

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 16 April 2024,

‘Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal’ Campaign

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the work currently undertaken to raise awareness of, prevent and respond to, public sexual harassment in Edinburgh.
 - 1.1.2 Note how Education is working to support pupils, teachers and parents to embed gender equality across schools in Edinburgh and to address sexual harassment of any form.
 - 1.1.3 Formally adopt the non-legal definition of misogyny provided by Baroness Kennedy KC in her report by the Criminal Justice and Misogyny Working Group, as quoted in section 4.3
 - 1.1.4 Agree next steps as outlined in Section 5 of the report.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services

Contact: Rose Howley, Chief Social Work Officer

E-mail: rose.howley@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3064

‘Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal’ Campaign

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report summarises the work of the City of Edinburgh Council in preventing and responding to public sexual harassment through a range of workstreams in making public spaces in Edinburgh safer for women and girls, raising awareness around public sexual harassment, and supporting pupils, teachers and parents to address public sexual harassment both in, and through, education.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 4 May 2023, Cllr. Mattos-Coelho tabled a motion titled ‘[Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal](#)’ Campaign. The motion called for endorsement of the campaign by the Lord Provost and all Elected Members; work with Trade Unions to raise awareness; and work with children, young people and their parents through education to teach children that sexual harassment is unacceptable.
- 3.2 The Motion further requested a report to Education, Children & Families Committee, detailing:
- 3.2.1 How the Council can follow the recommendations of Baroness Helena Kennedy’s report by the criminal justice and misogyny working group;
 - 3.2.2 How the Council has supported and endorsed the campaign;
 - 3.2.3 How Education and Children’s Services will work to identify further actions through schools, to equip teachers and parents with the necessary tools to teach children from P1 to S6 that harassment is not acceptable and to tackle it across society
- 3.3 Abbreviations used throughout this document:
- 3.3.1 CEOP – Child Exploitation and Online Protection
 - 3.3.2 ESAS – Equally Safe At School
 - 3.3.3 ESEC – Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee
 - 3.3.4 GDP – Gross Domestic Product
 - 3.3.5 GBV – Gender-Based Violence

- 3.3.6 MVP – Mentors in Violence Prevention
- 3.3.7 PSE – Personal and Social Education
- 3.3.8 PSH – Public Sexual Harassment
- 3.3.9 RSHP – Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood
- 3.3.10 VAWCYP – Violence Against Women, Children and Young People
- 3.3.11 VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls
- 3.3.12 WSPP CIP – Women’s Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership

4. Main report

Endorsement of the Campaign by the Lord Provost and City of Edinburgh Councillors

- 4.1 The motion called for endorsement of the campaign by the Lord Provost and Elected Members of the City of Edinburgh Council.
- 4.2 Following re-circulation of the original letter, it has now been signed by the Lord Provost, Deputy Lord Provost, the Council Leader, Deputy Council leader and a further 41 Councillors (for details, please see [Appendix 1 for a copy of the letter](#)).
- 4.3 The signed letter has now been returned to the campaign organisers to demonstrate the City of Edinburgh Council’s support for the ‘Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal’ campaign.

Recommendations by the Working Group on Misogyny and Criminal Justice

- 4.4 Baroness Helena Kennedy’s KC report on ‘[Misogyny – A Human Rights Issue](#)’ describes in detail the types of misogynistic behaviours women experience on a daily basis (including PSH) at home, at work, in education and in the community, as well as their impacts.
- 4.5 The report provides an up-to-date, non-legal definition of misogyny and calls for the creation of new legislation against misogyny – the Misogyny and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act.
- 4.6 The report on ‘Misogyny- A Human Rights Issue’ provides the following deliberately non-legal definition of misogyny:

“Misogyny is a way of thinking that upholds the primary status of men and a sense of male entitlement, while subordinating women and limiting their power and freedom. Conduct based on this thinking can include a range of abusive and controlling behaviours including rape, sexual offences, harassment and bullying, and domestic abuse”. (p.29)
- 4.7 As a starting point, the Council can adopt the definition of misogyny provided by Baroness Kennedy KC. The ESEC has adopted and endorsed this definition as it

considers it the most representative of what constitutes misogyny, and it is consistent with what is meant by 'misogyny' when discussed by the VAWG sector.

4.8 The report further summarises the below recommendations:

4.8.1 *The creation of a "Misogyny and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act." The Act would:*

- i. Create a new Statutory Aggravation where a crime such as assault, criminal damage or threatening or abusive behaviour is aggravated by misogyny.*
- ii. Create a new offence of Stirring Up Hatred Against Women and Girls.*
- iii. Create a new offence of Public Misogynistic Harassment.*
- iv. Create a new offence of Issuing Threats of, or Invoking, Rape or Sexual Assault or Disfigurement of Women and Girls online and offline.*

These are intended as a holistic response, not a menu of options.

4.8.2 *The Working Group concluded too that legislative change is essential but insufficient to address the insidious problem of misogyny in Scotland. In addition, therefore, to the creation of a Misogyny Act, the Working Group recommends that the Scottish Government:*

- i. Involves all relevant stakeholders (including women's groups and Police Scotland) in implementation of the Misogyny Act.*
- ii. Provides sufficient resources for:*
 - a. Education and training within the criminal justice system and for multi-agency support and awareness (medics, dentists, social services, educators) as well as the development of any new interventions such as awareness training required for diversions to social workers from the Procurator Fiscal).*
 - b. Resourcing social work and other interventions, as required by prosecution policy.*
 - c. Technology capability and police officer capacity for recording and reporting.*
 - d. Campaigning and awareness – within public institutions, workplaces, education.*
 - e. Learning from projects and good practice in other places and jurisdictions – e.g. Nottingham, Washington DC, France.*

4.9 The first section (4.5.1) of the recommendations by Baroness Kennedy KC are out of scope for the City of Edinburgh Council as they concern the creation of new legislation. The Scottish Government's [Programme for Government 2023-2024](#) states that new legislation on misogyny and misogynistic harassment will be introduced, implementing Baroness Kennedy's recommendations.

- 4.10 The second section of the recommendations (4.5.2) involve actions to which the Council can contribute and on which action has been taken already:
- 4.10.1 The Council is a key stakeholder in the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee (ESEC), the inter-agency partnership involved in implementing the Equally Safe strategy across the city. The ESEC also enjoys membership from Police Scotland and the third sector, particularly women's organisations. All ESEC partners adhere to an agreed communications strategy which provides guidance on shared messaging through all available media. Once the new legislation is introduced, all ESEC partners will communicate all relevant messaging through their individual channels to raise awareness.
 - 4.10.2 As a partnership, the ESEC responded to the Scottish Government's 2023 Consultation on the [Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform Bill](#), together with the Council's Justice services. The response advocated the importance of training on sexism, misogyny, VAWG and Trauma-Informed Practice for anyone involved in justice systems and processes. This is consistent with Baroness Kennedy's recommendation for training and education for the criminal justice system and multi-agency support and awareness.
 - 4.10.3 The recommendation around resourcing social work and other interventions following the implementation of the report's recommendations will likely be something the Council will address once the Misogyny and Criminal Justice Bill becomes an Act. At that time, once specific information becomes known about the contents and provisions of the Act, the Council will explore what additional resourcing might be required and options for providing this.
 - 4.10.4 The recommendation around campaigning and awareness is addressed in sections 4.8-4.14

The City of Edinburgh Council's support and endorsement of the campaign

- 4.11 The ESEC is the lead partner in Edinburgh's Women's Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership (WSPP CIP) which works to improve women's feelings of safety in public spaces in Edinburgh. The WSPP CIP is also an inter-agency partnership which reports to the [Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership \(ECSP\)](#) and to the [Policy and Sustainability Committee](#) (annually).
- 4.12 The ESEC Lead Officer communicated with 'Our Streets Now' and the organisation responsible for the 'Make PSH Illegal' campaign in England and Strut Safe, who submitted the attached letter to the City of Edinburgh Council requesting the support of the Lord Provost and elected members. In communication, 'Our Streets Now' suggested that the campaign could be brought to Edinburgh in the form of a short-term targeted intervention to raise awareness of PSH. This would have incurred a cost which would have depended on the specific needs and budgets available.

- 4.13 In [2021, the WSPP CIP](#) committed to ‘*deliver a campaign targeted at men’s thoughts, actions and behaviours around women’s safety, as well as [...] highlighting how men can act as allies in promoting the safety of women in public spaces*’. Given legislative developments in Scotland, the WSPP CIP and ESEC decided that, instead of campaigning for making PSH illegal, as this was already in the Programme for Government, the focus should be more on the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate PSH, making women feel unsafe in public spaces.
- 4.14 In 2023, the WSPP CIP together with higher education partners, Essential Edinburgh, Police Scotland and NHS Lothian delivered a campaign aimed at improving women’s safety in public spaces by calling on people, particularly men, to make small changes to their behaviour to help women and girls to feel safer in public places. The campaign recognises that a lot of the time behaviour might unintentionally make women and girls feel uncomfortable or unsafe, but it also more explicitly addresses sexual harassment.
- 4.15 The campaign, titled [#RespectHerSpace](#) ran slightly over the 2023 ‘16 Days of Action on Gender-Based Violence Campaign’ (20 November – 10 December 2023) over TV, outdoor advertising, local media, targeted digital including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Spotify, and dedicated pages on the City of Edinburgh Council’s website.
- 4.16 The web pages dedicated to [#RespectHerSpace](#) further contained a lot of information and resources aimed at helping men and boys understand what sexual harassment is and how it makes women feel. It further provides advice and suggestions on how to prevent sexual harassment, whether as a bystander or as the friend or family member of someone who is behaving inappropriately.
- 4.17 Although the campaign was highly visible and had considerable reach, its effectiveness can only be assessed with the advent of time, and with ongoing activity to monitor women’s feelings of safety in Edinburgh’s public spaces.

Addressing Public Sexual Harassment through Education

- 4.18 Baroness Kennedy’s report provides ample evidence about the impact of misogyny and sexual harassment on the wellbeing, confidence and education outcomes of girls in Education, as well as into their adult years and throughout life. The Council and the ESEC are further taking actions to address PSH both in, and through Education.
- 4.19 As part of the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) plan the Council is further working on embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into all policies and human rights work in education. Gender equality is part of the sustainable development goals in this work. In 2024, [the most recent report on Promoting Equality](#) was presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee. Supplementary guidance is being prepared on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, with a recognised need for additional guidance on sexual harassment. The soonest opportunity to create this resource will be 2025.

- 4.20 There is a variety of other tools also currently available to support this work, such as:
- 4.20.1 The new resource for 9-12 year old children developed by [Barnardos and the NSPCC](#) based on resources available through the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre ([CEOP](#)). This resource is still at pilot stage and unfortunately, Edinburgh schools were not picked as pilot schools. However, Education will consider the adoption of the resource following its finalisation upon completion of the pilot project.
 - 4.20.2 To successfully embed MVP in our 23 secondary schools, over 90 Education staff have been trained this year (2023), with 241 young people trained as Mentors. Consideration is being given to collaboration with upper year groups in some primary schools.
 - 4.20.3 The national [RSHP](#) resource, which is delivered in primary and secondary schools as part of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum, covers topics relating to PSH in age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate ways. There is an opportunity to broaden the range of resources and to increase staff confidence in delivering the material, particularly in primary. A written briefing on this issue is being prepared for the [June 2024 Education Children and Families Committee](#).
 - 4.20.4 In May 2022, Edinburgh Learns for Life also launched a toolkit on 'Prevention of, and Responding to, Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviours' toolkit. The toolkit offers a comprehensive list of resources available to secondary schools to prevent and respond to different types of gender-based violence, including PSH. This is not a publicly available document, but it is widely available to all teaching staff in secondary schools in Edinburgh through the Learning and Teaching Sharepoint.
 - 4.20.5 One of the key resources available to secondary schools as well is the presence of community police officers. There is an expectation that schools record all incidents of sexual harassment / Gender Based Violence and monitor this data to identify further actions at school level. This data also allows the Council to identify any further action needed at authority level.
 - 4.20.6 Last but not least, a large number of secondary schools in Edinburgh also use a range of third sector service providers to supplement their PSE curriculum, such as Edinburgh Rape Crisis.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Work on addressing PSH through education and partnership working is ongoing throughout the Council.

- 5.2 The ESEC will closely monitor developments regarding the progress of misogyny legislation and will share any information and messaging around it at a time when these are available.
- 5.3 The ESEC is currently formulating a Violence Against Women, Children and Young People (VAWCYP) working subgroup. The scope and remit of the group is currently being discussed and it is expected to be confirmed by May 2024.
- 5.4 The ESEC lead officer is further involved in a steering group for research carried out by the University of Glasgow on assessing the effectiveness of Equally Safe at School (ESAS). Nine Edinburgh secondary schools have agreed to be part of this trial, which is expected to run for 3 years.
- 5.5 The ESEC lead officer together with colleagues from Education are also members of the steering group for a research project by the Lucy Faithfull foundation (formerly 'Stop It Now!') exploring peer-on-peer inappropriate sexual behaviour between secondary school-age children. The project is currently running in two Edinburgh schools: Gorgie Mills and Currie Community High School.
- 5.6 Stop It Now! reports to the steering group on progress every 6 months. To date, findings of work already undertaken demonstrate that staff in the two schools involved in the project feel confident in recognising and addressing PSH, and the project continues.
- 5.7 The Council's Learning and Development department is also currently working on developing training for parents and teachers to support them to respond to sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based abuse and violence. This is due to be available in 2024.
- 5.8 Following the completion of the current project delivered by the Lucy Faithfull foundation, the Council may consider ongoing work to develop training on responding to gender-based violence and abuse which will also include PSH.
- 5.9 School inclusion reviews, which tend to focus on the inclusion of children and young people with additional support needs and disabilities, could start to explore the ethos and culture of each school with regards to the prevalence, response and support available for pupils both responsible for, and affected by, sexual harassment. This can be used as an indicator in this evaluation process and help to drive improvement in this area.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The work undertaken by the Lucy Faithfull foundation in Gorgie Mills and Currie Community High Schools has been funded to £41,723. The Council has contributed £20,000 towards this cost, while the remaining funding required has been funded through the [RS MacDonald Charitable Trust](#).
- 6.2 As part of this joint work with the Lucy Faithfull foundation, there are currently discussions ongoing on providing continuing funding by the Council to develop

training on responding to gender-based violence and abuse, and part of this training will also include PSH. This second part of the project is still being negotiated and a decision will be made following the end of the current project running in Gorgie Mills and Currie Community High Schools.

- 6.3 If there are any training needs it will require staff resource which will have a financial impact. This will be confirmed in due course as ongoing need is identified.
- 6.4 The #RespectHerSpace campaign did incur a financial cost, which was covered through different budgets within the Council, as well as through partner contributions, namely NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University and the University of Edinburgh. This cost will be reported in detail to the Policy and Sustainability Committee as part of the WSPP CIP's routine annual reporting.
- 6.5 It is possible that in future the Council and its partners might wish to deliver additional educational or campaigning activity towards addressing PSH. Should this be the case, a report will be submitted to the relevant committee at the appropriate time.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 The work to prevent PSH is expected to have a positive impact across all equality areas and for people with any protected characteristics.
- 7.2 However, with regard to Equality and Poverty specifically, there is overwhelming evidence to show that VAWG and wider misogynistic attitudes and behaviours adversely impact women's and girls' life chances. [UK-based research](#) confirms that women's concern for personal safety often precludes them from full and meaningful inclusion in public spaces, further limiting their ability to be involved in activities that would improve their overall physical and mental wellbeing, support income generation and enhance their overall participation in public life.
- 7.3 Research by the [West Midlands Combined Authority](#) further confirmed that women and girls turn down opportunities in employment and training due to limited transport and travel options and feelings of unsafety, contributing to a loss of an estimated 3.7% of GDP.
- 7.4 Baroness Kennedy's report demonstrates how public sexual harassment affects girls' and women's academic participation and performance, which impacts their future academic and career prospects and consequently their income. "*Why put your hand up in school if it draws attention to you and puts you at greater risk of misogynistic bullying, harassment or derision? Why put yourself forward for a promotion or a pay rise if it increases your visibility and therefore your risk of misogynistic treatment?*" (p.37)
- 7.5 Any work to reduce PSH will have a positive impact on women and girls by helping them to feel safer in public spaces and therefore able to participate in public life more fully.

- 7.6 It will also help towards the eradication of the sexist and misogynist views that underpin PSH, supporting gender equality and the implementation of Equally Safe across Edinburgh.
- 7.7 If women and girls feel safer and more confident, their performance in Education will likely improve, and they may be more likely to take up opportunities for employment, volunteering, education and training if they feel safe from PSH. As a result, it will be less likely that they would risk or fall into poverty due to poor educational attainment or obstacles with employability.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 Supporting the campaign to make public sexual harassment illegal is likely to have a positive environmental impact.
- 8.2 In September 2022, during the Women's Safety in Public Places (phase 1) consultation we convened 7 focus groups to discuss what makes women feel safe or unsafe in public places, and what actions they take to increase their safety.
- 8.3 A number of women responded that they prefer to use a private vehicle to travel, especially if travelling to social occasions, to avoid sexual or other forms of harassment while out in public.
- 8.4 Through education, awareness raising, public messaging and endorsing the Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal campaign, it is possible that incidents of PSH will reduce, helping women and girls feel safer. This could encourage them to use public transport or other methods of active travel, therefore reducing emissions from additional private vehicles on the road.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 The work around Women's Safety in Public Places has involved considerable consultation with Edinburgh communities, and particularly with women and girls. Through formal consultations in the summer of 2022 and winter 2023, women and girls told us that:
- (a) Between 73% - 80% have experienced some form of harassment, abuse or violence while in a public space.
 - (b) The top 3 factors women identified as key contributors to not feeling safe included lighting levels, the behaviour of men and the behaviour of young people.
 - (c) Women and girls indicated feeling less safe in public places during hours of darkness
- 9.2 The work to increase Women's Safety in Public Places, which includes addressing PSH and the attitudes that underpin it, further supports the Council to progress a broad range of local and national priorities, duties and frameworks:

- 9.2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council's [Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025](#) makes a commitment to be 'more empowering of citizens, colleagues and partners'. Its key priorities include 'Inclusive Communities: People at risk of harm through poverty and deprivation, hate crime and discrimination, violence against women, children and young people or of becoming involved in crime are protected and supported' and 'Improved health, wellbeing and attainment for young people: Increasing the life chances of all young people by increasing attainment at school'.
- 9.2.2 The [Edinburgh City Vision 2050](#) promises that we will create a Fair, Pioneering, Welcoming and Thriving Edinburgh.
- 9.2.3 The City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan 2023- 2027 has 3 key priorities:
- (a) Create good places to live and work
 - (b) End poverty in Edinburgh
 - (c) Become a net zero city by 2030
- 9.2.4 The [Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2022-2028](#) also identifies 2 relevant priorities:
- (a) Priority 2: Access to work, learning and training opportunities
 - (b) Priority 3: A good place to live
- 9.2.5 The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) places an onus on public bodies to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.2.6 The [Fairer Scotland Duty](#) places a legal responsibility on public bodies to actively consider 'how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions'.
- 9.2.7 [Equally Safe](#), Scotland's strategy to prevent and eradicate VAWG has the following vision: 'A strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it'.
- 9.2.8 The purpose of Scotland's [National Performance Framework](#) includes:
- (a) Giving opportunities to all people living in Scotland
 - (b) Increasing the wellbeing of people living in Scotland
 - (c) Creating sustainable and inclusive growth and

- (d) Reducing inequalities and giving equal importance to economic, environmental, and social progress

The relevant National Outcomes to this work include: Children and Young People, Communities, Culture, Economy, Education, Environment, Health and Human Rights.

9.2.9 Public Health Scotland (PHS) has identified [Scotland's public health priorities and violence against women and girls](#), with priority 1 being 'A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.

- 9.3 Beyond the positive impact this work is expected to have on women and girls, it is expected that the impact it will have on men might be more complex. Although combatting PSH will make Edinburgh safer for women and girls, men and boys might feel targeted by any communication regarding this issue.
- 9.4 This was the case during the Women's Safety in Public Places consultations as well as during the #RespectHerSpace campaign, when some men expressed feeling targeted and negatively portrayed. Others argued that they felt excluded from efforts to make Edinburgh safer.
- 9.5 These risks can be addressed through robust communications strategies and forward planning to address such comments and any complaints. By providing information on the impact of PSH on women and girls and inviting men and boys to be allies in combatting PSH, any efforts are more likely to be successful in this area.
- 9.6 There are currently no expenditure or relevant financial risks identified as a result of this work

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 ['Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal Campaign'](#) Motion by Cllr. Mattos Coelho at the Meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council – Thursday 4 May 2023 (item 8.8)
- 10.2 [Misogyny – A Human Rights Issue](#). Report by Helena Kennedy KC on the Working Group on Misogyny and Criminal Justice.
- 10.3 [Equality, Opportunity, Community: Our Programme for Government](#). The Scottish Government, September 2023.
- 10.4 The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre ([CEOP](#))
- 10.5 Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education ([RSHP](#))
- 10.6 [Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#), the Scottish Parliament.
- 10.7 [Women's Safety in Public Places](#): Report to the Policy and Sustainability Committee, Tuesday 30 November 2021.
- 10.8 [Respect Her Space](#): Edinburgh's Campaign to improve women's and girls' safety in public places.

- 10.9 Navarrete – Hernandez, P.; Vetro, A. & Concha, P. (2021): Building safer public spaces: Exploring gender difference in the perception of safety in public space through urban design interventions. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, Vol 214. Accessed on 12 February 2024 at:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0169204621001432>
- 10.10 [Transport Champions for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls](#): West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 10.11 [Equality and Diversity Framework 2021 to 2025](#), City of Edinburgh Council
- 10.12 [2050 City Vision](#): Report to the Policy and Resources Committee on Thursday 11 June 2020
- 10.13 [Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2022-2028](#)
- 10.14 [Public Sector Equality Duty \(Equality Duty\) Guidance for Suppliers to DfE](#). Department for Education, UK Government 2021.
- 10.15 [The Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for Public Bodies](#). The Scottish Government, 2021.
- 10.16 [Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls](#). The Scottish Government, December 2023.
- 10.17 [The National Performance Framework](#)
- 10.18 [Scotland's Public Health Priorities and Violence Against Women and Girls: Priority 1: A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities](#). Public Health Scotland, March 2022.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 Letter to the City of Edinburgh Council requesting support for the 'Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal' Campaign:

Appendix 1: Letter to the City of Edinburgh Council requesting support for the 'Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal' Campaign:

Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Wednesday 8th March 2023

FAO: The First Minister of Scotland and the Scottish Government.

We, the undersigned, are writing to formally request legislation to combat and bring an end to public sexual harassment in Scotland.

Public Sexual Harassment (or PSH) is defined by and includes (but is not limited to) behaviours such as;

- Catcalling
- Wolf-whistling and unsolicited sexual noises
- Unsolicited sexual comments
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching
- Unwanted sexual looks or gestures
- Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions
- Sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks
- Flashing
- Following a person in public
- Abusive, sexist, misogynist or sexual verbiage.

This would be a powerful step in tackling inequity, ending violence against women and girls and empowering and protecting all of those who experience public sexual harassment.

97% of women between 18-24 have experienced sexual harassment and the threatening, powerless, humiliating and painful experience of being harassed, as well as the often constant fear of harassment, can cause long-term emotional and psychological harm.

Tackling public sexual harassment would also be a key step in preventing further and more extreme acts of violence towards women and girls. Acts of public sexual harassment are shown to some of the earliest indicators of and first steps towards more extreme acts of violence towards women such as rape, domestic violence and murder.

When public sexual harassment goes unchecked and unquestioned, it allows for and encourages an escalating pattern of misogynistic behaviour. It also signifies to peers and others that acts of public sexual harassment are normal patterns of behaviour that will go

unquestioned and unpunished To check this behaviour at the earliest stages will go a long way to reducing more extreme acts of sexual violence.

This is also an opportunity for the Scottish Government to restore trust with the public on the issue of Public Sexual Harassment and Violence Against Women and Girls by demonstrating decisive and empowering action. Action that will empower victims of harassment and dissuade harassers. It will send a clear message to those who perpetrate this behaviour and the world that Scotland does not tolerate anything but public safety and equality for women and for all.

Public sexual harassment is a very real problem in Scotland and the data tells us that we need action to combat it.

- 26.8% of women have received unwanted male attention from a stranger (more than 1 in 4).
- 22.8% of women have felt threatened on the street at night (more than 1 in 5).
- 21.2% of women have been approached in the street unsolicited (more than 1 in 5)
- 49.6 % of women have been followed (nearly 1 in 2).
- 34.4% of women have been made uncomfortable by a stranger on public transport (more than 1 in 3).
- 21.2% of women have been catcalled (more than 1 in 5).
- 23% of women have been wolf-whistled (nearly 1 in 4).
- 13.2% have received sexist abuse from a stranger.
- 49.2% of women feel unsafe and vulnerable when out alone in the day. (nearly 1 in 2).
- Following the murder of Sarah Everard in 2021, 50.5% of women (1 in 2) felt less safe when out alone.
- 82% of women feel unsafe walking at night.
- 22% of women have learned self-defense.
- 10% of women have bought a rape/attack alarm.
- 28.6% of women make sure to travel home with a friend so as not to travel home alone.
- 45.2% of women stick to main roads when walking.
- 27.5% of men think that if women want to stay safe, they shouldn't go out by themselves (more than 1 in 4).

[Source: I Walk With Women Fund's 2021 Survey into Public Sexual Harassment and Violence Against Women; The 'I Walk With Women Fund' surveyed men and women in Glasgow and Edinburgh on the issues of Public Sexual Harassment and Violence Against Women.]

We are petitioning that you pursue an education-based approach to this problem and in legislation.

This is not an issue that can be tackled and be ended without education and we cannot and will not accept any path forward without it. To simply fine people or imprison people, which is the route that England and Wales have pursued or to pursue any kind of penal solutions will get us nowhere as it will fail to solve the root of the problem. The Scottish Government's Caledonian Project has been a significant influence on this campaign and so we are advocating for a legislative approach that emulates the Caledonian-model. The Caledonian Project works with men who have committed acts of domestic abuse to educate and rehabilitate them. It seeks to support and educate men and break down misogynistic and violent views and tendencies. It also provides support for women who

have experienced domestic abuse and children who have either witnessed or experienced it.

A report on the success of the Caledonian Project found that the programme is rated very highly by participants, staff and (female) partners. Women said that they felt safer and men who completed the programme posed a lower risk to partners, children and others by the end.

Men said the programme had equipped them with techniques to better control their behaviour and reactions and helped them learn to communicate more positively with their partners. They also reported improved understanding of the nature of abuse and of appropriate behaviour in relationships; a greater awareness and understanding of the inequalities that exist between men and women; and a more 'positive mindset' about both their relationships and themselves.

This is a model on which to base legislation that seeks to end public sexual harassment.

We are campaigning for a nationwide, full level approach to tackling this issue. We need to see action and change in schools, in communities, in all public spaces and a message that reaches all those across the country, "Public Sexual Harassment is not tolerated in Scotland". Together, we can bring an end to public sexual harassment. We can create communities, schools, a country that supports and protects women and girls from unwanted sexualisation, humiliation, objectification and the consequent oppression. It is the path forward for Scotland.

We hope you will pursue and enact legislation to end public sexual harassment in Scotland and we hope to work with you and support you in this endeavour.

Yours faithfully,