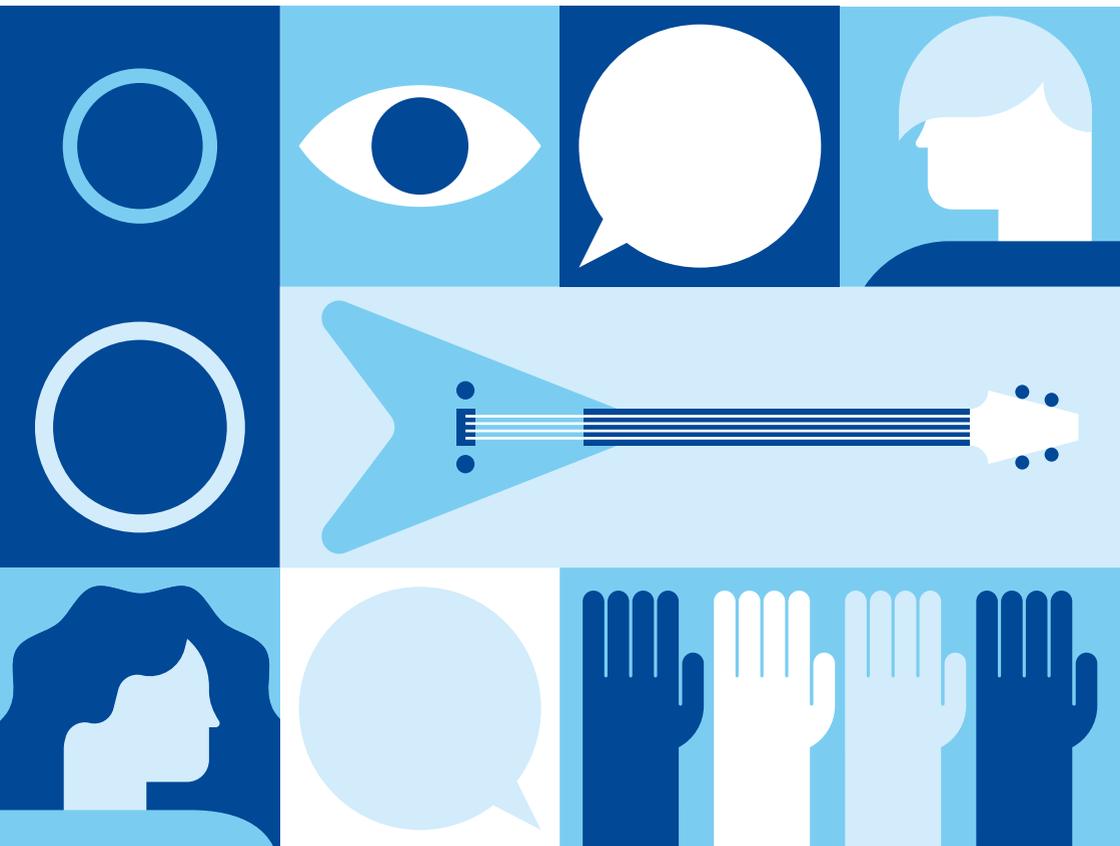


Five ways to combat sexual harassment, groping and assault at gigs

A guide for venues and promoters



Introduction

In the last few years there has been increasing attention paid to sexual harassment, groping and assault at gigs. The Healthy Music Audiences research project found that sexual violence at gigs causes serious long-term harm to victim/survivors and puts them in immediate danger. It significantly reduces victim/survivor's pleasure in the music, and damages venues' reputations.

But there are things that venues and promoters can do to help prevent sexual harassment, groping and assault at gigs, and respond well to incidents when they do occur. And these things benefit venues and promoters too.

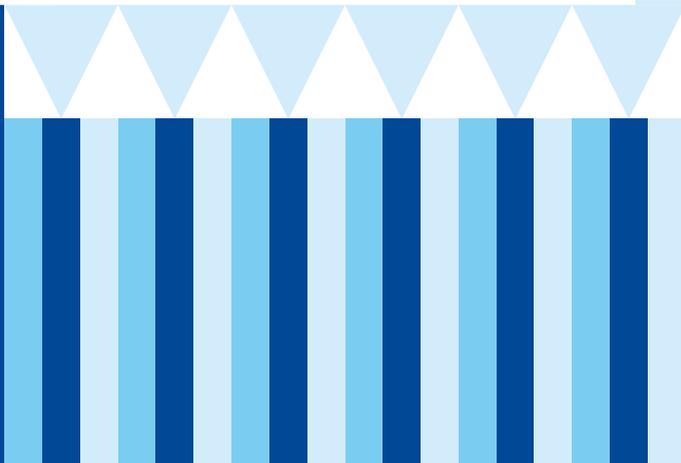
In this short booklet we present five ways to combat sexual harassment, groping and assault at gigs. We highlight the benefits for venues and promoters in acknowledging the problem and taking action. We make recommendations and outline the support available.

These recommendations are developed from the results of research with venues, promoters, gig goers and anti-violence campaigners. They were written by the research team in consultation with White Ribbon, Good Night Out, Girls Against Gig Groping and Safe Gigs for Women.



01

ACKNOWLEDGE
THERE IS
A PROBLEM



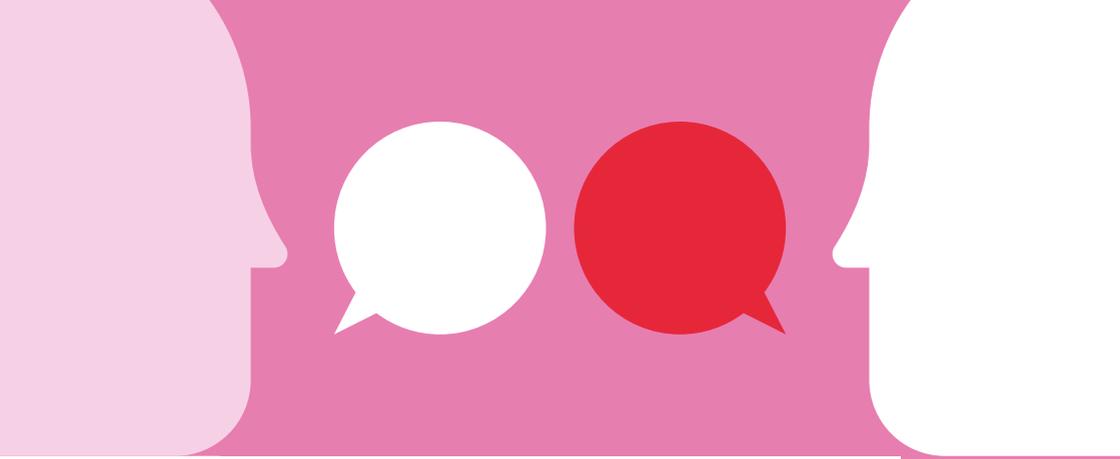
Sexual harassment, groping and assault is happening at gigs in all music genres.

It is not often reported, but it is happening and a lack of reports does not mean it is not to be taken seriously. It causes grave harm to victim/survivors and puts them in immediate danger. It results in feelings of shock, fear, humiliation, violation, anger and powerlessness which can last for many years. Groping, harassment and assault must not be considered as hazards of live music participation about which venues and promoters can do nothing.

Sexual harassment, groping and assault has a significant impact on victim/survivors' musical lives.

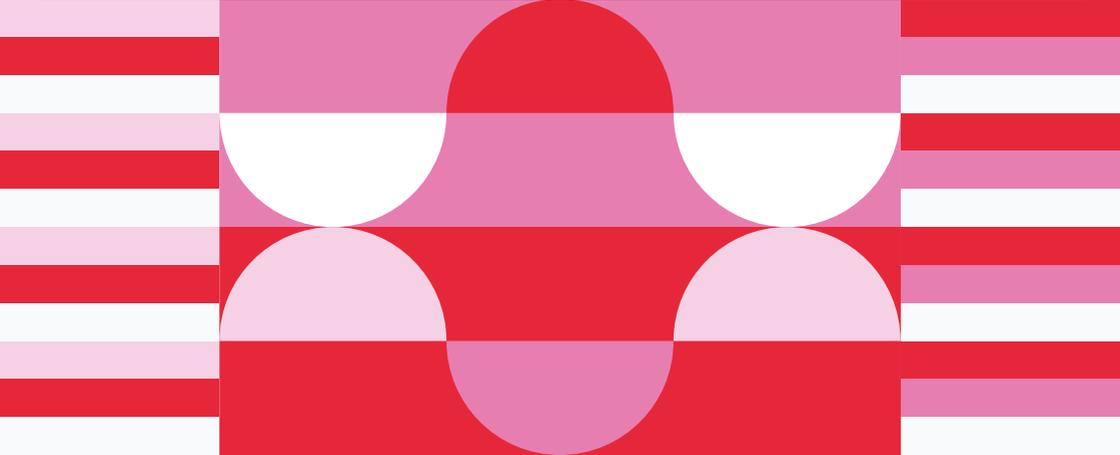
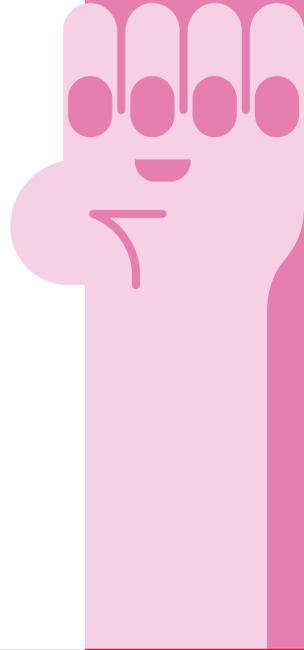
It distracts from the music, lessening enjoyment; it reduces feelings of community in the audience; it means losing a good spot in the audience; it means leaving the gig; it means not going to gigs in particular venues; it means not going to gigs at all.

Putting on gigs is about the music so it is important to ensure that the events you put on are enjoyable for all.



02

GET
SPECIALIST
STAFF
TRAINING



Most people are not experts in dealing with sexual violence and don't know how to respond. **All staff should be trained by specialists in dealing with sexual violence and harassment.** Training should be regularly updated and mandatory for new staff.

Victim/survivors lack trust in venues and worry they will not be believed, although the number of false rape accusations is no higher than false reports for other crimes (3%).

Sexual harassment, groping and assault is an equality issue: most incidents are perpetrated by men against women. It is not like getting into a fight: there are additional layers of humiliation and violation, and fear that the situation might escalate into rape or other violence. It is vital that victim/survivors are taken seriously.

Inebriation on either side is not an excuse for perpetrating sexual violence or harassment, nor should it be considered in mitigation. The burden of proof should be placed on the accused, not those reporting an incident.

By taking action it is possible to directly improve women's musical participation.



03

DEVISE AND
IMPLEMENT
CLEAR
POLICIES

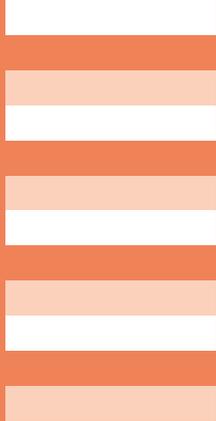


Venues and promoters should have clear policies devoted to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, groping and assault. These policies should be developed and regularly reviewed in discussion with gig goers, bands and other stakeholders. The discussions should include women, ethnic minority and LGBTQ representatives. This will help those who come to the venue to feel invested in maintaining the standards set out in the policy.

The policy should state what is expected of all those using the venue and what will happen if gig goers, bands, promoters and staff deviate from expectations. Bands, staff and friends of the venue/promoter should be held to the same standards as other people at the event. Policies should be publicised so that gig goers, bands and others coming to the venue know what is expected of them.

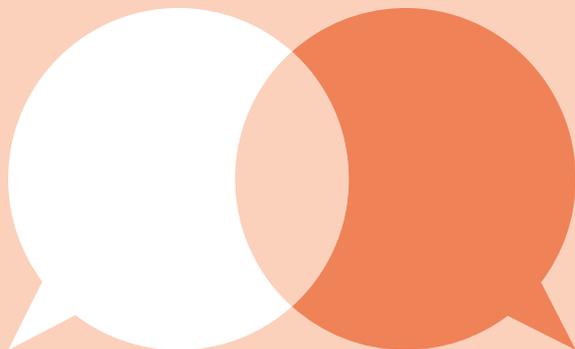
Groping is sexual assault and therefore illegal. The law says that sexual assault occurs when someone intentionally touches another person sexually without a reasonable belief that they consent to the touching. E.g. stroking someone's bottom in the crowd without asking first is sexual assault.

There is an opportunity to build trust and community with audiences, bands and promoters.



04

SET UP CLEAR PROCEDURES



Venues should have clearly written procedures for what to do when an incident occurs.

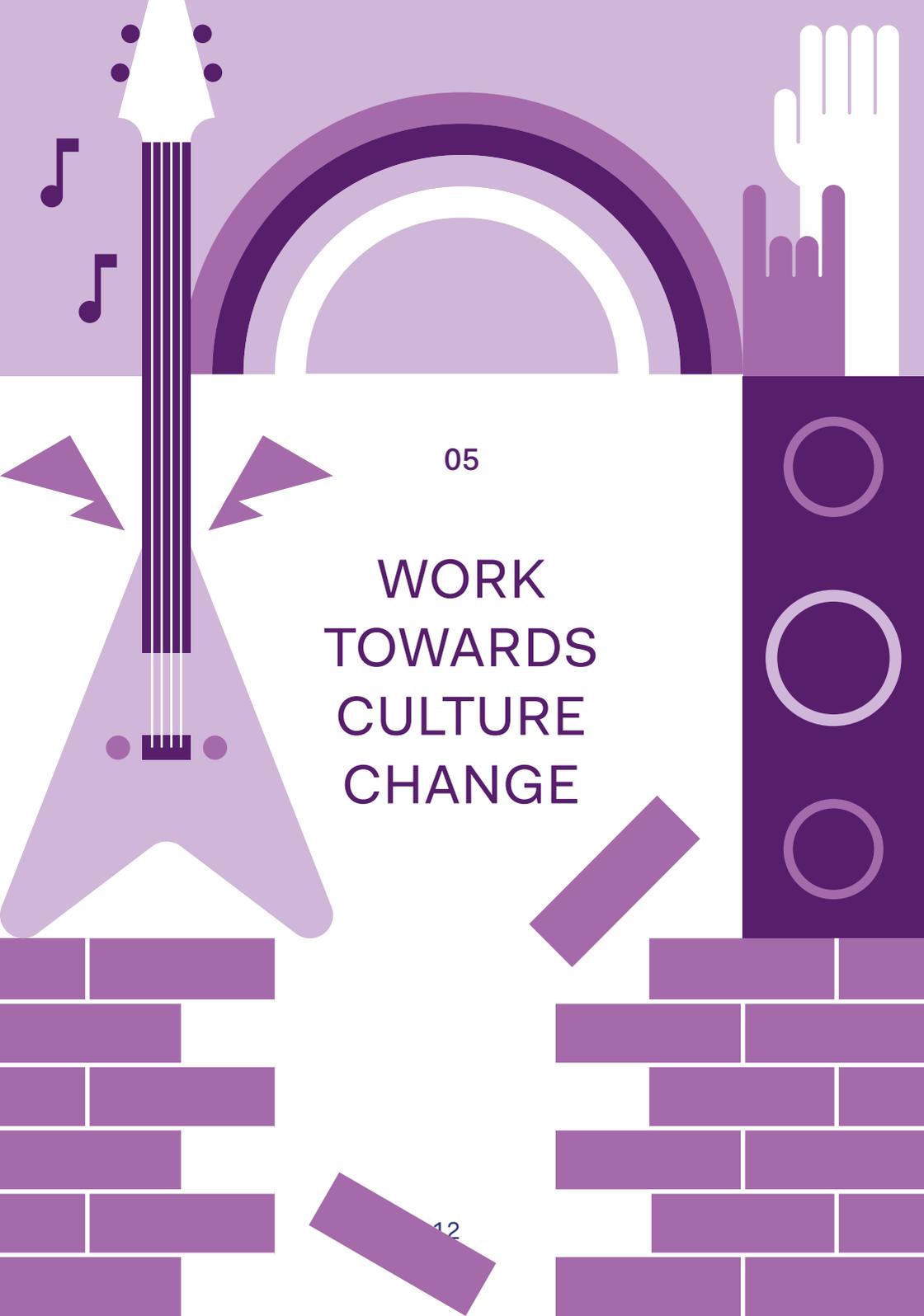
These should be accessible to all staff and regularly reviewed. There should be clear lines of reporting amongst staff and all incidents should be recorded in the incident book.

Dedicated staff members separate from bar staff and security should be available for gig goers to report incidents to. They should be well trained and have power to act. A means of digital or phone reporting could be offered so that those affected can report from their location in the venue or after they have left.

Procedures should be victim-led. It is not always in the wishes of victim/survivors to get the police involved, but if this is wanted then the venue should be supportive.

Victim/survivors we spoke to have had bad experiences of reporting incidents in the past, for example security staff have brushed off complaints or responded inappropriately. Poor responses can add to the feelings of humiliation and violation felt by victim/survivors. Clear procedures can empower staff to support victim/survivors well.

Clear procedures empower staff to know what to do in a crisis and to support victim/survivors well.



05

WORK
TOWARDS
CULTURE
CHANGE

12

Promoters and venues play a vital role in setting the tone and creating the right atmosphere at their events. They therefore have a key part to play in creating safer, healthier gigs, and there are reputational benefits in taking positive action. Concert-goers and promoters told us they avoid venues where they know incidents have happened and been poorly dealt with. Social media is used by victim/survivors to articulate their concerns about venues and promoters – and to say when things go well.

Venues and promoters should avoid working with other organisations that are unwilling to develop clear policies and procedures or to provide their staff with training. Promoters should book bands who are known for speaking out against sexual violence, and avoid bands with histories of sexual violence or sexually violent lyrics.

Working towards broader cultural shift, we recommend aiming for mixed gender bills and active support of women and LGBTQ musicians.

A positive reputation is to be gained from providing good responses to incidents and being seen to be proactive in encouraging respectful behaviour.

Support



Support is available to help venues and promoters take positive steps:

[White Ribbon Safer Music and Venues](#)

White Ribbon UK is a charity that campaigns to end male violence against women, once and for all. White Ribbon calls on all men to take a stand against sexism and gender-based violence in all forms. White Ribbon UK works with festivals, events and music venues to raise awareness of the need for safeguarding in this sector, and encourages organisations through a comprehensive action plan, to develop policies and practices that prevent violence against women and girls. The goal is for all women to know they can attend music events with confidence, and to encourage men (customers, staff and performers) to take a stand - because people of all genders should be able to enjoy music events free from fear.

More information:

www.whiteribbon.org.uk/safer-venues

Good Night Out

Good Night Out is a community interest company that delivers training to licensed premises on how to tackle and prevent harassment of women and LGBTQ+ people on nights out. They work with venues to develop policies and provide accreditation. Good Night Out is a global organisation and accreditation is a reputational boost.

More information:

www.goodnightoutcampaign.org

To enquire about training and accreditation:

info@goodnightoutcampaign.org

About the research underpinning this booklet



Healthy Music Audiences: Music, Gender and Health is a research project that aims to understand sexual harassment, groping and assault at gigs. It is conducted by popular music and gender scholars at the Universities of Huddersfield and Leeds with Girl Gang Leeds and The Leeds Music Hub. The research methods include interviews with concert-goers, anti-violence campaigners, music promoters and venue staff, as well as concert observation. It is funded by Leeds Cultural Institute and the University of Huddersfield. It was reviewed favourably by ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee, on 19/03/2018, reference AREA 17-098, and by the Department of Media, Journalism and Film research ethics process at the University of Huddersfield on 29/03/2019.

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The Leeds Music Hub

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Support numbers

If you have been affected by anything in this booklet, the following numbers may be helpful:

Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis support survivors of sexual violence

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk>

Victim Support provide support for survivors of sexual violence, including specialist support for male survivors

www.victimsupport.org.uk/more-us/why-choose-us/specialist-services/sexual-violence-services

Freephone:

0808 168 9111

This booklet was written by

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