

LEEDS WOMEN'S SAFETY SURVEY



WOMEN'S LIVES LEEDS
Empowering Women and Girls in Leeds



**Report of findings
September 2021**

Women Friendly Leeds
Website: womenfriendlyleeds.org
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01 Foreword by

TRACY BRABIN, WEST YORKSHIRE MAYOR



“I’m delighted to put safety at the heart of my Police and Crime Plan.”

Tracy Brabin is a British Labour and Co-operative politician who was elected as the first Mayor of West Yorkshire, and the first ever woman Metro Mayor in May 2021.

She was the Member of Parliament for Batley and Spen from 2016 until 2021. As MP, she held appointments as Shadow Early Years Minister, Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Shadow Minister for Cultural Industries.

Born in Batley, Tracy was an actor and television writer prior to entering politics.

A whole societal approach with a collective responsibility.

Tracey Brabin, West Yorkshire Mayor

As we recover from the senseless and tragic murders of Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallwood and Sarah Everard, women will, as they always have done, continue to take measures to keep themselves safe.

The safety of women and girls is of great concern to me and a key pledge of my Mayoral manifesto. That’s why I’m delighted to put safety at the heart of my Police and Crime Plan.

I have had lots of conversations with people about women and girl’s safety across the whole of West Yorkshire, and the overwhelming response to Women’s Lives Leeds’s Safety Survey shows the alarming and shocking breadth of negative experiences women and girls face in Leeds. In order to create meaningful and lasting change for women and girls in our area we need to tackle the issue of public safety head on and adopt a whole societal approach with a collective responsibility.

I am dedicated to addressing the issue of women and girl’s safety and that all women and girls have the right to both be and feel safe, in their homes, the community, on public transport and in the city centre, regardless of time, location or who they are with.

Women and girls across the whole of West Yorkshire, deserve to be able to enjoy their cities in safely, so that’s why I endorse this report and its recommendations and fully support Women’s Lives Leeds ambition of becoming the UK’s 1st Women Friendly City.

Tracey Brabin



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02 INTRODUCTION

“

Violence against women and girls is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It is our collective responsibility to identify and tackle oppressive attitudes, patterns of behaviour and practices which try to achieve power and control over victims and survivors of these crimes. (HM Government Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy, call for evidence)¹



Far too many women and girls experience violence and abuse. The national statistics speak for themselves: 1 in 5 women are victims of sexual assault or attempted assault in their lifetime; over a quarter of women experience domestic abuse, and a fifth experience stalking.² Tragically, some women die at the hands of violent perpetrators, and occasionally this leads to a surge of media and public attention. But the truth of the matter is that despite this heightened awareness, despite successive government strategies, and even despite decades of campaigning by women's organisations, violence against women persists. It manifests itself not only in physical and sexual assault, but in the day to day abuse and harassment of women: in behaviour so common it is all too often accepted as 'normal'.

This survey, completed by 1,371 women, provides a powerful insight into the experience of women in Leeds. It shows that almost two-thirds of women feel unsafe when out and about in Leeds after dark with half 'always' or 'often' feeling unsafe in the city centre at night. A massive 97% believe that 'being a woman' affects their personal safety in Leeds and 81% identify men's behaviour towards women as a major reason that they feel unsafe.

Not feeling safe in your own city or neighbourhood has an impact on wellbeing, and it is evident from this survey that it restricts women's choices and their freedom of movement. 91% of Leeds women said they take measures to try to protect themselves from sexual harassment and assault, including strategies which impact on their daily decisions about where they go, how they travel, who they speak to and what they wear.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/violence-against-women-and-girls-vawg-call-for-evidence/violence-against-women-and-girls-vawg-strategy-2021-2024-call-for-evidence>

² Sexual offences prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) Stalking: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)



**SURVEY COMPLETED BY
1,371 WOMEN WHO LIVE
AND/OR WORK IN LEEDS**

Women adopt these strategies not just because they feel unsafe. The experiences of women as revealed in this survey shows that, too often, they are unsafe. Unwanted and intimidating behaviour such as leering, sexual comments or touching is a regular occurrence. In fact, disturbingly, respondents to the Leeds Safety Survey reported higher levels of sexual harassment than the national levels identified in a YouGov survey earlier this year. For example, 50% of Leeds women reported having had unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours compared to 22% of women nationally. 27% of Leeds respondents had been flashed at (indecent exposure) compared to 14% of women in the national sample.³

A shocking 45% of Leeds women responding to our survey had been followed or stalked and 21% had suffered sexual assault or rape. These experiences can have major, life-changing impacts. Yet, the incidents very often go unreported because women think they won't be believed or taken seriously. A lack of trust in the police and other authorities remains a serious issue and one which the women of Leeds want to see addressed.

Safety is a fundamental human right. This is recognised by the recently published government strategy on violence against women and girls. Here in Leeds, the Women Lives Leeds Alliance welcomes the national strategy and looks forward to the implementation of its action plan. However, action needs to be local as well as national, and it needs to be at all levels and across all sectors. That's why we're using the report of this survey to call for change.

Each of these changes will make a huge difference to women's safety. But the biggest change involves all of us. We need to unite to change attitudes and behaviours. With the publication of this report, we are launching a local campaign to demand zero tolerance for sexist, misogynistic behaviours. We want everyone – women and men - to take a stand against the abuse and sexual harassment of women and girls.



“
Don't do it,
call it out,
and report it.”

**WE'RE USING THE REPORT OF THIS
SURVEY TO CALL FOR CHANGE:**



**A FOCUS ON
EDUCATION AND
AWARENESS-RAISING
TO CHALLENGE THE
ATTITUDES THAT
UNDERMINE
WOMEN'S SAFETY**



**THE INVOLVEMENT
OF WOMEN IN ALL
DECISIONS ABOUT
SAFETY PLANNING
LOCALLY AND
REGIONALLY**

³ Eurotrack research carried out by YouGov March 2021 comparing women's experience of sexual harassment in Britain, Germany, France, Denmark and Sweden <https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/qepiqi9xaf/YouGov%20Sexual%20harassment.pdf>

03 About the Leeds Women’s Safety Survey

RESPONDENTS

The Leeds Women’s Safety Survey was undertaken by Women’s Lives Leeds during May 2021.

It was distributed widely through organisations and networks in the city and was completed by 1,371 women who live and/or work in Leeds. Responses were mainly on-line with paper versions also made available.

Women of all ages responded to the survey with around half (52%) aged between 25 and 44.

The majority of those completing the survey (80%) were White British with White Other 9%; Black or Black British 2%; Asian or Asian British 4%; mixed heritage 4%; other (including Chinese) 1%.

11% (144 respondents) considered themselves to be disabled.

80% described themselves as heterosexual or straight; 5% as lesbian; 12% as bisexual and 3% as other.⁴

Most survey respondents (1192) are Leeds residents in the postcode areas in Table 1 below. A further 64 respondents live in other postcode areas (some close to the Leeds boundary) but relate to Leeds as their main place of work, education and/or leisure.

TABLE 1: POSTCODE OF RESPONDENTS

POSTCODE	NUMBER	POSTCODE	NUMBER
LS1	28	LS22	6
LS2	31	LS23	4
LS3	07	LS24	1
LS4	57	LS25	25
LS5	28	LS26	31
LS6	132	LS27	42
LS7	100	LS28	56
LS8	95	LS29	14
LS9	45	TOTAL LS POSTCODE RESIDENTS	1192
LS10	45		
LS11	62	NON-LS POSTCODES	
LS12	52	BD (BRADFORD)	23
LS13	48	HD (HUDDERSFIELD)	5
LS14	33	HG (HARROGATE)	2
LS15	53	HX (HALIFAX)	5
LS16	57	WF (WAKEFIELD)	26
LS17	56	YO (YORK)	3
LS18	35	TOTAL NON-LS POSTCODE RESIDENTS	64
LS19	22	OTHER/UNSPECIFIED	115
LS20	9		
LS21	18		

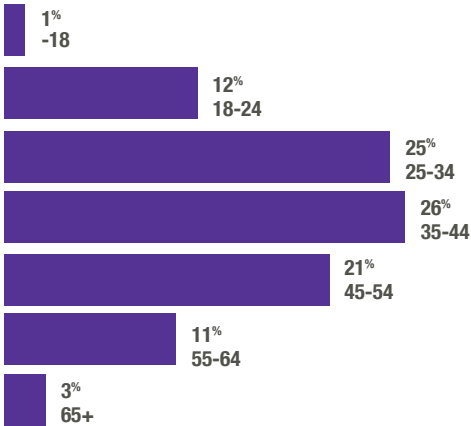
“Men not calling out other men.”

Men’s general lack of awareness when it comes to what a women might see as unwanted behaviour.

CHART 1: AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

⁴ Percentages in the charts have been rounded to whole numbers for readability. Exact percentages to two decimal points are as follows:

-18	1.39%
18-24	12.47%
15-34	25.46%
35-44	26.34%
45-54	20.91%
55-64	10.86%
65+	2.57%



FINDINGS

When and where do women feel more or less safe?

Overall, most women feel reasonably safe when out and about in Leeds during the day (70% feel 'fairly safe' and 17% 'very safe'). However, it's a very different picture after dark when 64% of women feel 'not very' or 'not at all' safe. (As a point of comparison, a YouGov Survey conducted in 2019 found that in Britain as a whole, 46% of women often or always feel unsafe walking alone at night – while the same is true for only 10% of men⁵).

Safety situations and contexts

We asked women how safe they felt when they were on their own in a range of situations. Walking in the city centre at night was of most concern, with 50% of women saying they always or often feel unsafe doing this and only 11% rarely or never feeling unsafe in this situation.

Staying close to home feels only a little safer – 43% of women always or often feel unsafe walking in their local area at night.

Some contexts feel particularly unsafe – for example 60% of women always or often feel unsafe when walking down an alley.

Other situations which were mentioned by women as feeling unsafe included

- When using their car – for example, some women mentioned feeling unsafe when collecting their car from a car park at night, when stopped at traffic lights and/or being anxious about breaking down after dark
- Cycling after dark
- Waiting at bus stops or taxi ranks at night
- Walking in isolated/rural/woodland areas (walking the dog was mentioned by several women as feeling unsafe)
- Using unisex toilets

⁵ A UN Women UK YouGov national survey published in March 2021 (Prevalence and reporting of sexual harassment in UK public spaces, APPG for UN Women) found that 71% of women of all ages in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space.

21%

OF WOMEN ALWAYS OR OFTEN FEEL UNSAFE WHEN GETTING A TAXI OR RIDE-SHARE*

*with 34% sometimes feeling unsafe. Public transport generally feels safer to women although around 11% still always or often feel unsafe in this context

20%

OF WOMEN ALWAYS OR OFTEN FEEL UNSAFE WHEN EXERCISING IN AN OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACE



18%

OF WOMEN ALWAYS OR OFTEN FEEL UNSAFE WHEN ALONE WITH A TRADESPERSON IN THE HOUSE

18%

OF WOMEN ALWAYS OR OFTEN FEEL UNSAFE WHEN GOING TO A STRANGER'S HOUSE*

*E.g. to collect something

18%

OF WOMEN ALWAYS OR OFTEN FEEL UNSAFE WHEN GOING ON A FIRST DATE



20%

OF WOMEN ALWAYS OR OFTEN FEEL UNSAFE WHEN ALONE IN A PUB*



*E.g. when waiting for a friend

CHART 2: OVERALL, HOW SAFE YOU FEEL WHEN OUT AND ABOUT IN LEEDS DURING THE DAY?

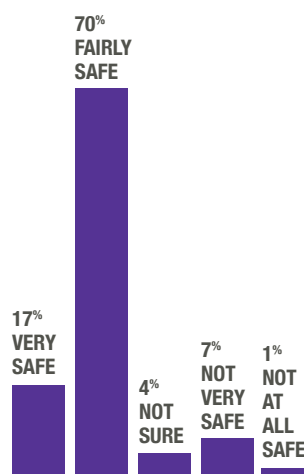
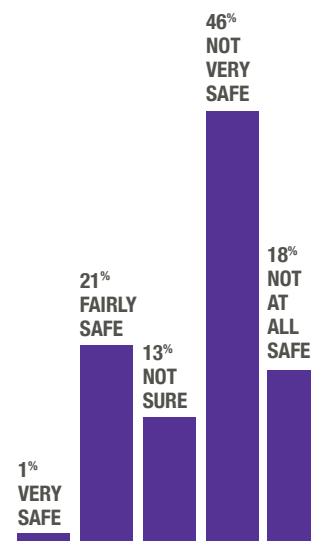


CHART 3: OVERALL, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL BEING OUT AND ABOUT IN LEEDS AFTER DARK?



What contributes to women feeling unsafe?

We asked what contributes to women feeling unsafe when they are out and about in Leeds.

- Men’s behaviour towards women was identified by 81% of survey respondents
- 75% identified drunken behaviour
- 74% suggested lack of people in some areas
- 70% identified poor lighting as a contributing factor
- 54% highlighted a lack of visible police

TABLE 2: WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO YOU FEELING UNSAFE WHEN OUT AND ABOUT IN LEEDS?

	%	NO.
POOR LIGHTING	69.91%	948
POOR SIGNAGE OR INFORMATION	10.69%	145
POOR MAINTENANCE OF OPEN PUBLIC SPACES	34.96%	474
LACK OF PEOPLE IN SOME AREAS	73.97%	1003
CROWDED PUBLIC TRANSPORT	15.63%	212
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	33.63%	456
LACK OF CLEAN AND SAFE PUBLIC TOILETS	38.20%	518
LACK OF VISIBLE POLICE	53.69%	728
LACK OF GENDER-SENSITIVE POLICING	21.90%	297
DRUG DEALING	42.77%	580
DRUNKEN BEHAVIOUR	75.52%	1024
MEN’S BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS WOMEN	80.97%	1098
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		164
	ANSWERED	1356
	SKIPPED	15

Many of those who provided additional comments used the space to expand on the above factors. However, there were some other issues highlighted as making women feel unsafe, including groups of men/youths. Several women said that the ‘managed area’ contributed to them feeling unsafe because of the way it encouraged/condoned men’s behaviour e.g. kerb-crawling.

TABLE 3: DO YOU THINK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AFFECT YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY IN LEEDS?

	%	NO.
BEING A WOMAN	97.19%	1245
MY RELIGION	4.06%	52
MY RACE OR CULTURE	11.16%	143
BEING FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY	5.31%	68
HAVING A DISABILITY	6.17%	79
MY SEXUAL ORIENTATION	9.45%	121
MY GENDER IDENTITY	5.62%	72
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		100
	ANSWERED	1281
	SKIPPED	90

Of the 157 women respondents who identified as Black/Black British, Asian/Asian British or mixed heritage 73% thought that their personal safety was affected by their race or culture, 22% by their religion and 22% by being from another country.

Other factors which respondents identified as affecting their personal safety included physical features such as age, non-gender confirming/transgressive appearance, size and weight that increased both women’s sense of vulnerability and the harassment they received:

“

Men’s behaviour is the single biggest factor by far.

Homeless/mentally unwell people on the streets who lack support. They can be threatening/intimidating but they need to be helped not moved on.

Unwanted/unnecessary conversations with men, vulgar use of language by men towards me.

Very quiet areas with no businesses open near by that you can run into should you need to, large groups of youths, no CCTV to put off possible attackers.

”

Measures taken by women to protect themselves:

The vast majority of women (91% of respondents to this survey) said they take measures to try to protect themselves from sexual harassment and assault. Strategies commonly employed include:

- Avoiding certain places (91%)
- Walking fast (83%)
- Crossing the road to avoid men (81%)
- Avoiding interactions with strangers (77%)
- Carrying keys in their hands or hairspray/pepper spray (64%)
- Dressing in a certain way to try and minimise the risk of harassment or assault (40%)

TABLE 4: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MEASURES HAVE YOU EVER USED TO TRY TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

	%	NO.
AVOIDED CERTAIN PLACES/AREAS	91.35%	1193
AVOIDED BEING OUT AT CERTAIN TIMES E.G. AFTER DARK	73.51%	960
PLANNED ROUTES IN ADVANCE	66.00%	862
WALKED FAST	82.77%	1081
CARRIED KEYS, HAIRSPRAY OR PEPPER SPRAY	64.24%	839
MADE PRETEND PHONE CALLS	57.35%	749
FREQUENTLY MESSAGED FAMILY/FRIENDS	59.72%	780
AVOIDED INTERACTION WITH STRANGERS	77.11%	1007
CARRIED AN ALARM	21.21%	277
DRESSED A CERTAIN WAY	39.74%	519
LEARNED SELF-DEFENCE SKILLS	16.92%	221
AVOIDED DRINKING ALCOHOL	21.21%	277
CROSSED THE ROAD TO AVOID MEN	80.55%	1052
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		170
	ANSWERED	1306
	SKIPPED	65

Other measures that women said they used included:

- Making actual phone calls and keeping someone on the line while walking to their destination
- Sharing their location on their phone with family or friends
- Keeping one earphone out or playing the music low so that they can listen out for danger
- Taking longer but safer routes
- Trying to ensure that they share the journey home with friends
- Wearing or carrying flat shoes for the walk home

I hate wearing loud shoes, such as heels, because they draw attention to you. I've gone the long way round to stick to main roads. Walked past houses where I know the people, so I have somewhere to run to in case I'm being followed or attacked.

Sometimes I avoid going out altogether if I'm not sure who is going to be there or how I'm going to get home. There are certain venues I hesitate about visiting because the part of the city where they are is difficult to visit.

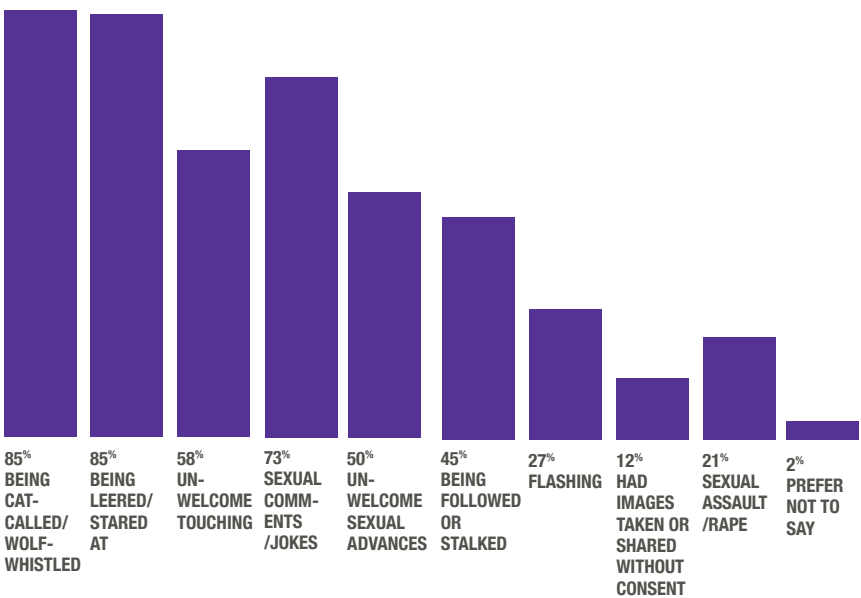


What forms of harassment and assault have women experienced?

The survey shows that women in Leeds do not just feel unsafe but frequently experience unwanted, frightening or intimidating behaviour in public spaces and everyday places. Sexual harassment is a common experience for women in Leeds.

- 85% of those responding to the survey had experienced being leered at, cat-called or wolf whistled
- 74% had experienced sexual comments or jokes
- 58% had experienced unwelcome touching or groping
- 45% had been followed or stalked
- 21% had suffered sexual assault or rape

CHART 4: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU EVER PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED?



117 women gave examples of their experiences or mentioned other things that had happened to them. These included several women who had experienced having their drinks spiked, and several who had been shown or sent porn or sexual messages. Several women had experienced racist abuse.

Some women gave examples of being ‘kerb-crawled’ or receiving persistent sexual advances in a variety of settings.

The patriarchy! Wider social acceptance of bad behaviour by men. The normalisation of lairy behaviour. I live in Headingley and particularly dislike the groups of young men visiting the different pubs and loudly shouting and leering and making various noises which proclaim their dominance. I feel like there should be encouragement by some of the pubs they go to to be less dominating and obnoxious. That’s “not all men” but a specific kind of privileged young man.

I’ve been spat at, my bag taken and emptied all over the ground with the contents rifled and mocked before my money and anything valuable was stolen, I’ve been surrounded by men threatening to rape me if I didn’t go with them willingly.

I once got pushed to the ground randomly by a man in town and sprained my wrist. He was just walking past me and did it for no discernible reason.

Over the years I’ve had my boobs grabbed, my arse grabbed, comments made a thousand times when in bars and clubs. I guess that’s sexual assault but my age (40s) means that we were always expected to take it in good humour and as ‘banter’. I never did, personally!



Unwelcome conversation (being talked at) - trapped in a window seat on the bus by men who deliberately sit next to me rather than take one of MANY empty double seats (only 3 people on the bus!) and then force a conversation on me involving questions about where I live, where I'm going, who I'm seeing etc. Usually have to get off the bus at a different stop and go into a shop to make sure they're not following me.

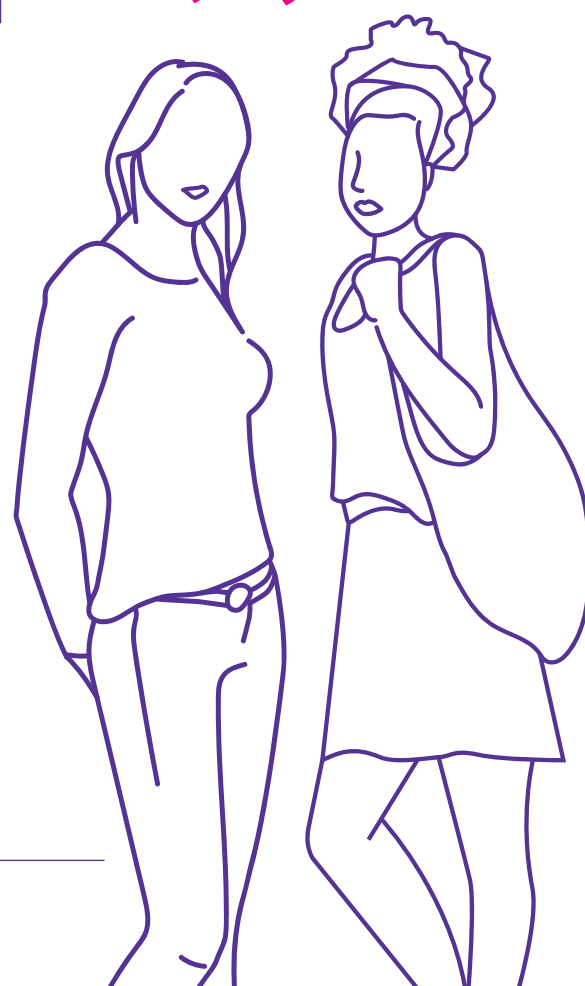
Asked where incidents had taken place, 84% of women said that they had happened in Leeds city centre and 58% in their local area. 72% had experienced harassment or assault in venues such as pubs, clubs and restaurants, 45% in parks and other open spaces and 43% on public transport.

TABLE 5: IN WHICH PLACES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE ABOVE?*

	%	NO.
IN YOUR LOCAL AREA	57.85%	741
IN THE CITY CENTRE	83.68%	1072
IN PARKS OR OPEN SPACES	45.59%	584
IN VENUES SUCH AS PUBS, CLUBS OR RESTAURANTS	71.98%	922
IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS E.G. SPORTS CENTRE/LIBRARY	12.02%	154
IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS	17.02%	218
ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT	43.33%	555
IN A PRIVATE DWELLING	18.74%	240
ONLINE	18.74%	240
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		115
	ANSWERED	1281
	SKIPPED	90

115 women mentioned other places where they had experienced harassment or assault. 40 of these said incidents had occurred at work.

*Listed in Chart 4



What is the impact of these experiences on women's lives?

Women reported a range of impacts on their daily lives, their health and relationships:

- 70% of women said their experiences had impacted on their confidence
- 68% avoided certain places as a result
- 48% said their mental health had been affected
- 62% said their experiences had made them embarrassed
- 32% that it had caused them to change their daily routine
- 26% felt it had impacted on their personal relationships
- 17% said that it had impacted on their work or education

TABLE 6: IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE ABOVE, WHAT IMPACT DID THIS HAVE ON YOU?

	%	NO.
IT CAUSED ME TO AVOID CERTAIN PLACES	67.67%	852
IT MADE ME FEEL LESS CONFIDENT	70.06%	882
IT AFFECTED MY MENTAL HEALTH (E.G. MADE ME STRESSED, ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED)	47.97%	604
IT CAUSED ME TO CHANGE MY DAILY ROUTINE	32.49%	409
IT MADE ME EMBARRASSED	62.19%	783
IT AFFECTED MY WORK OR EDUCATION	17.00%	214
IT AFFECTED MY PHYSICAL HEALTH	13.11%	165
IT HAD AN IMPACT ON MY FAMILY	8.74%	110
IT HAD AN IMPACT ON MY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	26.21%	330
IT HAD NO IMPACT	4.69%	59
PREFER NOT TO SAY	0.95%	12
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		120
	ANSWERED	1259
	SKIPPED	112

Respondents described a wide variety of other impacts on their lives, behaviour and mental health.

Many women said that what had happened to them had made them angry. Whilst in some cases, an experience had made them more challenging of men's behaviour (for example, a couple had learned martial arts), many said that it had caused them to change their behaviour in ways that restricted their freedom: to exercise greater caution, dress differently, give up outdoor exercise, stop going to pubs, move house or avoid using public transport.

Women also described how their experiences had made them feel powerless, ashamed, anxious or fearful:

“ It caused me to avoid certain situations. It made me feel angry and frustrated that I can't be out in public without being harassed for being a woman. It made me more wary and distrustful.

Shame and guilt. I did not disclose my attack for more than 2 years.

I tried to commit suicide after being raped.

In some instances, the impact of experiences was such that women's lives were overturned:

“ I'm afraid to walk anywhere alone. I can't work due to mental ill health. I became involved in drugs.

Some women commented that it was just what you had to expect in this society:

“ It's just part of being a woman in this country.

Unfortunately, as a female I just see it as it's going to happen, especially when in the clubs or pubs.

Sadly, I just accepted all of it as 'normal' and carried on. So depressing. If anything, it made me angry and impotent because there was nothing I could do about it.

The greatest impact had been experienced by those women who had been raped or sexually assaulted. This was the case for 269 respondents to this survey. 77% said the rape or assault had impacted on their personal relationships, 39% on their physical health and 84% on their mental health. Some of the impacts they described included:

“ After being assaulted, I would have panic attacks and my final year at university suffered as a result.

I often cancel options to exercise because I don't feel safe going out by myself.

Caused me to feel like my body was no longer my own, body dysmorphia. Trapped in fight/flight mode. Always scared to be alone.

The sexual assault left me terrified of walking my usual route to work. Even nearly 6 years later I will not go near that spot as I get flashbacks.

Long term impact is hard to assess but the culminate effect on my career and relationships is likely to have been life changing.

*It happens
all the
time, no one
would care.*

*I felt I'd be
laughed
at or
otherwise
belittled.*

“ When I reported the non-consensual image sharing, the police told me, I was also a criminal as the person had sent me the photo over Facebook to blackmail and taunt me with it. I was only 15 in the photo therefore, I was technically in possession of child pornography and if they arrested the person who took it/shared it online, they would have to arrest me too.

Reporting and not reporting:

We asked whether women had reported these incidents to anyone official (e.g. the police or venue manager). Very few women had done so.

- Only 13 (1%) of the 1147 women who had been cat called or leered at had ever reported the incident
- Fewer than one in ten women who had experienced being followed/ stalked or been flashed at said they'd reported it to someone official
- Of the 269 women who had been raped or sexually assaulted, just 80 (30%) had reported it

We also asked women why they hadn't reported.

- 73% said it was because they didn't think reporting would help.
- 73% said they didn't think the incident was serious enough to report.
- 30% said they didn't know how to report it
- 27% said they didn't think they would be believed

Many additional comments highlighted that sexual harassment is “typical” or “expected” behaviour and therefore would be likely to be brushed off if reported:

“ Just accepted it as a thing that happened to girls.

Catcalling would feel like a petty thing to report really even if it does make you feel intimidated.

Lack of trust in the police and justice system came across strongly in additional comments:

“ Feared that even if I reported, the police wouldn't take it seriously and even if they did the perpetrator would get off with no punishment anyway so there's no point.

The process of reporting is horrible and long winded and rarely feels worth the time and effort.

Self-blame sometimes reinforced assumptions about how a complaint would be dealt with:

“ Fear that I wouldn't be believed and that I must be at fault for leading them on.

I thought it was my fault because I was high and I felt unable to say no because I was in his house with no way of getting home.

Some women detailed previous negative experiences when they had reported:

“ Tried to report but was told my word against his and wouldn't get a conviction.

I only reported stalking as it included threats to kill me and my family. I would not bother again due to lack of support and fact it made matters worse and not better.

We wanted to know what would make a difference to levels of reporting, so the survey asked women to tell us what would make them more likely to report incidents in the future. The two factors most commonly identified by respondents were knowing they'd be taken seriously (80%) and being confident that reporting would prevent it happening again (73%). 63% thought that knowing what could be reported and how to do it was important and 61% that having a convenient reporting tool would help. 48% said that having more female police officers to report to would help.

TABLE 7: IF YOU WERE TO EXPERIENCE ANY FORM OF HARASSMENT OR UNWANTED SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE FUTURE, WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO REPORT IT?

	%	NO.
HAVING CONFIDENCE THAT REPORTING AN INCIDENT WOULD PREVENT IT HAPPENING AGAIN	73.32%	959
KNOWING WHAT CAN BE REPORTED AND HOW TO REPORT IT	62.84%	822
KNOWING MY REPORT WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY	79.82%	1044
KNOWING I'LL BE BELIEVED	53.21%	696
BEING ABLE TO REPORT ANONYMOUSLY	39.22%	513
BEING SURE THAT A REPORT WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL	41.90%	548
HAVING A CONVENIENT REPORTING TOOL	60.70%	794
HAVING SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE REPORTING PROCESS	40.60%	531
KNOWING THAT OTHERS ARE REPORTING THE SAME OR SIMILAR ISSUES	45.64%	597
HAVING MORE FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS AVAILABLE TO REPORT TO	48.39%	633
BEING INVOLVED IN MORE CONVERSATIONS AROUND SEXUAL HARASSMENT	27.29%	357
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)		99
	ANSWERED	1308
	SKIPPED	63

Additional comments in response to this question included numerous further examples of previous negative experiences of reporting. While there were ideas of what might improve matters – more female officers was a frequent suggestion – there seemed to be very little confidence that such improvements were likely to occur.

“ Having a clear communication from the police about what they would do about all levels of reporting.

I reported domestic abuse to the police and they asked me what specifically I wanted them to do about it, in a way that suggested that nothing was do-able

Reporting I have seen first-hand has made things worse, I would never report it to the police after what happened to me.

I just don't think reporting would really do anything or lead anywhere (from experience of supporting a friend to report assault) or would be too stressful and traumatising.

Others emphasised that changes in police practice needed to be supplemented by wider changes and a supportive social context:

“ Knowing that police officers are really well trained and have up to date language – having an all female team to report to that includes women with disabilities and from all cultural backgrounds; seeing more local and national campaigns to tackle it; seeing proactive

campaigns from our entire council having more females in top positions especially in politics; having clear statements and reporting procedures in every workplace and agreements signed by each team member with clear codes of conduct backed by regular training.

Information about how and to whom reports could be made, and what would happen as a result, was thought to be important:

“ Knowing step by step the process would help me and the options and different support to access.

Impartial advice on whether it is serious enough to make an official complaint.

The development of an alternative to reporting to the police was suggested by some respondents:

“ Being able to make this report directly to a victim's services specialist, like at the Women's Shelter, and NOT a police officer. Police officers do not make me feel safe or supported.

Being able to report to a non-police authority, or at least there being a police officer specifically trained in supporting LGBTQ+ victims.

58%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD REPORT INCIDENTS TO A THIRD-PARTY HELPLINE

67%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD USE A LEEDS 'SAFETY APP.'*

*A further 24% were not sure

What do women think about existing safety initiatives?

05 IDEAS AND ACTIONS

We wanted to know whether women were aware of various initiatives already in operation to improve women's safety. We therefore asked respondents to identify any they had heard of and to say what thought of them. This question was skipped by 1,142 respondents, whereas the 'skip' (non-response) rate for other questions that were applicable to all respondents was extremely low (between 0 and 15). Of those who did respond over 100 stated that they didn't know of any such initiatives. This would tend to indicate that levels of awareness about existing schemes is probably rather low.

“
Police presence on a night out helps alleviate a lot of stress.



Of the 229 answers that did identify 'schemes or initiatives' 30 referred to 'Ask for Angela'. It was noteworthy that a number of respondents were able to describe the scheme but didn't know what it was called. Most liked the idea, and wanted it to be better known, but thought there needed to be much more clarity about how it worked so that women would be confident to use it.

Other actual initiatives were identified by just a few individuals. These included: the 'managed approach' to sex work, the hate crime reporting mechanism, London's 'Night Charter', Street Angels, town marshals, and various schemes to provide safe transport such as a women-only night bus, taxi or minibus service and an Uber safety tool.

There were also numerous references to women's organisations in Leeds such as Leeds Women's Aid and SARSVL and to grassroots groups and campaigns such as Reclaim the Night, Our Streets Now, the Good Night Out campaign, Sole Sisters and SWARM Collective.

Some respondents also contributed ideas of the kinds of initiatives they thought could and should be developed to improve women's safety. Most frequent among these were initiatives to educate and raise awareness amongst men and boys. Safety Apps, self-defence classes and free safety alarms were mentioned, as were Safe Spaces venues ('kite marked' on the basis of standards and staff training) and women-only swimming and exercise sessions. The need for more visible female police and security and improved lighting/CCTV were also highlighted.⁶

However, there were also a number of women who pointed out that while various schemes and initiatives might be useful, they mostly placed the responsibility back on women and girls to keep themselves safe when the problem and its solution really lies with society as a whole:

“ Rape alarms being given to students, access to pepper spray, signs in female toilets with code words to give to staff if you feel unsafe and numbers to call if you feel unsafe. I think these help but aren't tackling the cause of the issue. All of the solutions above put the pressure on women to protect themselves, rather than stopping people harassing women.

What changes do women want to see in Leeds?

Our survey included an open question to enable women to tell us in their own words what changes they would like to see in Leeds. 65% of respondents took the opportunity to say what they thought was key to making women feel safer in the city. Many of the 897 respondents to this question wrote at length about their ideas for better policing, easier reporting of incidents, educating men and boys, improving safety on the street, on public transport and in venues, and expressed support for a highly visible public awareness campaign to communicate that Leeds was taking a zero tolerance approach to the abuse and harassment of women and girls.

⁶A recent YouGov poll found that 85% of women thought better lit streets would be effective in making public space safer for women and girls <https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/mk94g8n8bl/Women%27s%20safety.pdf>

Policing

Almost 1 in 3 of those who responded to this question included references to policing. Many women said they wanted a more visible police presence, particularly in the city centre and in 'harassment hotspots'.

The importance of female police officers was emphasised and it was suggested that as a matter of course female officers should be the first responders to incidents of abuse and assault. Police attitudes were also a strong theme. Women wanted reports to be taken seriously and not to be blamed or treated in a sexist or derogatory manner. They suggested that ongoing training was necessary to foster a better understanding of the issues and the barriers women face to reporting, and that more specialist officers with a sensitive and caring approach were required:

“ Knowing the police would take the complaint seriously and take a statement immediately, allowing for a female member of staff if needed with supported follow-up appointments.

In relation to the broader issue of overall criminal justice responses, many women thought that numbers of prosecutions and convictions needed to be higher, not just for the most serious incidents such as rape but for the whole spectrum of sexual abuse and harassment that women and girls experience.

“ A fair judicial system that protects women and has effective ways of preventing sexual assaults by punishment that reflects the crime.

There was also a more general call for non-legal responses, such as policies and sanctions, to be developed in order to deter sexist and intimidating behaviours such as cat calling and wolf whistling. These should include those in authority having powers to remove men who commit such acts in whatever context.

“ We shouldn't have to put up with the small, daily aggressions that wouldn't be taken seriously if reported but when go unchallenged might lead to worse behaviours.

Reporting

Women said they needed to know more about what could be reported and how to do so, have confidence that they would be believed and be treated with dignity and that something would be done as a result.

“ Rape, assault and sexual harassment happens all too much and when women have experienced such encounter and report it to the police they are most times not believed or the case not investigated... This further provides little or no hope for other women who have experiences similar and want to come forward. THIS NEEDS TO CHANGE.

There was also support for reporting options that were an alternative to the police, were easy to use and could be anonymous. A safety app was deemed a good idea, as a reporting mechanism for incidents of harassment, sexist or inappropriate behaviour. (It was also suggested that an app could be a useful tool for knowing which venues and spaces were rated safe by other app users.)

All available reporting options needed to be better publicised through posters or social media advertising.

“ Small incidents like cat calling or being followed [should be] taken more seriously. I would never report that as I've never known anyone get in trouble for it, which is probably because we don't report it enough! It's a circle. If there was a quick way to do it that would be great.

Social change through education and awareness raising

It was widely recognised that real improvement in women's safety depended on changes in the whole of society. The need for general cultural change, making harassment socially unacceptable and creating a ripple effect of positive change in both attitudes and behaviours was highlighted. Over half of those responding to this question mentioned the importance of increasing public awareness or education in achieving this.

“ Less conversations about actions which women should change, more conversations about actions which men should change. Campaign around how men can help women feel safe.

The education of men and boys was considered to be particularly important in achieving change. Women wanted men to have a greater understanding of the impact men's behaviour could have, to take more responsibility for the issue of women's safety, acknowledge their own 'unconscious biases' as well as women's legitimate fears, to 'call out' or challenge unacceptable behaviours in others and promote women friendly behaviour in workplaces and social situations. It was suggested that instilling a culture of men and boys valuing women and girls was something that needed to start early - in schools - and that in a whole range of contexts boys and men needed to have more conversations about the issue in order to become allies to women and positive role models for each other.

**“
Better
street
lighting**

“ It’s such a huge and entrenched issue so it is hard to solve in a few simple changes, however we need to work on changing men’s attitudes towards women in the first place. I think there should be a push for initiatives and campaigns where men stand up and call other men out (for this sadly seems to be more impactful than when we call out intimidation or harassment etc). To normalise calling someone out for even the small things that we usually dismiss, a rude comment or joke. When respect for women becomes ingrained then we will hopefully have less rape and sexual abuse.

Education of boys and young men and adults. Men calling out other men... it’s not just a joke, we don’t deserve it, we shouldn’t have to put up with it, our daughters shouldn’t have to live with the volume of these incidents that we’ve had to live with.

This is a problem of men not women so I would like more work done with men to help them own this problem and support them to challenge other men when they witness inappropriate behaviour. Until men’s attitudes towards women change, women’s safety will continue to be a problem.

A high-profile campaign to educate and inform the public was advocated by many respondents. It was suggested that this should include key messages aimed at both men and women and inform them about actions being taken in the city. Widespread signage, adverts, posters and social media content should be used to communicate that Leeds takes a zero-tolerance approach, encourage men to consider their behaviours, give women more confidence in reporting, and encourage a whole range of businesses and organisations to take the issue seriously.

“ Public messaging about what kind of behaviour is not acceptable and zero tolerance to violence against women. It could be posters, on digital bus stops, digital signing etc. Information in public places telling girls and women where and how they can get help if they are in a threatening situation.

Very clear posters with who and how to report to in accessible simple English with visuals that can get the message to as many as possible.

A big advertising drive on bill boards, local TV and media that sends out a message that women matter and reporting is a cool and effective thing to do.

Place based changes

A huge variety of place-based changes were suggested by women. These ranged from city planning from a women’s perspective, initiatives to make parks and car parks safer, tackling drug and alcohol misuse in public spaces or organising walk home buddying schemes, to providing better cycling infrastructure, single sex toilets, changing rooms and leisure/fitness facilities.

“ I’ve always felt safer riding a bike than I have walking e.g. home from a night out because I’m moving at speed and I’m not on a pavement. Better cycling infrastructure would enable me and many others to travel more by bike.

Parking is also an issue for women travelling in and out the city alone. I’d like to be able to contact people who will walk me to my car safely at night as a group. Even parking in a well lit car park with cameras is risky, involving walking dark streets or alleys to get to them and then having to climb empty stairwells.

Women identified the need for better lighting in a range of places. Bus stops were frequently mentioned as were some particular ‘dark spots’ including alleyways such as the alleyway in Headingley and down by the canal. Sometimes the issue was lighting that goes off after a certain time, or it doesn’t light the area well enough. It was thought that CCTV at bus stops and known hot spots would also make women feel safer and deter offenders.

“ Better street lighting, public transport and bus stops with more lighting, and car parks at night with more security patrols. More CCTV in areas with pubs, clubs etc so if anything happens there’s evidence.

The idea of female safety staff (variously referred to as night wardens, marshals, or safety champions) ‘buddies’ or volunteer schemes such as Street Angels operating in the city at night was widely supported.

“ I’d like to see people to go to in the street about sexual harassment because police officers can be intimidating.

Bystander intervention training was also suggested as an idea that would give people greater confidence in intervening as ‘ordinary citizens’ and have a positive effect on women feeling and being safe:

“ If someone sees woman in trouble, I would like to feel more confident I could rely on them to step in and help.

A city-centre ‘safety hub’ was also suggested. This would be a safe night time space where women could go to get help, call a taxi, charge a phone, report an incident or wait for the police if they wanted to make a formal report.



Safe transport

Transport was an area of concern for many. Women wanted bus stops with good lighting, accurate signage, clear visibility and panic buttons fitted. And buses themselves to be cheaper, more frequent, later running, safer and with CCTV. Ideas to enhance safety and deter inappropriate behaviour included buses at night having an additional staff member, like a conductor. A women's night bus was also suggested particularly for student areas.

“ A completely different public transport service free public transport - apart from the cost implication, it would mean not having to bother with finding money/cards/phone etc at bus stops, which make me feel more of a target as it distracts me from my surroundings. Ways of contacting transport companies or relevant authorities when stranded at bus stops. Full travel information at the bus stop incase you can't use the apps and proper working lighting at all bus stops.

Ideas for taxis included licencing to be subject to the completion of training in women's safety, and a women only taxi service was a very popular idea, with women drivers and a women only taxi queue or space. Women wanted better, and more universal ways of checking the details of taxis, such as knowing who the driver is and the taxi registration number. It was also suggested that funding should be made available for a number of prepaid taxi fares so women in vulnerable situations could be referred for these in order to return home, or to another safe space, at night.

Venues

Respondents called for safe space policies, the greater promotion of safety schemes such as “Ask for Angela”, and training for all night time economy staff, including door and bar staff. They wanted venues to take harassment more seriously, and have the confidence to deal with individuals who harass, or eject them from premises.

“ If nightclubs/ bars could have some kind of alliance or program where they would be able to create some sort of database of offenders so they would no longer be allowed in the venues that would be great.

Some women suggested that venues were only licenced following mandatory staff training, and others suggested introducing safety patrols or a 'Women Friendly Venue' scheme.

“ More training in bars/venues with managers and staff as to how to respond to incidents if they see them and how to support women if they find themselves in tricky situations. The schemes where you ask for help at a bar through a code sentence do work but need agreeing on and more awareness and involvement.

Knowing that certain venues had absolutely no tolerance to sexual harassment. This works by managers/staff being really aware and on the lookout, making it obvious through signage and word of mouth that these are women friendly spaces, and by taking actual action - i.e. barring someone indefinitely/making it a member's space (i.e. paying £1 a year which requires you to read and sign an agreement that goes over their policy and acceptance and appropriate behaviour).

There was also support for the less formal rating and sharing of information about venues through an app:

“ I think a venue rating app would be excellent. In my experience there are places with a certain culture of acceptance - the door staff, the security, the bar. And there are others that feel safer. I think the talk to Angela campaign is a great idea but I don't know how well known it is amongst women.

“
Railway bridges - dark and have tunnels leading away from public areas.

Assaults happening to other women in the area in the past. Being told I need to be careful or shouldn't be walking on my own at night - comes from a genuine concern but contributes to anxiety.

Abandoned areas e.g. industrial estates not being monitored e.g. no cameras, poor lighting in areas I have to walk past to get home. I don't think more lighting is necessarily the answer, but better policing/ security presence would be better, as more lighting just disrupts wildlife and doesn't necessarily deter people from acting illegally.

Large groups of men/ boys/young people converging around shops/in public spaces.
”

CONCLUSION

This Leeds women's safety survey has coincided with a governmental call for evidence on tackling violence against women and girls, with a new national strategy published by the Home Office in July 2021.⁷ Many of the issues and priorities identified by women in Leeds are reflected in this opportunity for these findings to make a timely contribution to the development of local and regional plans.

Three main priorities emerge from the findings of our safety survey:

1. Tackling the attitudes and behaviour which underpin violence against women and girls
2. Making city environments safer
3. Increasing reporting and improving responses

1. Tackling the attitudes and behaviour which underpin violence against women and girls

We must address the attitudes and behaviour that can underpin crimes of violence against women and girls as part of our approach to tackling them. To do this, more needs to be done to raise awareness and understanding of them across the public and among professionals, and to make sure more of our children and young people understand what healthy relationships and behaviour look like. HM Government Strategy Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, July 2021; p15

BETTER FOR WOMEN, BETTER FOR EVERYONE



Time and time again women in Leeds told us about their day to day experiences of harassment and abuse. Leering, catcalling, sexual jokes and unwanted touching might not seem very important – and women don't even think of reporting them because they know they're not seen as important – but they are part of a spectrum of behaviour which reflects male abuse of power, male sense of entitlement and disrespect for the rights of women. If these behaviours are widely accepted as OK, then it is a short step to even more serious violence and abuse.

Across Britain, 64% of men and 74% of women think that men in society are not doing enough to ensure the safety of women and girls, according to research conducted earlier this year. The same study found that women are much more likely than men to see the benefit of making schools teach boys about acceptable and respectable behaviour towards women: 61% of women say it would be very effective, compared with only 42% of men. The same split is clear when it comes to men doing more to criticise their male friends for bad behaviour towards women. While over half of all women (54%) believe it would be very effective, only 33% of men think the same.⁸ These findings suggest that more needs to be done to engage men and boys to increase their understanding of how their attitudes and behaviour impact on the safety of women and girls.

Many women responding to the Leeds survey highlighted the importance of attitudinal change starting early with education in schools. Of course, it's neither realistic nor reasonable to expect schools to carry the whole responsibility for raising awareness of young people, but evidence shows that alongside other initiatives, schools can play a vital role, especially when they adopt a 'whole school' approach, which not only provides healthy relationships education to boys and girls but also addresses the way in which staff respond to inappropriate language and behaviour and how schools create a safe and equal environment.⁹

Women in Leeds want a change in attitudes and behaviours, and they want men to share the responsibility for achieving this change. Attitudinal change can be a tough thing to achieve. But there is some evidence that 'zero tolerance' campaigns can make a difference to awareness and generate high levels of public support.¹⁰

⁷<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy> ⁸YouGov survey March 2021 – sample of 3414 adults <https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/mk94g8n8bl/Women%27s%20safety.pdf> ⁹Ellsberg M, Arango DJ, Morton M, Gennari F, Kiplesund S, Contreras M, Watts C. Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say? Lancet. 2015 April 18;385(9977):1555-66. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61703-7. Epub 2014 Nov 21. PMID: 25467575; Wolfe DA, Crooks C, Jaffe P, et al. A school-based program to prevent adolescent dating violence: a cluster randomized trial. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 2009; 163: 692-99; Wolfe DA, Wekerle C, Scott K, Straatman AL, Grasley C, Reitzel-Jaff e D. Dating violence prevention with at-risk youth: a controlled outcome evaluation. J Consult Clin Psychol 2003; 71: 279-91 ¹⁰Kitzinger, J and Hunt, K (1994) Evaluation of Edinburgh District Council's zero tolerance campaign: the fully report. Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee.



2. Making Leeds city environments safer

Tackling these crimes requires a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach. There should be no facet of life where violence and abuse are allowed to occur – at home, at work, at school, online, or on the streets. A 'whole system' approach means different professionals and agencies (including criminal justice professionals, as well as teachers, health and social care professionals and others), local and national Government, charities, and others all working together to tackle violence against women and girls. Partnerships at a local and regional level should be striving to ensure better joint working and more effective interventions. HM Government Strategy Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, July 2021; p18

BETTER FOR WOMEN, BETTER FOR EVERYONE

64% of Leeds women feel 'not very' or 'not at all' safe when they are out after dark with Leeds City Centre feeling especially unsafe for women at night. The importance of women's safety in public spaces, on transport and in venues – particularly those within the night-time economy – is recognised in the government's current strategy to tackle violence against women and girls, and there is an impetus for local areas to take actions to create safer spaces, informed by the experience and expertise of women themselves.

Women responding to our survey have highlighted a range of actions which could make a difference to their safety. These included: environmental changes such as better lighting in key locations, such as bus stops; increasing the presence and visibility of staff (including more female police officers) on transport, in venues and on the streets; more well-publicised and co-ordinated initiatives to promote safety in venues.

Developing, refining and implementing such actions requires co-ordination and commitment from many organisations and individuals. The City Council, the Police and voluntary sector agencies have key roles to play, but they can't make lasting change without the active support and engagement of venues, taxi firms and public transport providers to name just a few. Making Leeds a safer city requires partnership working and systemic change.

We shouldn't have to take a spare pair of flat shoes out with us on a night out, just so we can have the ability to run easier.

We shouldn't have to pretend to be on the phone, or actually call someone, just because we're scared to walk down the street in case we get attacked.

We shouldn't have to change our route home, just so we are walking in streetlights.

Call for Evidence, Public Survey cited in HM Government Strategy Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, July 2021; p43

We need to work on changing men's attitudes towards women in the first place. I think there should be a push for initiatives and campaigns where men stand up and call other men out... To normalise calling someone out for even the small things that we usually dismiss, a rude comment or joke. When respect for women becomes ingrained then we will hopefully have less rape and sexual abuse.





3. Increasing reporting and improving responses

We know from sources such as the government's recent end to end review of rape cases, that nationally, reporting of rape and sexual assault is low and that the subsequent conviction of offenders is lower still. Frequently women do not report these offences because they have little trust in the justice system. Our survey has revealed that women in Leeds share these concerns. Of the 269 women who had been raped or sexually assaulted, just 80 (30%) had reported it.

BETTER FOR WOMEN, BETTER FOR EVERYONE

If so few report rape, how many women are likely to report other forms of abuse and harassment? The answer from our survey is hardly any. Asked why they didn't report incidents, almost three-quarters of women said it was because they didn't think reporting would help and/or they didn't think the incident was serious enough to report. And the examples women gave of the responses they received when they did report provide ample illustration that women are right in their belief that day to day abuse and harassment is not taken seriously.

Yet we need women to report, not only to improve responses to incidents but to build better information about the nature and prevalence of harassment, where and when it occurs and who are victims and perpetrators.

The Police have a vital role in improving responses to incidents, but this is not just a concern for them. Women need other ways of making reports which are easier and more accessible. Our survey suggests high levels of support for alternative means of reporting via an app or phone line where incidents can be logged and responded to. This is not a substitute for appropriate police action. But it recognises that there are numerous factors which currently discourage women from reporting, and while this continues, the system colludes with the attitude that so-called 'minor' incidents are not worth taking seriously. Women reporting and authorities recognising and responding to their reports gives the message that harassment is not acceptable and will be taken seriously.



“

When I worked at a bar in Leeds, my managers made it absolutely clear that sexual harassment of any kind was totally unacceptable. This made me feel confident to report to them any instances of this, and to have men removed from the bar. This was unlike any other bar I had worked at - in my parents' town, the manager actively egged on men/laughed when men made sexual comments.

Men have no idea how commonplace these events are, and I'd have been at the police station weekly, or sometimes daily, if I'd reported every time I've been groped, followed etc.

”

07 Where do we go from here?

RECOMMENDATIONS



1

A Leeds Women and Girls Safety Campaign

A local, visible communications campaign. “Don’t do it, Call it out, and report it”

The overarching aim is to create behaviour change across society. It needs to be visible in the city centre, in the night-time economy, on transport and other places identified by the survey where incidents happen. It should use a variety of platforms such as billboards, signage, posters, social media.

The campaign should contain clear messages aimed at men and women: Leeds takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexist, misogynistic or harassment-based behaviours towards women and girls. It is unacceptable to us all. Don’t do it, call it out in others, and if it happens to you, report it. This stance takes a whole societal approach. Women and men can all contribute and be a part of the solution.

2

Clear, robust reporting mechanisms

Clear and simple reporting mechanisms should be developed alongside the campaign. We recommend 2 initiatives:

- To initiate the development of a local App - Collectively the city needs to develop a localised reporting app that is an easy mechanism to be used by women and girls to provide to information on incidents of abuse and harassment to inform local intelligence, and services. An independent App (not police or council) will enable users to log places they feel unsafe, and to confidentially report cat calling, sexual comments, groping etc. Data generated via the App can be analysed and shared to inform planning by the City Council and for the police to highlight hot spots. The App will also enable women to request a police follow up in order to make a formal report.
- Policing – We recommend that the police actively consult with women and girls around their existing reporting processes and act upon the consultation findings. The Police should actively promote the reporting process, and openly give reassurances that the process will be respectful, take a non-victim blaming approach, and be open about how complainants will be treated and kept informed.

We further recommend that female police officers respond to every report of sexual violence, not just when this is specifically requested.

3

A Safe Night-Time Space

Leeds City Council and Safer Leeds should work with women to develop a safe night time space, to include female night wardens.

This should include a centre open on weekend nights, where women can drop in or be referred to, to get help, charge a phone, book a taxi, have some water, report incidents and be referred for follow on support. It will provide a collaboration and enhancement of the offer of female safety wardens walking around the city centre, promoting the safe night-time space and supporting women.

4

Education and awareness raising

We recommend the development of two initiatives to increase awareness of the issue of safety for women and girls, and encourage a safe and practical 'action and solution' based approach for all.

- Leeds needs to promote a whole school approach to challenging violence against women and girls in schools and other education establishments.
- Men Supporting Women's Safety Workshops – Tailored accredited workshop session/s that can be delivered to men's groups and in colleges and universities, with the aim of supporting men to actively be part of the solution. These need to include topics such as unconscious bias, stories and stats on women's experiences, how to be a useful bystander, making a pledge and taking responsibility, challenging misogyny and sexism.

5

Safer Venues

We recommend widespread, universal schemes that are visible and simple, supporting the concept of women feeling safe, fostering an environment that that says our city takes a zero-tolerance approach thus enabling women to engage equally in society, free from fear or anxiety. We recommend:

- The Ask for Angela scheme is launched and made visible in all venues across the city centre and beyond. This should include Ask for Angela signage in the toilets of all venues, and clear guidance for all venue staff. Leeds City Council needs to make a commitment to provide resources, including a launch event so the scheme is widely known about and therefore widely used.
- The development of a Women Friendly Venues checklist, marked by stickers in windows and displayed on the website.
- Venues consider hosting women only nights.

6

Transport

Women want to feel and be safe on public transport so we recommend:

- a) Campaign materials on buses – A visual prompt that women's safety is a priority.
- b) Night-time conductors on buses on weekend nights (another member of staff other than the driver).
- c) A women-only taxi offer to be commissioned by the city through the black and white cabs. Funding for emergency pre-paid fares for women who have been referred by a night warden or the safe night-time space for women who need to get home, due to presenting as vulnerable or genuinely without funds.
- d) Bus stops to be audited to identify poorly-lit stops or other hazardous environments.

7

Involving Women and Girls

We recommend that leaders "Ask us and Include us, before you decide" by ensuring that:

- a) Women and girls are included in partnerships and conversations to represent the views and opinions of women and girls as communities and that they are they are consulted on activities that address women and girl's safety.
- b) West Yorkshire leaders and partnerships demonstrate a commitment to develop functions that will enable women and girls from Leeds to represent their communities in regional conversations.

THANK YOU



WOMEN'S LIVES LEEDS

Empowering Women and Girls in Leeds

Women Friendly Leeds

Website: womenfriendlyleeds.org

Twitter: [@womenfriendlyls](https://twitter.com/womenfriendlyls)

Fb & Insta: [@womenfriendlyleeds](https://www.facebook.com/womenfriendlyleeds)

