

Safer Streets, Shared Voices

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

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Outputs by groups

Overview of findings by groups: Women

Women:

- Reflected on lived experience of immediate safety concerns and the need for solutions now.
- Emphasised design in outdoor public spaces and on public transport that gives choice.



Overview of findings by groups: Girls

Girls:

- Focused independence and empowerment.
- Worried about over-surveillance making them feel blamed (i.e., victim shaming) or restricted.



Overview of findings by groups: Men

Men:

- Focused more on being part of the solution.
- Recognised harmful norms among peers and saw the importance of cultural change.



Overview of findings by groups: Boys

Boys:

- Highlighted practical ideas.
- Showed awareness that design alone is not enough without good operation and education.
- Reflected on how older generations hold onto harmful views (such as misogyny), and suggested teaching adults about VAWG in outdoor public spaces as well.





7 Recommendations



Recommendation 1

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



Recommendation 2

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



Recommendation 3

Focus design on visible and practical changes that make outdoor public spaces and transport feel safer during the day and night



Recommendation 4

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



Recommendation 5

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



Recommendation 6

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



Recommendation 7

Strengthen trust in public
institutions to act and deliver
meaningful change

Vision



- 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

Next steps

- Dissemination of report amongst partners to influence practice and policy.
- Application submitted for funding looking at VAWG and public transport.
- Collaboration with Groundswell on the Street Space project – focusing on East Belfast.
- Agreed co-design Principles document with the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment (Department for Communities).

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