Lord Stevens backs VigilAuntie app to safeguard women and girls.

Monday 15 September, 2025

Lord John Stevens, former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and Patron of the north-east-based charity Right to Resist, is overseeing the launch of a new personal safety app, named VigilAuntie, at Newcastle University.

“The need to protect women and girls from assault is paramount, yet they are still vulnerable”, says Stevens. “VigilAuntie is an innovative new app which tackles that problem early on, by recording and securing video evidence at a single touch so it can be used as a deterrent before an incident escalates into a crisis”.

Geography student Em Beattie is leading a team of volunteers to launch the app at Newcastle University. “VigilAuntie is a simple, effective way for us to look out for each other as students. One click, and video is streamed and stored in the cloud, along with a location map. SMS messages with links to the video are sent to close friends, allowing them to see what’s happening live and respond. The video can’t be deleted, even if your phone is taken from you. And it’s completely free, funded by donations to the charity.”

Newcastle has a history of being the first to adopt video technology. In the late 1980’s, when Lord Stevens was Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, it was the first to install CCTV on a widespread basis. “The effect was dramatic”, says Stevens, “we had a 100% conviction rate on 2,750 disorder prosecutions, which was previously unimaginable. VigilAuntie brings similar benefits to safeguard people, a kind of personal CCTV”.

With a successful launch at Newcastle University, Right to Resist plans on taking VigilAuntie to other campuses in the UK, followed by a general nationwide promotion. The app is in the UK App Store and Google Play now for those who want to be among the first to have it.

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Right to Resist

T. 07796390254
E. pete@petegaffney.co.uk
W. https//www.VigilAuntie.org

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