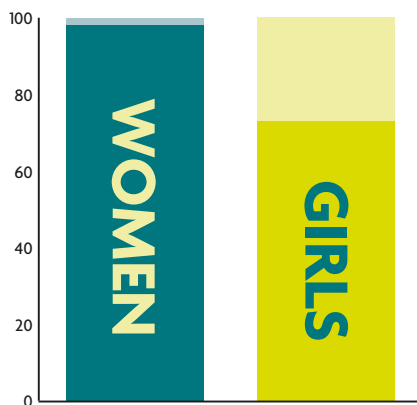


SAFER STREETS, SHARED VOICES

Insights from public workshops on preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) in outdoor public spaces in Belfast

THE PROBLEM



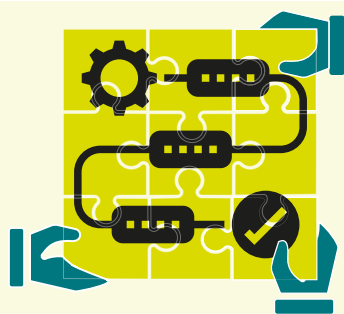
98% of women (18+ yrs) and **73% of girls** (12-17 yrs) in Northern Ireland have experienced at least one form of violence in their lifetime*^{1,2}



16% of women in Northern Ireland report the location of their worst recalled event occurring in public spaces, such as **parks, forests, streets** and **public transport**¹

Not only is this a matter of safety and equality, it is a public health issue, affecting health and wellbeing, opportunity, and quality of life

WHAT WE DID



1. Key partners were brought together to co-develop a systems map (i.e., visual diagram) representing a shared vision of the underlying factors that could contribute to preventing VAWG in outdoor public spaces in Belfast³



2. Public deliberation workshops with 45 members of the public to build on action points from stakeholders and produce a set of recommendations for preventing VAWG in outdoor public spaces⁴

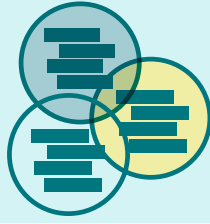
Workshops included:

- teenagers (16 – 19 yrs)
- adults (19+ years)
- different genders (female, male, trans, non-binary)
- ethnic minorities
- LGBTQIA+ community
- individuals living with a disability
- people with different socio-economic status

*these statistics refer to women and girls surveyed in Northern Ireland

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Focus on VAWG prevention solutions that are multi-layered and cross-sector



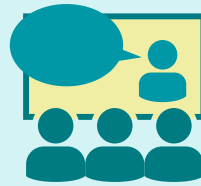
- 2** Encourage transparent, inclusive, and accountable management and stewardship of outdoor public spaces and public transport



- 3** Design visible and practical changes that make outdoor public spaces and transport feel safer during the day and night



- 4** Educate about VAWG and acknowledge the full spectrum of violence that often goes unreported



- 5** Involve people from diverse cultural, social, and identity groups directly in prevention efforts



- 6** Enhance sustainable funding dedicated to preventing VAWG in outdoor public spaces and on transport



- 7** Strengthen trust in public institutions to act and deliver meaningful change



THESE FINDINGS...

- Centre the views of individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds
- Highlight the urgency of the issue for policymakers
- Provide evidence for those in community voluntary/third sector
- Support practitioners in design and regeneration of outdoor public spaces
- Provide practical, community-informed solutions for transport providers to improve public transport environments for women and girls

Read the full report



References

1. Lagdon S et al. Every Voice Matters! Violence Against Women in Northern Ireland. 2024. [Online] Available at: https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/violence_report_singles.pdf
2. McAlister S et al. 'It's Just What Happens' Girls and Young Women's Views and Experiences of Violence in Northern Ireland. 2023. [Online] Available at: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/strategic-framework-evawg.pdf>
3. Jones SM et al. Preventing violence against women and girls in outdoor public spaces in Belfast: A systems map. 2024. [Online] Available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/groundswell/Filestore/Preventing%20violence%20against%20women%20and%20girls%20in%20outdoor%20public%20spaces%20in%20Belfast%20-%20A%20systems%20map.pdf>
4. Jones SM et al. Safer Streets, Shared Voices: Insights from public workshops on preventing violence against women and girls in outdoor public spaces in Belfast. 2025. [Online] Available at: <https://groundswelluk.org/Filestore/Safer%20Streets%20Shared%20Voices.pdf>