Torquay Best Bar None

Press Release

**For immediate release**

**Need help in a Torquay pub or club? Just ‘Ask for Angela’**

Torquay’s Best Bar None group in partnership with Safer Communities Torbay, is helping to protect any person who may feel frightened during a date or by their partner whilst out in several of its harbour-side licensed premises by launching a new scheme called Ask for Angela.

The scheme which was originally set up in Lincolnshire is being led and rolled out in a number of Torquay’s pubs by the local Best Bar None group.

It works by licensed premises displaying an ‘Ask for Angela’ poster or window sticker which signals that the pub, club, restaurant or bar is signed up to the scheme. In those premises staff know to take action if someone approaches the bar and asks if they can speak with ‘Angela’. If that happens the staff will discreetly offer to separate the individual asking for Angela from the person who is causing them discomfort or distress, and ensure that the person is able to leave safely. In any situation where a person becomes aggressive or is making threats to harm an individual or a member of staff, the police will be called immediately”.

Kelly Widley-Jarrett Torquay Best Bar None Chairwoman and Manager of Pier Point restaurant said: “Torbay as a whole has a huge choice of fantastic places to drink, dine and dance and whilst the majority of our residents and visitors enjoy what’s on offer without any issues at all, sadly for some people a night out can sometimes take a turn for the worse.

If an individual is out on a first date, especially with a person who they have only communicated with online before, there is always a risk that they may feel uncomfortable for a variety of reasons and not know how to remove themselves from that situation. We also know that many individuals suffer in silence due to abusive relationships with partners or family members, so we wanted to be able to offer help to anyone who may need to get out of a situation safely, quickly and discreetly”.

Best Bar None is a nationally accredited scheme that aims to recognise outstanding standards in licensed premises and efforts to reduce crime and improve community safety in an area and is supported by Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly’s Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez who said:

“Best Bar None is a fantastic scheme as it’s led by the licensed trade who are in the most powerful position to create not only a prosperous day and night time economy, but a safe experience for all. Preventing crime and protecting vulnerable people, particularly from the risk of domestic abuse and sexual violence are key priorities within my Police and Crime Plan so am delighted to be able to offer my support to this outstanding team. I commend Torquay Best Bar None for their work in partnership with the police, council, Community Safety Partnership, and the Torbay Street Pastors to deliver Ask for Angela. I hope that in time other licensed premises throughout Torbay and indeed other Best Bar None Schemes in Devon and Cornwall also adopt Ask for Angela”.

Torquay’s Best Bar None group which is led by the licensed trade was set up in 2016 and has so far delivered a range of activities to help reduce the risk of sexual vulnerability. This work has included supporting Torbay’s Community Safety Partnership to deliver specialist training to bar and security staff, as well as funding Torquay’s taxi marshall scheme which aims to reduce the risk of disorder at taxi ranks, as well as discouraging taxi sharing between individuals who are not known to each other.

Superintendent Jacquie Hawley who is South Devon Police’s Area Commander and Chair of Torbay’s Community Safety Partnership said “Devon and Cornwall Police has been delighted to be involved with Torquay Best Bar None since it started and we fully support Ask for Angela as a method to reduce the risk of harm, reduce vulnerability and prevent crime. Whilst the scheme will be initially starting in Torquay I have already pledged my support to the Best Bar None group in helping to encourage licensed premises in Paignton and Brixham to sign up to Ask for Angela”.

Further information on the Ask for Angela campaign and other supportive services for individuals concerned about abuse from intimate partners and family members is available at [www.areyouok.co.uk](http://www.areyouok.co.uk)

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors**

All media partners are invited to Torquay licensing forum on 22nd November 2017 at XXXXXXXXXXXXX at Pier Point, Torquay. The event provides an opportunity for licensed premises not currently accredited as Best Bar None premises, to find out more about the scheme and how they can take part. Various representatives of the Best Bar None Steering Group including the Chairwoman Kelly Widley-Jarrett & Vice chair Trevor Staveley will be available to give interviews to the media on Ask for Angela.