



# From Surviving to Safety

**Sheffield's strategy to end Domestic and Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls**

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**Themes from consultation**

**2023-2024**



# Who did we hear from?



Over 40 survivors at events & focus groups



5 perpetrators of domestic abuse



Over 20 organisations who work with survivors & perpetrators



Over 350 people in surveys



5 children in surveys

# What did people tell us about the current strategies?

## Positives:

- Residents & professionals liked the layout of the safe accommodation strategy

## What they wanted to see in the new one:

- A clear format
- More consideration for accessibility. For it to be shorter and not as wordy  
– ***"Is this for professionals or is it for the city?"***
- Information to be visual & in infographics. More pictures / diagrams needed
- A summary page at the start

## Suggestions:

- Videos and other content would be good too

# Consultation Feedback - What did victims & survivors want more of?



## More campaigning on domestic & sexual abuse

- Campaigns that list the symptoms of abuse rather than “are you a victim of domestic abuse?” More - “are you being controlled?”
- Use the media to tell stories of black and brown women
  - Use social media, Tik Tok, radio adverts
- More QR codes, more inclusive comms with braille options and the use of hearing loops etc.
- Involve the City’s big employers and agencies in campaigning to gather more traction



## Staff training & knowledge

- More staff to be trained on trauma informed practice, coercive control & post separation abuse
- Ensure that the city’s big employers have awareness training and DA policies for staff

# Consultation Feedback - What did victims & survivors want more of?



## Prevention & education

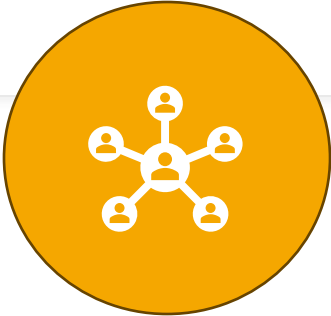
- People should be helped before a crisis, rather than after it
- "Sure Start used to be the 'first line of defence' - you could go there if you needed anything, and the staff knew how to ask appropriate questions."
- Earlier interventions for children and young people in schools & a focus on prevention
  - Cultural awareness in sex education
  - Consent discussed from primary school age



## Practice & professional curiosity

- Seizing opportunities in all engagements and asking questions
- Increased professional curiosity - "I didn't know how to explain what I was going through. It was only because a professional asked me a few gentle probing questions that helped me open up."
- Staff across agencies to be more thoughtful of their choice of language (mediators & health professionals)
- Services to understand that domestic abuse has a long-term impact

# Consultation Feedback - What did victims & survivors want more of?



## Mental health & wellbeing support

- More investment in long-term mental health care (not 6-week courses of therapy)
- More avenues for self-sustaining peer to peer support groups & support to help these become well established
- More wellbeing activities, including volunteering opportunities, art, painting, therapeutic dancing, cooking classes, jewellery making, clay & pottery, access to leisure centres / access to exercise



## Specialist and more support for child victims

- Specialist support (e.g. therapeutic) to help them as children
- The challenges of post separation abuse & how the non-abusing parent must teach their children how to communicate with the perpetrator as a parent
  - Better supervised contact
- Contacts with the perpetrator can be challenging as children may not want to go and spend time with them, but the Court Order dictates this

# Consultation Feedback - What did victims & survivors want more of?



## Legal systems & Courts

- Better support for those with precarious immigration status' & with No Recourse to Public Funds
- Professionals to realise that court processes / family group conferences can be retraumatising as the perpetrator will be there & can use it as an opportunity to further abuse
- Delays mean it is easier to retract than go ahead & professionals should understand this



## Better housing options for survivors

- Housing Solutions Pathway is challenging to access with long wait lines on the phone which results in people being not able to access safe accommodation (e.g. up to 4 hour wait)
- Limited information provided by council staff on what residents are entitled to e.g. Housing Support Fund
  - Unsafe temporary accommodation
- Rent arrears impact ability to access safe accommodation & lack of recognition of financial abuse
  - Victim-survivors removed from family home & away from support networks

## ***Ideas suggested regarding service provision from victims & survivors & service providers***

- Navigators in hospitals for sexual assault
- Domestic Abuse Services to be more linked up with alcohol services
- Face to face support available at drop-in services so all support can be accessed under one roof
- Have a Domestic Abuse Register
- Use social prescribing model for domestic abuse
- More co-location of staff / services



# Consultation Feedback - Refuges

## Main themes:

- **Difficult pathway to access a refuge** - navigating long phone wait times & sometimes placed in temporary accommodation beforehand
- **Refuge options** – people don't want to be forced to go to a refuge a million miles away from their home & support system
- **Accessibility of refuges** – consideration is needed of what's in the surrounding area that makes it an easy place to live (location, shops etc). Many found it positive that a refuge in Sheffield accepted pets
- **Big overlap with cost-of-living crisis** - food poverty, travel costs, access to gyms
- **Getting children into schools** – not able to get a space, long travel times to get to school, navigating public transport
- **Navigating processes and systems** - e.g. Household Support Fund, social housing bidding, local support options such as where to find and buy clothing
- **Mental health** – many struggle with trauma and the lack of access to long-term mental health support

**“Trying to access emergency housing is like calling for an ambulance but not getting one.”**

# Consultation Feedback - Sheffield Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (SRASAC)

## Main themes:

- **Accessibility** – SRASAC has a clear service description, so service users knew what support options were available
- **Reputation** - Trusting the organisation was important & victims-survivors knew it was high quality
- **Referral options** - Ringing up personally and asking for support was challenging & the option of an online referral was beneficial
- **Waiting lists** – biggest barrier to accessing support
- **Silo working of other organisations** - Organisations only doing their role & not signposting onwards once the case has closed
- **Power of the peer support** - Peer to peer support post-therapy has been hugely valuable (as it was set up successfully with clear boundaries)
- **End of sessions** - Limited support sessions & what happens after the sessions ends is daunting

# Consultation Feedback - Together Women Project

Main themes:

Areas the council should focus on:

- Early intervention & prevention
  - Campaigning & educating
  - Improving Housing Response
  - Improved mental health provision and longer-term support
  - Specialist Counselling for sexual violence
- 
- Things that could have been improved:
    - More person-centred approach as support worker suggested well-being activities that cost £20/30/50. This felt insensitive given the unaffordability.
    - Missed opportunities from healthcare professionals e.g. not seizing the opportunity and asking probing questions

**“I had to wait over 4 hours on the phone to Housing Solutions. When you’re in need and you come forward for help you can’t be met with that waiting list. I nearly gave up.”**

# What did specialist service providers who work with victims / survivors want to see more of?

## Top priorities to be addressed:

- **Physical & mental health** - routine enquiries across every area of health, build capacity in communities and local areas to build people up, better longer-term mental health care
- **Housing** - poor quality temporary accommodation in the city, rent arrears impacting access to safe accommodation, challenges with priority awards, difficult pathway to access
- **Children & Young People** - importance of whole family working and Safe & Together model, smooth transition for children to adults to ensure support services still in place, social media & its impact, work on 'risk factors' in young people who may be future perpetrators of abuse, focus on the best interests of the child, training for those working in education settings
- **Criminal Justice System** - How can we support Ministry of Justice, Magistrates, Judges to have increased awareness of domestic abuse and sexual abuse

# What did specialist service providers who work with victims / survivors want to see more of?

## Top priorities to be addressed:

- **Immigration** – More consistent approach to supporting those with No Recourse to Public Funds, interpreters / translated documents an issue, very difficult to access legal advice, staff have limited knowledge on No Recourse to Public Funds/ immigration issues
- **Adult vulnerabilities** – multiple disadvantage and co-occurring needs – which issues do we address first or address them at the same time? The trap of silo working and how to move to a person-centred approach. Finding ways to address stigmas in communities
- **Post separation abuse** – increase professional awareness, court process exasperates this so more support is needed for child contact / family court
- **Awareness Raising** – materials to be in different formats / languages / easy read / simplified / pictorial, more use of social media, label and describe actual domestic abuse behavior – can we raise awareness via urinals and male toilets?, campaigns on – perpetrators, impact on cost-of-living crisis & financial control / abuse, post separation, move away from heteronormative narrative regarding domestic abuse

# What did specialist service providers who work with perpetrators of domestic abuse want to see more of?

Changes needed:

- Talking about relationships, not domestic and sexual abuse e.g. *How is your relationship?*  
**Not** *are you a perpetrator of domestic abuse?*
- What do 'interventions' look like? Can we do better at indirect interventions? i.e. better recording/information sharing
- Better identification of perpetrators where they are accessing services – are they seeking support with substance misuse? Are they seeking support with mental health issues?
- More perpetrator based campaigns (involve Football clubs)
- More confidence in workforce (inconsistencies and staff afraid of getting it wrong)
- Short duration of perpetrator programmes – what happens after these end? Are there other options? (must factor in risks associated with Domestic Abuse Perpetrator support groups)
- Intergenerational trauma and finding ways to support people who have experienced this

# Consultation Feedback - Inspire to Change (domestic abuse perpetrator programme) - Cranstoun

Themes that came up through discussion:

- Idea of the jigsaw and how the programme fits together over time - “we can’t change in a day.”
- Impact of doing the programme and how this affects partner and how important support is for them
- How professionals often referred perpetrators to anger management treatment, but not perpetrator programmes for behaviour change
- Fear of the programme ending and what support would be available after - how to maintain change and find some space that felt equally non-judgmental and safe

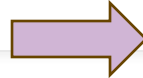
## Takeaways:

- Dynamics of the group are hugely influential as the group offers accountability. Men challenging and supporting other men.
- In-person programme is preferred option
- Success / usefulness of a rolling programme that allows people to join at different points
- Longer term support options and desire for drop-in sessions
- Missed opportunities as people had reached out for support with drugs / alcohol / mental health issues but behaviour at home was not addressed
- Group could be only space people can reflect on their behaviour (some mentioned that one to one support was not helpful for them – didn’t like the intensity of sitting one on one with a professional)

# Consultation Feedback - Perpetrators

What  
Sheffield  
needs  
more  
of

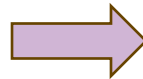
Appropriate support for  
those with dual  
diagnoses



What  
this could  
look like in  
the future

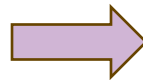
Perpetrator programmes  
delivered in partnership  
with substance services

Investment in  
accommodation for  
Perpetrators to reduce some of  
the harm caused to survivors



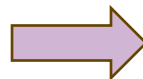
Single occupancy  
supported accommodation

Increased staff  
confidence when working  
with perpetrators



Toolkits & training on how to  
talk to people about healthy  
relationships / behaviour  
at home

More preventative,  
group & therapeutic  
interventions



Commissioning of more  
or different  
behavioural change  
programmes



## What did victims / survivors & professionals all want to see by 2050?

- Statistics of those impacted are much lower
- There's been a massive cultural change
- Everyone knows and understands what domestic and sexual abuse is
- Accessing mental health support is encouraged & there's no shame in accessing it
- Therapy offer is not time limited / no waiting lists
- Perpetrator support is considered business as usual
- Better criminal justice outcomes
- Schools are educating young people about healthy relationships from nursery school age and upwards
- People feel comfortable to call out challenging behaviour when they see it
- More adverts / awareness campaigns on the TV and in the media
- Domestic Abuse Register is created

## What did victims / survivors & professionals all want to see by 2050?

- Domestic abuse passports so victims-survivors don't have to retell their story.
- Professionals would use more kind & empathic language and would be recruited based on their commitment to values
- Less labelling from professionals - "she drinks anyway"
- No one would ever ask 'why didn't she leave?/why does she put up with him?'
- No need for any Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Children don't need to move schools
- Social media regulation
- Eradication of the incel culture and on/offline radicalisation of children /young people and no glamourising of Violence Against Women and Girls.



# Headline findings from our public surveys

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Survey 1: All areas of Violence Against Women and Girls

Survey 2: Public sexual harassment



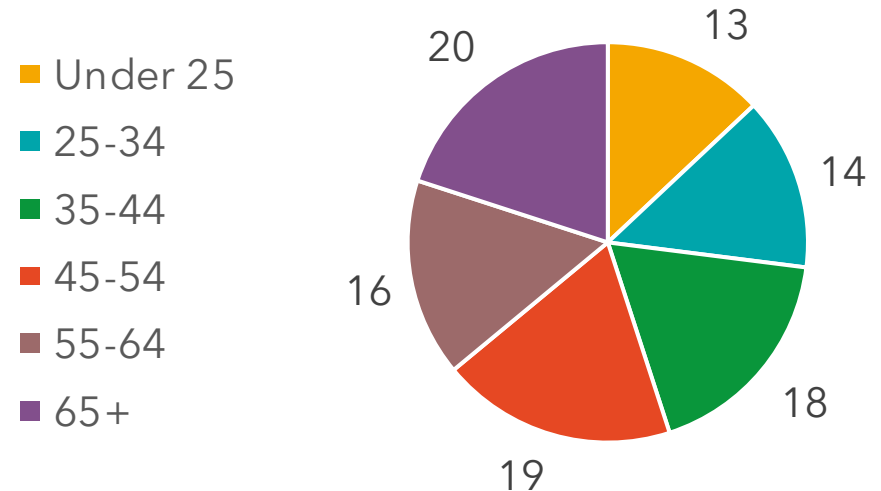
# Survey 1:

How can Sheffield prevent and respond to domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls (VAWG)?

## 214 responses

- 83% were female
- 55% were over 45 years old
- 19% were LGB+
- 2% had a different gender identity to that assigned at birth
- 15% were from a racially minoritised background
- 29% reported a disability
- 10% were an unpaid carer

Respondents by age group (%)





# Survey 1: Experience Insights

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## **75% of respondents had experienced one or more forms of harm in scope**

- 61% had experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment
- 50% had experienced public sexual harassment
- 44% had experienced sexual violence
- 40% had experienced domestic abuse in adulthood
- ADD S/H, HBA, IMAGE
- 7% had been spiked



## **Only 50% of respondents reported one or more of their experiences**

- Of those who did report the most common organisation reported to was South Yorkshire Police (63%)



## **Only 25% of respondents received support locally**

- 75% said this was very helpful/helpful



**The biggest reported impact of these experiences overall was on feelings of safety, mental health and general wellbeing.**



# Survey 1: Awareness Insights

## 93% knew of at least one national support organisation listed

- The most known (over 50%) were: **Shelter, Women's Aid, Victim Support, Refuge and Rape Crisis**
- The least known (under 10%) were: **Surviving Economic Abuse, Paladin and Galop**

## 96% knew of at least one local support organisation listed

- The most known (over 50%) were: **Citizens Advice Sheffield, Shelter, Sheffield Mind, Sheffield Women's Aid, Sheffield City Council support**
- The least known (under 10%) were: **Changing Lives/Netreach, Cranstoun/Inspire to Change and Hackenthorpe Lodge Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**



**89% of respondents would use the internet to find support**



**52% would go to someone they know to find support**



**42% would go to an organisation they are already aware of**



## Top enablers of support

1. Signposting from a trusted person (35%)
2. Signposting from an organisation (32%)
3. Support from a trusted person/people in their life (32%)



## Top barriers to support

1. Confusion about what is available (37%)
2. Not being in the right emotional state (37%)
3. Lack of time (e.g. to attend appointments) (32%)



# Survey 1:

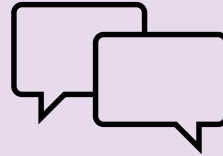
## Survivor voice

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### Criminal Justice System Insights

Common themes in free text responses in this area included:

- Victim-blaming
- Slow action
- Lack of accountability



***"Perpetrators taken at their word and left alone to move on to the next victim"***

***"Victim blaming and police slow to act until problems escalated for domestic abuse."***

***"Very little support or help at the time of reporting to police prevented me reporting further incidents. I had to keep myself and my children safe from my abuser...."***

***"99% of the time it is the victims that leave the family home usually with children ... Children are often made to see the abusive parent by the court"***



# Survey 1:

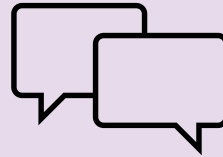
## Survivor voice

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### Feedback on our ambitions:

The three top rated ambitions out of those listed were:

1. Action to make sure services **understand trauma** and **do not blame victims**
2. Action to better **educate everyone about domestic abuse, sexual violence, and VAWG**, including in **schools and workplaces**
3. Action to make sure **people that do harm are held accountable**



### Criminal Justice System Insights

#### Q: What do you want to change?

*"Waiting time for police and court to reduce"*

*"Better understanding of domestic abuse throughout the system to support victims not perpetrators"*

*"the police should find more ways to investigate sexual violence reports instead of quickly giving up on them."*

*"Better conviction rate for perpetrators of abuse and more powers used to prevent perpetrators continuing to abuse victims"*





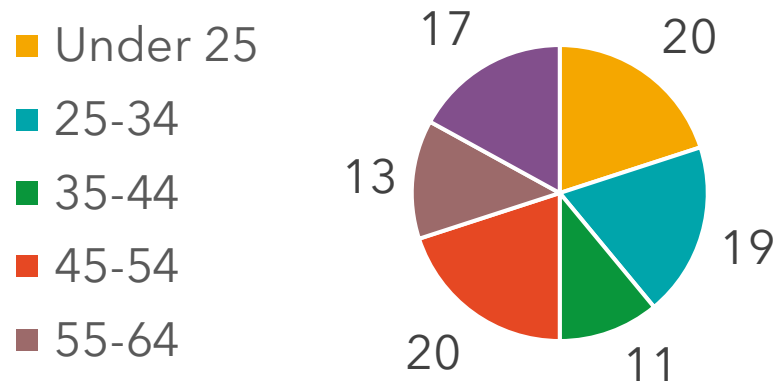
## Survey 2

# Sexual Harassment in Sheffield

**155 responses**

- 86% were female
- 31% were LGB+
- 5% had a different gender identity to that assigned at birth
- 3% were from a racially minoritised background
- 32% reported a disability
- 13% were unpaid carers

Percentage of respondents by age



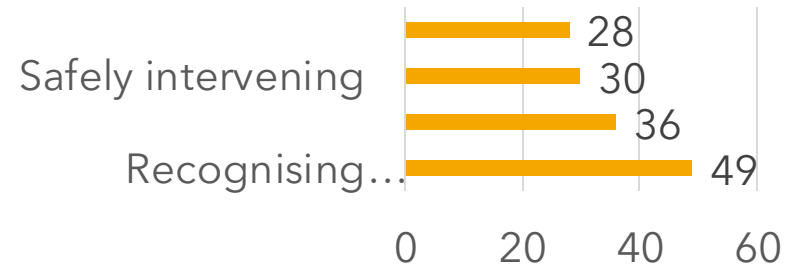


## Survey 2: Witness Insights

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- **63% had witnessed sexual harassment online**
- **43% had witnessed sexual harassment at work and/or in their place of education**
- **72% have witnessed public sexual harassment in Sheffield**

Percentage of respondents  
confident or very confident  
(%)



### What would increase confidence in responding as a witness?

The top three things:

- More education on recognising sexual harassment and knowing what to do (27%)
- A way of preventing harm upon themselves (25%)
- More confidence in how the police will respond (21%)

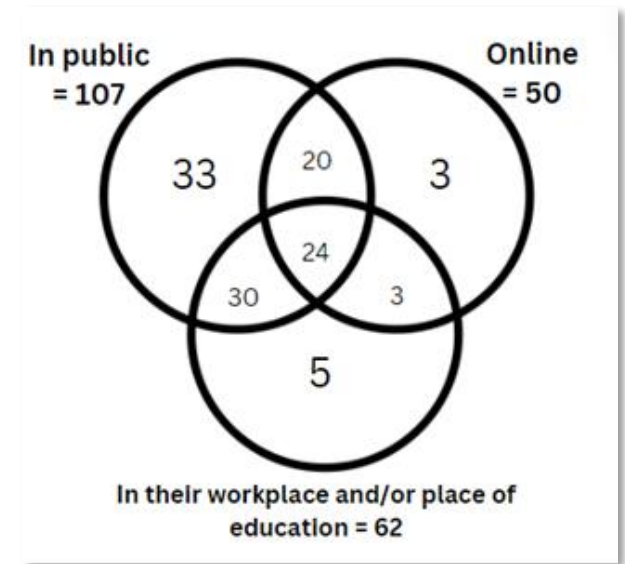


## Survey 2: Experience Insights

- **32% had experienced sexual harassment online**  
*94% were female, 60% were aged 16-34*
- **40% had experienced sexual harassment at work and/or in their place of education**  
*93% were female, 55% were aged 16-34*
- **69% had experienced public sexual harassment in Sheffield**  
*97% were female, 48% were 16-34*

**21% of respondents had not experienced any form of sexual harassment:**

*62% of the total male respondents  
All were over 25 and 84% were over 45.*



Total respondents experiencing each form of sexual harassment



**Across all forms of sexual harassment, the biggest reported impact of these experiences overall was on feelings of safety, mental health and general wellbeing.**



## Survey 2: Reporting Insights

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- Respondents were least confident in knowing where to report public sexual harassment.
- 80% of respondents were not confident in knowing where they could access support.
- Only 32% of respondents were confident in knowing what was and what was not criminal behaviour.

**69% of respondents did not report any of their experiences**

The top three reasons for not reporting were:

- Feeling like nothing would be done
- Low confidence in the police/justice system
- Sexual harassment being normalised



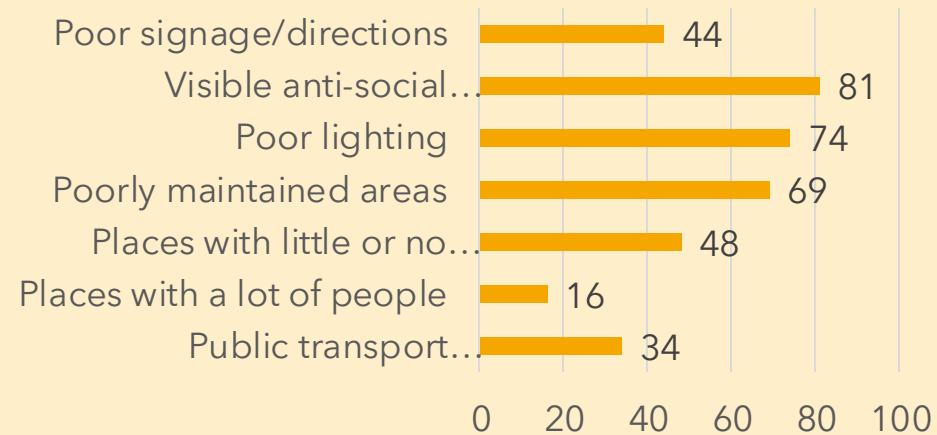
## Survey 2: Feelings of Safety Insights

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- **People felt less safe from experiencing public sexual harassment as the day went on**
- **People felt safer from sexual harassment when with others both on the street and on public transport**
- **Those who had experienced public sexual harassment felt less safe overall**

### What impacted feelings of safety?

**Percentage of respondents who felt very unsafe or unsafe due to the physical factor**



Visible anti-social behaviour or crime led people to feel the most unsafe.



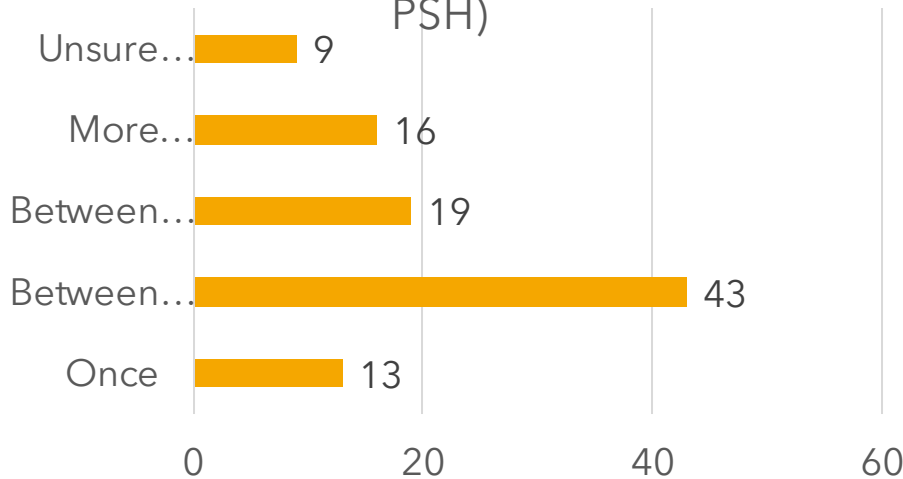
## Survey 2:

# Public Sexual Harassment Experience Insights



**82% had never used a personal safety app**

Frequency of harassment (% of respondents who had experienced PSH)



**The most common form of PSH was verbal sexual harassment (94%), and 37% had experienced PSH specifically related to part of their identity.**

**75% had experienced non-verbal sexual harassment.**

**81% of respondents had experienced more than one form of public sexual harassment**



## Survey 2:

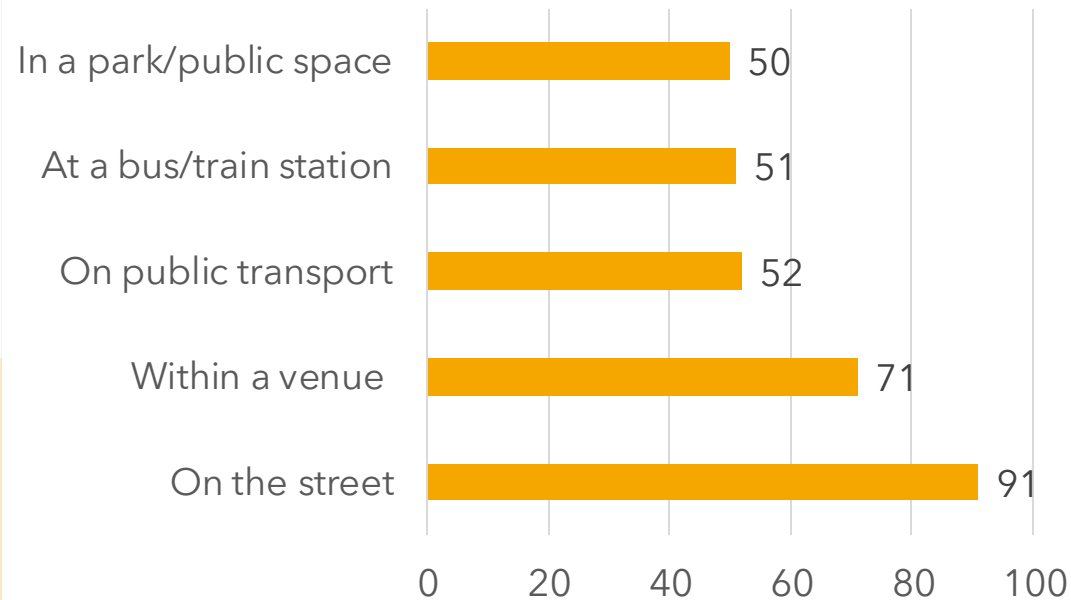
# Public Sexual Harassment Experience Insights

**76% had been sexually harassed in public in the last 3 years.**

**Of these 35% had experienced public sexual harassment 6+ times.**

- **54% had been sexually harassed by a group of people**
- **44% had an experience that escalated further**
  - For 59% of these respondents, it escalated to sexual assault

### Percentage of respondents who have been sexually harassed at the location



**78% had experienced public sexual harassment in more than one place**