

SAFER STREETS, SHARED VOICES

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

What I'm going to talk about

- Purpose of the public workshops
- Who took part
- Methodology
- Facilitating with care



Workshop purpose

- To **sense-check** emerging action areas for the prevention of violence against women and girls in outdoor public spaces, identified in the systems mapping workshop held in January 2025.
- To look to the public for **ideas and innovation, priorities and recommendations** for how the identified actions can be most effective to address the issue of VAWG in outdoor public spaces.

Multiple groups – diverse perspectives – eight workshops in total

Defining VAWG

- Light-touch definition – focus on **what VAWG feels like, looks like, and means** in the context of everyday public life.
- Range of behaviours including **visible acts and micro-behaviours**
- Participants connected it to **freedom of movement, sense of ease, belonging, and the right to feel safe** in shared public spaces.

VAWG in outdoor spaces isn't just about incidents – it's about environments that either enable or prevent harm.




Representation and inclusion

- **Four groups:** women, men. teenage girls/ young women, teenage boys/ young men
- Internal **diversity** including socio-economic, educational background, sexual identity, gender identity, age, ethnicity
- Key considerations:
 - Intersectionality
 - Safety and trust
 - Collaboration
 - Recognition of trauma and resilience
 - Framing men's involvement as active participants and allies



Building conditions for honesty, trust, and care

- Establish ground rules together
- Introduce a protocol for if harm was caused in the space
- Lots of different kinds of activities
- Fidget toys
- Facilitated, open discussion that encouraged curiosity
- Adapting for different groups
- Wellbeing support and signposting

A group of people are sitting on a grassy hill, looking out over a city at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The people are mostly seen from behind, looking towards the city. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

“It was great to see ways in which VAWG can be reduced and to think about ways to do that and to know that something will actually be done with our ideas and views” – participant from young women’s workshops

