Resource pack for event organisers

Running safer, inclusive events in Exeter

This pack supports anyone who wants to run LGBTQ+ events in Exeter, from club nights to community events. Most of it is adapted from Devon & Cornwall Police's **Guidance for Event and Protest Organisers** (version 10, May 2026).

Who is responsible?

Devon & Cornwall Police say they have no authority to approve or ban events, and keeping the public safe at an event is not a police role. Responsibility for public safety rests with the event organiser, the owner of the land, and the local authority if the event is on a road. The police advise organisers to consider public liability insurance, and not to underestimate how long planning takes.

1. Write an Event Management Plan

Devon & Cornwall Police recommend your plan covers:

- an overview of the event and how many people are expected
- major incident and evacuation plans
- a command structure, with roles and responsibilities
- security, steward and marshal numbers
- crowd management
- access and exit routes for emergency services
- counter-terrorism considerations and measures
- a lost child / vulnerable person policy
- risk assessments, including in the event of a protest
- maps showing evacuation routes and muster points

Ask your local council or the Safety Advisory Group whether they have an Event Management Plan template.

2. Tell the right people

Who	What to do
Police	Use the form to tell the police about an event, procession or protest.
Exeter City Council	Contact the Exeter Safety Advisory Group. It usually reviews events of more than 500 people, but smaller events may also need its involvement. Its guidance is advisory only.
Fire and ambulance	Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and South Western Ambulance Service (SWAST) both have event notification forms.
Roads	If your event affects a road, contact Devon County Council Highways.
Protests and marches	Under the Public Order Act 1986, you must give the police written notice at least **6 clear days** before, unless that isn't reasonably practicable.
Licensing	Selling alcohol, live or recorded music, plays, dance or film usually needs a Premises Licence or a Temporary Event Notice. Applications can take several months.

3. If you sell alcohol

The police recommend an Alcohol Management Plan alongside your Event Management Plan. It should cover things such as staff training, a Challenge 25 age policy, security, first aid, toilets, an incident book, and a refusal process and register.

4. Plan for safety at night

Devon & Cornwall Police recommend a VAWG-centred approach (violence against women and girls):

- Identify risk areas, such as dimly lit areas, toilets, crowded spaces and dance floors.
- Have a clear recording and reporting procedure for all staff.

- Include these reporting procedures in every staff briefing.
- Consider bystander training.

The police say organisers **must** make sure spiking incidents are reported to the police immediately.

The UK Government also has spiking guidance for venues and festival organisers.

Galop, the UK's LGBT+ anti-abuse charity, says that during Pride, when LGBT+ communities are most visible, it sees a 60% increase in people coming for support after a hate crime. Its helpline is **0800 999 5428**.

Our recommendation

- Think about the risk of hostility or protest targeting LGBTQ+ events, and plan your response.
- Name one person as your welfare lead, and make sure they know about LGBTQ+ support such as Galop.
- Some people at your event may not be out. Ask before taking or sharing photos, and consider a no-photo option, such as a coloured wristband.
- Offer gender-neutral toilets if you can.
- Share safe ways to get home before the event: taxi numbers, night buses and the Exeter Safe Space location.

5. Safeguarding and lost people

The police advise having a lost child / vulnerable person policy. It should include:

- a clearly advertised collection point
- staff with radios wearing earpieces, so others can't overhear
- not announcing a missing person in public
- if you use the PA to find an adult, not saying why
- contacting the police if a missing child or vulnerable person isn't found within 30 minutes at most

All staff, including security, must know how to report incidents and inappropriate behaviour.

6. Brief your stewards

- Appoint a chief steward. Supervisors should each look after about 6 to 10 stewards.
- Brief stewards on your plans, emergency procedures and safeguarding. Record who attended.
- Stewards should wear a coloured tabard with a clear number. Keep a record of the numbers.
- Stewards must call **999** immediately for anything that needs the police.
- Stewards are not police officers. They must not carry weapons.

7. What to look out for

According to NHS guidance, signs of spiking can include:

- suddenly seeming very drunk
- dizziness
- tiredness
- difficulty walking or moving
- feeling or being sick
- seeing things that aren't there
- problems with vision, such as blurred vision
- paranoia, a feeling of fear or distrust of others
- confusion
- memory loss

The signs often look like someone has had too much alcohol.

Also look out for harassment, unwanted touching, and abuse about someone's gender or sexuality.

8. If something happens

1. Call **999** if someone is unwell or in danger.
2. Stay with the person and move them somewhere safe.

3. Report spiking straight away using the police spiking form, report a crime or incident, or call **101**.
4. Record it in your event log. The police say a dedicated person should keep the log, recording incidents, decisions and actions.
5. If someone is targeted because of their sexuality or gender identity, report it using the police hate crime form, or call **101**.

9. After the event

- Hold a quick "hot" debrief straight after, and a formal debrief a few weeks later.
- If your event went to the Safety Advisory Group, you may be invited to a SAG debrief.
- Tell us what worked: hello@outthere.org.uk

Further guidance

- **The Purple Guide** to health, safety and welfare at events: £25 for the full version, or £10 for Purple Guide Lite, aimed at voluntary and community events.
- **The Can-do Guide**: GOV.UK guidance for organisers of voluntary and community events.
- **UK Pride Organisers Network**: brings together the organisers of over 150 LGBTI+ Pride events to share skills and knowledge.