



# THE BRISTOL STREET HARASSMENT PROJECT

## REPORT ON SURVEY FINDINGS

The Bristol Street Harassment Project is a Bristol Zero Tolerance campaign looking at addressing and tackling the problem of street harassment in Bristol - [www.facebook.com/BristolStreetHarassmentProject](http://www.facebook.com/BristolStreetHarassmentProject)

We have gathered evidence and raised awareness of the issue across Bristol by collecting people's stories and testimonies in the form of videos, written accounts and geographical mapping of incidents to develop a picture of the problem in the city.

The #snapshotofharassment ran from April 2nd 2017 (International Anti-Street Harassment Week) to September 30th 2017 and collected 117 responses to the survey and 38 incidents reported on the online map.



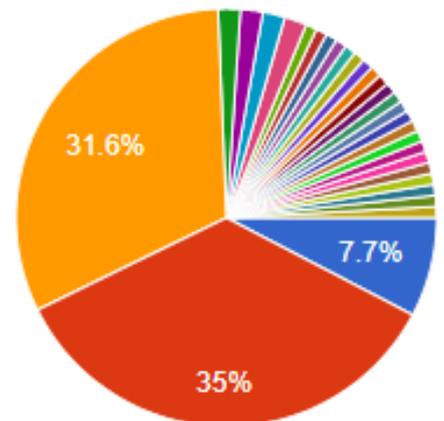
### FREQUENCY OF HARASSMENT

Responses from the survey showed that:

- 35% of people experienced street harassment **weekly**
- 32% of people experienced street harassment **monthly**
- 8% of people experienced street harassment **daily**

For some the frequency of harassment has been impacted by changes in circumstances. For example, respondents commented “[it happens] **less often since I moved further away from the centre**” and “**Since I learnt to drive it happens less frequently. Before I drove it happened several times a week.**”

58% of people first experienced harassment when they were between 10-15 years old. One respondent told us “**First time I was harassed on the street, I was 13 and in my school uniform during secondary school. Was walking home and around 3 older men on the other side of the road whistled at me.**”



- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Every few months
- Virtually never
- occasionally
- Once every couple of months

# STOP STREET HARASSMENT



uncomfortable or unsafe.

**IT'S NOT A COMPLIMENT. IT'S HARASSMENT!**



[www.facebook.com/BristolStreetHarassmentProject](http://www.facebook.com/BristolStreetHarassmentProject)

## TYPES OF HARASSMENT

Responses from the survey included multiple responses for different types of harassment and showed that:

- The most common forms of harassment were **being honked at in a vehicle and someone making a comment about their appearance** (both 78% of respondents)
- 70% experienced **being called a pet name** by a stranger
- Many were regularly **whistled at or leered or stared at excessively** (both 67%)
- 63% had someone make a **sexist comment** about them or experienced **sexually explicit comments**
- 54% had **kissing or other noises** made at them
- 53% had someone **trying to get their attention, number or ask for a date**
- 45% were **followed** by someone
- 41% had someone **swear or make a rude hand gesture** at them
- 41% had someone **physically block their path**
- Someone made a **sexual or vulgar gesture** at 40% of respondents
- 34% of respondents were **grabbed or touched in a sexual way**
- 12% also reported **assault**

Many respondents also reported specific incidents such as: **“Someone told me he would have killed me if it was dark”, “Repeated sexual 'heckling' on the street (comments and sexual gestures)”, “Spat at me because I didn't want to hug them”, “After telling a guy to 'fuck off' after he shouted aggressive sexual comments out of a car at me when I was walking home from work he then stopped the car and got out as if to attack me until a car pulled up behind him and shouted for him to move.”**

**“Whilst walking from my work on lunch break to the gym, I walked through Queen Sq. A group of workmen stared at me, then as I passed the group one male repeatedly told me how big/juicy my 'butt' was and how he loved it. The other men laughed. This was very, very intimidating, and made me feel insecure about wearing leggings / gym wear outside of the gym.”**

# STOP STREET HARASSMENT



## WHERE HARASSMENT OCCURS

### ON THE STREET:

92 respondents said that they had mostly experienced harassment on the street. Specific areas that were identified were:

- **City centre** (25 responses and 27% of respondents), particularly Broadmead, Bear Pit, Corn Street, Queen's Square, Baldwin Street, Corn Street, East Street, Wine Street, St Nicks Street, St Stephens Street, Harbourside, Whapping Wharf, All Saints Street, Frogmore Street,
- **Stokes Croft** (8 responses)
- **Old Market** (3 responses), particularly Midland Road
- **Montpelier** (2 responses)
- **St Pauls** (15 responses), particularly Grosvenor Road, Ashley Road
- **Easton** (16 responses and 13% of respondents), particularly Tudor Road, Mivart Street, Stapleton Road, Chelsea Road, St Marks Road
- **St Werburgh's** (2 responses), particularly Muller Road and the exit of an underpass at St Agnes (Junction 3)
- **Lawrence Hill** (4 responses), particularly the underpass and Church Road from the Glebe Rd Junction to Lawrence Hill roundabout
- **Fishponds**, such as outside Blackberry Hill Hospital, Frenchay Park Road and Bromley Heath Road
- St Mary Redcliffe Church roundabout and Redcliffe Hill
- **St Michaels Hill**
- **Clifton** (9 responses and 3% of respondents), particularly the Clifton Triangle, Park Street, Whiteladies Road, Cranbrook Road
- **Redland** (4 responses), particularly Gloucester Road
- **Hotwell Road**

- **Bedminster** (5 responses and 4% of respondents), particularly North Street, Kings Head Lane, Hartcliffe Way, Coronation Road
- **Brislington**, particularly Bath Road
- **Filton**, particularly Monks Park Avenue,
- **Westbury-On-Trym**, particularly Pen Park Road

Specific incidents included:

**“Coming out of Asda in Bedminster recently and an old man made a gesture to allow me to walk ahead of him as little room on the pavement, I moved ahead of him and he touched my bum.”**

**“Walking through Whapping Wharf late one night, a man walked up to me and my girlfriend and started telling my girlfriend how attractive and "fashionable" she was. Completely unwanted attention and it made us both feel vulnerable so we changed our route so we weren't walking near him.”**

This shows that there are no specific areas of Bristol where there is not a problem, as one respondent commented **“there's nowhere it doesn't happen”** and 27% of respondents said that it happened in multiple areas, but that the areas where the majority of experiences that have been reported occur, are quite close to the city centre and often on main roads.

As one respondent commented **“Literally everywhere. My area seems particularly bad. I avoid certain areas specifically because I want to avoid harassment.”**



# STOP STREET HARASSMENT



## WHERE HARASSMENT OCCURS

### TOWARDS CYCLISTS:

In particular women who were cyclists reported experiencing harassment while on their bike, often in the mornings on the way to work and with incidents occurring along designated cycle paths. For example:

**“While cycling and following the rules of the highway code, I was yelled at, sworn at and intimidated by drivers honking their horn revving their engines, speeding and deliberately passing too close. I cycled for living an average speed for a cyclist and followed the rules and guidelines of the highway code, wearing high vis and a helmet as per my work place rules, yet I still was intimidated on a nearly weekly basis.”**

Also, **“When cycling in the street a man said to me “I would love to be that saddle”. This is just one incident which comes to mind. I was 19.”**

### FROM DRIVERS:

Harassment experienced from drivers was also common for pedestrians and cyclists. Incidents included:

**“Someone kerb crawled me on my way home from work commenting on my appearance and asking where I lived and then demanding to know why I wouldn't talk to them until I was eventually able to turn off into a pedestrian area”.**



### IN PARKS AND GREEN SPACES:

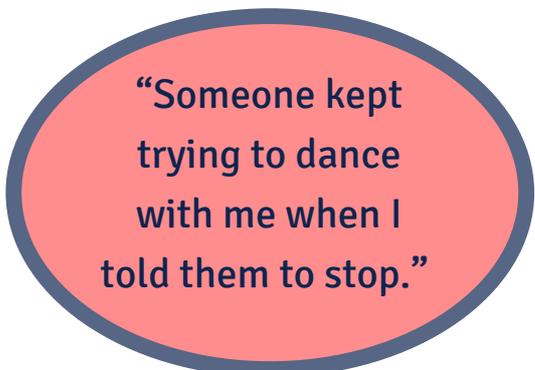
55 respondents said incidents had occurred in parks or green spaces (19.5% said it had happened in multiple places), including Castle park (4 responses and 22% of respondents in central Bristol), Eastville Park (3 responses and 7% of respondents), Brandon, Redcatch Park, St George's Park and Begbrook Park. One respondent commented **“I don't tend to go on my own or at night to these places.”**

### IN SHOPPING CENTRES:

41 respondents mentioned incidents happening in a shopping centre or shop, including Broadmead (6 responses), The Galleries (2 responses), Cabot Circus, Sandy Park and outside or in various shops. 51.5% said this happened in central Bristol and 18% reported that it happened in multiple areas. Respondents commented **“even shop staff whilst on duty”** and **“in several takeaways around Bristol, by staff”**.

### IN THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY:

54 respondents talked about incidents happening in clubs, bars or pubs 49% saying this happened in central Bristol, 12% in Easton and 23.5% in multiple areas. Comments included **“Virtually every pub I've ever been in to greater or lesser degree”**, **“I avoid these places these days, especially on weekends in the centre of town, because I got tired of the harassment”**, **“Every bar/pub/club I've ever been in”**, **“I stopped going out because of it”**.



**“Someone kept trying to dance with me when I told them to stop.”**



## WHERE HARASSMENT OCCURS

### ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

37 respondents talked about harassment happening on public transport or in a bus or train station, 41% in central Bristol and 21% in multiple areas. Experiences included **“A male bus driver was smiling at me and called me a lovely lady which made me uncomfortable”**, **“Often bus drivers will try it on, as well as passengers. Drivers will ignore complaints about harassment and refuse to throw men off the bus for bothering women.”** Another respondent commented on harassment happening **“at the bus stop and on the bus from Staple Hill to Fishponds. On a bus from Filton to Staple Hill. Walking along Fishponds High Street. Walking in the centre of Bristol. Evening or night buses from the centre. Anywhere and everywhere.”**

## WHEN HARASSMENT OCCURS

**76% of people experienced street harassment during the day**

**58% of people experienced street harassment during the evening**

**47% of people experienced street harassment late at night**

**19% of people experienced street harassment early in the morning**

**“I was walking along Gloucester Road on my way to work one morning when a guy starts trying to talk to me. I carry on walking but he continues to walk alongside me and asks me for a hug. I say no but he asks me again at least 10 times before he gives up. Why was one no not enough?”**

## PICTURE OF HARASSERS

There did not seem to be a typical profile of a harasser, as one respondent commented **“They are all ages, races, sober, drunk, aggressive, creepily staring etc. The only thing they have in common is they are all men.”** 98% of respondents reported that their harassers were male. There was no particular typical age of harassers, as one respondent commented **“A range from about 13 to 65+”**.

A few respondents mentioned incidents with groups of men connected to drinking alcohol and sports matches. For example, **“Sometimes it is one man but often it is two or more, so it definitely feels like harassing and abusing women is more for the benefit of other men than anything else. Your abuse is a hilarious way for them to impress each other.”** Although another respondent commented **“Men sometimes harass in groups but usually the scariest ones with real intent are lone individuals. They always have this smug smile and you can tell before they speak what their intentions are (if you're a woman you know the one).”**

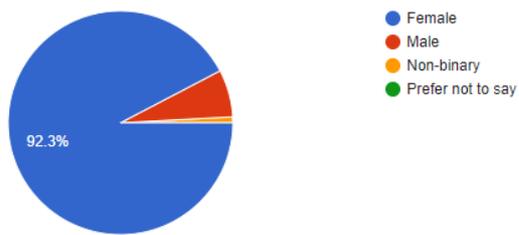
# STOP STREET HARASSMENT



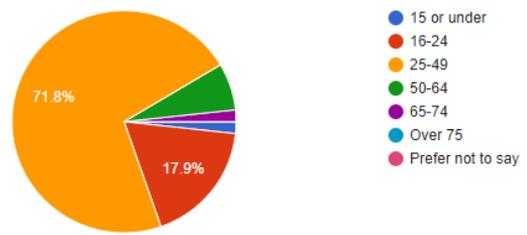
## PICTURE OF RESPONDENTS

92% of respondents were female, 8 identified as male and 1 as non-binary, 20 identified as having a gender identity different to the one they were assigned at birth. 72% were aged between 25-49 with 18% between 16-24, 8 people were 50-64, 2 were 65-74 and 2 were 15 or under. 10 respondents considered themselves disabled. 77% of respondents identified as white British, 11% as any other white background and 3% as any other mixed background and 3 people chose 'prefer not to say'. The majority of respondents who gave their postcode came from BS5 (28), 13 from BS6, 12 from BS3, 11 from BS2, 9 from BS7, 7 from BS8 and 7 from BS4, 6 from BS16, 3 from BS1, 2 from BS10, BS13 and BS14, and one from BS11, BS34 and BS40.

What is your gender?  
117 responses



Which age group do you belong to?  
117 responses

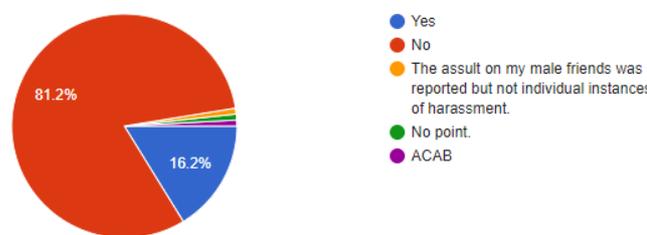


## REPORTING TO THE POLICE

81% of people had not reported the harassment they experienced to the police. 23 respondents had reported and had had a range of experiences including no response to the report, or issues with collecting evidence, witnesses and finding the perpetrator, to keeping a record, taking statements and calling back depending on the incident. Those who reported flashing or public masturbation tended to have a positive police response. However, people had also had negative experiences with the police, comments included **“I didn't report it because I felt it likely no one would care”, “I was not taken seriously. Nothing happened”, “End up feeling worse because it attracts more attention and leaves me feeling insecure and even more vulnerable. The perpetrators often start acting up even more when they can see the police have been called.”**

There were also some positive experiences, for example **“Police went round and had a word with the staff at the garage and at the car wash next door. It never happened again”, “I reported harassment to the Police in a former job role. I made a statement. I decided to keep the statement on record to take forward if there were further incidents. I changed my work mobile phone number. The best approach was to ignore the person and not respond to any messages/calls.”**

Have you ever reported street harassment to the Police?  
117 responses





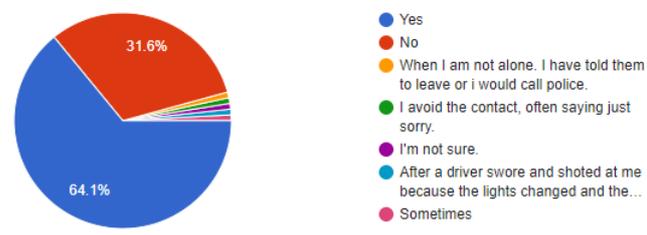
### RESPONDING TO HARASSMENT

64% of respondents said that they had responded to harassment but 32% had not. Typically, a response has led to an aggressive or violent response or an escalation of the abuse. For example: **“Sometimes I shout at them and they respond with 'fuck off you slag' or words to that effect”, “I was spat at. Another time I narrowly avoided being punched”, “They became aggressive and shouted”, “Violent assault on male companions, verbal assault”, “Ordinarily it is not safe to respond because acknowledging the harassment always makes it worse”, “Usually they get defensive, angry, annoyed, call you more names or aggressively say it’s just a compliment”, “Just shouted obscenities back or made rude gestures. Nothing productive came out of it”, “He threatened to smash my face in!”, “I always respond to people who make anti-queer/trans comments but find people get quite aggressive and it can 'provoke' them further”, “They swear at me. Ignore I said anything. Drive off. Beep their horn”, “I was then threatened with direct violence”.**

One respondent commented that **“ignoring them only seems to encourage louder or more vulgar comments/gestures. And in some instances has made one or two of the men come up to me to try and start a conversation. I once asked a group to 'please stop as I wasn't interested' and although it only served to stop the vulgar tone of the comments, it just made them more eager to talk to me when I wasn't interested or in a hurry to get somewhere.”**

**“I have often shouted at men who have harassed me as a defence, so that other people will see or hear what’s going on, I've told men and boys its unacceptable and on occasion tried to reason with them. Often they are defensive and aggressive in return which is unsurprising. Sometimes they'll laugh... The most common response when I was younger at least was always, 'don't flatter yourself'... This is the most damaging thing a harasser can say in my opinion, over time you begin to feel as though you are flattering yourself, and that by speaking to others about it, you're almost bragging.”**

Have you ever responded to a harasser?  
117 responses



Some responses have been positive, for example **“When a man driving a scaffolding truck started following me and making weird noises at me, I took note of the company named on his truck and rung the company's number. The wife of his boss answered the phone and I explained what happened to her. She was appalled and said she would talk to her husband who would deal with them. I hope at the very least he will have learnt that such actions have repercussions.”**



### HACK A HECKLE DATA

Bristol Zero Tolerance also worked with the campaign group Hack A Heckle who also conducted surveys around Bristol on gender-based harassment – [www.hackaheckle.org.uk](http://www.hackaheckle.org.uk)

70 people responded to surveys during the Bristol Harbour Festival 21st-23rd July 2017. Three people were aged between 11-15, 13 were aged between 16-20, 17 were aged between 21-24, 35 were aged 25+ and three did not give their age. 50 respondents identified as female, 15 identified as male, one as non-binary, one as 'other', one as trans-masc gender fluid, and two did not identify their gender. 53 respondents identified as British, two identified as black, 3 identified as Asian, 6 identified as having mixed heritage, 3 identified as non-British and 4 did not answer the question.



### WHERE TO GET SUPPORT:

These findings showed that 41 respondents would not know where to go for support if they were harassed. 17 said they would know where to go including to friends and family, teachers, security staff in a venue, and managers or HR in a work context. 7 people said they would go to the police.

**"I was spat at. Another time I narrowly avoided being punched."**

This data has been used to create proposals for action on this issue which were presented to relevant stakeholders and groups at a roundtable meeting during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2017 leading to an action plan on improving safety in Bristol.

Bristol Zero Tolerance have created a toolkit for those experiencing street harassment, whether or not they want to report to the police, as well as those who may be bystanders, on how they can intervene safely. Available at: [www.bristolzerotolerance.com/get-involved/bristol-street-harassment-project](http://www.bristolzerotolerance.com/get-involved/bristol-street-harassment-project)



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Working in partnership with Bristol's 5 other equality forums, as **BEING** (Bristol Equalities Influencing & Networking Group)