

## BTP & Rail Partnership Strategy, 2026 – 2028

# Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls

*A joint strategy developed by the following partners:*



### **Rail Delivery Group**



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# Foreword

Ensuring the safety and confidence of women and girls across our railway network is not just a shared responsibility - it is a moral imperative. This Joint Industry VIAWG Strategy reaffirms our unwavering commitment to making our railways places where women and girls are not only safe, but feel safe, every single day.

The UK Government has designated Violence Against Women and Girls as a national emergency and set an ambition to halve incidents within a decade. This strategy represents the rail industry and British Transport Police's response to that national call to action.

As leaders of Rail Delivery Group and British Transport Police, we stand united in driving a partnership that puts the prevention of violence and intimidation at the heart of everything we do. Our progress in recent years has been significant: we have launched pioneering campaigns, earned national recognition for victim-focused investigations, and introduced innovative support initiatives such as Safe Hubs. Yet, we are under no illusions, the journey is far from over. The statistics remain stark, and the barriers to reporting - trauma, mistrust, and insufficient support - are reminders that we must do more and do better.

We will not accept complacency. This strategy sets out a bold, collective vision: a railway where safety is not just a promise, but a lived reality for all. We will be fearless in our ambitions, transparent in our actions, and relentless in our pursuit of meaningful change. By forging stronger alliances between enforcement, rail organisations, government, and the wider community, we will create a culture where violence and intimidation against women and girls are confronted head-on and unequivocally condemned.

We are committed to working with government, aligning our efforts with the national strategy to halve incidents of violence and intimidation against women and girls within the next decade. Our approach will be defined by bold, transparent, and measurable industry-wide action.

Together, we will not only build on our achievements - but we will also set a new standard for safety, dignity, and respect on our railways. This is our pledge: to deliver lasting, transformative change for everyone who travels and works across the network.

**Signed:** Jacqueline Starr (Executive Chair and CEO, RDG) and Lucy D'Orsi (Chief Constable, BTP)

**Dated:** March 2026

# Executive Summary

The Joint Industry VIAWG Strategy sets out a united commitment to reduce Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls (VIAWG) affecting passengers and frontline colleagues across the rail network. It sets out the societal issue facing the railways, progress to date and recent activity, the aims and objectives of this plan, and our joint industry-wide commitments to take forward in response to this challenge.

This strategy aligns with national government objectives and adopts the 4P policing framework - Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Prepare - to deliver measurable and impactful change. Its focus includes:

- **Preventing harm** through shared industry standards, targeted safety initiatives, aligned public campaigns and the wider use of Body Worn Video.
- **Protecting staff and passengers** via robust vetting, stronger safeguarding policies, discreet reporting mechanisms and joined up multimodal safeguarding frameworks
- **Relentlessly pursuing perpetrators** through specialist investigative capability, intelligence led deployments, disruption tactics and strengthened offender management.
- **Preparing** the network with senior leadership accountability, robust staff training, improved data sharing and passenger led insight through VIAWG focus groups.

A cross industry Steering Group and Delivery Group will oversee progress, supported by clear KPIs and transparent reporting.

The strategy will be reviewed in 2027 to ensure continuous learning and alignment with national priorities.

# The Challenge: tackling a societal issue

Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls is a societal issue and the challenge facing law enforcement is well documented. The National Policing Statement for VIAWG, commissioned by the National Police Chiefs' Council and College of Policing, found (published 2024):

- Over one million VIAWG-related crimes were recorded during 2022/23, accounting for 20% of all police recorded crime<sup>1</sup>.
- Police recorded VIAWG-related crime increased by 37% between 2018/23<sup>2</sup>.
- At least one in every 12 women will be a victim per year, with the exact number expected to be much higher<sup>3</sup>.
- Child sexual abuse and exploitation increased by more than 400% between 2013 and 2022<sup>4</sup>.

The 2025 Personal Safety on Transport Survey found a pronounced gender disparity: 24% of men feel very safe on public transport compared to just 14% of women, with young women feeling especially unsafe<sup>5</sup>.

In addition, research in 2025 from Rail Delivery Group revealed that nine in 10 people believe sexual harassment and violence against women and girls is an important societal issue<sup>6</sup>. The research also found that the overwhelming majority of people (87%) believe that more needs to be done to prevent and address these incidents in society, and that the rail industry has an important role to play<sup>7</sup>.

This strategy sets out the joint response to this challenge from the rail industry working together with the British Transport Police.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/call-to-action-as-violence-against-women-and-girls-epidemic-deepens-1#:~:text=Violence%20against%20women%20and%20girls%20\(VAWG\)%20is,Education%20\\*%20Local%20authority%20\\*%20Voluntary%20sector](https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/call-to-action-as-violence-against-women-and-girls-epidemic-deepens-1#:~:text=Violence%20against%20women%20and%20girls%20(VAWG)%20is,Education%20*%20Local%20authority%20*%20Voluntary%20sector)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.npcc.police.uk/resources/vteb9-ec4cx-7xgru-wufu-5vvo6>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.npcc.police.uk/resources/vteb9-ec4cx-7xgru-wufu-5vvo6>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/call-to-action-as-violence-against-women-and-girls-epidemic-deepens-1>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-safety-on-transport>

<sup>6</sup> <https://media.raildeliverygroup.com/news/85-percent-say-rail-has-role-in-tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-industry-sets-out-safety-commitments>

<sup>7</sup> <https://media.raildeliverygroup.com/news/85-percent-say-rail-has-role-in-tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-industry-sets-out-safety-commitments>

# VIAWG Current Position

## Progress to date

### BTP

- **High solve rates:** As of March 2025, the rape solve rate is **22%** and sexual offences solve rate is **18.5%**, outperforming the national average of **4.2%**.
- **Improved reporting:** BTP have campaigned heavily to raise awareness and improve reporting this has led to a **24%** increase from same period in 2023/24.
- **Recognition:** National Policing VIAWG awards for *Speak Up*, *Interrupt*; *Op Streamline*; and runner-up for VIAWG Ambassador.
- **The creation of the VIAWG Taskforce:** A national taskforce with specialist capability to prevent, detect, and disrupt violence and intimidation against women and girls across the rail network.

### RDG and Operators

- **Industry-leading VIAWG pledges:** Five national pledges embedded across the industry, setting consistent standards for prevention, reporting and response.
- **Cross-industry leadership:** Delivered a major VIAWG conference, launching new public-attitude research and generating national coverage, including in *The Times*.
- **Commitment to safety:** Signatory of the Women's Night Safety Charter and White Ribbon partnership: Strengthened accreditation with coordinated 'We Speak Up' campaigns promoting allyship and zero tolerance.
- **National staff training:** Designed and rolled out a tailored training programme for frontline staff on recognising harassment and supporting victims and survivors.
- **Anti-sexual harassment roadshows:** Ongoing national roadshows (since 2024) with BTP and operators, achieving strong regional engagement and media coverage.

### *Body-Worn Video progress to date*

- **Evidence base:** Cambridge University research shows BWV reduces assault risk by 47%.
- **National guidance:** Issued to all TOCs on BWV adoption.
- **Policy alignment:** TOCs updated uniform policies to include BWV for front-line staff.
- **Improved prosecutions:** 67% of BTP prosecutors report BWV footage as useful evidence.

### **Network Rail**

- **Enhanced CCTV strategy:** Working with RDG and BTP to expand CCTV coverage and enable real-time police access, supported by £17m government funding.
- **White Ribbon accreditation:** Ongoing cultural change work including events across stations and offices.
- **Public awareness:** Promoting zero tolerance and reporting via BTP's 61016 text service.
- **Safe Hubs:** Trialling dedicated support spaces, with the first hub launched at Leeds Station in early 2025.

### **Transport for London (TfL)**

- **Industry leadership:** Since 2013, TfL alongside the BTP and the Metropolitan Police Service has led efforts to tackle sexual offences and harassment on public transport through its End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) programme, focused on prevention and improving confidence to travel.
- **Groundbreaking research:** TfL delivered the largest study of its kind, engaging over 3,000 women, girls, and parents to co-design safety improvements across the network to improve confidence.
- **Pan-modal collaboration:** Established the first Transport Taskforce addressing VIAWG and hate crime across all transport modes, bringing together partners from transport, policing, and specialist sectors.
- **Commitment to safety:** Founding signatory of the Women's Night Safety Charter, White Ribbon accredited, and winner of the UN Women Award (2024) recognising leadership in safer public spaces.
- **Empowered & supported workforce:** Over 6,000 frontline London Underground colleagues trained in a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, supported by strengthened internal workplace safeguarding policies and dedicated staff support pathways, with frontline staff also equipped with Body Worn Video as essential kit to enhance safety.

- **Award-winning campaigns:** High-impact initiatives such as 'Crime Has Consequences' and 'Act Like a Friend' (2025) encourage active bystander intervention and challenge harmful behaviour.

## Transport Scotland

- **Travel Safe campaigns:** VIAWG embedded in *Not Part of the Job*, *Suicide Prevention*, *White Ribbon*, *Railway Children* and *Fearless* campaigns.
- **White Ribbon accreditation:** ScotRail accredited.
- **Travel Safe Team:** Joint initiative with BTP targeting sexual harassment on priority routes.

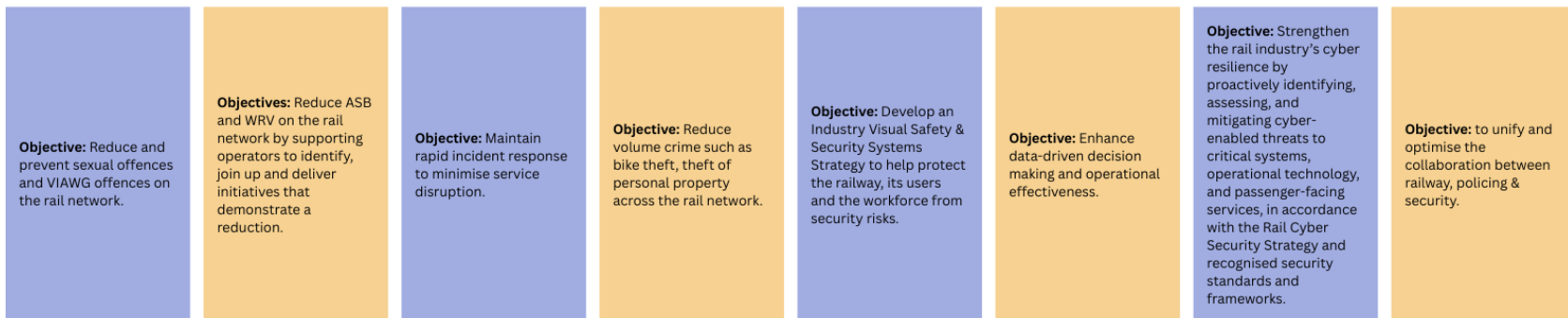
# Alignment with Existing Plans

## Rail Partnership Strategy

The UK rail industry is committed to ensuring the safety and security of everyone who travels or works on the railway network. This commitment extends to both passengers and employees, reflecting the industry's responsibility to provide a safe environment at every stage of the journey. The Policing & Security Strategy embraces a holistic approach to policing, recognising that effective safety and security require coordination between enforcement, rail organisations, government, and the wider community. By addressing issues proactively, fostering strong partnerships, and integrating prevention, enforcement, and support measures, the strategy seeks to create a secure and welcoming rail network for all customers and rail staff.



Safeguarding cuts across all strategic themes, shaping how we protect vulnerable people and respond to risk throughout the rail network.



# Rail Partnership Strategic Aim and Objectives

## **Our Partnership Aim**

We are committed to creating a railway network that is safe and *feels* safe for everyone. Together, we will foster a culture where all forms of Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls (VIAWG) are clearly recognised as unacceptable and are actively challenged.

## **Our Objectives**

- We will build on our collaborative efforts to date and go further, being bold and innovative to tackle offenders.
- We will amplify our collective efforts to make the railway safer and more welcoming for all.
- We will continue to make a meaningful and lasting difference for the travelling public.
- We will transparently track and share our progress in tackling VIAWG.

## **Our Approach**

There is more detail on how we will deliver on our aims, monitor our actions and report on the progress we make together in the pages below in this document.

# Government VIAWG Objectives

The Government has designated VIAWG as a national emergency, aiming to halve such incidents within ten years. Recognising transport as a key frontline, the strategy calls for staff to identify, challenge, and respond to harmful behaviour, and to support victims while addressing perpetrators early.

The Government's approach is described as a whole of society and cross-sector responsibility, mirroring the Door-to-Door workstream's focus on joined-up safety across the transport network. The strategy is set out in two volumes: one cross-government strategy and one action plan. The strategy has three main objectives:

- Preventing abuse through early intervention,
- Relentlessly pursuing perpetrators,
- Supporting victims and survivors.

The 4P policing framework (Prepare, Protect, Prevent, Pursue) closely aligns with these aims, and the strategy underlines that reducing VIAWG requires more than just the criminal justice system, with transport playing a pivotal role.

In addition, The Angiolini Report<sup>8</sup> underscores that safe travel is central to women's freedom and equality. It calls for urgent reforms not only within policing but also across transport systems, recognising that journeys to and from work, school, or social activities must be free from fear or risk of violence.

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<sup>8</sup> The Angiolini Inquiry Part 2 Report (published 2 December 2025)

# Rail Delivery Group's Board Pledges

The Pledges were made in October 2024, and they set out a set of commitments to take forward the work of the rail industry in tackling VAWG. Progress with the implementation of the Pledges is being monitored and a summary reporting is done to the VAWG Steering Group.

## VIAWG 5 PLEDGES

### Sexual Harassment Training

1. Mandatory, consistent training on sexual harassment to be delivered to all customer facing staff.



### VIAWG representation

2. Board-level representation/member for safeguarding at each TOC.



### Body Worn Video

3. A commitment of 100% of customer-facing rail staff to be equipped with Body Worn Video.



### TOC Focus Groups

4. TOCs to establish a passenger group for women and girls. Providing a forum for those who experience this issue to directly inform operators how they would feel safer using the network.



### Staff Reporting App

5. The need for a staff reporting app, consistent across all TOCS.



# Approach

To deliver our Partnership VIAWG Strategy, we have aligned our approach with the 4P policing strategy which has been used successfully to tackle terrorism and organised crime. Tackling VIAWG addresses one of the six strategic threats identified by British Transport Police.

This Strategy aligns with the National Chief Police Council (NPCC) VIAWG National Framework for Delivery 2024-2027, which sets out the '4 P' approach to tackling VIAWG – Prepare, Protect, Pursue and Prevent.

It identifies five critical threats:

- Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)
- Domestic Abuse
- Stalking or Harassment
- Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Online & Tech-enabled VIAWG.

It now brings together all these areas under one overarching umbrella and incorporates all sexual offences and sexual harassment.

It is, however, important to understand that the critical threats in the railway environment are:

- Sexual assault
- Indecent exposure
- Masturbation
- Upskirting
- Cyber flashing
- Sexual harassment

Working closely together in partnership is key to successfully tackling and preventing all these high harm offences.

We will collaborate to create a hostile environment for offenders and reduce the likelihood of those who identify as women and girls becoming victims of crime or face intimidation of any sort on the railway network.

Working together, we seek to innovate and build confidence that we can defeat VIAWG.

Our Partnership Activities and KPIs are set out below using the 4Ps as the framework.

# Shared Performance Framework

## Prevent People from committing VIAWG through Partnership

**1 Industry Commitment to Safer Railways:** By December 2027, every participating rail organisation to achieve accreditation under a Department for Transport recognised security and/or safeguarding scheme. This will be measured by improvements in passenger satisfaction survey scores, indicating a reduction in crime and the fear of crime.

**2 BWV for Customer-Facing Staff:** 100% of customer-facing rail staff, as per agreed definition, to be equipped with Body-Worn Video (BWV). Success will be measured by year-on-year increases in the use of BWV.

**3 Agreed Campaign Framework:** RDG and BTP will collaborate on RDG-led VIAWG-related external campaigns that incorporate BTP's trusted brand within partnership materials. RDG will provide BTP with early sight of planned campaign activity, including key messages, timelines, and relevant creative assets, to support aligned and consistent communication across partners. Each campaign will include an agreed evaluation framework established prior to launch, with defined performance indicators and a post-campaign report produced within 30 days of completion. Campaign outcomes will focus on increasing customer awareness of reporting routes for VIAWG-related concerns and enhancing confidence in the response. RDG will maintain a baseline and track progress through regular customer surveys.

**4 Multi-agency Initiatives:** Strengthen multi-agency collaboration to deliver 75\* targeted safety initiatives at high-risk locations a year, using a range of operational approaches to prevent VIAWG offences, improve public confidence, and increase incident reporting.

**5 Innovation:** Rail organisations and BTP will explore the potential of new technologies - such as live facial recognition, AI and more effective data-sharing - with a view to strengthening VIAWG prevention and investigative capabilities.

## Protecting individuals and communities from VIAWG

**6 Industry-Wide Vetting for Customer Facing Staff:** By December 2026, establish a single, secure vetting framework to ensure consistent and robust background checks for all future customer-facing staff across the rail industry. Success will be demonstrated by steady year on year growth in the number of staff completing the vetting process.

**7 Safe Working Environment:** All employers will implement and maintain robust internal safeguarding policies (e.g. Domestic Abuse policy) and confidential reporting mechanisms to prioritise staff safety and ensure compliance with the Workers Protection Act. To be tracked against the internal action plan driven by the VIAWG Ambassador.

**8 Discreet Reporting Mechanism:** BTP and the rail industry will support the creation of a passenger app to provide trusted and accessible reporting channels across the rail network to enable timely intervention.

**9 Safeguarding for Passenger Journeys:** The transport industry will work in partnership with national regulators for buses and taxis, local authorities, and Home Office police forces to establish a nationally agreed safeguarding framework or MOU. This will ensure consistent, joined-up safeguarding across all modes and stages of passenger journeys, supported by clear reporting mechanisms and joint safeguarding initiatives. Alongside this the Home Office and rail industry will keep working together to develop a rail focused adaptation of the Enough Campaign deepening awareness and embedding preventative behaviours across the network. The framework will deliver holistic protection for vulnerable individuals in transit, embedding safeguarding into the core of transport operations and enabling proactive, multi-agency intervention.

## Relentlessly Pursue VIAWG perpetrators

**10 Specialist Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Investigation Team:** By April 2026, BTP will launch a specialised team to investigate the highest harm sexual offences, delivering expert-led, suspect-centric, and victim-focused investigations that meet National Op Soteria RASSO KPIs.

**11 Disruption of Offenders:** BTP and the rail industry will achieve a year-on-year increase in proactive tactics, including Railway Behaviour Notices, Criminal Behaviour Orders, access restrictions and enforceable interventions across the network at the top 20\*\* VIAWG hotspots.

**12 Robust Management of High-Risk Offenders:** Enhance the multi-agency, proactive approach to increase the number of high-risk offenders managed by BTP 10% year-on-year, actively reducing recidivism and delivering an 8% improvement in solved VIAWG crimes\*.

**13 Intelligence-Led Industry Tasking:** BTP and industry partners will enhance intelligence sharing through the Unified Policing and Security Programme to enable targeted deployment of rail security resources to VIAWG offence hotspots. Success will be measured by increased precision in deployments which evidence a demonstrable reduction in VIAWG-related incidents at identified locations.

*\*\* Top 20 stations/lines of route to be identified from BTP crime stats combined with industry data from passenger surveys around fear of crime. DOCU led environmental audits to be carried out at each location/line of route.*

## Prepare to effectively respond to and reduce VIAWG

**14 Senior Leadership Commitment to Reduce VIAWG on the Rail Network:** By April 2026, every participating rail organisation will appoint a VIAWG Ambassador and create an action plan with clear deliverables for the next three years that will be held to account at Joint Partnership meetings.

**15 Industry-Led VIAWG Training:** By July 2027, all employers will deliver mandatory VIAWG training to all customer-facing staff. Success will be measured by the year-on-year improvement in staff knowledge and confidence in responding to VIAWG-related issues, identified via post-training surveys and auditable training recording systems.

**16 Industry VIAWG Focus Groups:** By June 2026, every participating rail organisation will launch an ambassador-led VIAWG Focus Group to amplify passenger voices and co-design safeguarding strategies that protect women and girls across the rail network, including clearly defined terms of reference and formal reporting mechanisms into BTP. Success will be measured by the number of passengers participating in focus groups or related activities, the diversity of participants (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, travel patterns), frequency of meetings and attendance rates and the volume and quality of feedback collected from passengers.

**17 Improved Data Sharing:** Establish a unified approach to retaining, recording, and sharing intelligence and safeguarding data across the rail industry to support proactive risk management, operational response, and collaborative safeguarding between the BTP and industry partners. For example, a single staff reporting app and including enhanced CCTV connectivity and secure digital evidence transfer between rail operators and BTP. Success will be measured by a year-on-year improvements in briefing to industry by BTP and the number of reports received from industry partners.

# Delivery and Monitoring

In July 2025, to delivery our Partnership VIAWG Strategy, we set up a Steering Group comprising representatives from:

- BTP
- BTPA
- DFT
- DFTO
- Network Rail
- RDG
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- TFL
- TFW
- Transport Focus

An annual report setting out progress will be reported to the Steering Group on an annual basis.

For further information about the Steering Group please contact:

**Chair:** Jacqueline Starr, [Jacqueline.Starr@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:Jacqueline.Starr@raildeliverygroup.com)

**Project Manager:** Uchenna Forjoe, [Uchenna.forjoe@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:Uchenna.forjoe@raildeliverygroup.com)

## Senior Oversight Group

The Senior Oversight Group is made up of senior leaders from across the rail sector, focused on driving meaningful change on VIAWG and providing strategic oversight to the development of the Steering & Delivery Group. The Senior Oversight Group comprising of representatives from:

- Jacqueline Starr, CEO of Rail Delivery Group.
- Lucy D'Orsi CVO QPM, Chief Constable of British Transport Police.
- Steve White, Managing Director of Southeastern Railway.
- Ellie Burrows, Managing Director, Eastern Region of Network Rail.
- Claire Mann, Chief Operating Officer of Transport for London.

## Partnership Delivery Group and Plan

We have established a Delivery Group that will have day to day oversight of activities and KPIs. The Group comprises representatives from:

- RDG
- BTP
- BTPA
- Network Rail
- DFTO
- TfL
- TOCs

We have developed a Delivery Plan. The Partnership Delivery Group will review progress monthly.

Our dedicated Project Manager will be responsible for reporting to the Steering Group and strategic alignment across the industry.

Our Strategy will be reviewed in late 2027.

# Conclusion

This strategy sets out our shared commitment to make Great Britain's railways safe for all, with a clear and united focus on tackling VIAWG. Built on strong partnership between the rail industry, British Transport Police, government and wider industry stakeholders. It establishes a coordinated framework to prevent harm, protect passengers, pursue offenders and prepare the network to respond effectively.

By aligning our national objectives with the 4P policing approach, we will deliver practical, measurable action that strengthens safeguarding, improves reporting and victim support, creating a culture where unacceptable behaviour is consistently challenged. We will pursue the goals set out in this strategy and hold ourselves accountable through transparent monitoring, partnership leadership and continuous learning.