

WMCA bosses appointed as UK's first champions to tackle violence against women on public transport

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Two West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) leaders have been chosen by Government to lead on efforts to tackle violence against women and girls on transport.

WMCA interim chief executive Laura Shoaf and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) interim managing director Anne Shaw have been announced as the UK's first Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champions.

The West Midlands is the only region with a joint combined authority and transport authority led by women.

Their appointment was part of the wider Violence Against Women And Girls strategy [unveiled by the Home Office today](#).

Under the new role they will work with the Department for Transport, as well as passenger groups and the

transport industry, to identify areas for improvement across the country's transport network.

Laura, who also chairs the Urban Transport Group which represents UK city region transport authorities, said: "It is completely unacceptable that women do not always feel safe on our country's transport systems. It is an essential service helping people get to work, to health care, out with friends and connecting families. It is for everyone.

"Anne and I will be engaging with the transport sector and local authorities to make a real change on the ground to better ensure everyone feels safe on our transport."

Laura and Anne are tomorrow meeting with Transport Minister Rachel Maclean to hear from a group of charities about the key issues facing women on transport as they see them.

Anne added: "As managing director of Transport for West Midlands, the safety of our passengers is of paramount importance which is why we work closely with police and operators through our **pioneering Safer Travel Partnership**.

"We will be working very closely with Government to ensure that changes can be introduced across the country."

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said: "No woman should ever be made to feel unsafe on public transport which is why we'll be working with operators across all modes to address the problems vulnerable passengers face.

"I'm delighted that Laura Shoaf and Anne Shaw will be our new VAWG Transport Champions. They bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the role and I look forward to working with them as we help deliver real change on the ground."

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio lead for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, added: "It is not surprising that the Government has turned to Laura and Anne for advice on this very important project to improve safety for women on transport.

"Their expertise, experience and ability to deliver has been proven over many years working here to improve transport for the people of the West Midlands."

The Department for Transport has also issued a call for evidence to see how their guidance on street design can be updated to take more account of women's safety when planning highways.

Photo credit: West Midlands Combined Authority