment to using its regulatory powers to promote safe environments in and around licensed venues. This includes commissioning training for staff on preventing harassment and violence against women, emphasising customer welfare, encouraging better venue design, and working with partners to improve lighting and surveillance.

1.8 For the Licensing Committee, the Women's Safety Action Plan provides a framework for considering women's safety within the licensing process. It supports the licensing objectives of preventing crime and disorder and public safety and encourages licensed premises to adopt measures that reduce vulnerability and promote safer environments.

2. Camden's Strategy Update: Evening and Nighttime Economy and Women's Safety

2.1 Camden's ENTE Strategy implemented 2024 embeds women's safety a priority supported by the collaborative approach of licensing, cultural, planning and public health policies.

2.2 Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy (2025-30) explicitly references women's safety, including:

- Requiring safety statements from new applicants on how they will safeguard women and vulnerable patrons".
- Use of standardised licence conditions to encourage staff training (WAVE), participation in schemes like Ask for Angela, and provisions for safe transport signage and welfare support.

2.3 The Council recognises the particular importance of women's safety within the evening and night-time economy (ENTE) and is committed to ongoing efforts to understand and address these vulnerabilities such as drink spiking, travelling home from venues, and navigating unfamiliar environments.

3. Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) Training

3.1 Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training is delivered free of charge to licensed premises and other customer-facing businesses in Camden through the Safer Business Network. The training helps staff identify vulnerability, respond to safeguarding concerns and support individuals at risk. It covers drink spiking awareness, the 'Ask for Angela' scheme and Safe Havens. Since 2022, 296 venue training engagements have been completed, supporting safer licensed premises and a safer night-time economy.

3.2 A range of delivery methods are offered to maximise accessibility and uptake, including:

- In-person session
- An online/virtual training session
- Self-guided eLearning courses

This programme forms a key strand of our broader strategy to enhance safety, promote responsible management of licensed premises, upskilling frontline staff and build confidence in the night-time economy.

3.3 Since 2024 over 600 staff have completed WAVE training from almost 300 venues, exceeding the 2024 and 2025 targets. Additionally, due to staff turnover venues continually undertake refresher training. Many larger premises in Camden arrange their own in-house WAVE training as part of staff induction and development.

3.2 WAVE training is organised around key dates such as Freshers/Welcome Week in September, during the 16 Days of Action in November – December, and International Women's Day on March 8th.

3.4 These sessions will support ongoing efforts to equip licensed premises staff with the skills to identify vulnerability, respond appropriately and promote the use of the 'Ask for Angela' scheme.

3.5 WAVE training is promoted by Camden external communications; newsletters and social media, as well as through key partnerships with the Business Improvement Districts and the Camden Safety Bus Teams during engagement.

3.6 The Licensing Team supports the implementation of the Ask for Angela scheme and WAVE training across Camden's licensed premises as part of its wider commitment to promoting a safe and welcoming night-time economy.

3.7 The Licensing Team works closely with Community Safety and Police Licensing colleagues to promote good practice and encourage venues to adopt measures that help identify and respond to vulnerability. This includes promoting WAVE training, Ask for Angela, drink spiking awareness and other safeguarding initiatives through engagement with licence holders and applicants.

- 3.8 Women's safety considerations are embedded within the licensing process through pre-application advice, communications with licence holders and their representatives, and committee reports, which highlight where applicants have demonstrated a commitment to supporting women's safety initiatives.
- 3.9 In line with Camden's Licensing Policy and the Women's Night Safety Charter, licensed premises are encouraged to implement appropriate measures to reduce vulnerability, support reporting, train staff to respond to safeguarding concerns and create safer environments for customers. These measures contribute to the licensing objectives of preventing crime and disorder and promoting public safety.

4. Spiking

- 4.1 In 2025 (Jan–Apr), 53 incidents of drink spiking were reported to the police in Camden. While overall incidents fell by 9% in 2025 compared with the previous year, there have already been 101 incidents recorded in the first five months of 2026. This indicates that the end-of-year total is likely to exceed previous years if current reporting trends continue.

Hotspot areas remain Holborn & Covent Garden and Camden Town, which align with Camden's prominent night-time economy and areas of high footfall.

National research also continues to indicate that most drink spiking cases go unreported.

Addressing Spiking

- 4.2 Tackling spiking remains an important part of Camden's commitment to women's safety in the night-time economy. Our approach is to focus on proactive prevention, staff training, and support for individuals at risk.

Key actions Camden is taking include:

- **Venue Engagement:** Through Camden's Licensing Team and police Licensing Team, we regularly engage with licensed venues to reinforce their responsibilities around safeguarding and vulnerability, including spotting the signs of potential spiking.
- **Staff Training:** Venue staff are encouraged to complete vulnerability and safeguarding training, which includes how to respond if they suspect someone may have been spiked. This year Camden have also commissioned The Loop to deliver Drug Awareness training which is promoted at WAVE training, during engagement with and visits to licensed premises.
- **The Camden Safety Bus** provides a safe space where anyone feeling vulnerable, including potential victims of spiking, can access immediate support and assistance from trained staff.

- Communications activity continues to be delivered in partnership with the Police and local services, with a focus on raising awareness of spiking, prevention, and how to seek help and report incidents.
- 4.3 In May 2025, Camden launched a targeted spiking awareness campaign. The first phase focused on the borough's university population, reflecting that Camden is home to the third-largest student population in London, with 29,965 higher education students residing locally. Of these students, 61% are women and 56% are international student's, groups identified as being at potentially higher risk of spiking-related harm.
- 4.4 The campaign focused on raising awareness amongst the student population, improving safety messaging in student venues, and encouraging early reporting. Engagement events were organised with several universities last year and this year safety pop ups are scheduled.
- 4.5 This year for International Stamp Out Spiking Day on July 15th, Camden Safety Bus will feature at different locations across the borough with the Safeguarding Training in A New Dimension (STAND) Up, virtual reality. This gives members of the public the opportunity to try a first-of-its-kind immersive training experience tackling violence against women and girls and vulnerability in the day and nighttime economy. Using the virtual reality, participants step into real-life scenarios to learn bystander intervention and how to spot vulnerability such as identifying a spiking situation, intervening safely, using Ask for Angela, and responding with confidence to police or security.

5. Safe Havens

- 5.1 A Safe Haven is a place of temporary refuge for individuals who may feel unsafe or need assistance while facilitating their onward journey. While Safe Havens do not offer specialist interventions, staff are trained to offer a safe space, contact emergency services or signpost individuals to appropriate support where needed.
- 5.2 Premises such as shops, cafés, pubs, leisure centres and other public-facing venues can register to become official Safe Havens. These spaces provide a visible and practical form of reassurance to women and others who may feel vulnerable, offering support such as:
- A friendly face and reassurance
 - Assistance with contacting police, family, or friends
 - Directions or public transport information
- 5.3 Three Safe Haven training sessions have been delivered to date in Camden, resulting in twenty Safe Havens being established. Safe Havens now include Camden libraries, community centres and licensed venues. Two more sessions will be delivered this financial year with recognised franchises such as Wendys, McDonalds and Boots discussing joining the initiative.

- 5.4 The scheme is actively promoted through the Council's website and social media, as well as direct outreach to local businesses, community groups and partners, encouraging further participation. This year Camden are working with Street Hub at Global, to use the fifty screens across the borough to advertise Safe Havens as well as Camden Safety Bus.

6. Pan London collaboration

- 6.1 Camden continues to actively participate in pan-London partnerships and forums focused on improving women's safety, enabling the borough to share learning, align approaches, and draw on emerging good practice across London local authorities and partners.
- 6.2 The Council maintains ongoing engagement with neighbouring boroughs and those with similar night-time economy profiles, including Westminster and Hackney, to exchange insight on prevention activity, partnership approaches, and operational responses to women's safety concerns.
- 6.3 This collaborative approach supports continuous improvement and helps ensure that Camden's work remains informed by wider sector developments, particularly in relation to safeguarding in public spaces and the night-time economy.

7. Considerations for Licensing Committee Members

- 7.1 The Licensing Authority, working alongside responsible authority partners, expects applicants and licence holders to demonstrate clear and consistent standards of operation in line with the Licensing Act 2003 objectives. Licensing Panels are encouraged to apply proportionate, evidence-based conditions tailored to individual premises where appropriate.
- 7.2 There is now widespread adoption of welfare and safety measures within licensing applications, including schemes such as "Ask for Angela" and equivalent safety initiatives, which are commonly secured through licence conditions or operating schedules where relevant.
- 7.3 Licensing Panel reports routinely highlight whether applications include appropriate measures to support women's safety and the prevention of harassment and vulnerability in the night-time economy. Where such measures are not sufficiently addressed, additional conditions may be considered by Members at committee, informed by consultation responses and representations from responsible authorities.
- 7.4 The Camden Statement of Licensing Policy supports the use of recognised welfare and safety initiatives, including Ask for Angela and staff training such

as WAVE (or equivalent bystander intervention and vulnerability awareness training), where relevant and appropriate. These measures support the prevention of crime and disorder and public safety licensing objectives and contribute to a safer night-time economy in Camden.

8. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

- 8.1 The activities outlined in this report are being delivered within existing budgets and funded resources. A Community Partnership Coordinator post, which supports the delivery of this work, is funded through a combination of funds from the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board and ongoing funding from the London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) for the next four years.
- 8.2 Training sessions are delivered by an external provider at an approximate annual cost of £5,000, which is covered by existing service budgets. Venue costs are minimal, as sessions are typically held in council-owned buildings such as the Town Hall, which do not incur additional charges.
- 8.3 There are no new financial pressures arising from this report. Finance will continue to work with the service over the period and beyond to ensure any additional costs are flagged and forecasted where necessary.

9. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The Borough Solicitor has been consulted, and legal comments have been incorporated throughout the report.

10. Environmental Implications

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Presentation on Women's Safety

REPORT ENDS