# #ASKFORANGELA

## SAY NO MORE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

"HI I'M ANGELA,

ARE YOU ON A DATE THAT ISN'T WORKING OUT?

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE NOT IN A SAFE SITUATION?

IS YOUR TINDER OR POF DATE NOT WHO THEY SAID THEY WERE ON THEIR PROFILE?

DOES IT ALL FEEL A BIT WEIRD?

IF YOU GO TO THE BAR AND ASK FOR 'ANGELA' THE BAR STAFF WILL KNOW YOU NEED SOME HELP GETTING OUT OF YOUR SITUATION AND WILL CALL YOU A TAXI OR HELP YOU OUT DISCREETLY – WITHOUT TOO MUCH FUSS"



**24-hour Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline:**
**703-237-0881**

May 11, 2026

POLICE DEPARTMENT ARLINGTON COUNTY VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON VIRGINIA
ARLINGTON RESTAURANT INITIATIVE

Arlington's PROJECT PEACE
Partnering to End Abuse in the Community for Everyone

Arlington Commonwealth's
Attorney Victim-Witness Program

As part of Arlington Restaurant Initiative (ARI), the Arlington County Police Department, Arlington Commonwealth's Attorney Victim-Witness Program, and Project PEACE has introduced the 'Ask For Angela' patron safety program to Arlington County.

'Ask for Angela' was created by Hayley Child, the Substance Misuse Strategy Coordinator for Lincolnshire County Council in 2016: the campaign received rave reviews from members of the public, but has also been endorsed and rolled out in other cities across the UK. **The scheme is focused on supporting those people who feel unsafe, intimidated or threatened.**

**Sexual Harassment** is sexual behavior towards a person without consent. This is the difference between flirting and harassment. It is any behavior that makes a person feel uncomfortable. It could be groping, stalking, verbal threats or sexual comments, overly persistent behavior (e.g. not taking 'no' for an answer) homophobic language, taking photos without consent, flashing, stalking, public masturbation, sexual touching or assault. **The victim and perpetrator can be any gender. The perpetrator does not have to be of the opposite sex to the victim**.

# #ASKFORANGELA

## How does it work?

The initiative applies to women, men, straight or LGBT + who may be on a date **or on a night out** but are feeling uncomfortable or even threatened. They can approach the staff of the premises they are in and use the code words "**Is Angela in**?" The staff will then know that the person is in need of assistance and will help to remove them from the situation and call a taxi if necessary. The poster is a visual aid which might provide a vital life-line to someone who finds themselves in a difficult situation and can't get out of it.

'Hi, I'm Angela,' the poster says. 'Are you on a date that isn't working out? Do you feel like you're not in a safe situation? Is your Tinder or POF [Plenty of Fish] date not who they said they were on their profile? Does it all feel a bit weird?'

**'Ask for Angela' isn't just for people on dates, there could be someone in your premises acting inappropriately, and if it's happened to one person, there's a good chance this has happened to others.**

May 11, 2026

If you go to the bar and 'Ask for Angela' the bar staff will know you need some help getting out of your situation and will call you a taxi or help you out discreetly – without too much fuss.

## Guidance for Staff

One of the difficulties in understanding sexual harassment is that it involves a range of behaviors. In most cases (although not in all cases) it is difficult for the victim to describe what they experienced. Once the scheme is running, we ask that you log any incidents in either your general incident book or create your own 'Ask for Angela' incident log.

**Believe them**

This is rule number one, and the easiest way to support a person who is asking for 'Angela', they may be feeling embarrassed or blame themselves. The posters create an environment that doesn't tolerate harassment, but it is how staff respond to a report that makes the biggest impact.

**Don't Blame the Victim**

Just because someone may have had several drinks doesn't mean they deserve to be harassed or intimidated. If they are feeling scared, this scheme provides them with a safe way out.

**Listen First**

Letting a person speak so you know what they want or need to happen is crucial, e.g. they may not want you to eject a harasser or 'make a fuss' for their own personal safety. Be discreet and show sensitivity for the individuals' needs.

**Never Assume**

- Use 'I' sentences not 'you' statements e.g. "I'm sorry that happened" is your failsafe opener – inform the duty manager as soon as you can.
- Often people minimize their own experiences, so if you're hearing about an issue, there's every chance it's happened to multiple people that night.
- All staff should feel confident about responding to a report and hand them over (if necessary) to an appointed member of staff, who has oversight of all safety issues.

You as managers, supervisors, staff and door staff play an important role in creating a safe environment which discourages this sort of behavior. Where staff are vigilant and aware that this behavior is unacceptable they will feel confident in preventing it.

**Ask for Angela Additional Information**

Public sexual harassment can be described as "any action or comment between strangers in public a place that is disrespectful, unwelcome, threatening and/or harassing and is motivated by gender, sexual orientation, or gender expression. It can include behavior such as:

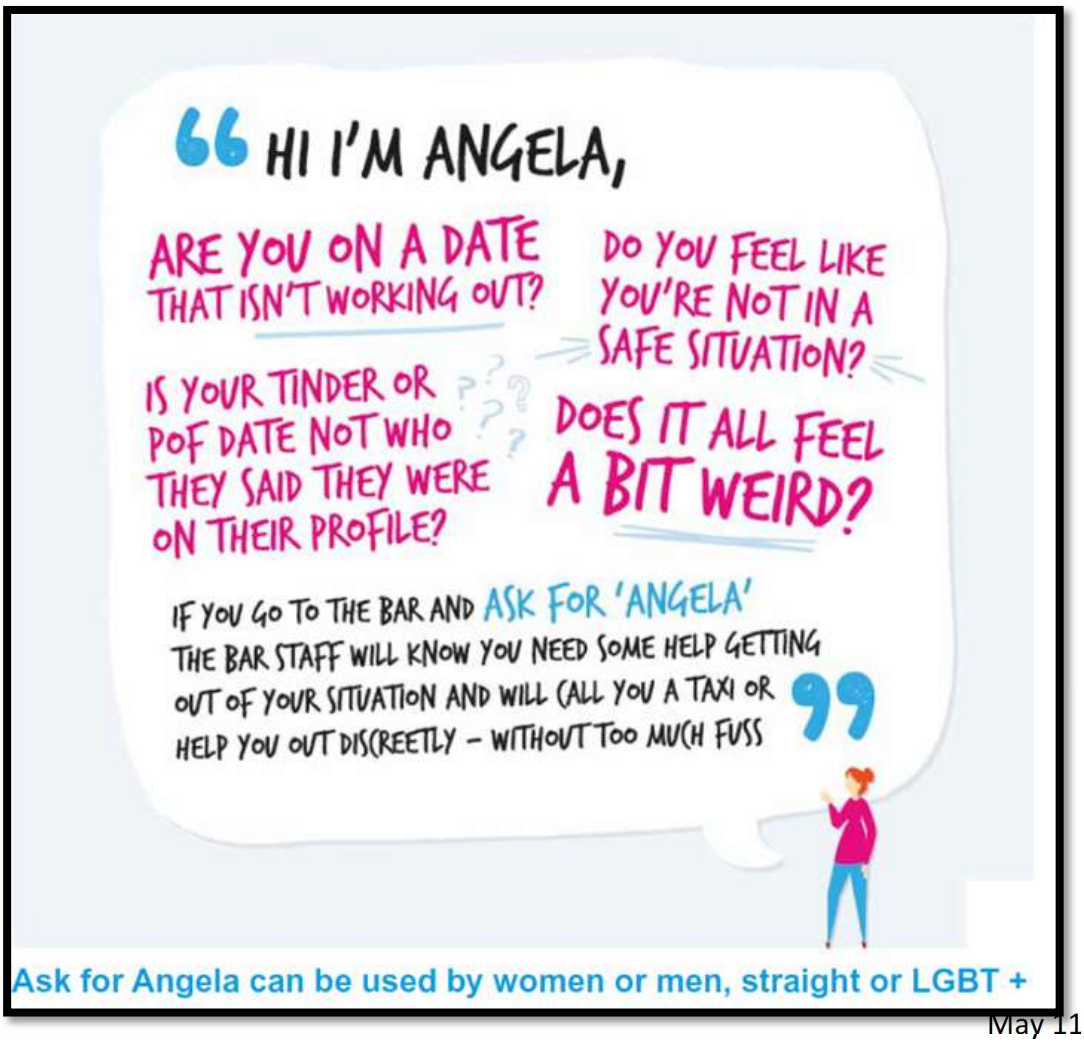
- Leers, whistles, honks, kissing noises
- Brushing past repeatedly
- Uninvited comments or conversations
- Groping

- Cornering someone

**Remember there is no stereotypical “type" of harasser, abuser or rapist.**
Most offenders don’t fall into some easy stereotype — and in fact, the vast majority are people who know their victims, often well. There is no type, and there may even be people you know and trust who have a history of committing sexual violence.

Harassers often test out new victims with minor violations of social and interpersonal boundaries. For example, they might tell sexual jokes or make sexual comments about their target, ask questions about one's sex life; violate one's personal space with touching, and maintain that it is meant to be nonsexual.

Harassers often dismiss or show a lack of regard for the feelings of their victims; even when assertive attempts are made to put an end to the inappropriate behavior. When confronted about their inappropriate behavior, perpetrators of sexual harassment often act as if they are being victimized, or it is the victim who is at fault. This type of manipulation can make the victim feel guilty about trying to set limits or bringing a complaint against the harasser.



# Advice for staff using the 'Ask for Angela' poster scheme

1. Offer to take the person asking for help to a part not in sight of the public or potential threat (staffroom, kitchen, toilets).
2. Offer to call the person a taxi or assist them in calling a friend/ family member to come and collect them.
3. Where safe to do so (the person asking for help is out of sight and the staff consider it safe) request the person causing distress leaves the venue.
4. Ask the person in distress what they want to do? (It might be they just want to alert staff that things are becoming uncomfortable and might need someone to keep watch whilst they collect possessions from the area where they were seated.
5. Do not allow the person asking for help to leave the venue in sight of the person causing them distress as this could lead to them being followed out of the venue and placed at higher risk.
6. If the person causing distress becomes angry consider calling the police for assistance or follow your corporate policy on this issue.

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