

Women's safety on public transport in the spotlight for minister visit

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Transport minister Trudy Harrison MP visited the West Midlands to find out about ground-breaking work being done to make our transport networks safer for women and girls.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) bosses met the minister, who is leading the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls agenda, to report back interim findings following a series of roundtable discussions on the issue.

The visit follows the appointment earlier this year of West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) chief executive Laura Shoaf and TfWM interim managing director Anne Shaw as the government's first Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Transport Champions.

Laura, who also chairs the national [Urban Transport Group](#), and Anne have been speaking to a wide range of stakeholders including passenger groups, campaign groups, charities, police and the transport industry to look at measures to improve safety on public transport networks. This includes a focus on making it more difficult for perpetrators to commit these crimes in the first place.

By January 2022 the Transport Champions will provide the Department of Transport with a set of recommendations on how the transport sector can improve safety.

The Minister said: “Far too often we hear harrowing accounts of women experiencing violence and harassment when they are simply going about their daily lives. It’s unacceptable and we will take every action to put an end this disturbing trend.

“I’m grateful to the Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champions for giving victims a voice, and although there are already many fantastic initiatives underway, our work will not stop until everyone feels safe and confident on public transport.”

Laura said: “It is completely unacceptable that women do not always feel safe on our country’s transport systems.

“Women should feel they can take up opportunities such as in work, training and education and connect with friends and family without feeling threatened.

“Through our extensive engagement with a wide range of different organisations, we are gathering best practice examples which can make a real change on the ground to better ensure everyone feels safer on our transport networks.”

The visit included a look at how the work of VAWG champions will be incorporated into the emerging transport plans for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and a meeting with the dedicated police officers, assigned to [the Safer Travel Partnership](#), who work on the front line to keep the public safe on public transport.

The minister also saw some best practice examples on ways we are making the network safer, such as through the [cutting-edge Regional Traffic Coordination Centre](#) – which monitors the region’s road, rail, tram and bus networks round the clock.

Anne said: “Alongside this work, the Commonwealth Games is also bringing about a range of safety enhancements across the transport system, whether that be new or improved physical infrastructure; better and safer public spaces; accelerated investment in camera and communications technology or closer partnership working across agencies to deliver enhanced safety and security.

“As a result, the West Midlands will benefit from a range of sustainable transport choices that will make it easier for people to travel in safety.

“And as the Transport Champions, we will ensure this wider VAWG’s work is captured across the Games Transport Plan and associated security plans.”

Photo credit: Transport for West Midlands