



London pubs failing to enforce Ask for Angela safety scheme, investigation finds
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The 'Ask for Angela' scheme aims to make bars and clubs safer at thousands of venues across the country

London's pubs, bars and clubs are failing to enforce a scheme that enables women on a night out to use a safe word to venue staff if they feel under threat, an investigation has found.

The 'Ask for Angela' scheme aims to make bars and clubs safer at thousands of venues across the country to help people feeling vulnerable to get support.

People who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'.

But only half of London venues visited by undercover reporters from the BBC found that staff responded to the code word.

Reporters posed as a couple on a date and tested whether staff led distressed customers to safety.

Some 13 out of 25 venues visited failed to respond appropriately to the Angela code word.

In one case, a member of staff at a pub, which is part of the Ask for Angela scheme, told a BBC researcher: "Nobody called Angela here... 100%, I'm the manager – I know my staff."

Sylvia Oates, director of Ask for Angela, said she was disappointed to hear that only half of the venues responded appropriately when someone needed help.

She told the BBC: "It's a real concern that premises have got the poster up and then if somebody asks for Angela, it's not successful."

Ms Oates added that venues which advertise being part of the scheme had a responsibility to make sure staff were trained to respond.

The investigation found staff at chains including Greene King, JD Wetherspoon and Simmons were among those who did not recognise the code word.

Greene King told the BBC it was concerned about the findings and pledged to review how the Ask for Angela scheme was communicated to its teams.

JD Wetherspoon said it had successfully dealt with many examples of distressed women using the scheme but would provide additional training if necessary.

The BBC did not receive a response from Simmons.

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1. UK
2. London
3. All
4. Weatherspoons

5. News
6. Business
7. Business News
8. News

Tags

1. King
2. Pubs
3. Green King
4. BBC
5. JD Wetherspoon
6. Bars
7. London

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