

# Queen's Park Trust

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## Stay Safe on a First Date

Hopping on a video call before meeting in person is a great way not only to get a better sense of how well you get along, but also to make meeting in person much less nerve-wracking.

To stay safe on an in person first date, always meet in a busy, public place, and arrange your own transportation to and from the venue. Never let your date pick you up at your home and tell a trusted friend exactly where you are going and who you are meeting.

If you don't love the idea of meeting someone you don't know solo, pitch a group outing and suggest your date bring a friend, too. There are less expectations and it takes the pressure off. If you decide you like your date, you can move on to more intimate meetups from there.

Follow these core safety practices before, during, and after a solo meetup to ensure a comfortable and secure experience:

### Before the Date

- **Keep personal details private:** Never share your home address, workplace, or daily routine before you know the person well.
- **Share your itinerary:** Give a close friend or family member the name of the venue, the time you are meeting, and the date's contact details.
- **Turn on location sharing:** Use a safety app or features like *Find My Friends* or *Google Maps* to let a trusted person track your live location.
- **Do your research:** Ask for their last name, look them up, do your homework. Do a rudimentary online search or social media scan to verify simple things, like their name is what they said it was or that their pictures are current.
- **Take charge picking the location:** Choose a public place that can still be romantic and fun, like the putting green, a coffee at a cafe, or a picnic in the park. Have two date ideas that make you feel safe and ready to go in your hip pocket. The person that you're chatting with may be excited about meeting you but may not know

where to go either. You can also pick a place that's familiar to you, which can help you feel more comfortable when meeting someone for the first time.

## During the Date

- **Stay in control of your drinks:** Going to the bar can seem like an easy date activity, but for the first meeting you might want to stay dry. When you drink alcohol, it brings down your defences. Stick with a non-alcoholic date such as go to a farmer's market, go for a walk, get a coffee or tea. If you do opt for drinks, keep track of your intake and remember not to leave drinks unattended with someone you don't know.
- **Keep it to a short meetup:** Opt for a coffee or a quick drink first. This gives you a clear out if there is no chemistry or if you feel uncomfortable.
- **Set up a check-in system:** Pre-arrange a "bailout" strategy with a friend. Have them call you an hour into the date so you have an excuse to leave.
- **Stay public:** When you're meeting up with someone for the first time, don't go to their apartment or to a non-specific location. Try to meet somewhere where other people will be present.
- **Know your boundaries:** You likely already know by the time you're meeting up exactly what you feel comfortable doing on that date. So, if you want to go for coffee but your date keeps insisting on drinks, you should tell them you aren't comfortable. If their reaction is flexible and open, that's a good sign. On the other hand, if they show resistance or keep pushing, that's a red flag. They should be respecting your boundaries. Be straightforward, and they should immediately back off. If they don't, then that person is not for you, because I can almost guarantee they will try to push your boundaries in other ways. And your boundaries are valid, whatever they are.
- **Remember:** Agreeing to a date does not mean that you have to do more than meet up, and it doesn't entitle your date to have access to your body, your affection, or more of your time if you're feeling uncomfortable or being pressured in any way. Going on a first date does not imply consent to intimacy or hooking up, and you should feel empowered to withdraw your consent at any time.
- **Trust your gut:** If you get a weird feeling from the other person, even if you can't really put your finger on why, it's totally fine to leave. You can make an excuse or just immediately call a car, but feeling uneasy doesn't lead to a positive outcome.
- **Always feel free to politely leave the date:** In every social situation, you should always be kind and compassionate. If you don't feel comfortable, it's always important for you to put yourself first.

## When Leaving

- **Do not go to private places:** Avoid moving the date to their home, your home, or any secluded area on the first meeting.
- **Travel independently:** Drive yourself, take your own rideshare, or use public transportation. Do not let them walk you directly to your front door.
- **Enlist the help of a bartender or a waiter:** Watch your surroundings and find an advocate nearby. Have the waiter help get you out of the situation by saying you have an urgent call. If it's something more serious, you can always have someone call the police or help you get a ride home.

## Top tips

**Ask for Angela:** Widely used across the UK and many international locations. By going to the bar and asking staff, *“Is Angela working?”* or *“Can I see Angela, please?”*, you are signalling that you feel unsafe and need assistance, such as a taxi, a safe exit, or intervention with a date.