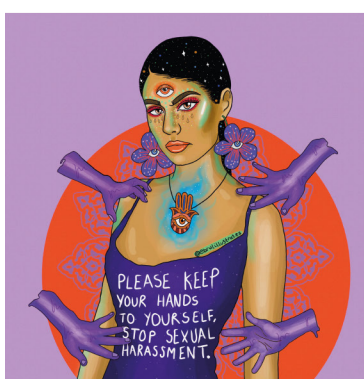
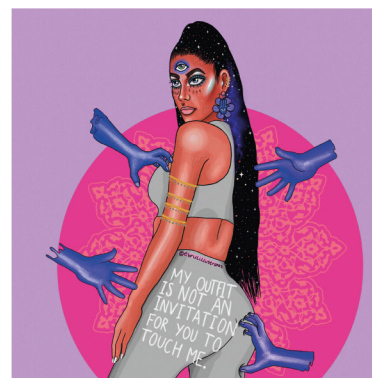
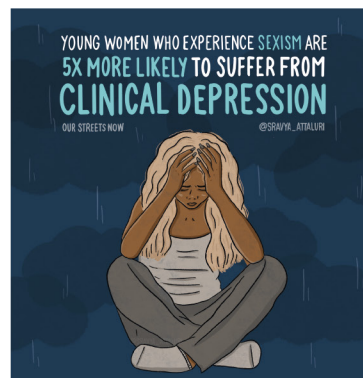




“They saw my fear and laughed”

TACKLING PUBLIC SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EDUCATION





WHO ARE OUR STREETS NOW?

Our Streets Now is a national intersectional campaign demanding an end to public sexual harassment. With over 200,000 supporters signing our petition to make PSH a criminal offence, the campaign has started a UK-wide conversation around the issue of harassment. We wanted to find out how this is affecting secondary school pupils.

ANTI-STREET HARASSMENT WEEK
19TH TO 25TH APRIL



What is Public Sexual Harassment

Public Sexual Harassment (PSH for short) comprises unwelcomed and unwanted attention, sexual advances and intimidating behaviour that occurs in public spaces, both in person and on-line. It is usually directed towards women and often oppressed groups within society however, it can be experienced by all.

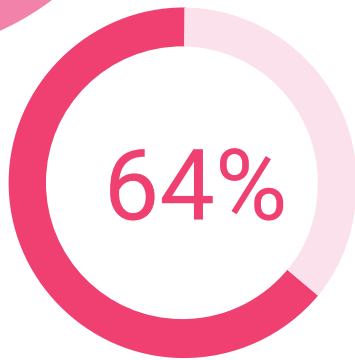
Our Research

This survey asked 153 secondary pupils and recent school leavers about their experiences of reporting PSH to staff, discussing the issue in school and what they want to change. It was mostly answered by Our Streets Now followers and supporters and therefore represents the voices of one community who largely have knowledge of lived experiences of PSH.

IN EDUCATION OR RECENT SCHOOL LEAVER?
WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY?



TEACHING ABOUT PSH



of pupils

Said they have never been taught about PSH at school

“They definitely talked about not engaging with strangers, but there was no explanation of what sexual harassment is, more just advice about staying safe”

“We were just told to wear longer skirts and skin-tone bras”

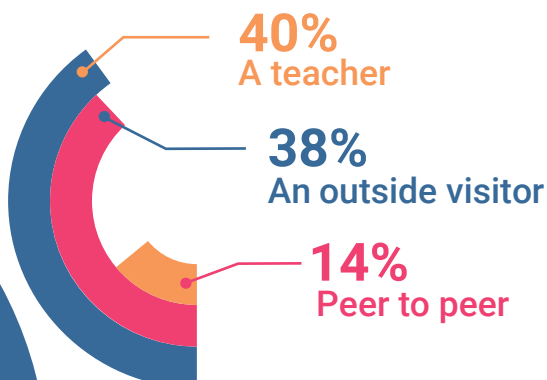
Pupils' top priorities for teaching PSH

- To deter boys from ever becoming perpetrators
- To raise awareness of the extent and severity of PSH
- To tackle victim-blaming
- To empathise with those who experience PSH
- To encourage reporting
- To teach bystander initiatives

How pupils would like PSH to be taught

- A regular part of the curriculum
- Starting from a young age
- During lesson time
- In small focus groups
- With interactive activities

Who would you prefer to teach about PSH?



“Focus should be on preventing it happening in the first place, rather than victim-blaming”

Pupils highlighted the importance of being taught by someone the pupils respect and that it is followed up by teachers rather than being taught as a one-off.

“There should be some level of education, especially when we have to take public transport home at a young age”



REPORTING

Most pupils told us they had never reported or discussed PSH with staff before as some feared that schools would do nothing about it or not take them seriously.

I wouldn't report it to anyone, just speak to my friends. This happened to me around 20 times over the course of school and I never reported it. I feel they would embarrass me and take it way too seriously, I don't want that attention

I would be hesitant to go into school as they don't do anything but i would feel guilty if i went to the police

41 pupils said they, or a friend, had reported **Only 7** described a vaguely positive or positive response



Their response was for me to ignore the boys that were groping me because boys will be boys

I reported this guy who was a persistent offender who used to walk around our school's area when we were let out of school, and he did it for 6 years straight. Initially the teacher seemed worried and listened to me but nothing ever happened. I probably reported him over 10 times

It did very little when I spoke to the teacher whose class it occurred in, and I got the impression she was scared of challenging the boys behaviour



Pupils' suggestions for reporting PSH to staff

- A clear and simple reporting process
- Designated staff to report to
- Basic training for all staff in how to respond
- Anonymous reporting if desired
- An on-line reporting system
- The option to use a written form

Two boys in my art class would regularly take objects from around the art classroom (often large fake flowers) and try to insert them up my skirt

All teachers but especially personal tutors/coaches should have the appropriate training to be able to support any students that come to them with an issue

There should be designated teachers who you can talk to so that you know they'll take you seriously

RECOMMENDATIONS

Women and girls deserve to feel safe. Women and girls deserve to be safe.

“They denied it ever happened around the school and when I went to them told me to “stop being so silly””

1

Include PSH as part of the RSE and PSHE curriculums

- Teach what constitutes PSH and the impact it has on women, girls and marginalised groups
- Engage all pupils as potential bystanders and teach bystander initiatives
- Run a visible school campaign which aims to tackle the stigma around PSH

Education for staff

- Train staff in how to intervene in incidents of PSH
- Train staff how to respond if a pupil reports PSH
- Work with local specialist support services to better support pupils who are distressed following an incident of PSH

2

3

Take action against PSH outside of school

- Encourage pupils to report PSH and monitor the locations where it is happening
- If many pupils report PSH at a particular location near school, arrange for a teacher to be present before and after school when pupils are travelling

Take action against PSH which occurs in school

- Introduce a clear reporting process with designated staff which allows pupils to remain confidential if they choose to
- Develop a clear policy to tackle PSH, distinct from a school bullying policy

4

Acknowledgements

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