



‘SAFER DANCE’ – HELPING CLUBS AND VENUES BETTER MANAGE MODERN RISKS

The ‘Safer Dance’ initiative aims to improve the nightlife experience, ensuring our spaces become safer and more emotionally and physically enjoyable for staff and customers.

Background

‘Safer Dance’ is a collaboration between Subtle Speaks CIC and RSM UK. The initiative is a combination of risk technology (www.insight4grc.com), our risk management advisory, club/festival promotional activities, and the expertise gleaned from significant experience working within the night-time economy.

‘Safer Dance’ has recently been working with nightlife businesses to explore and consult on their approach to managing sexual harassment risk. This area of risk has been attracting high media interest and could potentially have significant negative reputational impact on individual clubs - and the sector as a whole.

- 71% of women of all ages in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space. This number rises to 86% among 18 – 24 year olds with only 3% of 18 – 24 year olds reported having not experienced any type of harassment (*UN Women, 2021*).
- According to Drinkaware, more than three quarters (79%) of 18 – 24 year old females think harassment is likely to happen to them/their female friends on a night out, with over half of males (60%) expecting these behaviours to happen to their female friends.
- “Rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, unwanted attention, misogynistic and sexist obstructions are what we encounter as we try to simply do our jobs. This is the price tag we are paying for.” (*#metoo For the Music Open Letter, Rebekah Teasdale, DJ Rebekah*).



About fabric London

Known for its talent led events covering the full spectrum of electronic dance music, fabric has been ranked the number one UK venue five times in the past two decades and nominated for the ‘best global club’ in 2011 & 2012.

fabric welcomes between 10,000 and 20,000 customers through its doors every single week, and have a customer welfare framework called Safer Spaces.

fabric acknowledge that the industry needs to do more to tackle sexual harassment and assault, and were seeking to understand the “maturity” of their own arrangements in this area.



If you're serious about tackling this issue, ‘Safer Dance’ can help. It's very easy to take the path of least resistance, and ‘Safer Dance’ has forced us not to do that. At first, I was sceptical, but the feedback has won me round, made me think of this issue (sexual harassment) in a different way.”

Luke Laws, fabric, Operations Director

 fabric

What we did

We undertook an assessment of fabric's current arrangements for managing sexual harassment risk, focussing on aspects such as senior management commitment, their policies and procedures, their reporting mechanisms and their approach to customer welfare, training, and continuous improvement.

The first phase was the completion of a self-assessment questionnaire to provide a baseline to help fabric to 'set the scene'. This was followed by an information gathering phase which included an interview with the operations manager. We also carried out specific staff and leadership team surveys, a document and website review, and a peer benchmarking exercise.

The self-assessment and surveys were distributed via 4Questionnaires - a module within Insight4GRC (www.insight4grc.com) - RSM UK's proprietary cloud-based risk management software suite.

In the final stage a workshop was undertaken with the management team to discuss the findings and recommendations stemming from our assessment. This workshop was structured to allow for an open "check and challenge" phase - enabling the team to identify additional information and agree potential actions.

We identified evidence that demonstrated that fabric London has embedded a culture of respect and had placed potential victims / survivors at the centre of their strategy with their 'always believe the report' policy in cases of harassment. The venue demonstrated a clear ongoing commitment to the safety and the welfare of both staff and customers through their 'Safer Space' policies which included the strap line "**Striving to create a safe and truly open space**".

Outcomes and how we helped

Based upon the outputs from the workshop, we proposed a set of recommendations including;

- a public facing communication strategy;
- the development of innovative messaging for 'would be perpetrators';
- the development of key performance indicators;
- the creation of customer engagement strategies; and
- advice to improve the business's governance structures.

fabric were able to undertake some of these recommendations immediately.

As part of their commitment to continuous improvement in connection with the management of sexual harassment risk, fabric have scheduled a series of quarterly meetings with RSM to help them review the progress of the agreed actions being taken.

If you would like to know more about how your club can benefit from the 'Safer Dance' initiative, please contact:

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SUBTLE SPEAKS



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