



Scoping Study

A Safety and Inclusivity Study in Clondalkin within the Context of Gender-based Violence in Public Spaces.

South Dublin County Council

2020



Background

- 'A Safety and Inclusivity Study in Clondalkin' within the context of Gender-based Violence is a project through South Dublin County Councils, €300k Have Your Say Initiative.
- The study aims to gain a deeper understanding on the nature of the problem of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence within the context of gender-based violence in public spaces in Clondalkin.
- Significant media reporting on a serious sexual assault in 2016 heightened concerns for the safety of women in public spaces locally.
- Steering group for the study, Niall Noonan (SDCC), Noreen Byrne (North Clondalkin Community Safety Forum), Rita Harte (Clondalkin Lucan Women's Network), Vivienne Glanville (Ronanstown Women's CDP), Doreen Carpenter (Clondalkin Traveller Development Group) and Kevin Byrne (Sargent Community Section Ronanstown Garda Station).



Context

- Research shows women and girls fear and experience various types of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces.
- This takes the form of unwanted sexual remarks and touching, to rape.
- It is a universal issue that has no boundaries of community, class or culture and is perpetrated on streets, in parks, at shops and bus stops, in urban and rural areas.
- It negatively impacts on women and girls' freedom of movement, on their ability to access services or other opportunities and ultimately impacts their health and well-being.

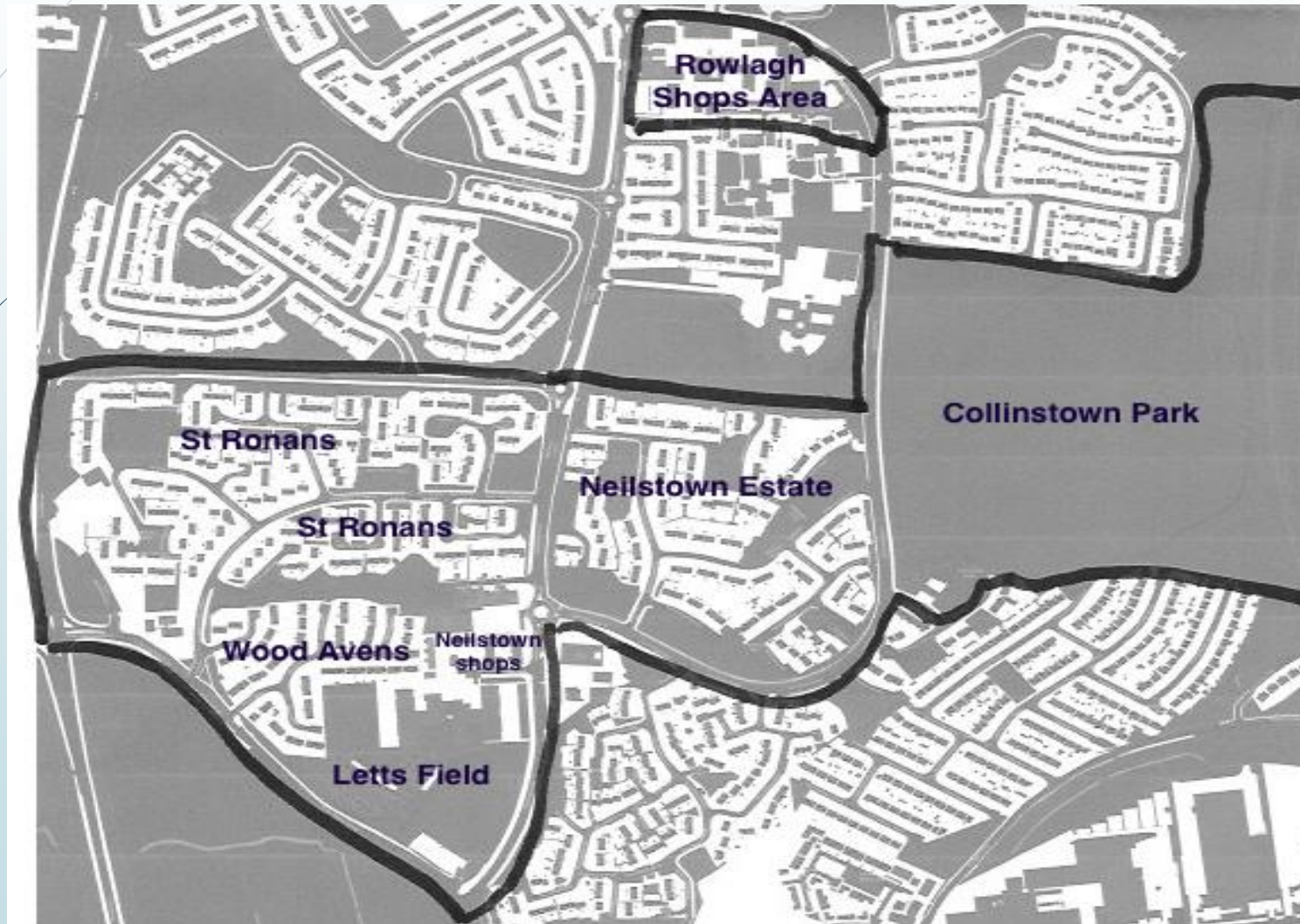


The Study Area

The specific areas of focus for the study:

- the Neilstown Shopping Centre and adjacent areas
- the residential areas of Neilstown, St Ronan's, Wood Avens and Letts Field
- All adjacent public pathways, lane ways, green areas, roads were included.
- Collinstown Park which is the main park in the area.
- Rowlagh shops area - Initially this area was not identified for inclusion. However, as the study progressed the very high level of concern emerging about this area warranted an extension of the study area which subsequently included the Rowlagh shops location.

Map of study area





Methodology and Consultation

- Participatory research methodologies
- Steering group
- Face to face meetings with groups and organisations
- Surveys – Individuals and organisations
 - Respondent details
 - Safety and Inclusivity in Public Spaces
 - Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces
 - Informing local responses and strategies.
- Women's safety audits
- Focus groups via zoom to discuss emerging issues, key findings and inform recommendations.



Individual Participant Profile

- 157 individuals participated
- 151 completed surveys
- 87% female and 13% male
- 54% lived in the study area
- 29% both lived and worked in the area

Age profile

- 45% aged 40 to 54 years representing the largest cohort.
- 29% aged 25 to 39 years.
- 17% aged 55 to 70 years.
- 7% aged 20 to 24 years.
- 2% aged 17 to 19 years
- Just under 1% were over 70 years of age.



Groups/Organisations

- Initial face to face meetings with 17 organisations to inform of the research and look at engagement.
- 14 Groups/organisations engaged (Covid-19 had an impact).
- 11 completed the survey.
- Majority based within the study area.
- Others in wider Clondalkin - providing supports and services to individuals, families or groups within study area.
- Working with diverse range of target groups.



Study findings

Three crucial findings were established from the study.

- Firstly, specific locations of concern for the safety and inclusivity of women have been identified.
- Secondly, there is an alarming high prevalence of sexual harassment and a high level of fear of other forms of sexual violence within the study area.
- Thirdly, a multi agency coordinated response is needed to enhance safety and inclusivity for women in public spaces within the study area.

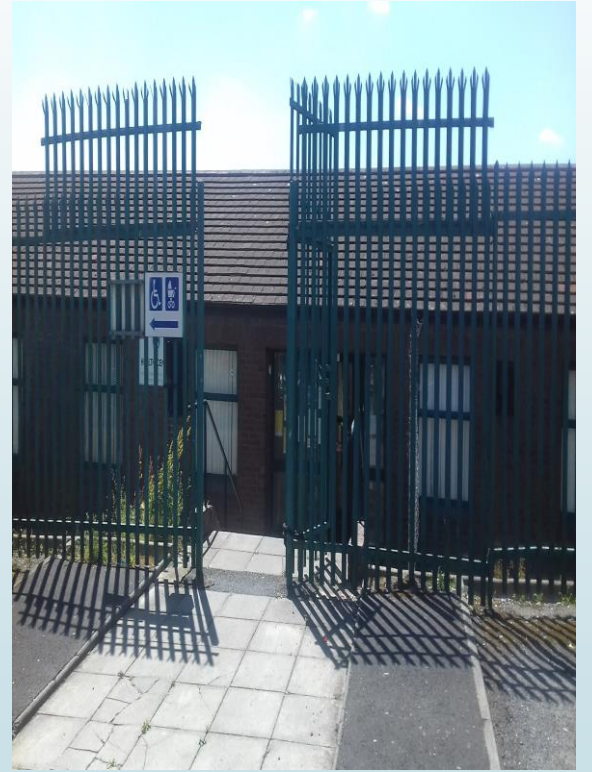


Study findings cont.

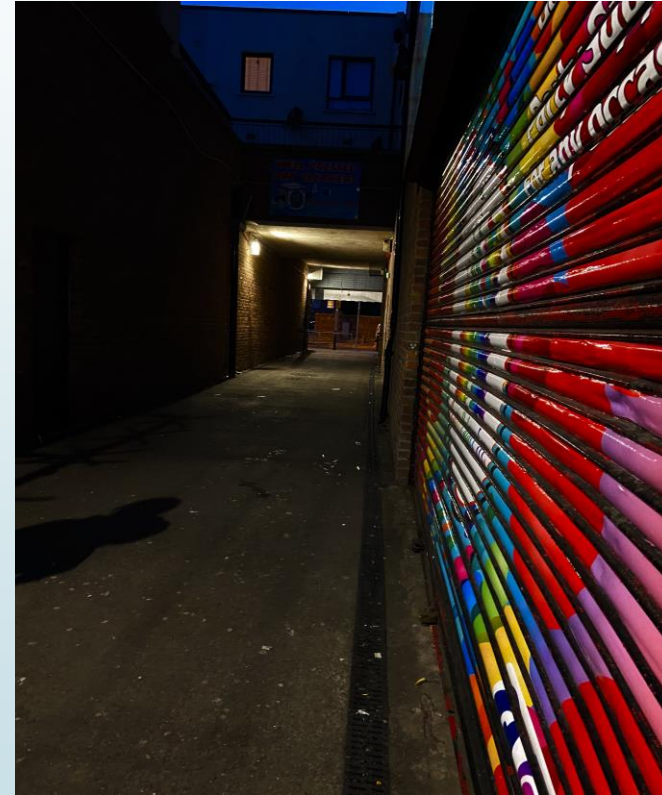
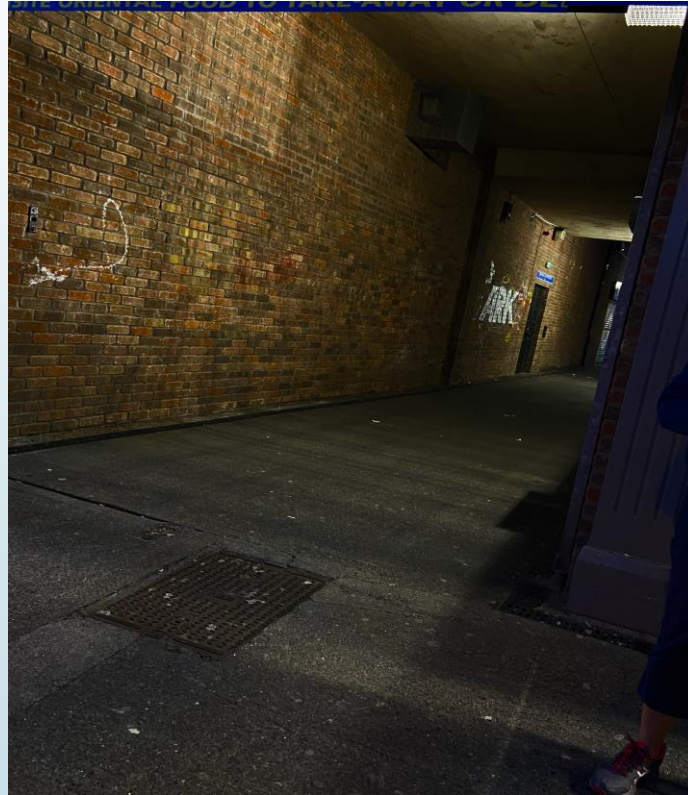
Safety and Inclusivity in public spaces

- Consensus with individuals and organisations in relation to identifying specific locations of concern.
- 67% of individuals and 78% of organisations - identified current concerns of safety within the areas identified.
- Specific locations of concern: areas around Rowlagh Shops (particularly at the back of the shops and the archway), the Black Lane, areas around Neilstown Shops, Neilstown Road (from Shopping centre to junction of Newlands Road) , Letts field area, Collinstown Park.
 - Areas identified outside of study area – noted in report require further examination.
- Layout and features of spaces (physical and social) a significant contributing factor.
- 84% of individuals and 78% of organisations not aware of actions taken to address these concerns.
 - Repeated requests for lighting - maintenance of trees & overgrown areas
- 64% of individuals and 56% of organisations identified women are staying away from identified locations – particularly in the evenings and after dark – a form of self censorship –women and girl's freedom of movement curtailed.

Back areas at Rowlagh shops



Walkway/archway at Rowlagh shops

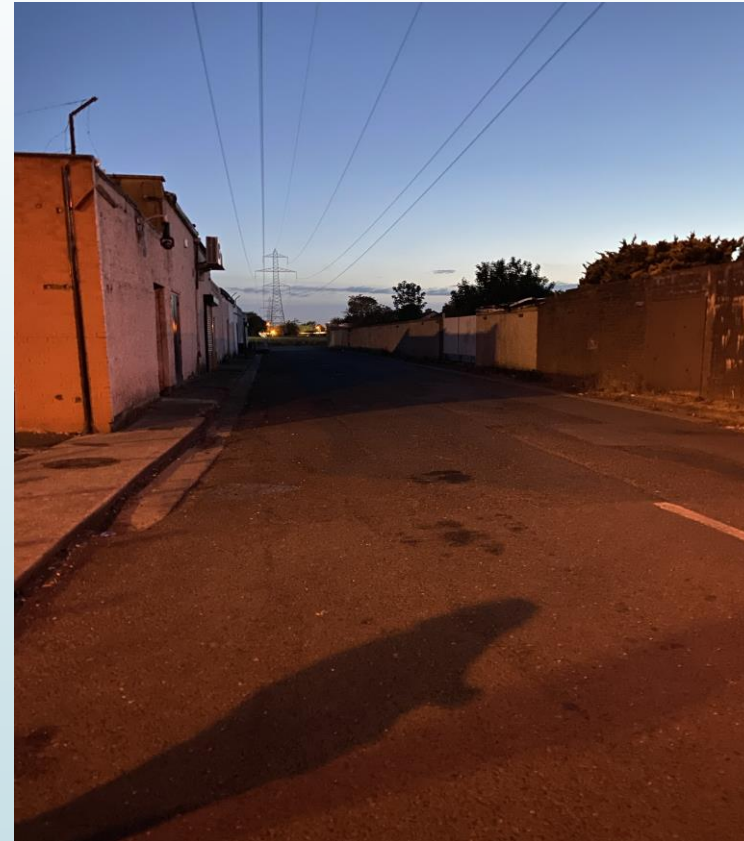


Neilstown Shops

front



back

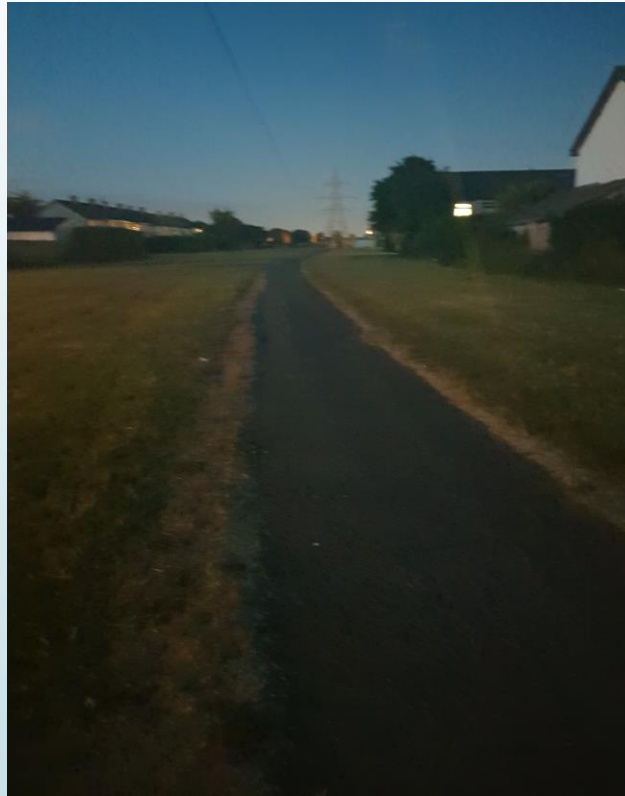


The 'Black path'

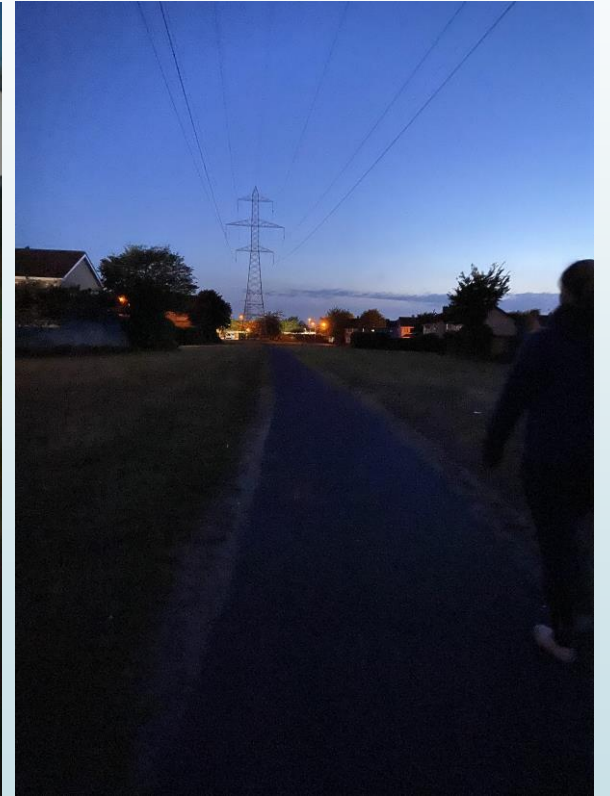
day



evening

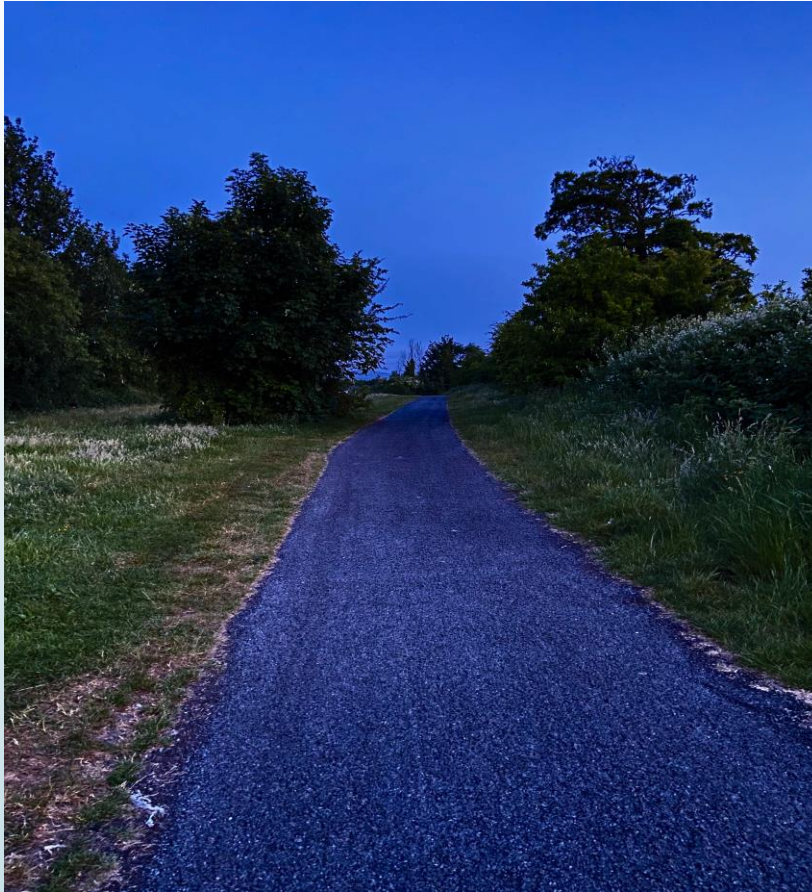


night



Collinstown Park

walkway summertime evenings



overgrowth at entrance gate



Collinstown Park

unused containers



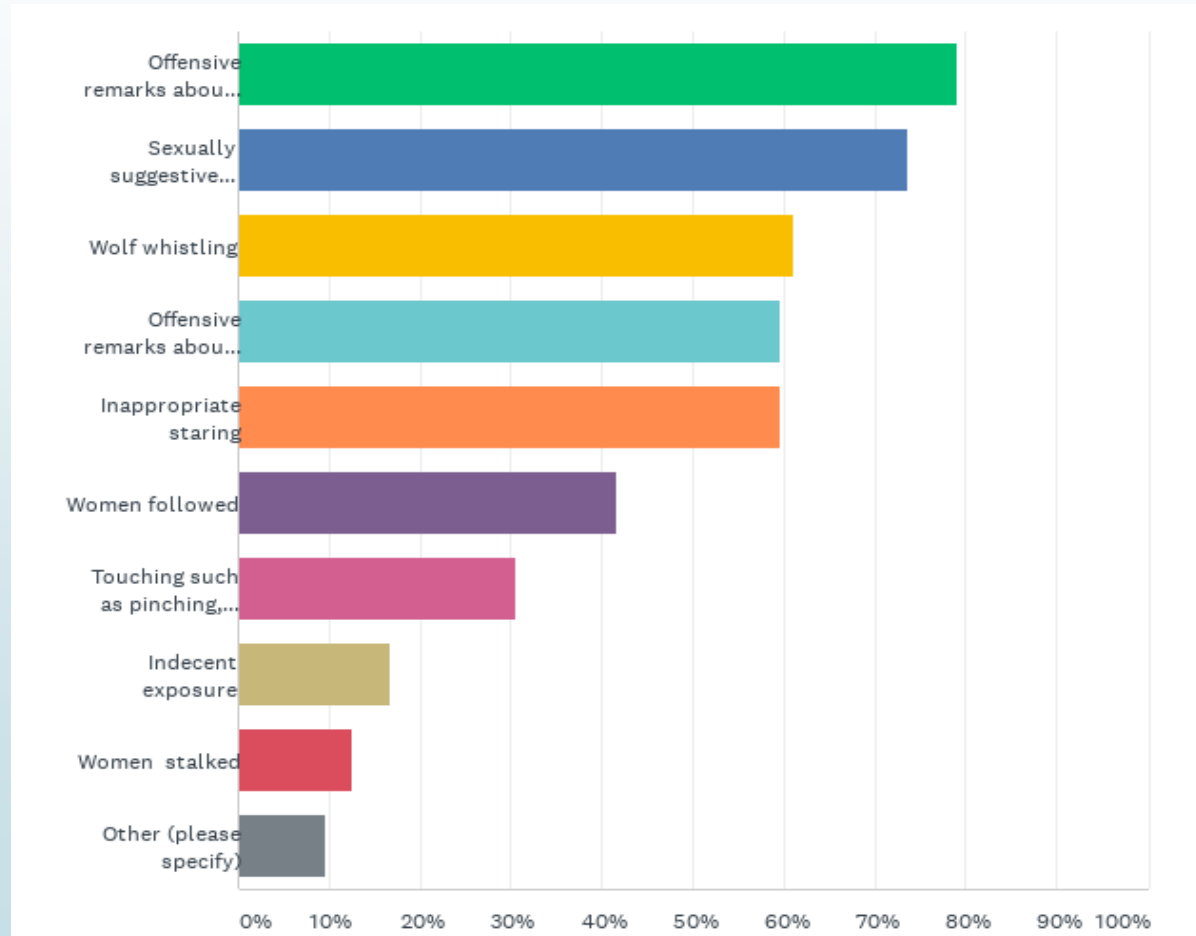


Sexual Harassment against women in public spaces

High prevalence of sexual harassment – daily basis

- Offensive remarks about physical appearance 79%
- Sexually suggestive comments or 'jokes' 74%
- Wolf Whistling 61%
- Offensive remarks about clothing worn 60%
- Inappropriate staring 60%
- Women followed 42%
- Touching such as pinching, grabbing, slapping or kissing 31%
- Indecent exposure 17%
- Women stalked 12.5%
- Other 10%

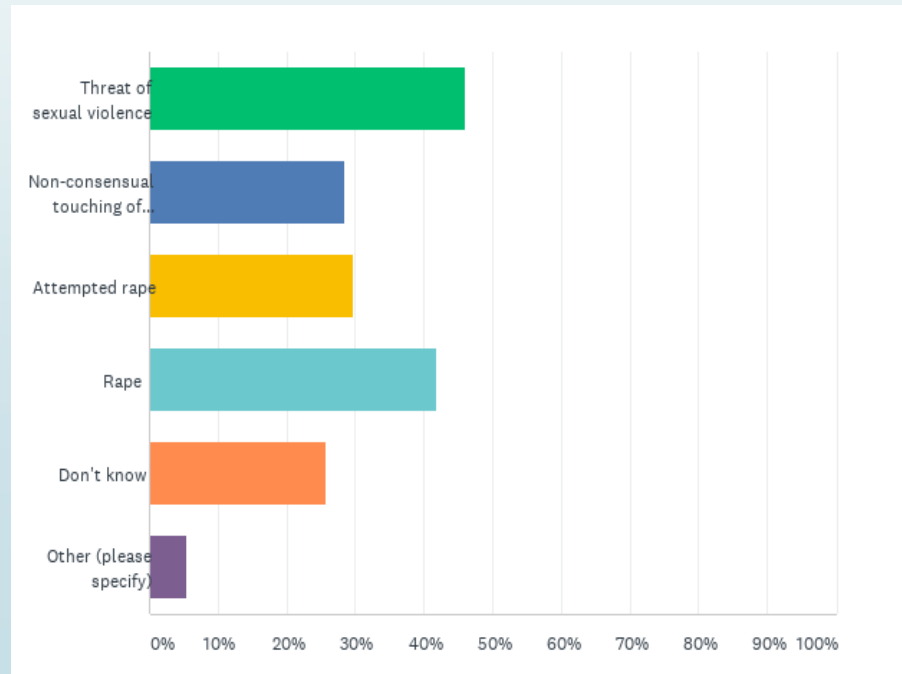
Sexual Harassment against women in public spaces



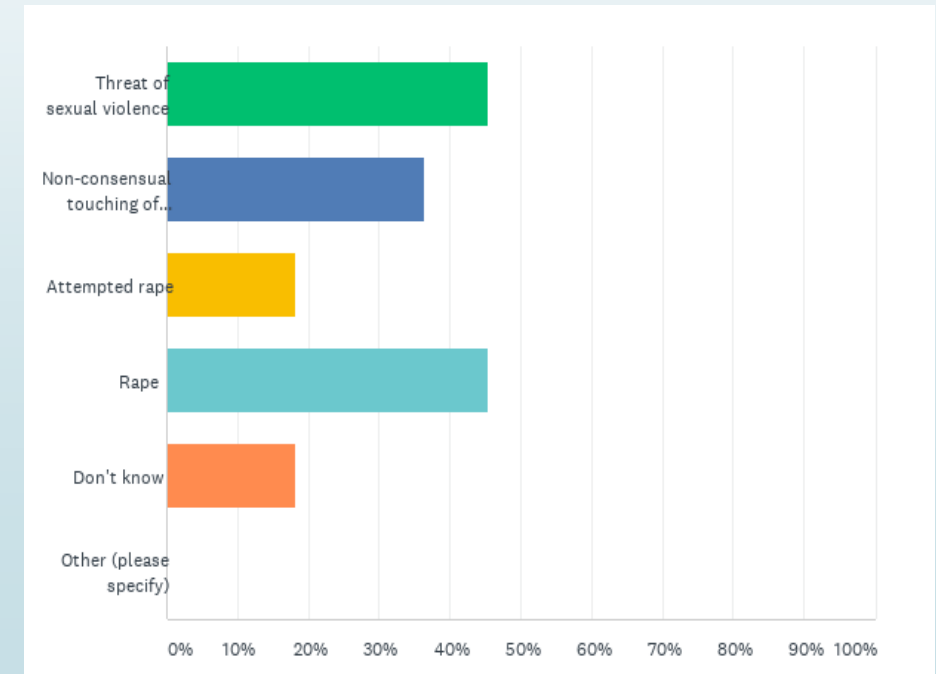
Other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces

- 46% of individuals and 45% of organisations identified the fear of other forms of sexual violence as a cause of concern for the safety of women
- Rape in Letts Field (2016) identified as significant contributing factor
- Non-consensual touching – contact sexual harassment

Individuals



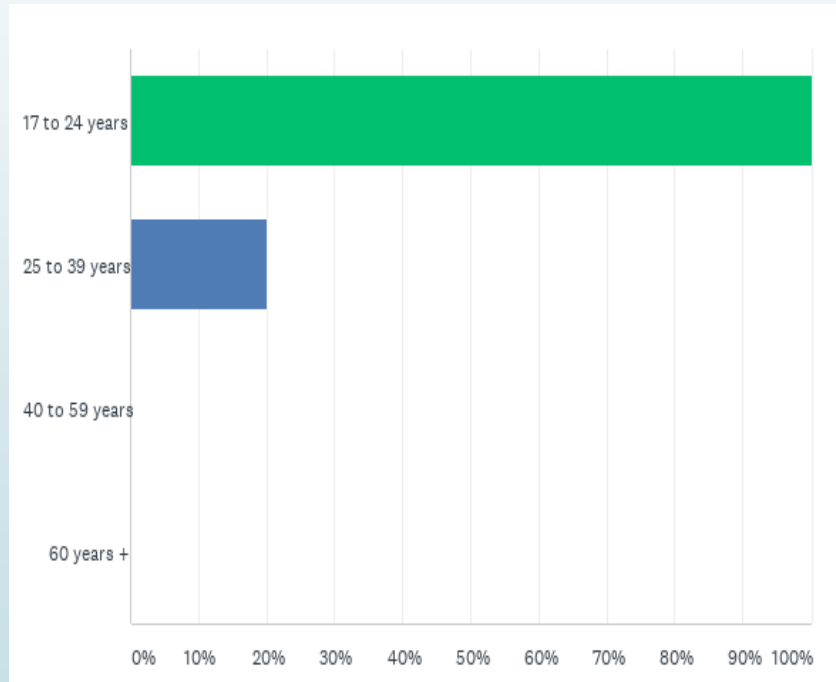
Organisations



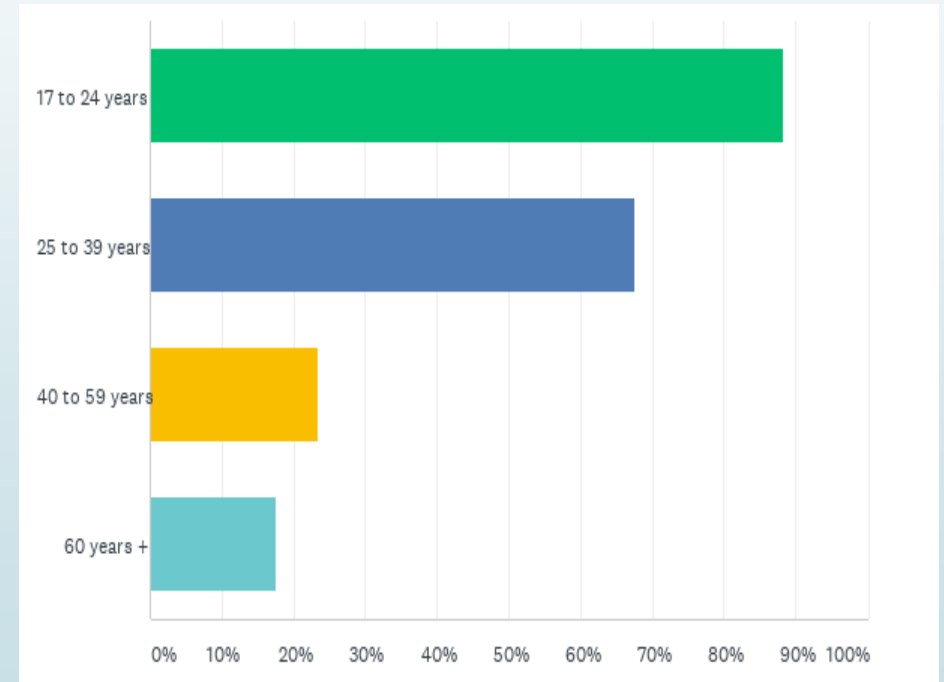
Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces cont..

Examining if women of any specific age group were more vulnerable to sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence in the study area

Organisations



Individuals



49% of individuals and 67% of organisations identified this is also an issue for females under 17yrs



Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces cont..

- Individuals and organisations identified that women can be subject to sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence at any time of the day and night.
- The majority identified the times between 9pm to 5am as the time of most concern for the safety of women
- 6pm to 9pm also a time of concern



Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces cont..

Reporting to friends, family, co-workers

- 58% of individuals and 56% of organisations stated that they were unsure if women reported incidents to friends, family member or co-workers.
- 29% identified they were aware women reported this to a friend or family member
- 8% were aware that women did not report their experiences of sexual harassment or sexual violence to friend, family etc

Reporting to Garda Síochána

- 64% of individuals and 67% of organisations were unsure if women had reported to the Garda
- 17% of individuals stated they were aware women reported incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence to the Garda
- 19% of individuals and 33% of organisations stated they were aware women did not report to the Garda.



Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces cont..

In looking at why women might not report experiences of sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence issues including the following were named.

- Embarrassment
- Shame
- self-blame
- Stigma
- Fear of repercussions
- Fear of not been taken seriously
- An unsupportive system for women
- Little evidence of perpetrators been held accountable



Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces cont..

Locally based supports and services

- 78% of participants were not aware of any supports or services within Clondalkin to support women who had been subject to sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence within the study area.
- This is worrying given that issues of sexual harassment are highly prevalent in the area.
- 67% of organisations identified providing informal supports and services and 11% identified providing formal supports and services



Summary of findings

- The study found a general consensus between individuals and organisations about where the unsafe locations for women are.
- Layout and features (physical and social) contribute to lack of safety and inclusivity.
- In seeking to remain safe many women are avoiding specific locations after dark and particularly when alone.
- Women and girls right of access and freedom of movement is curtailed.
- A startling high prevalence of non-contact forms of sexual harassment.
- A high level of fear amongst women for personal safety and fear of attack or sexual violence.
- Women of any age can be vulnerable to sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence, women aged from 17 – 39 years identified at greater risk.
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence are issues impacting on females under 17 years of age in the study area.
- Non reporting of sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence to an Garda Síochána or disclosing to friends, family or co-workers.
- Individuals not aware of supports or services within the area to support women who had experienced sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence.



Summary conclusion

- Nationally, changes to legislation and policy are required.
- Locally, findings will be of no surprise to many women in the area particularly those who have experienced issues of safety and inclusivity or others who have sought to raise the issues and find solutions.
- Sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence have negatively impacted on women's daily lives and curtailed their freedom of movement within their own community.
- The lack of and poor lighting and overgrowth of green areas must be addressed urgently by the local authority.
- Addressing the physical factors alone may alleviate some concerns, however, it will not remove or reduce all concerns.
- This must be matched with a commitment for change in attitudes and behaviours through a robust strategy to address the social and personal factors.
- Strategies to tackle issues of safety and inclusivity in public spaces can only be achieved through a multi agency coordinated strategy and an investment of resources.
- The SDCC communication campaign must be part of this wider strategy.
- SDCC should commit a level of funding to implement a community wide safety strategy and use this as leverage for matched funding from other agencies e.g.HSE



Informing local responses and strategies

Notwithstanding the fact issues in relation to the safety and inclusivity of women within a context of gender-based violence need to be addressed at national policy and systemic levels the following are proposed as local responses informed by the study process and individuals and organisations who participated.

Recommendations

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
1. Communications campaign	
<p>To highlight key findings from the study and seek support in addressing same at local level SDCC should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a steering group to ensure the communications campaign is developed in collaboration with community-based organisations and implemented as part of the proposed wider strategy.• Raise awareness of this report through presenting key findings to key for a and decisions making structures. <p>The campaign should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope out key messages and identify the range of audiences to maximise effectiveness.• Use a range of mechanism's that are creative and interactive including, social media, vox pops, short video clips and involve youth and younger adults to communicate issues and strengthen engagement for high impact.• Be inclusive of the wider community recognising that over 20% of households in the study area have no internet access.	<p>SDCC & community and statutory organisations</p>

Recommendations cont.

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
2. Infrastructure <p>To improve visibility, enhance access and increase safety and inclusivity in public spaces, SDCC and other stakeholders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the installation or upgrading of lighting in the following areas (exploring the option of sensor lighting): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Neilstown Shopping Centre – the front and back. ◦ Rowlagh shops – back areas and side entrances. Improve lighting in archway during daytime. ◦ Collinstown Park - around the pathways and at entrance/exit gates. ◦ The black lane – ensuring the length of the laneway is lit particularly at night. ◦ Letts Field area – from the bus stops opposite houses to the junction of Neilstown Road. • Cut back overhanging trees and overgrowth to shrubbery and greenery in the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Along Collinstown Road and Neilstown Road where trees are blocking lights and visibility and shrubs are encroaching on pathways. ◦ Both sides of land bordering the black lane. ◦ The Collinstown pathway linking Palmerstown Woods and Neilstown. ◦ At Collinstown & Palmerstown Wood entrance and exit gates to Collinstown Park. • Remove unused shipping containers from Collinstown Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Explore the option of a street art project on the remaining containers. • Install bus shelters with lighting and real time bus timetables for bus stops at the end of Neilstown Road just before the junction with Newlands Road: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Convene a meeting with bus service providers to discuss alternatives to withdrawing bus services. • Explore the possibility of installing safety buzzers linked to Garda stations as an alternative to repairing or replacing CCTV currently not working around the area (an example of this is currently used on the grounds of TU Dublin Grangegorman). 	<p>SDCC, local businesses and management companies.</p> <p>SDCC</p> <p>SDCC Youth Services</p> <p>SDCC & bus service providers</p> <p>SDCC, an Garda Siochana, local businesses.</p>

Recommendations cont.

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
3. Planning and Development	
<p>All planning and development initiatives for the area should be gender-proofed to ensure women and girls have safe and secure freedom of movement. Immediate interventions to achieve this should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A consultation process should be facilitated to examine in detail the needs and opportunities to address the significant safety and inclusivity issues around the Rowlagh shops and develop a plan for addressing same with associated timelines.• The appointment of park wardens for the new play areas in Collinstown Park<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SDCC in collaboration with other bodies should explore the employment of local people for such posts similar to a previous Training and Employment programme for general operatives within the SDCC parks department.	<p>SDCC, business and NCCSF</p> <p>SDCC</p> <p>SDCC & SDC Partnership</p>

Recommendations cont.

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
4. Empowerment, Collective Action and Supports	
<p>To ensure all women have access to information on sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence, know how and where to report incidents and or access supports and services all stakeholders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a reclaim the streets/safe public spaces campaign that builds a collective community approach to prevent and tackle sexual harassment and promote a culture of zero tolerance – ensuring access for all women and cultural appropriateness.• Adapt the ESHTe programme and It Stops Now campaign to meet local needs.• Develop and implement a younger women and girl's safety programme for under 17 years (recognising ethical considerations and children first).• In collaboration with the DPSU explore the establishment of a text-based emergency help line.	<p>SDCC & Community organisations</p> <p>CYPSC & Youth Services</p> <p>Garda & key stakeholders</p>

Recommendations cont.

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
5. Education and Awareness	
<p>Raise awareness of issues and impacts of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence through a gender equality lens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing information and training to all organisations on first step response /support and signposting to women disclosing sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence (an existing body in the community may already be equipped to provide this).• Providing age appropriate training, workshops, webinars and information on issues including safety and inclusivity of women in public spaces, tackling the 'normalisation' of sexual harassment, gender inequality and impacts of sharing images on social media platforms:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek to engage men and women of different ages and backgrounds via schools, youth services, community bodies etc.	HSE, Women's Aid, CLWN

Recommendations cont.

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
6. Implementation of overall strategy	
<p>Develop a multi-agency approach to ensure stakeholder engagement and support for the effective implementation of agreed strategies and actions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing a coordinating group to oversee the implementation of the overall strategy. SDCC should ensure representation from key stakeholders such as local residents, community groups, education providers, businesses, SDCC, Garda, HSE etc.• Resourcing and appointing a lead agent for coordination of the working group – (this could potentially be a sub group of the NCCSF if resources are provided as there is a direct fit with their remit and the recommendations.• Provide a commitment to a level of financial resources to support implementation of the overall strategy which can be used as leverage for matched funding from other bodies.	<p>SDCC</p> <p>SDCC & NCCSF</p>

Recommendations cont.

Strategies	Potential Delivery Partners
Further Research	
<p>To examine key issues which emerged but were outside the remit of this study, further studies should be undertaken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the locations identified outside of the study area where concerns were expressed in relation to the safety and inclusivity of women. (Locations are listed in section 6.2).• Examine the tension between <i>groups of young people hanging around</i> versus <i>gangs</i> and how this is perceived or experienced in relation to safety and inclusivity.	<p>SDCC</p> <p>SDCC, Youth Services, NCCSF and Drug Task Force.</p>



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Commissioned by SDCC, through the €300k Have Your Say Initiative.

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