



Our Streets Now

Tackling Public Sexual Harassment in Education

“They saw my fear and laughed”



Higher Education Executive Summary

Image by Eliza Hatch / @Cheerupluv from the photo series 'Snapshots of Sexual Harassment'.



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 university students.

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.

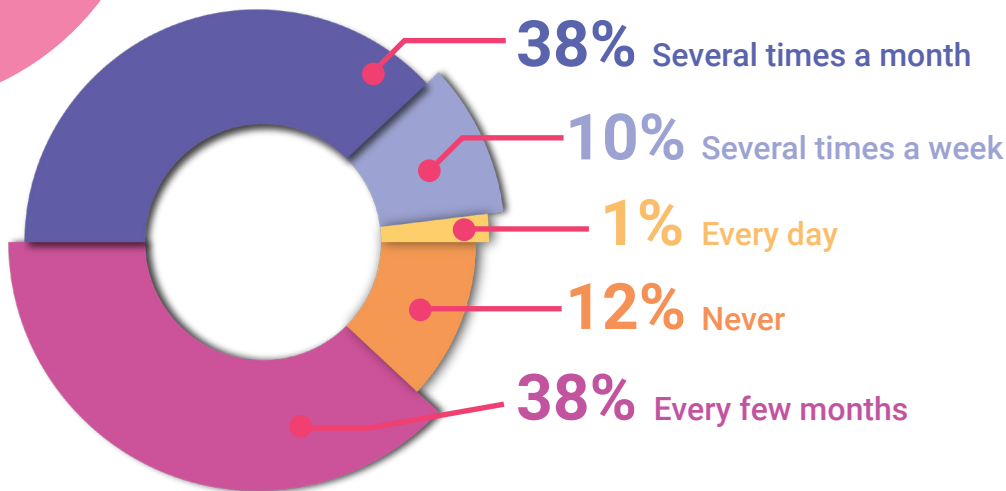
Our Research

This survey asked 100 students and graduates about their experiences of PSH, how it impacted them and what they want to change. It was mostly answered by Our Streets Now followers and supporters and therefore represents the voices of a community who has knowledge or lived experience of PSH.

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



How often do students experience PSH?



“It's an ingrained aspect of daily life that slowly grinds away at your self worth”

Where do students experience PSH?

49%

Have been harassed while travelling to or around university

25%

Have been harassed in clubs or bars

24%

Have been harassed on campus

“A boy saw me and my female friend having a friendly cuddle whilst on a night out. Neither of us knew him but he came up to us and asked us to kiss so he could watch.”

What types of PSH are experienced by students?

- ~ Name-calling
- ~ Sexual comments
- ~ Whistling
- ~ Groping
- ~ Persistent sexual advances
- ~ Unwanted sexual attention
- ~ Sexual jokes
- ~ Being followed
- ~ Cars slowing down
- ~ Rape threats

“While walking to university during my postgraduate degree, a van stopped in the middle of a main road and shouted across at me 'how much would it cost for me to rape you? I bet you'd do it for a fiver'”

@sravya_attaluri



The Impacts of PSH on Students

- ~ Negative effect on mental wellbeing
- ~ Feeling unsafe
- ~ Choosing a different route home
- ~ Avoiding certain outfits
- ~ Being distracted from education
- ~ Inability to complete daily tasks and activities
- ~ Triggering past experiences
- ~ Difficulty forming friendships
- ~ Avoiding going to campus

“*Being harassed and groped on public transport just makes me dread my commute to uni and makes me not want to go in*”

University Policies

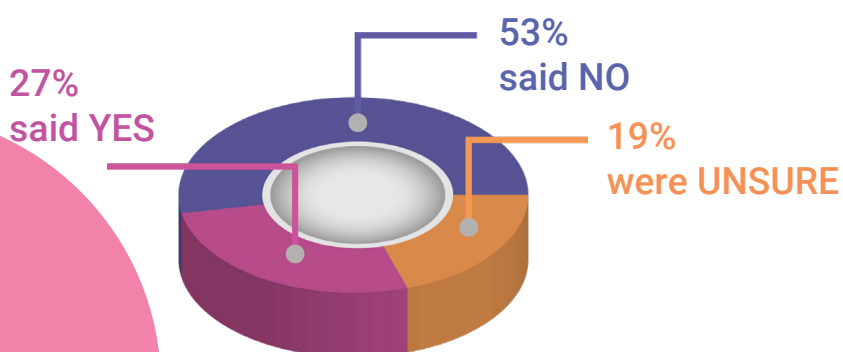
37% of students had knowledge of existing schemes or policies at their university relating to PSH, but **43%** of those who had knowledge of a scheme criticised it in their answer.

Criticisms included:

- ~ Weak campus presence
- ~ Limited capacity to support victims
- ~ Lack of policy regarding off-campus PSH

“*There is the campus patrol, however they are not in town and so offer no protection to students living off campus.*”

Are students aware of reporting platforms or support services for PSH?



“*I believe this is a huge issue amongst university students. Too often it is dismissed due to age or general university behaviour, but it shouldn't be. The amount of people I know who have been sexually harassed whilst at university without any relief or justice is disgusting.*”

Students were hesitant to use services that are designated for victims of sexual violence as they felt they may not be taken seriously.

Students' Priorities for Change

01

Workshops and training to prevent students from becoming perpetrators of PSH

02

Awareness raising to empower students to speak up

03

Clear and visible reporting process

04

Punitive measures and a zero tolerance culture

Public sexual harassment is everywhere.

We won't rest until it's nowhere.

05

Counselling and support for those who experience PSH

06

Training for staff

07

Bystander training

08

Campaigns specific to off-campus PSH

It's not a compliment. It's Harassment.

Just empowering people to speak up and be heard. No matter how "small" an incident feels it has an impact on the victim and escalates the apparent validation of this behaviour if someone isn't held accountable.

Outside of the institution, I would like to see universities offering stronger support and solidarity with their students rather than stating that it isn't their problem if it happens off campus.



RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1 Education

- ~ Mandatory workshops on PSH which can be included as part of consent workshops
- ~ Bystander training compulsory for all campus staff or students in positions of responsibility
- ~ Visible campaigns on campus to raise awareness and provide platforms for students to speak up
- ~ Training and awareness raising to happen at the start of the year

2 Support

- ~ A full-time sexual assault and harassment advisor
- ~ Training for all wellbeing and support staff to consider reports of PSH sensitively
- ~ Work with local specialist sexual violence agencies to shape these services

3 Reporting

- ~ Clear and anonymous (if desired) reporting process
- ~ Encourage students to seek support around PSH whether it happened on or off campus which may include reporting it
- ~ Monitor reports of PSH off campus and develop strategies to tackle it, for example working with transport providers to reduce harassment on university buses
- ~ Clear and consistent zero tolerance policy

Acknowledgements

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