

Our Streets Now Press Release: Schoolgirls demand street harassment taught in schools

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The majority of schoolchildren in the UK are not taught about street harassment, despite the fact that 2 in 3 girls will be subject to this violence, according to a report from Plan UK.

A group of schoolgirls and students is on a mission to change this. “Our Streets Now”, the grassroots campaign to end street harassment are launching “[Our Schools Now](#)”, a campaign to include public sexual harassment as part of PSHE/RSE lessons in schools. The campaign is launching a wide range of resources for teachers and students to use, and releasing the findings of its “Our Schools Now” [report](#).

The report, based on an in-depth survey with over 150 students and recent school leavers, has found that:

- Only 14% of students had been taught about public sexual harassment
- 47% of students said they would not report an incident of public sexual harassment to their school either because they did not know or feared not being taken seriously by staff
- 72% of pupils who did report public sexual harassment described receiving a negative response from their school, with the majority of participants stating that no real action was taken.

Maya and Gemma Tutton, the sisters who have been campaigning for “Our Streets Now”, said “We need to make sure that the next generation of children in the UK understand the prevalence and impact of public sexual harassment.

As children and teenagers go back to school and the government’s mandatory sex education curriculum is introduced, we are urging schools to include public sexual harassment within their mandatory PSHE/RSE lessons.

The rise of online and offline abuse as a consequence of the pandemic must not be allowed to further proliferate with the reduction of adequate sex education in response to schools being under pressure because of Covid-19.”

Gemma adds “I remember one incident of harassment when I challenged the perpetrators, telling them “I’m 13 years old”. One man answered, “Age doesn’t matter to me”. This culture has to change because until it does, girls will continue to feel confused, isolated and even blame themselves. I certainly did”.

14 year old student from Essex, Anya said: "Since I was 11 years old I have avoided walking home alone from the bus stop, especially when coming home from school in my uniform. Along with the majority of my friends, I have experienced public sexual harassment on multiple occasions. Yet we've never been taught about it"

19 year old recent school leaver from Cheshire, Jess commented "Travelling to and from school became a trip that was uncomfortable. I remember walking back from school in year 9, and these guys drove past and honked their horn and shouted at me. At the time I was so upset, uncomfortable and embarrassed and immediately blamed myself. Looking back, I know how beneficial it would have been to have been taught about public sexual harassment."

The new calls for educational and cultural change around public sexual harassment come as their [Change.org petition](#) for public sexual harassment to be made a criminal offence has reached 200,000 signatures.

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Notes to editors:

For media requests, interviews and photos please contact Maya Tutton on ourstreetsnow@hotmail.com or call her on 07807967504.

[Our Streets Now](#) is a nationwide grassroots campaign to end public sexual harassment through legislative and cultural change. It was launched with a Change.org [petition](#) in April 2019 by two sisters, Gemma and Maya Tutton, who have both faced this everyday violence. With the mandate of our 200,000 petition signers and over 20k [Instagram](#) followers, we are working towards a society in which women and girls can feel safe and be safe in public space.