

Don't Stand By, Step In

By [Redbridge Council](#)

Redbridge Council has launched an **initiative aimed at addressing women's safety and tackling sexist harassment in the borough**. Named 'Don't Stand By, Step In,' the campaign calls on residents to take proactive measures when witnessing harassment. This initiative is part of the broader 'This Has To Stop' campaign, a long-term effort to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Redbridge.

The initiative stems from feedback indicating that many bystanders feel uncertain about how to intervene when witnessing harassment. Concerns about making the situation worse or not knowing what to do are common barriers. 'Don't Stand By, Step In' seeks to empower individuals with practical tools and guidance to effectively support women and girls, promoting safety and respect in public spaces.



Innovation is an essential ingredient for high performing services."

Adrian Loades, former Interim Chief Executive and Corporate Director of People, London Borough of Redbridge

The campaign outlines three simple, actionable steps for bystanders to follow:

- 1 Distract the Perpetrator:** Depending on the situation, bystanders can create a distraction by asking the harasser a question, such as directions, the time, or even complimenting their clothing. This subtle intervention can defuse the tension and shift focus.
- 2 Support the Victim:** Making eye contact with the affected woman or asking if she's okay can provide reassurance. If appropriate, offer to walk her to her destination or involve another passerby to assist. It's essential to respect her wishes and avoid actions that might make her feel uncomfortable.
- 3 Seek Help:** Look for others nearby who can help, such as shop staff or transport workers. In more serious situations, call the police on 999 to ensure the woman's safety.

Developed using international best practices in bystander training, 'Don't Stand By, Step In' provides resources to help residents, local businesses, and community organisations combat harassment. These tools are designed to raise awareness and equip people with the knowledge needed to address inappropriate behaviour effectively.

Redbridge Council's Leader, Councillor Jas Athwal, emphasised the importance of collective action, stating:

"Everyone deserves to feel safe on our streets. This initiative equips our community with the tools to challenge unacceptable behaviour and support victims, while reinforcing the message that harassment has no place in Redbridge."

The council is also implementing additional measures, including penalties for men who engage in catcalling, as part of its commitment to ending sexual harassment.

Recognising the critical role of men in addressing VAWG, male leaders across the borough have stepped up to champion the campaign. Dr. Stephen Addison, CEO of Box Up Crime, and community leader Taiwo Ademola are actively working with youth leaders to challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours among young people.

Dr. Addison stated,

"Sexist harassment isn't just something we have to accept. Men need to hold each other accountable and set positive examples for younger generations. Change begins with each of us."

See more: [Don't Stand By, Step In: Training Resources](#)

