



Hayley Crawford

Founder and Creator
'Ask for Angela'

Hayley Crawford is the Founder and Creator of the recognised 'Ask for Angela' safety initiative and current Police Inspector. She launched the scheme in 2016 while working as the Strategic Lead for Sexual Violence at Lincolnshire County Council, providing a discreet way for people to seek help in licensed venues. The initiative is now widely implemented across the UK and internationally by police forces, local authorities and hospitality groups. Hayley is currently supporting the establishment of an Ask for Angela charity ahead of the scheme's ten-year anniversary launch to keep the scheme free, ethical and accessible.

to ensure Ask for Angela is implemented everywhere it's needed. Its purpose is two-fold: To signal to predators that their behaviour is not tolerated in an Ask for Angela venue and to reassure customers that there is a safety net, a clear, discreet way to seek help without fear or judgement. Every venue that adopts it is sending a message: You are safe here and we will step in for you.

Ask for Angela, approaching its 10-year anniversary, remains a prime example of how simple, well-communicated tools make a profound difference. Over the last decade, the initiative has evolved into more than a discreet safety phrase it has become a cultural cue for compassion, staff readiness and rapid safeguarding. Its continued growth shows exactly what the public want from our sector: Practical, trusted interventions that allow people to seek help without fear or embarrassment.

People want to see how their safety is protected in real terms. Policies need to be public, staff need to be confident and reporting cultures need to be open. Trust is earned through visible action.

As Ask for Angela reaches its decade milestone in 2026, its message resonates more strongly than ever: Safeguarding is not a trend and prevention is not optional. If our sector is serious about protecting women and girls, then this must be the year we collectively commit to zero tolerance, early intervention and environments where safety is proactively created, not passively hoped for. ■

As we head into 2026, the security sector finds itself in a moment of both opportunity and frustration. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains one of the most urgent public safety challenges of our time, yet the long-awaited national VAWG strategy promised for release in 2025 has still not materialised. Alongside this delay sits a bold government pledge: To halve VAWG within ten years. It is an ambition we all want to believe in, but one we will struggle to achieve if we continue to bury our heads in the sand and rely on rhetoric rather than action.

Until national direction is clarified, the responsibility falls even more heavily on organisations, venues and security professionals to lead from the front. And the truth is this: Organisational safeguarding policies must be sharper, clearer and genuinely enforced. A zero-tolerance approach to VAWG isn't a slogan, it must be embedded in culture,

practice and leadership decisions. If every venue, event space, transport hub or hospitality setting adopts rigorous standards, we can create tangible community-level change even while we wait for wider strategic alignment.

My motivation for this work is deeply personal. From my teenage years onward, sexual assault and harassment in the night-time economy felt like an unavoidable part of going out, something women quietly navigated, endured or dismissed as 'normal'. Too many of us have walked into venues knowing we had to manage our own safety in environments that weren't always designed with us in mind. Being groped at the bar when ordering drinks or having your backside slapped as you walk through a crowded bar holding drinks and having to decide on whether to challenge it and risk further assault or ignore it and not give the predator the satisfaction of getting a reaction. That history fuels my determination