Report of Scoping Study for Dublin City Council Safe City Programme, Challenging Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Sexual Violence in Public Space

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Report of Scoping Study for Dublin City Council Safe City Programme

Challenging sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space
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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a scoping study on sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space. Reporting and disclosing all forms of sexual violence in public space is far lower than the level of incidents revealed through a supportive research context. The study findings show that sexual harassment is a frequent and distressing occurrence for women and girls in Dublin City. These findings are supported by a number of recent initiatives such as The Everyday Sexism Project, Hollaback! and The Stop Street Harassment Campaign, and in turn the mainstream media which has begun to highlight issues arising from attacks of this nature against women and girls. Women and girls make a clear distinction between mutual flirtation which is fun and harmless and sexual harassment which is a form of sexual violence and harmful.

The initiatives set up to challenge all forms of sexual violence in public space are giving women and girls a voice to raise awareness of the impact. Through these initiatives women and girls are expressing their refusal to tolerate it anymore. Sexual violence is a form of gender based violence predicated on women and girls’ disempowered status in society and increasingly recognised as a violation of their human rights. The research undertaken for this report is timely and reflects a wider discussion on the importance of acknowledging and challenging threats women and girls encounter in the urban public realm.

The aim of the scoping study was to inform the design of Dublin’s Safe City Programme, an initiative which is being developed in conjunction with the UN Women’s Safe Cities Global Initiative, spanning over 20 countries. Dublin City Council has a strong commitment to promoting equality, combating discrimination and ensuring that the city is open and welcoming to all those who live, work, study in and visit the city. The decision was taken to join the Global Initiative not because Dublin is an unsafe city, but because the city wants to share knowledge and learn from other cities, and to proactively strengthen efforts to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces.

The objectives of the study were to ascertain the following:

- The nature of sexual harassment and other form of sexual violence in public space
- Whether certain groups of women and girls are more likely to be targeted
- Who the perpetrators are
- What the contributory factors are
• The scale of the problem
• Whether there is any temporal significance
• How women and girls respond
• The consequences
• To explore the relationship between the urban environment and sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence

In addition the research undertaken aimed to identify beneficiary groups and agents of change, to establish the views of key stakeholders, to identify existing projects, to analyse relevant policies, plans and initiatives, to profile the intervention area and, finally, to identify delivery partners for the safe cities programme.

Based on the findings of the scoping study, a working group of stakeholders, in partnership with Dublin City Council, will design and implement interventions as part of a comprehensive approach to address the safety of women and girls in the city.

**Methodology**

The data for the study was collected using qualitative and quantitative methods. A questionnaire was issued to a number of stakeholders which examined the nature and extent of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space. The study was located in a research intervention site comprising the corridor from Heuston Station to Abbey Street. A group interview with residents and women who represented organisations based in the study site enriched the questionnaire data, as did a focus group of men who lived along the study site or represented organisations based there. In addition, a group of women who worked and lived along the study site, as well as women representing organisations based there, participated in a Women’s Safe Audit of the site. The women identified spatial problems which they related to safety concerns and proposed solutions. Finally, informal research was undertaken through conversations which were initiated spontaneously by friends, family, colleagues or members of the public.
**Key findings**

Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space are a significant threat for women and girls in Dublin City. Sexual harassment in particular is a frequent occurrence. It is distressing for women, leading to feelings of shame, humiliation, anxiety, fear and self-blame. It is indicative of on-going sexist attitudes towards women and girls and is a form of gender based violence. It impedes women and girls’ freedom of movement in the city and causes long term harm. As such it is a violation of their human rights.

Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence effect women of all ages and backgrounds, but it is especially prevalent among younger women, gay women, homeless women, women affected by prostitution, migrant women, Traveller women and Roma women.

The dirty and dilapidated condition of the urban public realm in parts of the city exacerbates concerns women have for their safety because this neglect is strongly associated with danger. As a result women choose to avoid certain places, which has detrimental consequences for both women and the city of Dublin.

**Key recommendations**

The recommendations from this report are all derived from proposals made by participants in the data collection process. Thus, the recommendations present a collaborative basis on which to build the Safe Cities Programme. Key among the recommendations are the following:

- Upgrade the design of the public realm along the intervention site with attention to rubbish, derelict sites, graffiti, lighting and obstructions to women’s line of sight. Encourage more life and vibrancy along the site by supporting businesses at ground floor level and rejuvenating wasteland areas
- Implement educational programmes for the public and service providers, in particular An Garda Síochána, clearly defining what constitutes sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space. These programmes should address underlying causes, the harmful effects of sexual violence in public space, and how to seek help when required
- Gender proof Dublin City Council policy and strategy documents which refer to public space to ensure proposals are of equal benefit to women and men
- Develop public awareness campaigns expressing zero tolerance of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space
- Provide better support services for key beneficiaries/agents of change including; girls age 14 and up, gay women, homeless women, women affected by prostitution, Traveller women, Roma women, migrant women

There are extensive recommendations presented throughout the report which reflect the concerns of a very diverse group of women. It is imperative that all these recommendations are taken on board as the Dublin Safe City Programme moves forward.
1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a scoping study on sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces. The aim of the scoping study was to inform the design of Dublin’s Safe City Programme, an initiative which is being developed in conjunction with the UN Women’s Safe Cities Global Initiative. Dublin City Council has a strong commitment to promoting equality, combating discrimination and ensuring that the city is open and welcoming to all those who live, work, study in and visit the city. The decision was taken to join the Global Initiative not because Dublin is an unsafe city, but because the city wants to share knowledge and learn from other cities, and to proactively strengthen efforts to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces. The council identified an intervention site in Dublin City which the study focussed on. This site is the corridor from Heuston Station to Abbey Street. It is proposed that a working group of stakeholders and beneficiaries/agents of change, in partnership with Dublin City Council, will design and implement interventions based on the findings of the scoping study as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing the safety of women and girls in the city.

The scoping study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of the problem of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces. The following were the main objectives of the study:

- To identify specific areas of concern to be addressed in the Dublin Safe City Programme
- To identify intended beneficiary groups/agents of change
- To identify potential delivery partners
- To review relevant existing policies, plans, services and projects
- To evaluate the research site the study focussed on
- To make recommendations

The findings of the research undertaken for the scoping study are described in the following chapters.
1.1 Defining the problem

Violence of all kinds against women and girls is a violation of their human rights\(^1\). Defining sexual violence and sexual harassment in public space as two distinct entities is somewhat problematic as sexual harassment is increasingly regarded as a form of sexual violence. Different organisations have developed and refined definitions.

According to the Rape Crisis Network Ireland 2014 report; “For the purposes of RCNI data collection sexual harassment is defined as: Subjecting a person to an act of physical intimacy, requesting sexual favours, or subjecting to any act or conduct with sexual connotations when the act, request or conduct is unwelcome and could reasonably be regarded as sexually offensive, humiliating or intimidating, or someone is treated differently or could reasonably be expected to be treated differently by reason of her or his rejection or submission to the request or conduct.

Sexual violence is defined as follows: Any actions, words or threats of a sexual nature by one person against a non-consenting person who is harmed by same. This could include: Rape, Aggravated sexual assault, Sexual assault, Sexual harassment, Ritual abuse, Trafficking, Reckless endangerment, Observing/voyleurism, Grooming\(^2\).

The following is taken from the UN Women Glossary and Definitions of Key Terms\(^3\):

**Sexual Harassment**

*It includes unwelcome sexual comments, attention, actions, or gestures. As is the case for other forms of sexual violence, a key component to sexual harassment is that someone does these actions without the consent, permission, or agreement of the person or persons they are targeting. Sexual harassment includes non-contact forms, like: sexual comments about a person’s body parts or appearance, whistling while a woman or a girl is passing-by, demands for sexual favours, sexually suggestive staring, following, stalking, exposing one’s sexual organs at someone.*

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\(^1\) European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2014) *EU-wide survey on violence against women* p. 9.  
\(^2\) Rape Crisis Network Ireland (2014) National Rape Crisis Statistics p34  
\(^3\) UN Women Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls Global Programme Glossary and Definitions of Key Terms, pp. 4-5.
Sexual harassment also includes physical contact forms, like someone purposely brushing up against someone else on the street or public transportation, grabbing, pinching, slapping, or rubbing against another person in a sexual way.

Some elements of sexual harassment may be covered within criminal law, however, many elements may require civic remedies, educational and administrative responses.

Sexual violence

Any sexual act committed against the will of the other person, either in the case when the victim does not give the consent or when consent cannot be given because the person is a child, has a mental disability, or is severely intoxicated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drugs. It encompasses both sexual harassment and other forms of sexual assault such as attempted rape, and rape. It includes acts such as genital mutilation/cutting, forced sexual initiation, forced prostitution, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and other sexually motivated forms of violence.

1.2 Gender based violence as a human rights abuse

Women are still somewhat disempowered in Irish society and research indicates that violence against women arises primarily as a result of this disempowerment, therefore all forms of violence against women are understood as gender-based violence. The UN Human Rights Committee published its findings on Ireland’s human rights records as the first stage of study this was being completed and it found that sexual violence against women in Ireland ‘remains a serious problem’. This is a grave concern and suggests that the decision to participate in the safe cities programme is timely.

Irish research and statistical evidence show that sexual violence against women is most likely to occur in a domestic situation, and that the perpetrator is most likely to be someone known to the woman. But an awareness of the extent of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space is now emerging and this form of gender
based violence is recognised as a human rights violation which demands in-depth comprehensive research.

1.3 Increased mainstream media awareness of the issues

As this report was being written, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space was receiving increased attention in the mainstream media. There have been reports featuring women refusing to tolerate sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence, decrying the lack of adequate statistics and discussing the need to rethink our acceptance of gender violence in public space. Aligned with what is referred to as ‘the fourth wave of feminism’, women and girls in many countries around the world have begun to campaign through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and various websites for an end to all forms of sexual violence in public space. In turn, those campaigns are picked up by the mainstream media and initiatives such as The Everyday Sexism Project and Hollaback! are changing what is considered socially acceptable behaviour.

Alongside the message communicated through the mainstream media, the comments women and girls are making on social media are informing a discussion centred on a refusal to tolerate sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space any longer. Women are slowly finding a voice to express the damaging effects of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space. They are saying quite emphatically that there is a difference between mutual flirtation and unwanted attention of a sexual nature. This report reflects the views of women living and working in Dublin City, and it is hoped that the findings will contribute to the evolving discussion on this issue and the participatory design of Dublin’s Safe City Programme.

The report begins with a concise review of international and national literature, policy, services and projects of relevance to the study. The purpose of this review is to contextualise the scoping study and the programme it is designed to inform. The review has also identified some gaps in the literature which have been addressed by the data collection. The literature review is

followed by a description of the methodology developed for the data collection. Finally, the findings of the data collection are presented.

2. Placing the study in context
The subject of sexual violence against women has been receiving increased attention by researchers. Both in Ireland and internationally there has been a growing awareness of this problem, leading to an increase in academic and applied research, and policy changes. While this report is framed by that shifting awareness, the literature review does not claim to be fully comprehensive but rather is presented as a concise overview, or a snap shot of the concerns which have come to the fore.

Much of the research conducted into sexual violence indicates that while it may be perpetrated by a stranger, it is often perpetrated by someone known to the woman or girl. The perpetrator can be a relative, a friend, an acquaintance or a man the woman or girl has previously had a consensual intimate relationship with, but most frequently perpetrators of sexual violence against women are men they are in an intimate relationship with. As such, the focus of policy and awareness raising has been on domestic violence. But sexual violence in public space is increasingly discussed and recently there has been a shift in the discussion towards recognising sexual harassment in public space as a form of sexual violence.

2.1 The international perspective
In an international context, there have been changes in policy and legislation on violence against women and girls. This has resulted in fine tuning the definitions of sexual violence, identifying the prevalence of sexual violence, the most likely perpetrators, causes and location of sexual violence, and finally, describing the impact this has on women. Under Article 6 of the General Recommendation of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1992), gender-based violence is described as ‘violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately’ and under Article 1 gender-based violence is described as ‘a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men’. In 2011 The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was adopted. Under Article 3 (a) of this convention; ‘violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of
such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’.

Although sexual harassment in public space is often regarded as harmless, or even a compliment, there is a growing international trend towards recognising how damaging it can be. In a report published by the U.S. based Stop Street Harassment Campaign, sexual harassment in public space is described as street harassment. It is defined as: ‘unwanted interactions in public spaces between strangers motivated by a person’s actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, or gender expression’\(^{10}\) which has an adverse effect on the person. In line with international conventions, street harassment is described as a human rights violation and a form of gender based violence. The report states that street harassment impedes women’s freedom, affects them psychologically and leads them to feel long term concern for their safety in the public domain. There were 2,000 participants in the study which found that street harassment is a ‘wide spread problem’\(^{11}\) that effects women from all age groups and backgrounds.

2.2 The Irish context

In Ireland, the Task For on Violence against Women published a report in 1997 which examined key issues for women who have been subjected to violence. The report found that most violent attacks, including sexual violence, were in the woman’s own home and therefore the focus of interventions to date has been on domestic violence.

The first extensive study of sexual violence against women in Ireland, (the SAVI report), was published in 2002\(^ {12}\). The study explored attitudes, beliefs, and experiences regarding sexual violence, as well as the uptake of services and the challenges of reporting or disclosing sexual violence against women. It found that 42% of women experienced some form of sexual violence over their lifetime, but that women rarely reported sexual violence they experienced to the authorities. Recommendations in the SAVI report included; public awareness raising on sexual violence against women, addressing barriers to disclosure, and further in-depth research.

Cosc, The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender- Based Violence, was established in 2007. In 2010 the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and

\(^{10}\)Kearl, H. (2014) *Unsafe and harassed in public space* p.5
\(^{11}\)Ibid p.13
Gender- Based Violence was published. Among the key objectives of this four year strategy are:

- To reduce prevalence
- To increase disclosure and reporting
- To create improved opportunities for disclosure and confidence in the system
- To ensure people in the community and service providers are better informed on how to respond

Ultimately the purpose of the strategy is to ensure that women’s lives are safer at home and in the community. The strategy focuses on domestic and sexual violence and defines both as gender based violence. The strategy does not refer specifically to sexual harassment in public space although it does indicate that sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence and it also makes reference to assault in the public realm. The areas identified as being of benefit for the prevention of gender violence include; awareness raising, education programmes and fostering a change in attitudes.

The National Women’s Council of Ireland published a report in 2013 which examines the relationship between violence against women and how gender is culturally constructed. The report identifies gender discrimination as the cause and consequence of sexual and domestic violence against women. Women in Irish society, while enjoying a relatively empowered status, are still subject to an inequitable power dynamic in relationships with men. According to the report there is evidence that violence against women is rooted in this power imbalance.

The report looks at sexual harassment as something which is regarded as a form of violence against women and an infringement on their human rights. It is described as degrading, unsafe, intimidating, and as creating a humiliating environment. Furthermore, it is described as a problem which exacerbates the inferior status of women in society. As with other documents, this report concludes that there is a need for more data on gender violence in Ireland as well as a change in legislation, better services, and an increase in measures which prevent gender violence such as education.

2.3 The extent of sexual violence against women
Accessing national statistics on the extent, and prevalence of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public space is extremely difficult. For a variety of

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reasons, (see below), women rarely report sexual violence to the authorities. This is exacerbated by how data is processed by An Garda Síochána and communicated to the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Thus, in the most recent CSO figures a total of 75 sexual offences were reported in 2013 to Gardai in the North Central Garda Division, an area which includes the research site. These figures include all sexual offences. There is no breakdown per Garda station so it is not possible to get figures specific to the research location. Nor is there any information on whether a particular assault occurred in public space, who the perpetrators were, or any profile of the women affected.

Furthermore, due to a range of fears and concerns, women tend not to report sexual violence. The SAVI report found that only 10% of women subjected to sexual violence reported to the Gardai. Rape is a very violent, invasive form of abuse and women who have been raped can feel stigmatised. It can be very difficult to talk about, and some women are afraid they will not be believed or that they will be blamed. The criminal process is often quite gruelling for women and the conviction rate for rapists is very low in Ireland.

The annual report of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre of 2012 covers a much wider catchment area than the Dublin North Central Garda Division and many women who contact the centre may never contact Gardaí. The number of what are described as ‘genuine contacts’ to the helpline made by people for the first time at 4,000 is high. Almost half (44%) of the calls, were made in relation to adult rape, 8% referred to sexual assault while 1.1% of calls were made in relation to sexual harassment.

The SAVI report sought to estimate the prevalence of sexual violence across a person’s lifetime, that is, from childhood to adulthood. In a survey of 3,000 people, the study found that almost four in ten women had experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. In the 12 months prior to the survey, 16% of women reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment. However, almost half of the women who revealed the sexual violence to researchers indicated that they had never disclosed the abuse to anyone else, much less reported it to the authorities. The authors of the report note that sexual violence against women is something of a taboo subject and most women who participated in the study said that if they were subject to sexual violence they would be very unlikely to disclose it. Among the reasons women cited for not telling anyone about the sexual violence they had suffered were shame, feeling what had happened was not serious enough or self-blame. A small proportion did report

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sexual violence to the Gardaí, and of twenty women who reported sexual assault, two cases went to court, and one perpetrator was found guilty. This poor conviction rate is an on-going challenge to women when it comes to reporting sexual violence.

Some ten years on from the publication of the SAVI report, the Union of Students in Ireland conducted a survey of 2,752 third level students\textsuperscript{15} on their experiences of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence on campus. In this study the median age of participants was 21 years. People of all genders and sexual orientations participated. The study found that 16% of students had experienced some unwanted sexual encounter. Five percent of students had been raped and 3% had experienced attempted rape. Again, the rate of reporting to the authorities is extremely low and only 3% of victims reported unwanted sexual experiences to the Gardaí. The vast majority indicated that they did not report to the Gardaí as they did not believe the sexual violence was serious enough, while 44% did not think it was a crime. As with the people surveyed through the SAVI study, reasons for not reporting include feeling a sense of shame, embarrassment, self-blame, and fear of family or friends finding out. Again, disclosure rates are low and only half of victims report disclosing to anyone. The report findings are comparable to similar studies carried out in the UK, although Irish students describe experiencing less sexual violence than their UK counterparts.

In 2014 the European Agency for Fundamental Rights published the results of an EU wide survey on violence against women, including sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence. All 28 EU member states participated and there were 42,000 respondents to the survey. The prevalence rates varied from 32% to 38% depending on the country. This is explained by a number of factors including cultural variances in what is regarded as adverse behaviour and differences in the likelihood of reporting. Once again, a concern with under reporting is raised and the extent to which women report sexual violence varies from state to state. Crime statistics are not considered a reliable source of the prevalence of sexual violence against women, in fact, the authors conclude that official statistics on sexual violence against women reflect more on how data is collected and cultural attitudes surrounding sexual violence than on the actual prevalence of sexual violence in any one state. The authors suggest that the higher the figures recorded for reporting rape, for example, the more an indication this is of a

\textsuperscript{15}Union of Students in Ireland (2013) \textit{Say Something: A Study of Students’ Experiences of Harassment, Stalking, Violence & Sexual Assault}.
satisfactory reporting and prosecution system. Surveys on sexual violence against women provide a more reliable estimate of the prevalence of sexual violence.

The study examined sexual violence against women across their lifetime and also within the previous 12 months. The findings show that women aged between 18 and 39 are at greatest risk of sexual harassment and that up to 55% of women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15. Twenty one percent of respondents had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months. The study describes sexual harassment as ‘multidimensional’ ranging from offensive verbal comments to unwanted touching. It is understood to be ‘a breach of the principle of equal treatment between men and women’ and is considered a form of gender based violence and thus a form of sexual abuse. Nineteen percent of Irish women surveyed for the study reported some form of sexual harassment in the year prior to the interview. The highest rate of sexual harassment revealed to the authors was in Denmark where 37% of women surveyed indicated they had been subjected to some form of sexual harassment. However the authors say that this is more likely an indication of greater awareness of sexual harassment as abusive among Danish women and a reflection of legislation and policy which acknowledges sexual harassment as an infringement of women’s rights.

The authors conclude that increased gender equality in a society results in higher levels of disclosure. A key issue identified was a need for more comprehensive EU legislation on violence against women which would address sexual harassment.

2.4 Vulnerable Groups

Research in Ireland shows that there are particular concerns around marginalized groups of women. The SAVI report identified homeless women, prisoners, Travellers, women with a learning disability, psychiatric service users and women affected by prostitution as being marginalized in Irish society.

Women affected by prostitution are quite vulnerable to sexual violence. Ruhama is an Irish support group for women affected by prostitution. The organisation describes the extent of the choice in becoming involved in prostitution as limited, due to the degree of coercion involved, the extreme poverty some women suffer, as well as issues around addiction and a history of abuse. In a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Defence

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Review of Legislation on Prostitution, Ruhama stated that rape, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence are at an unacceptably high level.

Currently legislation in Ireland centres on criminalising the women who are involved in prostitution. Under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill 2014 buying sexual services is identified as a criminal offence, which shifts the focus towards people buying sex. Ruhama advocates developing more effective measures to support women to leave prostitution by tackling the issues which caused them to become involved in prostitution.

Women who are homeless and sleeping rough are also in a very vulnerable position. According to research conducted by Paula Maycock and Sarah Sheridan\textsuperscript{17} the gender implications of homelessness are increasingly recognised but there is a lack of research into women’s experiences. A series of interrelated factors which often includes sexual abuse can result in homelessness. These factors, and the precarious nature of their lives on the street, leaves homeless women particularly at risk of sexual violence.

Pavee Point represents Traveller and Roma women. The organisation developed a policy paper on violence against women in 2011 which focuses on domestic abuse. This report indicates that there is a perception in Irish society that domestic violence against women is more prevalent among the travelling community, which is a myth. However, seeking help is difficult for Traveller women due to the interplay of racism and sexism in Irish society. This is compounded by their marginalisation in society which results in a fear that reporting to Gardai will result in a lack of appropriate response, further stereotyping of Traveller men and a rejection of the women by their community. As with women in the wider population, sexual violence is something of a taboo among Traveller women and thus difficult to disclose or discuss with others.

Concerns have been raised about the challenges faced by migrant women. A briefing document submitted by the Domestic Violence Coalition to the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality in 2013 states that the residency status of some migrant women makes it difficult to report instances of gender based violence. These women may also have very little community or family support and therefore have difficulty disclosing the violence they are subjected to.

\textsuperscript{17}Maycock and Sheridan (2012). \textit{Women’s ‘Journeys’ to homelessness}. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin
2.5 The impact of sexual violence on women
Sexual violence can be exceptionally distressing for women and can have long-term adverse effects. The SAVI study found that sexual violence can cause post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression, anxiety and serious mental illness. There can also be physical injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. The impact on women seems to vary depending on the circumstances and the nature of the sexual violence. Of those who participated in the USI study almost 10% of people said that the effect on them was quite significant. Almost 10% said it affected their studies and in some cases attendance rates were adversely affected. Another impact identified in the survey is anxiety around accessing public space. Students surveyed for the USI study expressed a fear of being harassed, and a fear of being threatened. Their biggest concern was being alone on campus and students were concerned by what they felt were inadequate security measures.

2.6 Perpetrators
Perpetrators of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space are usually male. In most cases of sexual harassment in public space the perpetrator is not known to the woman. In some countries such as the U.S. where walking in public space is associated with poverty, it has been argued that perpetrators are more likely to be young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who are ‘victims of systematic disadvantage’18. However in cities like Dublin where walking is more commonplace irrespective of socio-economic circumstances, there is evidence that sexual harassment in public space is perpetrated by men of every age and background19. Alcohol sometimes plays a role and often the perpetrators, especially at night, have been drinking.

2.7 Urban Design Factors
The importance of designing the urban public realm with a view to enhancing the vitality of the city and meeting the needs of everyone who engages with the city is reflected in Dublin City Council policy documents. In particular, the Dublin City strategy on the public realm highlights the importance of good quality public spaces for the city. Your City Your Space: Dublin City Public Realm Strategy (2012) states that the importance of the public realms lies in how it constitutes a key aspect of a city’s identity. The public realm is defined as all areas the public has access to in the city, including the streets, parks and squares. In order to move

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19 Everyday Sexism Project http://www.everydaysexism.com/
anywhere in the city, public space has to be navigated and the strategy stresses the importance of ensuring the public realm is safe. One of the objectives of the public realm strategy is to ensure the quality of public space enriches the user’s experience. It recommends on-going research into the needs of public space users and the need to create an awareness of both the shared ownership and shared responsibility for the management and enhancement of public space in Dublin City.

Nonetheless there are challenges regarding the condition of the urban public realm. A report on the physical environment of the north-west inner city (the location of the research site) conducted by the Dublin Institute of Technology raised a number of concerns. Participants in the study identified a lack of signage, poor lighting, a lack of green space and welcoming features such as public seating, fountains or pieces of sculpture as problematic. The study found that there was a lack of interaction between residents and public space. An absence of people out and about in an urban area is a challenge for women and girls who can feel unsafe walking through underpopulated spaces. The report raised the importance of injecting a sense of vibrancy into the area.

Since the publication of the report in 2009 there has been a considerable amount of work undertaken in Smithfield, a key public space in the north-west inner city. The square has been re-landscaped to the north and a small playground has been constructed to the south. Both these developments appear to have led to more activity in Smithfield, but as yet there are no data on how the changes have impacted on the sense of safety in the area.

2.8 Making cities safer for women and girls: recent initiatives
In 2012 COSC conducted a survey of post-primary schools in Ireland to establish the effectiveness of 2nd level gender based violence programmes. The report of the findings argues that social norms are learnt at a young age and it is therefore imperative that sexual violence against women and girls is addressed through educational programmes. In Ireland the programmes which address themes around relationships include the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE) and the Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme (RSE). Both cover sexual violence for the 2nd level junior and senior cycles. The survey looked at the effectiveness of the programmes, taking into account the socio-economic background of the students, the location of the schools and other factors. The survey indicated

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20Dublin Institute of Technology School of Spatial Planning (2009). *Breaking Barriers, Creating Connections: A physical environment action plan for the north-west inner city.*
that none of these elements played a significant role in the extent of student’s awareness and understanding. However the survey found that teaching staff generally find the material in these programmes inadequate. According to the report there is an urgent need to improve the material in order to raise levels of awareness of gender based violence among young people.

Within the last couple of years a number of initiatives to combat sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space have emerged. Some of these initiatives are described as being allied to the ‘fourth wave of feminism’ as they use social media to raise awareness and affect change. In this way, these initiatives readily engage girls and younger women – the group who are most likely to be effected by sexual harassment. Among them is the Everyday Sexism Project, (http://everydaysexism.com/), an online initiative set up in the UK in 2011 which has links with countries and cities across the globe. Through the website and Twitter feed women share everyday sexist experiences. Arising out of the stories women and girls were sharing, instances of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space have emerged as a prevalent and disturbing problem. Through hashtag streams such as #shoutingback women and girls share stories on the kinds of sexual harassment they encounter, how it affects them, and how they deal with these situations. Through this project women and girls are given the opportunity to disclose a range of adverse experiences from wolf whistling to date rape in a context which they know will be supportive. This has had an empowering effect on women and girls and fostered a growing awareness that all forms of unwanted sexual encounters in public space are unacceptable, no matter how insignificant they might be deemed by either the perpetrator or society at large.

In Ireland there are volunteers who manage the Twitter feed, although as all contributors are guaranteed their anonymity, it is not possible to ascertain specific detail on the experience of Irish women and girls. By coming to the attention of more mainstream media, the project has generated debate and discussion in a range of contexts including schools, third level institutes and even at a political level.

Hollaback! is a similar initiative. It was set up by women concerned with the level of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space to create a platform for sharing experiences, and to raise awareness of the problem. It is described on the website as ‘an international movement to end street harassment’. It was set up in 2005 in New York, but like the Everyday Sexism Project, through its online presence it now has branches in cities and
countries all over the world, including Dublin. Its online presence includes a website; www.ihollaback.org, a Facebook page, Twitter feed and YouTube account.

The U.S. based Stop Street Harassment Campaign is an organisation which campaigns against all forms of sexual harassment in public space. It also has a strong online presence through its website, www.stopstreetharassment.org, Twitter feed and Facebook page. In June 2014 the campaign published an extensive survey of people across the U.S. entitled Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces: A National Street Harassment Survey. The survey of 2,000 people aged 18 plus found that 65% of women had experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in public space, while 86% of women who had experienced sexual harassment said they had been harassed more than once. In some cases this is a daily occurrence. Stop Street Harassment has also produced a toolkit for educators to raise awareness of street harassment. Among the tools they recommend is the award winning film ‘Walking Home’ by Nuala Cabral which documents the challenges of sexual harassment women encounter on everyday walks through their neighbourhoods.

Aimed at young people aged fifteen and up, The BodyRight Programme was developed by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre to ‘raise awareness about sexual violence among young people, to support them in protecting themselves and to contribute to the prevention of sexual violence’21. One of the objectives of the programme is to challenge negative attitudes which underpin sexual violence. Young people learn about what sexual violence and sexual harassment are, as well as developing an awareness of the effects of all forms of sexual violence.

Turn off the Red Light is a campaign to end prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland. The key focus of the campaign is the criminalisation of the purchase of sex. In other countries where the purchase of sex is penalised there has been a reduced demand for prostitution and less sex trafficking.

Finally, in an urban design context, there is a move towards addressing issues in the public realm which are a cause of fear and concern to women. Designing spaces with activity at street level, such as the example promoted by the Dutch urban design organisation Stipo,22 creates public spaces which are safer for women and girls. Other urban design possibilities include

engaging women in participatory feminist urban design initiatives as has been done in Vienna, Austria.23

2.9 Conclusion
This concise overview of the literature outlines some of the research, policy and initiatives which address sexual violence against women and girls both internationally and in Ireland. The literature describes an evidence based concern around the extent of domestic violence and initiatives to target this concern. But the extent and nature of sexual violence in the public realm is more difficult to establish. There is a reluctance among women to report and disclose experiences of sexual violence arising out of culturally bound feelings of shame, embarrassment and self-blame. Groups of more marginalized women such as migrant women, homeless women and Traveller and Roma women are further inhibited by racist and other bigoted attitudes towards them. Furthermore, some forms of sexual violence are viewed as an almost intrinsic part of urban daily life and thus there is an expectation of tolerance and acceptance which mitigates against reporting or disclosing.

On balance the literature does not suggest there is a high level of sexual violence such as rape against women and girls in the public realm in Dublin. But it does indicate that there is a considerable degree of sexual harassment, which can include sexual assault. Sexual harassment in public space, sometimes called street harassment, is described as a distressing form of sexual violence and as underpinning a more generalised and long term perception of danger in public space.

A societal tolerance of sexual harassment is being challenged by a number of organisations which support women and girls to voice their concerns and raise awareness of the damaging impact. While these initiatives have had a very positive impact, this literature review has identified a need for further research into the nature and extent of sexual harassment and other form of sexual violence against women and girls in public space in Dublin. A particularly alarming feature of sexual harassment in public space is the young age at which it begins and there is a need to conduct research with girls under 18 on their experiences.24 There is also a dearth of information on perpetrators of sexual harassment in public space in an Irish context.

24 Due to ethical considerations raised by the DIT Research Ethics Committee it was not possible to work directly with girls under 18 for this study. But young women and women working with girls shared knowledge of the experience of this age group.
The data collection process for this study sought to address some of these gaps by localising the issues and focusing on Dublin City, especially the research site. Particular attention was given to solutions proposed by participants in the data collection process. Their views are presented throughout the report in order to inform a participative approach to developing a Safe Cities Programme.

3 Methodology

A mixed methods approach comprising quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted by this scoping study.

The data collection consisted of the following:

- A review of existing material
- Survey of key stakeholders and representative bodies
- A group interview of women who live or work in the research area
- A focus group of men who live or work in the research area
- Women’s Safety Audit
- Informal discussions

3.1 The research site

A series of online surveys entitled Your City, Your Voice, have produced data which suggest that Dublin City is widely regarded as a safe city. In the 2013 survey, 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I feel safe when I am in the city during the day”. This sense of safety does drop at night with only 35% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing they felt safe in the city at night. The majority of respondents (82%) stated they felt safe in their own neighbourhood, which corresponds with the findings in this study that familiarity and perception are key factors shaping women’s sense of safety. In general 36% of respondents identified anti-social behaviour, crime and safety issues as a serious concern in Dublin City.

The research site identified by Dublin City Council comprises the corridor of public space running from Heuston Station to Abbey Street. It was not chosen by the council because it is regarded as any less safe than other parts of the city, but rather it is a site where other important council interventions are taking place. See map below.
Study Area

Figure 1. The study site which comprises the spine running from Heuston Railway Station to Abbey Street Luas stop, and its hinterland. Key locations are identified using a red star.

The study area is a mixed commercial and residential area, home to the Dublin City Markets, tourist attractions such as Collins Barracks Museum, Smithfield Square where cultural events such as Blue Fire Street Fest occur, many office blocks, the Four Courts, the Bridewell Garda Station and shopping destinations such as the Jervis shopping centre and O’Connell Street.

Located mainly in the north-west inner city, the corridor and its immediate hinterland can present a number of challenges to the public including a high incidence of litter and dog fouling, graffiti of a sometimes sexual or racist nature as well as derelict and unoccupied sites and buildings. Public spaces which are unkempt have been identified through national and international research as threatening and there is evidence of a perception of danger associated with a poorly maintained urban public realm. There are also a number of emergency accommodation centres which cater for people with drug and alcohol dependency along the site and there is a long history of prostitution in the area. Furthermore, there is anecdotal evidence of on street drug dealing, drug using, personal theft and assault occurring in some locations along the research corridor.

These negative associations with the intervention area can foster a perception of the space being unsafe. Nonetheless, it is a thriving residential area, home to several strong and dynamic communities where regular street parties, cultural festivals, community gardening initiatives and children’s events occur. It also encompasses a Dublin City Council initiative, Dublin City Beta, which works with public space users in the area to improve the location. We are Dublin
Town; the business improvement district scheme, which focuses on improving the local environment, also operates here. There are also many active community groups located in the area including the Macro Centre on Bolton Street and the North West Inner City Network on North King Street.

Based on the 2011 census the total population of the area is 4,580. It is a culturally diverse area where almost half of the population stated in the 2011 census that they were not born in Ireland. The vast majority of residents in the area (84%) live in flats or apartments, with 71% of those residents renting from private landlords. Only 11% of the population is aged under 19 and proportionally there are less retired people than in the wider Dublin City Council area. Most people (59% of the population) are working, while 19% of the population identified themselves as students. There are a considerable number of people living in poverty interspersed with affluent and very affluent households. This mix of income levels within the area is a historic feature of the north-west inner city dating back through the centuries.

3.2 Data collection methods
In the first instance a literature review of both national and international reports and studies was undertaken. This review identified the issues of concern regarding sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space. It also served to identify gaps in the current knowledge on this issue. The data collection, comprising interviews, a focus group, a survey, a safety audit of the research site and informal discussion, addressed some of the gaps identified and clarified the concerns and possible solutions for women in Dublin City.

The questionnaire consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions. The respondents were as follows; The National Women’s Council of Ireland, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, COSC, BeLongTo, Pavee Point, Focus Ireland and The Immigrant Council of Ireland. The group interview with women and the focus group with men were conducted to enrich the questionnaire data. Participants in both the women’s and the men’s focus groups comprised local residents, community activists, local advocates and other community representatives. Transdev, the organisation which operates the Luas along the research site, was represented at the men’s focus group. The group discussions explored the nature and extent of sexual violence and sexual harassment against women in the research site and male awareness of, and attitudes to, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women.
A Women’s Safety Audit of the research site was conducted during the day with a group of twelve women. The Women’s Safety Audit (WSA) is a multi-dimensional research tool for women’s empowerment, data collection and partnership building with local authorities and other city stake holders. Women’s Safety Audits are used by safe city teams implementing comprehensive approaches within UN Women’s Safe Cities Global Programme. The participants were residents, women who worked in the area, representatives of local women’s groups and representatives from stakeholder bodies. The women identified sections of the site which were perceived to be dangerous and areas where sexual violence had occurred. They also proposed solutions to the problems identified.

Finally, informal discussion between the researchers and women based in Dublin City were on-going throughout the research process. These discussions tended to be very impromptu, initiated by women who became aware that the study was underway. Time and again women expressed an interest in the research and spontaneously contributed both their own and the experiences of friends or family of every day sexual harassment and sexual assault in public space. These discussions support the overall sense of urgency required to address the safety of women and girls in public space which is expressed through this report.

3.3 Limitations of the study
This study was completed within 10 weeks. It was designed to inform the development of a safe city programme and to initiate and inform an on-going discussion regarding sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space in Dublin. As such it is not an in-depth account of the issues involved.

Due to the time restrictions it was not possible to engage with all cohorts of women and among the groups of women whose voice is not reflected in this study is women with disabilities. Secondly, it has been especially difficult to engage with young women and girls still at school. This is due to ethical constraints around engaging people aged less than 18 years in research. This is unfortunate as the evidence of other studies shows that younger women and girls are most likely to be victims of sexual harassment in public space. It is important that the voices of women with disabilities and the voices of girls are included as the Dublin Safe Cities Programme moves forward.
3.4 Ethical Clearance
The study was granted ethical clearance by the Research Ethics Committee of Dublin Institute of Technology. Furthermore, ethical considerations in international research on violence against women were adopted during the study, in compliance with the Scoping Study Guidance note.
4 The study findings: Group Interview and Focus Group

In this chapter the findings of the group interview and focus group are outlined under a number of headings, while the survey and safety audit findings are discussed in chapter five and six respectively.

4.1 Exploring the extent and nature of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence

As part of the data collection a group interview with women representing residents and one young female resident was conducted. There was also a larger focus group of men who worked and lived locally and who represented stakeholders in the study. The participants in the women’s group interview described Dublin as being generally quite a safe city for women and girls. They compared Dublin with other cities they had lived in or visited and felt it compared favourably. They spoke about feeling safer in areas they were familiar with. In areas they knew well, the women said that if they walked by a group of men who shouted sexually inappropriate comments at them they felt uncomfortable rather than unsafe. But they discussed avoiding areas they did not know so well where they felt their safety would be threatened.

This sense of avoiding an area which is not familiar to them was also identified as a concern by participants in the men’s focus group. Some of the participants described how their female family members avoid coming in from the suburbs to visit them in their homes in the city. They also described how some women prefer not to shop along the research site because they feel unsafe and how other women will avoid certain tourist attractions there.

The sense of feeling unsafe is fostered by a number of factors including the poor quality of the public realm along the research corridor. There is a considerable number of derelict buildings, vacant sites, graffiti and a general squalor along sections of the corridor which make it unwelcoming. Drinking in the area is another concern. There are a number of pubs along the research site and men of all ages and backgrounds congregate outside the entrance to smoke. Regardless of how quiet or “rowdy” the group might be, women will change their route to avoid walking too near them.

There are also a number of emergency accommodation hostels along the corridor for people with alcohol and drug abuse problems. Drunken behaviour by men is viewed as quite threatening. In general the threat arises from what is described as “anti-social behaviour”, but there are instances - albeit quite rare - when this more “loutish” behaviour has become sexually violent behaviour and one participant identified an incident when women were threatened with
rape. Participants in the male focus group identified what they describe as a “grey area”, between sexual harassment and anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour was defined as a form of gender based violence by some of the participants.

During the women’s group interview there was a mention of an incident which had affected a girl in her teens living in the area. It was described as very serious but the participant did not give specific details. The impact was described as on-going and while it happened quite some time ago, younger women still prefer not to walk through the area alone. The effect on the whole community seems to have been quite considerable and suggests the need to offer some form of intervention, such as counselling, to wider members of the community when sexual violence occurs.

Sexual harassment was identified as a persistent problem for women of all ages and backgrounds throughout the city, including the research corridor. It is often presented as part and parcel of everyday life and described by the women as “normalised” and “just one of those things” to get on with. Girls and women develop various coping mechanisms such as walking in groups. The participants said it starts when girls are as young as 14 (and in rare cases where a girl looks older, as young as 10), and they described how they themselves had experienced sexual harassment while in their school uniforms, or witnessed their young daughters experiencing sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was associated with age by the group and younger women under the age of 30 were regarded as far more likely to experience sexual harassment than older women, particularly aged 40 up. Nonetheless, according to one of the participants who works at a local community centre, older women in the area often choose to walk in groups, or with the security guard at the local community centre, when going home from a community event.

The experience of sexual harassment the women described takes a number of forms, but was most likely to consist of men, of all ages, making sexually inappropriate comments. The men might be in groups shouting things like “hey good lookin’ stop lookin’ at the ground”, or they might be in a group driving by cheering loudly or shouting out sexually suggestive remarks. There were also many examples of men driving by alone in their cars shouting out abusive remarks. The men driving by shouting out remarks were identified as being of all ages and from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Social media such as Facebook or Twitter emerged in the discussion as an iteration of the public realm through which an act of sexual violence can be perpetuated. Photographs or film images
of women who find themselves in sexually compromising situations are taken using phones and then shared, thereby extending and exacerbating the sexual violence a woman experiences. Participants said that this occurs along parts of the research site, especially at night outside clubs where people are drunk. The use of mobile phone technology by men on the Luas to share sexual images of women was identified as a form of sexual harassment because of the sexually inappropriate remarks men make. Men discussing their own “sexual conquests” loudly on the Luas was also identified as a form of sexual harassment which occurs.

Examples of women being inappropriately touched, being “rubbed against” or “groped” both on public transport and throughout the city were described. Instances of being inappropriately touched were identified as being more likely to occur along the quays at night or waiting in a queue for a bus, and there were examples of women being sexually assaulted on the Luas. Instances of groping emerged in the male focus group from reports women made to the Luas operator, Transdev. There was one particular high profile case where two girls were being groped by a man who was apprehended and subsequently prosecuted.

4.2 How women respond and how they are effected
The women participating in the group interview said that neither they nor their friends or family members would be inclined to report experiencing sexual violence to the Gardaí. Instances of women being raped in the public realm along the research site did not emerge during either focus group. But the women discussed instances when they, or other women they knew, had been touched in sexually inappropriate ways and otherwise sexually harassed. Generally these incidents were not reported to Gardaí because they were not considered “significant enough”. For younger women sexual harassment is such a regular occurrence they don’t bother disclosing to friends or family because it is just seen as “part of normal life”. They will often choose not to disclose to family members because they do not wish to worry them.

Furthermore, there is a concern among young women that they will be rejected by their peers as “boasting” if they describe being harassed. Some forms of sexual harassment, such as sexually inappropriate remarks or inappropriate staring are regarded by some women as something they should consider a compliment and thus drawing attention to this is considered bragging. The question of where to draw the line between harmless flirtation and sexual harassment arose during the women’s discussion and it was agreed that a key factor was “the balance of power”. Where a woman felt disempowered or threatened the behaviour was regarded as sexual harassment.
Depending on the circumstances, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence had varying impacts on individual women. Participants at the women’s interview indicated that a group of younger women will sometimes be merely amused by sexual remarks made by a group of younger men in their own age groups as they pass by. In these cases the women feel the young men are simply trying to impress one another and that no harm is intended.

But a woman on her own passing a group of young men will feel more intimidated. Men driving by in cars shouting out remarks are regarded as more threatening again, while a man on his own, especially driving by in a car, is considered quite malicious because the comments are directed at the woman and designed to unnerve her rather than to impress a group of male peers. Staff with Transdev who participated in the men’s focus group described dealing with women who were “utterly terrified” following instances of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence they reported. The women described how all forms of sexual harassment can make them feel embarrassed, annoyed or afraid. Previous experience has long term effects and even older women who say they are no longer harassed carry the memory of the fear of being harassed and avoid places, such as the quays, at night.

The women described how they will reconsider what they are wearing and make more of an effort “not to draw attention to themselves”. They described avoiding parts of the city where they have been sexually harassed, or changing their route to and from a particular destination along the research site. They will carry a rape alarm if they have to walk along parts of the research site that are not overlooked, especially at night. In some cases, women prefer to cycle than to walk as they feel they are safer. But they described concerns around having to stop at the red light because they are no longer moving along at speed but stationary and hence they feel more vulnerable. The men in the focus group discussed how women they know prefer to take a taxi in the city. But the women in the group interview said taxis were not a safe haven. Some described taxi drivers making sexually inappropriate remarks, especially at the weekend and at night. If a woman is taking a taxi she will often make note of the taxi license and text a friend details of her destination and expected arrival time. In general the women described using the Halo App because the route is then logged and the taxi can easily be tracked.

The state of the urban environment along the research site was identified as a contributing factor to women’s perceptions of their safety. The stretch of the site from Collins Barracks to the Ashling Hotel which is bounded on either side by a high blank wall is considered very threatening by some women. Derelict buildings, vacant sites, and closed down shops where
people congregate were identified as places women felt very unsafe. A lack of lighting along the corridor was identified as problematic during the night.

Participants agreed that the poor quality of the public realm in the area fosters a sense of danger particularly among people who do not live locally and are less familiar with the space, such as visitors, shoppers and tourists. The question of the economic implications of women choosing not to visit or shop in the vicinity of the research site was raised while the social implications of the city not being considered a safe place to live was also discussed. It was agreed that many parts of the city can be equally difficult, not just the research site.

4.3 Recommendations from the group interview and focus group

How to address the threats to women’s and girl’s safety was considered challenging. It was felt that a lack of political will and adequate resources impede progress in making the city safe for women. The male participants focussed on removing the threat of anti-social behaviour by examining how to work more constructively with groups of people such as alcoholics and drug users. They identified an urgent need for all the agencies working in the research site to work together. The agencies were criticized for working in what is considered a piecemeal and incoherent fashion which often results in the problems simply being relocated rather than being resolved. It was felt the report from of The Lord Mayor’s Commission on Anti-Social Behaviour\(^{25}\), which address issues around women’s safety, should be implemented immediately.

Education programmes at second level through which boys and girls could learn to talk more openly about their views and feelings on sexual harassment was considered important. Having opportunities to speak together outside school hours was also considered important for young people. It is considered important that discussions on sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls is not seen as just another class within the school day.

Addressing the urban design elements which foster a sense of threat was regarded as a key step. Ensuring “a clear line of sight” for women as they walk was proposed. Dealing with derelict buildings and vacant sites, having better lighting and installing CCTV were proposed. It was suggested that the unsightly nature of the research site should be addressed and that it should be cleaned up and made to look more appealing.

\(^{25}\) The report was published in 2013
The importance of reporting was stressed and the need for being heard and having reports of all forms of sexual harassment acted on was regarded as a valuable way to address women’s fears. Training for the Gardaí on the unacceptable nature of all forms of sexual violence including sexual harassment was proposed. Participants also suggested that options to facilitate reporting such as using a telephone hotline, an App, Facebook or instant messaging should be developed. It was suggested that occurrences might be mapped and black spots and regular perpetrators identified. Participants said that sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence should become a key item on the agenda for the Community Policing Forum and a context through which to raise concerns and report incidents. In this way it would be possible to raise awareness among the public and the Gardai that sexual harassment is unacceptable and that women have a right to report. Finally, a change in legislation to make all forms of sexual harassment illegal was considered a significant step forward.
4.4 Summary
The relationship between place knowledge and how women perceived their safety was a key finding in the focus groups, with particular spatial design challenges being identified as contributing to how women perceive the safety of the urban environment. Dublin was described as being “on balance” a safe city. Women and men alike described how women feel safe enough to negotiate areas of the city they are familiar with alone but see areas of the city they are not familiar with as “no go” areas. Their fears around rape were articulated with reference to a perception of safety rather than examples of specific attacks. The time of day was identified as a key factor and night time in unoccupied areas is perceived as being very unsafe for women whether they are alone or in a group. Sexual harassment were identified by both the male and female participants as persistent across the research site and throughout the city centre and suburbs of Dublin. All forms of sexual harassment were identified as daily occurrences for women of all ages, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. But the extent of the sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence is difficult to quantify because women rarely report it to the Gardaí, or even disclose to friends of family.

5 Study findings: the questionnaire survey
Agencies concerned with gender based violence participated in a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire explored the extent and nature of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space. It looked at contributing factors, perpetrators, concerns of specific cohorts of women including Traveller women, Roma women, gay women and migrant women as well as priorities for a Safe City programme. Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence were addressed separately in the questionnaire. As sexual harassment in public space had been described in the literature as occurring often, there was a particular emphasis on this form of sexual violence including; the contributing factors, how women respond, and the impact of sexual harassment.

5.1 The extent and nature of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence
The respondents described the extent and nature of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space they encounter with reference to research they conduct, and the experiences of the women they work with. The instance of forms of sexual violence other than sexual harassment was described as either frequent or very frequent, occurring between at least once a week and at least once a month. The nature of the sexual violence identified included the threat of sexual violence, non-consensual penetrative sex and non-consensual touching of the vagina or the breasts.
The extent of sexual harassment in public space is identified as very frequent, occurring at least once a week. It was described by some respondents as being such a regular occurrence that women hardly even acknowledge it to themselves, so frequent in fact that one of the respondents described it as ‘shocking’.

The questionnaire listed types of sexual harassment, drawn from the FRA survey. The list included; cat calling or wolf whistling, offensive remarks about physical appearance, unwelcome sexually suggestive comments or jokes, inappropriate staring, unwelcome touching/grabbing/kissing, being followed and indecent exposure. Most of the respondents indicated that women experienced every one of these types of sexual harassment. Respondents listed other types of sexual harassment other than those named on the questionnaire which they had come across in their organisation. This included masturbating in front of women, the use of social media to sexually harass young women, being pulled into a secluded spot and threatened. While all the respondents indicated that women experienced sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space, not all the respondents were familiar with the research corridor. However all the groups familiar with the research site indicated that women experienced sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in this space.

5.2 Beneficiaries/agents of change identified
While some respondents indicated that younger women were more likely to experience sexual harassment, most indicated that women of any age and from any background, experience it. A number of concerns specific to certain cohorts of women were also identified. Some women are sexually harassed because of their socio-economic or ethnic background or sexuality. Migrant women, especially from countries associated in the public mind with trafficking, are frequently solicited for sex. Women who are in receipt of direct provision and as such living in poverty are seen as targets for being solicited for sex. Gay women, especially women out with their same sex partner, are subjected to sexual harassment because they are regarded as a challenge for a straight man.

5.3 How women respond and are effected
Most respondents indicated that women do not report experiences of sexual harassment to Gardaí. They cited a number of reasons for this including; it is something they were embarrassed about, they did not feel they would be taken seriously, that their experience was not illegal so it couldn’t be reported, or that they felt they were to blame themselves. Some women do disclose to friends or family, but in some cases sexual harassment can be seen as
such a normative part of their day that it doesn’t merit disclosing and they only mention if it happens to come up in conversation. Some women say nothing as they feel they “give away their power” by acknowledging the harassment. Feelings of shame, self-blame, loss of dignity and guilt deterred women from disclosing while a sense of stigma attached to all forms of sexual violence mitigated against homeless women reporting or disclosing and concerns about institutionalised racism deters Traveller and Roma women.

5.4 Contributing factors
Contributing factors identified by respondents were many and diverse. The teachings of the Catholic Church on homosexuality (which it is felt pervades the predominantly catholic Irish education system) was identified as a factor which contributes to the sexual harassment of young gay women.

Respondents did not indicate that men from either a specific age group or cultural or socio-economic background were more likely to subject women to sexual harassment. In fact, a common occurrence is sexual harassment by men who are driving in cars, including what were described as “men in suits” on their way to what appear to be higher paid jobs. Nonetheless, this is a small-scale study and the political dynamics of the urban public realm is an important focus for further exploration into the factors which contribute to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women.

The condition of the public realm was identified as contributing to a perception of a lack of safety. Among the concerns listed were; dereliction, unmanaged vacant sites, poor lighting and a lack of security. The sexist and sexualised nature of what is described as the “wallpaper” of public space, or the billboard and hoarding advertising in the public realm which use images of women that objectify and demean them are identified as contributing to a spatial context which tolerates all forms of sexual violence against women.
Other contributing factors included; socially normative values of a sexist nature, the increasing use of online pornography, men in groups trying to impress each other, alcohol and drug abuse, sexualising young girls in the media and a lack of education to combat stereotyping of women from different backgrounds. Almost all the respondents indicated that the time of day was not a factor and that women experienced sexual harassment at any time of the day.

5.5 Impact on women
The emphasis in the questionnaire was on sexual harassment and the respondents described a range of adverse effects this has on women. The respondents indicated that sexual harassment in public space made women feel unsafe, uncomfortable, that it demoralised them, and made them feel self-conscious. One agency stated that “the sexual harassment on its own was so impactful as to warrant drawing on specialist support services for support in addressing this impact”. Feelings of disbelief, disgust, shame, anger, guilt, fear and embarrassment were listed as impacts of sexual harassment on women. Arising out of their experiences some women choose to avoid certain places at night, to only go out with friends, or to limit their access to public space.
5.6 Current initiatives and how they might support the Safe Cities Programme
A number of organisations give staff training on how to assist women who disclose sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence, and some support groups liaise with organisations such as the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and Safety Net Ireland. The focus of the work conducted by respondents includes; providing counselling for women who have experienced sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence, conducting research into gender based violence, offering training and educational programmes on sexual violence and participating in awareness raising campaigns.

5.7 Respondent recommendations
The breadth of knowledge among the stakeholders and service providers who participated in the survey is considerable and the proposals they have for moving forward towards developing a Safe Cities programme are very insightful. They include in their suggestions the following:

- Awareness raising for all women on the importance of disclosing any form of sexual violence and seeking support
- DCC should regulate imagery of women used in advertising campaigns on its sites
- A public campaign challenging culture which permits sexual harassment
- Improved lighting and signage in public space
- The provision of accommodation for homeless women
- Better support for those who disclose, i.e. 24 hour emergency units
- Challenging the acceptance of sexual harassment and the influencing factors such as the objectification of women and sexualising girls in the media
- Reversing budgetary cuts to service providers such as the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- A stronger Garda presence
- A ‘zero tolerance’ of all forms of sexual violence against women campaign
- Raising awareness of how to make a complaint and encouraging reporting of all forms of sexual violence
- Improved training of Gardaí on how to respond to reports of all forms of sexual violence
- Implementing the recommendation of the Committee on Justice (2013) to outlaw soliciting and selling sex immediately
- Posters in public space with Freephone numbers to dial for support
• Safe places to disclose all forms of sexual violence such as emergency walk in clinic and other services which are culturally adaptable
• Education for service providers on Traveller and Roma women which fosters trust so they can report all experiences of sexual violence in public space
• Education initiatives which build confidence among women not to tolerate any form of sexual violence and create awareness among boys and men that sexual violence of all kinds is unacceptable
• Changes in the legislation regarding sexual harassment
• Improving the appearance of the urban public realm

6 Women’s Safety Audit: Applying the discussion to a specific location
A group of 12 women comprising both local residents and members of a diverse range of women’s organisations participated in the women’s safety audit of the research site. The groups represented on the walk were: Akidwa, Inner City Organisations Network (ICON), The Chrysalis Community Drug Project, We are Dublin Town: Dublin City’s Improvement District, Feminist Ire, the youth branch of the National Women’s Council of Ireland and one female city councillor elected to represent the area. The Women’s Safety Audit is described by UN Women as; “a form of participatory urban appraisal to identify factors that make women feel safe or unsafe”. It is designed to empower women and to give them a voice in urban planning issues. The safety audit involved walking the research site to identify problems and propose solutions.

The group met at Heuston station on a Friday morning. In order to cover the entire site effectively, the women broke up into two groups of six, each facilitated by the study researchers. One group walked in a west to east direction from Heuston Station to Smithfield. The other group took the Luas from Heuston to Abbey Street and walked east to west as far as Smithfield. Both groups reconvened at Smithfield, the mid-way point along the site, for a post walk informal discussion.

A key feature of all the data collection is the relentless examples of being sexually harassed women share – so much so that it is clear this is a regular feature of women’s lives. It emerged again during the general discussion among the group participating in the safety audit, who
described men groping or rubbing up against them on crowded public transport and an example of a man flashing at a woman on a street on the research site.

As the women who walked the site from east to west as far as Smithfield set out, city council street cleaners drove up behind them on a path on an island in the middle of O’Connell Street. They began shouting at the women to move out of the way, which was difficult due to the size of the path. The men then began to shout out at friends down the road, which was confusing for the women who didn’t know whether they were still in the way or how to proceed. This situation was very unnerving for the women and it was suggested that a group of young women or girls would have found this quite frightening. The group expressed the opinion that it was quite sexist behaviour and that if they had been men the cleaners would not have shouted but would have waited and allowed the group to pass.

Although the women were aware that the focus of the study was sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women, during the women’s safety audit it became very clear that there is a strong correlation between the threat of all forms of anti-social behaviour and sexual violence. Fear of all these concerns is difficult for women to disaggregate and places identified along the site as dangerous reflected worries regarding all forms of gender based violence.

In general women are concerned that men do not understand the fear that they live with while walking through the city on their everyday walks. As one of the participants said; “I don’t think that men fully understand that women absolutely always have their peripheral vision on”.

6.1 The perception of public space and women’s safety
How a space is perceived is an important factor in how safe women feel. There may be very few recorded or known instances of sexual violence, but women nonetheless feel unsafe if a public space is; unkempt, dirty and unwelcoming, has dark sections, areas where something obstructs their vision and someone might be hiding, where they are forced to walk through a narrow section due to the relationship between the road and the footpath, street furniture or Luas stops. The following statements which were made by women participating in the safety audit encapsulate the impact of the vulnerability women can feel as they walk through this area both by day and by night:

“It is the unimaginable that you fear”

“I sprint through here every night”
“I hold my breath and just run as fast as I can”

“If I am dragged in there, I’ll never be seen”

They identified a number of concerns they had walking through the area, the most compelling of which was the extremely run down state of the site. Closed up shops, derelict buildings and vacant sites, coupled with a considerable amount of rubbish and graffiti combine to give an impression of a neglected and threatening space.

A recurring theme is the sense that the public realm is far less safe for women at night. The women walking the site from west to east identified the area along the south side of the Liffey just out the side exit of Heuston Station as “okay” during the day, but not safe at night at all. It leads to what is described as a long walk down a deserted street with high brick wall on one side and river on the other. The women accept that it is preferable not to close up a side exit but, unless security is very good, people should be directed to the main front exit.

6.2 Urban design problems

The section of the site from Abbey Street to the Jervis centre is an area many of the women avoid. There are a lot of empty ground floor spaces and closed up shops. It is a confusing space where at times it is unclear who has priority; traffic, the Luas or pedestrians. This section of the site was described as being more like “a back lane” than a main street and women prefer to walk along Henry Street which is parallel and full of street life. The traffic management scheme and street design presents a similar problem for women at the west end of the site from Parkgate Street to the Ashling Hotel. The crossing was identified as very bad for pedestrians. These unclear road layouts cause women to feel that they; “just want to get out of as fast as possible”.

At the pedestrian crossing on the south side of Parkgate Street there is a small triangular area of land and an old building closed off by railings. This space is dilapidated, overgrown with weeds which was described as creating a sense of neglect and therefore a feeling that there is nobody around.

Groups of people hanging around who were drunk or on drugs between Abbey Street and the Jervis centre were considered very threatening. There was a sense of compassion for these groups, but a feeling that the state does not make adequate provision for them. Being approached by people collecting for charity or begging was also a concern for the women as they felt vulnerable and afraid to open handbags to take money out of their purse.
Visibility is also a concern. On the one hand the front entrance to Heuston Station was described in positive terms as busy, open, a place where you can be seen, and where, most importantly for women; “you can see an escape route”. On the other hand, shops set back at ground floor with a first floor overhang such as the building at the Jervis Street Luas stop make the area quite dark and inhibit visibility. Problems such as large pillars supporting Capel House on Mary’s Abbey were identified as somewhere a man could be hiding behind. Hoardings on derelict sites such as the land between Church Street and the Smithfield Luas stop were also regarded as a feature that could conceal threatening activity.

Figure 4. The dereliction on Wood Lane was identified as threatening and feeling unsafe

From the Ashling Hotel to Smithfield feels to women like “no-man’s land”. Wood Lane was described as all boarded up and the area has a feel of being a very male-dominated environment. This section was described by the women as somewhere which, despite attractions such as
Collins Barracks, the Croppies Acre or the Complex, would not be a place of destination, but rather somewhere to pass through quickly as it feels very dangerous.

A general lack of lighting and signage was consistently identified as a problem for women, both by day and night. There are many badly lit laneways along the research site which women feel very uncomfortable walking past. A particular area of concern was Abbey Cottages, a laneway leading to a dead end which to the west has a derelict site surrounded by palisade fencing. A lack of signage at the crossing on Parkgate Street means it is difficult; “to know where you were or how to move on and get to where you are going”. Lighting is also a problem along Temple Street West. The worst section of the research site was identified as the space around Benburb Street and Montpelier Hill, which was described as a “total disaster”.

The presence of women working in prostitution along Montpelier Hill and Arbour Hill leads to the threatening presence of kerb crawlers. Women who live or work in this area are treated as if they are in some way associated prostitution, and soliciting and sexual threats were described as common place. One woman described how she was moved on by Gardaí on her way to visit her mother because they assumed she was working in prostitution. One of the women described how a friend came out of her apartment at 8am and had a man expose himself. The incident was reported to the Gardaí but the woman was told there is nothing Gardaí can do. This section of the site was identified as being especially dangerous for the women who are working in prostitution. One of the participants said that she often had to call homeless or emergency services to help women working in prostitution here. The lack of safety is exacerbated by a lack of any Garda presence at night.

Along Temple Street West and Montpelier Hill the road and path surface very considered poor. This lends to the perception of being the area being totally neglected and “no-go” zone. Walking here means “constantly negotiating your route and your safety” and the women said for residents or anyone working locally this “just isn’t right”. The footpath along Temple Street West is too narrow. It is difficult to walk side by side with a friend, to push a buggy or use a wheelchair. This challenge is compounded by the presence of large bins from the hotel and pubs as well as domestic waste. Litter, graffiti and broken glass in the area all exacerbate the perception that the site is neglected and thus unsafe.

Some sections of the site were identified as positive for women. The development of a small community garden behind brightly painted palisade fencing at Arran Street lent a sense of the presence a community of people who cared about the space which was regarded as welcoming,
although the need for lighting here at night was identified. The fruit markets themselves are quite busy with activity by day, but empty and daunting at night. The presence of new businesses along Benburb Street was also seen as creating a vibrancy along the route which helps women feel safe. Directly outside the Ashling Hotel and First Ireland the space is nicely maintained. This creates a sense that there might be people around and that it is therefore safe. Smithfield Square was also identified as a good space during the day where there is plenty of activity. That was qualified by the lack of any presence at night on the square and this sense of isolation is regarded as very unsafe for women.

Figure 5. Improvements to Smithfield seem to have increased footfall, which was identified as positive for women.
The Church of the Sacred Heart on Arbour Hill which contains the burial site of the leaders of the 1916 rising and a small park was described as a good example of opening a space up. There is good visibility, the park is totally open and there are often people there enjoying the park and children playing.

6.3 Participant recommendations
A number of recommendations were proposed by the women including:

- Acting fast to create a sense of vibrancy in areas which become unoccupied
- Better lighting
- A stronger presence of community Gardai on foot or on bike
- Addressing concerns around lanes
- Ensuring line of vision
- Working with people who have drug and alcohol problems
- Cleaning up the site, making it feel more cared for, more inviting and welcoming makes it feel safer
- Making the route a tourist destination so people had a reason to come and there was incentive to clean it up
- Addressing traffic, footpath surface and size and other urban design issues which compound the lack of safety
- Being able to get away if they feel threatened is very important for women
- Develop the space with the derelict building behind railings at the south side of the pedestrian crossing on Parkgate Street. The railings could be removed and the building turned into an outlet such as a coffee shop/newsagent
- Graffiti on the walls should be removed and replaced with murals or similar
- Clothes and bottle banks block view and passage up the street and should be moved
- The bus stop is in the wrong place, it is too far up the road from Heuston Station and should be moved to where the traffic slows and stops at the lights
- Include the local community that have been there for generations in improving safety
- Take the car out, open up spaces and encourage more bikes
7 Further recommendations emerging from the research

There are many recommendations made by the women and men who participated in this study, which are detailed in the study findings chapters. Each of these recommendations is valid and should be noted as the Dublin Safe City Programme moves on from this study.

Included here are a number of further recommendations which have emerged from research which was undertaken. They are as follows:

1. The needs of women and girls to enjoy a safe, secure freedom of movement through the city should be a top priority in the work of Dublin City Council. All future policy documents which affect the development of the city should be “gender proofed”. In other words, policy documents such as the City Development Plan or Local Area Plans, as well as any urban regeneration or renewal initiatives should be carefully examined to ensure proposals are of the same benefit to both women and men.

2. Similarly, and in recognition of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 which states that children should have a say in all matters which affect them, all future policy documents which affect the development of the city should reflect the needs of girls and their safety in public space.

3. Dublin City Council should reach out to the public, through for example, community groups, to seek submissions to council policy on this matter.

4. There is also a wider societal need to empower and inform women and girls in relation to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space. There is a need for educational programmes and awareness raising campaigns which empower women and girls to understand they do not have to tolerate gender based violence, and to empower women and girls to know how to take action if they experience gender based violence. This recommendation goes hand in hand with the need to raise the status of women and girls in Irish society.

5. In order to foster an understanding of the difference between flirting and sexual harassment and the damaging impact of the latter, there is a need to create space for informal discussion between girls and boys, and men and women. Forums for discussion include youth groups, community groups, and other supported environments where girls and boys and women and men can discuss issues surrounding the ownership of public space, safety in public space and gender equality.
6. A public media campaign highlighting the unacceptability of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public space is important for girls, women, boys and men.

7. Finally, there is a need to conduct further research into the issues which have emerged through this study. In particular there is a need for in depth research into why boys and men behave the way they do towards girls and women and to ensure they do not subject girls and women to any form of sexual harassment or sexual violence in the urban public realm. There is also a need to look at the use of social media as a further iteration of sexual violence in public space.
8 References


www.everydaysexism.com

www.ihollaback.org

www.stopstreetharassment.org

http://www.turnofftheredlight.ie/

*Walking Home*, Nuala Cabral https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2Qpi-fW6jA

*Street Harassment: Why Guys Do It*, Elizabet Rivera https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZiaTDxJ-rQ
Appendix One: The Questionnaire

Safe Cities for Women and Girls Study

Please read carefully through the following before filling out the questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey on behalf of your organisation. This questionnaire forms part of a scoping study on sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space. The study has been commissioned by Dublin City Council in order to develop a programme which addresses the safety of women and girls in public space. It is being conducted in conjunction with the UN Women’s Safe Cities Global Initiative. The primary objective of this scoping study is to identify and fill information gaps regarding the nature and extent of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public space. Some questions may demand a more generalised response than you are comfortable with, given the very individual needs of every woman. We appreciate this concern but would ask that you provide a summary of issues where appropriate. If you are representing a particular cohort of women, please bear in mind the particular concerns regarding this group of women as you answer the questions.

This questionnaire focuses on women over the age of 18. The questions below are designed to establish an overview of some of the issues surrounding sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public space. Public space here refers to outdoor publicly owned space in Dublin City, that is, streets, footpaths and public squares which the public have access to during the day and night. It also includes public transport. The study is focussing on a specific research site which comprises the corridor running from Heuston Station through a section of the north-west inner city as far as O’Connell Street. Please find a map of the research site attached on page 8.


Instructions

26 Sexual violence is defined as situation where “a woman is forced to participate in a sexual act without her consent. Sexual harassment is defined as “when unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of violation a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person”; Observatory on Violence against Women (2013). Violence against women: an issue of gender. Dublin: National Women’s Council of Ireland. The definitions also refer to the Safe Cities Global Initiative Glossary of Terms (2011) which states: “Any sexual act committed against the will of the other person, either in the case when the victim does not give the consent or when consent cannot be given because the person is a child, has a mental disability, or is severely intoxicated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drugs. It encompasses both sexual harassment and other forms of sexual assault such as attempted rape, and rape.”
This questionnaire consists of three separate sections. Section A looks at sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public space. Please tick the relevant box to answer the questions using the ‘x’ key on your keyboard. Section B looks at the impact on women and how they respond. Section C is open ended, to allow for the specific concerns of the group you are representing. Please answer these question in the space provided. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries at all. Many thanks again for taking the time to participate in this scoping study.

**Section A Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public space**

1. Has the issue of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public space come to your attention through your organisation or work?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐

If you answered ‘Yes’ to question 1 above, please state briefly how this issue has come to the attention of your organisation; eg. from service users, as a research topic or policy issue.

If you answered ‘No’ to question 1 above, please state why you think the issue has not arisen

2. How frequently would you estimate incidents of sexual violence against women occur in public space:
   a) Very frequently (at least once a week) ☐
   b) Frequently (at least once a month) ☐
   c) Not very often (at least once a year) ☐
   d) Never ☐

3. What acts of sexual violence against women occur in public space, based on your organisations knowledge (please tick all relevant boxes)
   a) Threat of sexual violence ☐
   b) Non-consensual penetrative sex ☐
   c) Non-consensual touching of vagina or breasts ☐
   d) Other (please specify) ☐
4. How frequently would you estimate incidents of sexual harassment against women occur in public space:
   a) Very frequently (at least once a week) ☐
   b) Frequently (at least once a month) ☐
   c) Not very often (at least once a year) ☐
   d) Never ☐

5. What kinds of sexual harassment against women occur in public space, based on your organisation's knowledge (please tick all relevant boxes):
   a) Cat calling or wolf whistling ☐
   b) Offensive remarks about physical appearance ☐
   c) Unwelcome sexually suggestive comments or jokes ☐
   d) Inappropriate staring ☐
   e) Unwelcome touching/grabbing/kissing ☐
   f) Being followed ☐
   g) Indecent exposure ☐
   h) Other (please specify) ☐

6. Are women of a particular age more vulnerable to sexual harassment?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐

7. If you have ticked Yes to question 6 above could you identify the age group most likely to experience sexual harassment in public space? Please tick more than one box if appropriate.
   a) 18-24 ☐
   b) 25-39 ☐
   c) 40-59 ☐
   d) 60+ ☐

8. Are women more likely to be subject to sexual harassment at a particular time of day?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐

9. If you ticked Yes to question 8 above could you identify the time of day women are most likely to be subject to sexual harassment?
   a) 6am – 12pm (Morning) ☐
   b) 12pm – 7pm (Afternoon/Evening) ☐
   c) 7pm - 5am (Night) ☐

10. The research site is the corridor running from Heuston Station past Collin’s Barracks, past Smithfield, past the Bridewell Garda Station and Four Courts, past the Jervis Centre and on as far as O’Connell Street. Please see the attached map for your convenience (Page 8). We are
particularly keen to assess the nature and extent of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence which women may encounter in this area. Is this an area where sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence against women occurs?

a) Yes ☒
b) No ☐
c) Don’t Know ☐

Section B Effects of sexual harassment in public space, how women respond, possible contributing factors.

In this section we are looking specifically at how sexual harassment in public space affects women. Your responses can refer to anywhere in Dublin City. These questions are open ended to allow for any concerns specific to the group of women you represent or work with. We understand that some of the responses to the questions will vary and depend on the individual woman. However, we would be grateful if you could give a broad sense of the concerns in your response.

a) Are you aware if women report instances of sexual harassment in public space to An Garda Síochána? If not, why not?

b) Are you aware if women disclose instances of sexual harassment in public space to a friend, family member, co-worker, etc.? If not, why not?

c) How do women describe the impact of sexual harassment in public space?

d) Who are the most likely perpetrators of sexual harassment against women in public space?
e) Is alcohol a contributing factor?


f) Can public space layout and features such as street lighting be a contributing factor?


g) What other contributing factors can you identify?


h) Have you policy documents, staff training or other documents which address these issues?


i) Do you have services in place - formal or informal - to support women who have been subject to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence?


j) Can you list three key priorities which would help prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public space? Priorities can refer to any organisation across the public, private or voluntary sector, including academia and the media.

Section C Sexual violence and sexual harassment in public space against the women you represent, women you work with or women who use your services.
In this section we would be grateful if you could identify issues of particular concern to your organisation and the women you represent and propose how these problems might be tackled.