

SAFER STEPS

2026

TOWARDS A FEMINIST CITY: SAFETY,
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND WOMEN'S
HUMAN RIGHTS



This report is a result of consultation with women, desktop research and the continuing development of the project.

Wise Women would like to thank all of the women who have contributed to our work over the years.

We would not be able to achieve our aims without your input.

Vision Statement

“Wise Women is a feminist organisation that continues to fight the oppression all women and girls experience in everyday life. We challenge society’s attitudes towards women by encouraging and supporting women to express themselves, recognise common experiences and take action for change.”

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MARCH 2026

1. Introduction

Wise Women

Wise Women was established in 1994 to “... address women’s fears of crime and violence by taking positive action through self-defence and personal safety courses.”

In 2021 Wise Women coordinated a women’s safety survey in Glasgow. There were over 600 contributions to this online survey. Significantly women identified that they restricted their movements to avoid unsafe situations.

Following the findings Wise Women worked in partnership with a variety of organisations, from across sectors, to consult with women on their experience of safety in areas of development. This resulted in the creation of the Safer Steps Project.

Since establishment Safety Tours are held wherever there are concerns about women’s safety due to structural and infrastructure development, areas where safety concerns have been raised or areas where partner agencies have recognised risk.

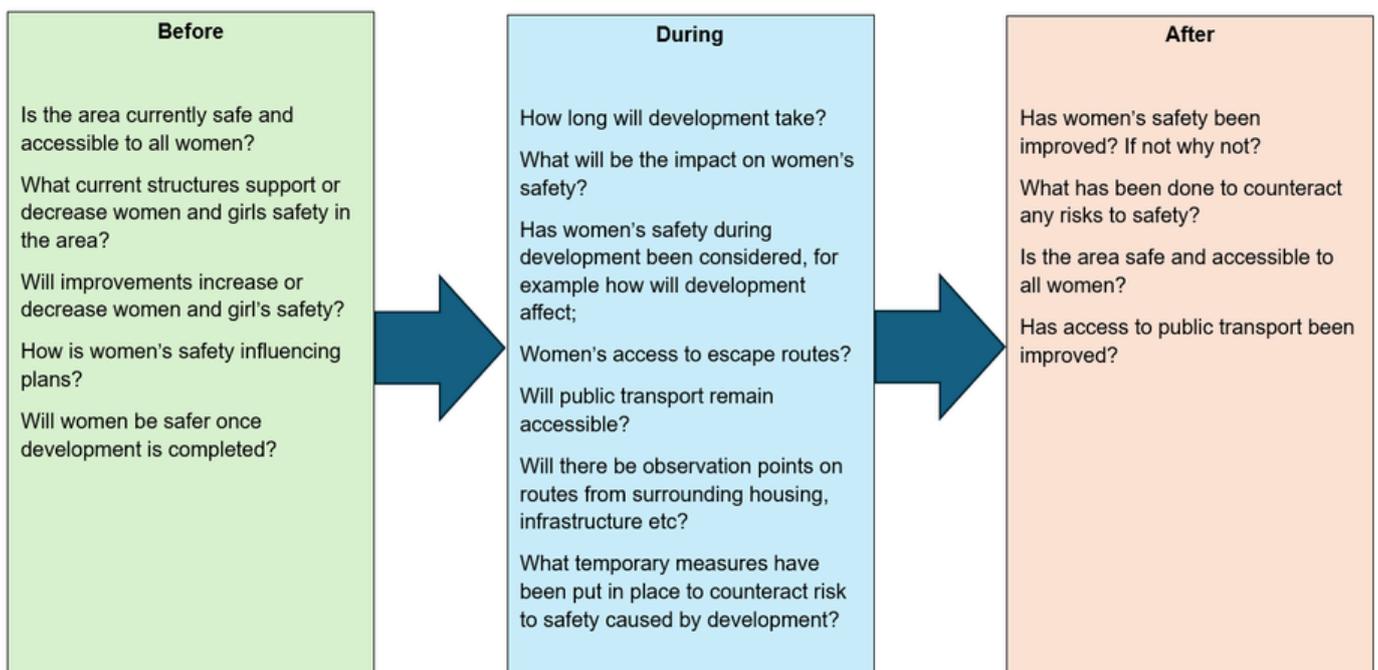
Much of the focus of these tours are on the current physical area or consultation of potential changes. Wise Women however is also concerned about the impact of the actual development itself. As one woman highlighted:

“It was a nightmare the canal being closed for 2 years. I had to walk up ----- Street, which I usually avoid because it feels unsafe.” (Participant)

Wise Women are concerned that there is little consideration of the impact of street closures and infrastructure disruption, such as changes to public transport. It is essential that planners consider not only the impact of current and future developments, but also the impact of disruption during development.

Do you avoid areas in Glasgow?

- After dark (41%)
- If alone (10%)
- Always (7%)
- On weekends (9%)
- Daytime (6%)
- Late at night (0.4%)



Scotland-specific evidence

- In 2024 - 2025, 14,892 sexual crimes were recorded by Police Scotland, representing a sustained increase over the past decade (Scottish Government, Recorded Crime Scotland 2024 / 25).
- 63,867 domestic abuse incidents were recorded in Scotland in 2023–2024; 81% involved female victims and male perpetrators (Scottish Government, Safer Communities and Justice Statistics, January 2026).
- The Scottish Crime and Justice Committee acknowledge in 2024 that only around 23% of women who experience rape report it to the police, demonstrating significant under-reporting (Scottish Government, CJ/S6/24/3/1).
- Cyber-enabled sexual crime is rapidly increasing, with 16,890 sexual cybercrimes recorded in 2023–2024, highlighting the expansion of violence beyond physical spaces (Scottish Government, Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2023 - 24) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2023-24/>.
- Girls and young women are disproportionately affected: 37% of women aged 16–21 in Scotland report frequent unwanted sexual attention in public, with 12% of girls aged 11–16 reporting the same (Scottish Government, Equally Safe 2023).

“We are concerned that the presence of a sexual entertainment venue in the area will increase this risk of harassment and abuse for women accessing public transport, including taxis. Research has shown that sexual entertainment venues have a negative impact on surrounding areas, particularly on women’s safety, Bindel (2004), Lilith Project (2002), Eden, (2007).”

Glasgow Standing Group on Violence
Against Women



2. Executive Summary

Women's freedom of movement in Glasgow is not guaranteed. Despite formal equality in law, research would suggest women and girls continue to restrict their daily lives due to the threat and reality of male violence. This report sets out clear evidence that women's safety, mobility and human rights are inseparable, and that current approaches to transport, planning and urban development are failing to meet Glasgow's commitments as a feminist city.

Based on consultation with women across Glasgow, alongside community research and lived experience gathered through the Safer Steps programme, the report demonstrates that women routinely change routes, avoid public transport, limit travel after dark, and self-exclude from public spaces. These behaviours are rational responses to unsafe environments, service disruption, poor design, and persistent gender-based violence—not individual choices or lack of confidence.

Violence against women and girls, including harassment, sexual assault, coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse, directly undermines women's freedom of movement. While Scotland places no formal legal restrictions on women's mobility, structural barriers—unsafe public transport, poor lighting, inaccessible infrastructure, lack of staff presence, and failure to consider safety during development and street closures—continue to restrict women's participation in economic, social and civic life.

Public transport and active travel are central to Glasgow's climate, equality and economic strategies, yet women report that these systems frequently compromise safety and dignity. Infrequent services, long waiting times, harassment, poorly designed cycling infrastructure and neglected walking routes disproportionately impact women, particularly those on low incomes, disabled women, carers, older women and young people. As a result, women often take longer, more expensive or less sustainable journeys to feel safer, reinforcing inequality and transport poverty.

The report highlights that women's experiences of safety are not uniform. Intersectional factors—including race, disability, age, immigration status and caring responsibilities—compound risk and exclusion. Evidence from neighbourhoods such as Govanhill shows significant gender gaps in feelings of safety, particularly when walking alone after dark. Current policy responses tend to focus on city centres, overlooking the local routes, services and neighbourhoods that shape women's everyday lives.

Key messages:

- Women's restricted movement is a systemic failure, not an individual choice.
- Safety must be designed into transport, public space and before, during and after development.
- Local neighbourhoods require the same level of attention as city-centre regeneration.
- Women's lived experience is essential evidence for effective policy and planning
- Community-led programmes like Safer Steps are critical infrastructure, not optional add-ons.

3. Why this report

This report was produced because women's freedom of movement is not guaranteed. As the women in Wise Women's survey highlighted, despite legal equality on paper, women and girls continue to shape their lives around the threat and reality of male violence. Our Safer Steps programme brings together women's lived experience, feminist analysis and urban planning to show how safety, mobility, and human rights are inseparable. A city like Glasgow cannot be equal, sustainable or accessible while half the population navigates its streets and communities under conditions of fear.

Wise Women are committed to challenging this fear, giving women the confidence and information to increase their safety and to inform strategies and services about how women's safety can be increased in the city.

Glasgow as a feminist city

In 2021 Glasgow City Council adopted a motion to declare Glasgow a feminist city. This motion agreed that;

"In order to create public spaces that are safe and inclusive for women, and accessible for all members of the community, it is fundamental that women are central to all aspects of planning, public realm design, policy and development and budgets."

The recognition of urban life as male centric is gathering pace across the globe. Glasgow is seeing major structural change in response to the climate crisis. Ensuring the voices of women residents, and in particular the most vulnerable, are heard will not only ensure greater safety for women, as required by international conventions, but will also offer women the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

"Adopting a feminist perspective in urban planning makes you be able to walk through a city and feel like in some way or another your city has been kind of shaped for you." Sorcha MacIntyre, University of Groningen.

What Glasgow as a feminist city will ultimately look like has still to be decided. We hope the women's voices in this survey will contribute to this discussion.

Equality Act

Wise Women is funded by Glasgow City Council and therefore has responsibility to support Glasgow to achieve its Equality Duty.

The three aims of the Equality Duty are;

- Eliminating discrimination.
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Advancing equality of opportunity.

This responsibility is specific, but not exclusively towards those with protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Wise Women is a violence against women service and therefore a single sex organisation. In relation to Safer Steps, it is essential have a single sex space to discuss experiences and perceptions of risks to safety to ensure not only that the project is accessible, but also to ensure the data collected is specific to women's experiences.

Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 1998 plays a significant role in protecting women's safety in Scotland by placing legal duties on the state and public authorities to prevent harm, protect life, and respond effectively to violence and abuse.

The relevant articles are:

- Article 2: Right to life.
- Article 3: Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.
- Article 4: Freedom from slavery and forced labour.
- Article 5: Right to liberty and security.
- Article 10: Freedom of expression.
- Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association.
- Article 14: Protection from discrimination.

Unless Freedom of Movement is guaranteed additional human rights are unattainable for women and girls.

- Article 23: Right to work.
- Article 24: Right to rest and leisure.
- Article 26: Right to education.
- Article 27: Right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.



CEDAW

There is an expectation that in 2026 the Scottish Government will introduce the new Scottish Human Rights bill, which will incorporate several international treaties into Scots law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The inclusion of CEDAW in Scots Law would provide the following protection for women.

1. **Violence against women = discrimination**

This would reframe women's safety as:

- A state responsibility, not just an individual issue.
- Something governments must prevent, not only respond to.

2. **Positive duties on the state**

Under CEDAW, governments must take active steps to protect women's safety, including:

- Preventing violence through education and awareness.
- Protecting women at risk (e.g. refugees, protection orders).
- Prosecuting perpetrators effectively.
- Supporting survivors with health, housing, and legal services.

3. **Due diligence standard**

CEDAW requires states to exercise "due diligence" to prevent, investigate, punish, and remedy violence against women.

This means:

- Authorities must take risks seriously.
- Repeated failures by police or courts are unacceptable.
- "Private" abuse (like domestic violence) still triggers state responsibility.

4. **Focus on structural and gendered harm**

CEDAW recognises that women's safety is affected by systemic inequality, such as:

- Economic dependence.
- Unequal power in relationships.
- Social norms that excuse or minimise violence.

Sustainable Development Goals

Women's safety is not a side issue in global development—it is foundational to sustainable development itself. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise that societies cannot be peaceful, prosperous, or sustainable while women and girls live with the constant risk of violence, abuse, and insecurity.

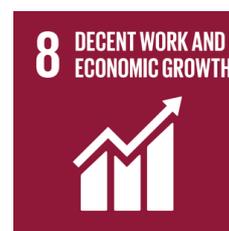
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. Exposure to violence is associated with long-term health consequences, including injury, trauma, chronic illness, and reduced life expectancy. Fear and insecurity can deter women from accessing healthcare, public spaces, or support services. Preventing violence and providing safe, trauma-informed responses are essential to achieving sustainable health outcomes for individuals and communities.

SDG 4: Quality Education and **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth. Girls who experience or fear violence are more likely to miss school or drop out altogether, while women facing harassment or abuse may be excluded from employment opportunities or unsafe workplaces. Economic participation depends on safety: without it, women's skills, labour, and leadership are systematically lost, weakening long-term development.

SDG 5: Gender Equality, which commits states to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in both public and private spheres. Violence restricts women's freedom of movement, limits access to education and work and undermines physical and mental health. Where women are unsafe, equality is unattainable. Ensuring women's safety is therefore not only a human rights obligation, but a prerequisite for meaningful gender equality.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Safe housing, transport, and public spaces determine whether women can fully participate in urban life. Cities that fail to address sexual harassment, domestic abuse, or unsafe environments reinforce inequality and exclusion. This includes providing fit for purpose housing to allow women to escape violence and abuse in a timely manner.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Highlights the role of effective laws, justice systems, and public institutions in protecting women from violence. Impunity for abuse, weak enforcement, or discriminatory practices undermine trust in institutions and perpetuate instability. Protecting women's safety strengthens the rule of law, promotes accountability, and supports peaceful societies.



4. Freedom of Movement

What is it?

Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right allowing individuals to travel, reside, work, and change location freely within their own country, as well as the right to leave any country and return to their home nation. It protects against forced relocation and is recognised internationally, notably in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Why is it not happening?

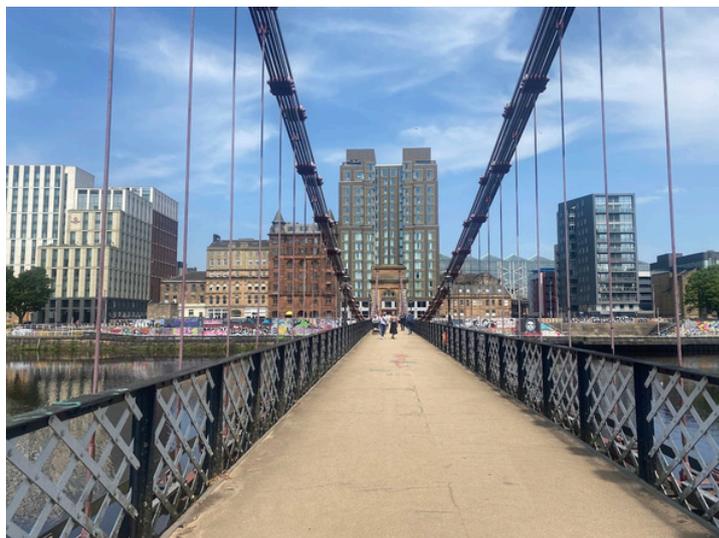
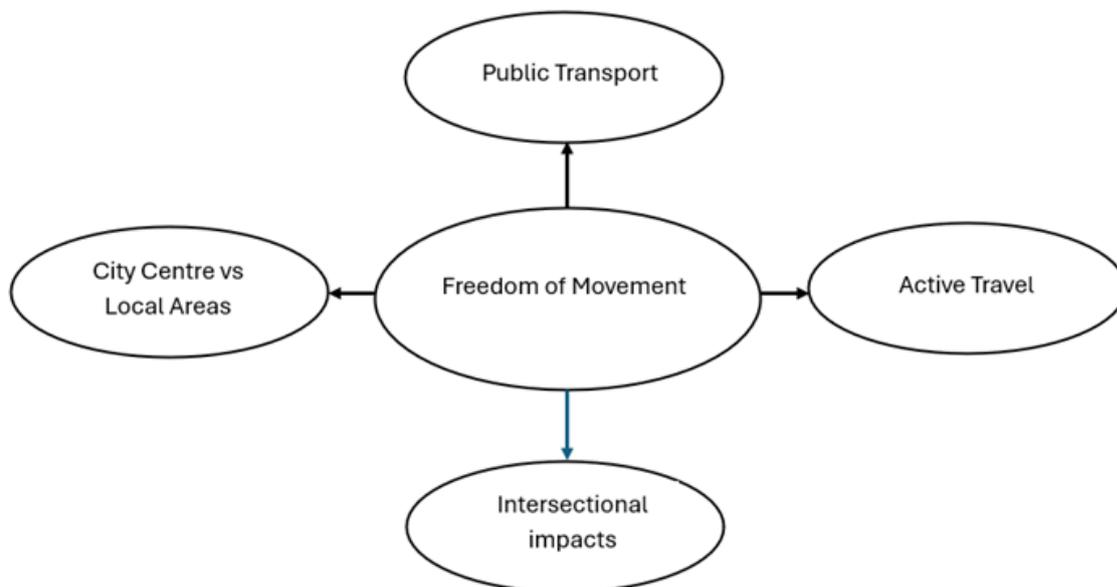
Violence against women and girls limits movement through both direct and indirect means:

- **Coercive control:** Perpetrators monitor, restrict or ban survivors' movement, isolating women from public life. Coercive control is a strategic pattern of behavior used by an abuser to dominate, isolate, and exploit a partner, stripping away their independence and creating fear, dependency, or distress. It includes and is not limited to psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse and the threat of physical abuse to harm partner, children, pets, or damage property; also using suicide threats to manipulate.
- **Digital violence:** Cyberstalking, image-based abuse and doxing extend control beyond physical spaces. Digital surveillance and coercive control, often referred to as technology-facilitated abuse (TFA) or tech-based coercive control, involve using digital tools to monitor, harass, threaten, or isolate a partner or family member. This form of abuse is a rapidly growing, often invisible, subset of intimate partner violence that extends an abuser's control into the victim's digital life 24/7. Studies indicate that up to 72% of women accessing domestic abuse services have experienced some form of technology-facilitated abuse. (<https://post.parliament.uk/technology-and-domestic-abuse/?utm/>).
- **Self-censorship and fear:** Women frequently structure and restrict their daily routines in response to the threat of gender-based violence. This may involve avoiding certain locations, limiting travel after dark, adjusting routes, modifying clothing choices, sharing live locations, or seeking accompaniment to reduce exposure to risk. These strategies represent a form of internalized self-regulation, positioning women as responsible for their own protection and resulting in constrained mobility shaped more by fear of male violence than by personal choice or opportunity.
- **Legal barriers:** Globally, women possess only around 64% of the legal rights afforded to men, with guardianship laws in some regions directly restricting their ability to travel and move freely (World Bank, Women, Business and the Law). While the UK and Scotland impose no formal statutory limits on women's freedom of movement, the absence of legal restriction does not equate to genuine mobility. Women continue to face entrenched practical and gendered barriers. Including unaffordable transport costs, heightened risks of harassment and violence on public transport, and unequal access to essential services. All of which significantly constrain their everyday mobility and autonomy.

Current issues

- Women self-excluding from public space.
- Burden placed on women to mitigate violence.
- Limited criminal justice response and low conviction rates.
- Media narratives that normalise fear rather than challenge perpetrators.
- Public spaces designed without women's needs in mind.
- Right-wing rhetoric that denies distorts and exploits women's fears of violence.
- Intersectional barriers faced by Black and minority ethnic women, disabled women, older women, and LGBTQ+ women stem from overlapping systems of discrimination. The interaction of gender with race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity produces compounded disadvantages across employment, healthcare, education, safety, political representation, and access to services.

Freedom of movement is the central point of Safer Steps aim, however through consultation with women and research Wise Women have identified 4 areas that have an impact on women realizing this human right.



5. Public Transport

Public transport is essential to women's mobility and economic independence, particularly for those on low incomes, carers, young people, and older women. It can also be a site of routine harassment and abuse.

Key issues include:

- Poor lighting and visibility at stops and stations
- Infrequent services increasing waiting times
- Lack of staff presence or meaningful reporting mechanisms
- Design that prioritises efficiency over safety and dignity
- Caring responsibilities for children, nurse and school pick-ups and taking older adults to hospital appointments

Women often choose longer more expensive or less sustainable journeys to feel safer, reinforcing inequality and exclusion.

Public Transport

"I was on a very busy late night bus home one December (pre Covid) I was with friends, we were all jam packed like sardines at the front of the bus, a stranger was behind me and was rubbing himself against me, I could tell he had an erection and was swaying back and forward as if he couldn't balance but he was essentially masturbating by rubbing against me, I had no space to move away from him."

"Coming out of the station at both of the above is concerning as there is a patch where you come under a concealed bridge and it is not particularly well lit or covered by cameras."

"The past 3 times I've got in taxis every single driver has changed the fare to be more expensive - took longer routes (as a driver I kind of know my way home from most places), made inappropriate sexual comments the last time I tried to tell a driver something he said to me "least your getting home safe" in a very threatening manner."

"Anti-social behaviour on trains, particularly men who are drunk and in groups, harassing lone women and there is no police presence, even on the busiest routes."

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(Wise Women, Reclaiming the Right, 2022)

6. Active Travel

What is active travel?

Active travel includes walking, wheeling, and cycling for everyday journeys.

Who is it for?

Active travel must serve everyone. Not only the fit, confident, or time-rich, including carers, disabled people, older women, pregnant women, and those travelling with children.

How realistic is it?

Women's lives, particularly those with few resources or who have low incomes, are shaped by time poverty, unpaid care responsibilities, shift work, and safety concerns. Unless these structural pressures are addressed, active travel initiatives risk reinforcing exclusion rather than reducing inequality.

Glasgow's Active Travel Strategy

Glasgow's Active Travel Strategy (2022–2031) aims to make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural first choice for local journeys.

Key features include:

- A city-wide network of safe, segregated routes.
- Streets redesigned to prioritise people over cars.
- Integration with public transport.
- Removal of physical barriers such as poor crossings and lack of dropped kerbs.
- Accessibility and inclusion embedded in design.

The strategy recognises that safety, dignity and accessibility are prerequisites for behaviour change. Glasgow's free public transport pilot is noteworthy. From 9th February until 29th March 1000 residents; 500 residents selected from community-based services and 500 residents who usually travel by car, received a Zonocard for free travel on most bus operators (including First Bus and Stagecoach), ScotRail, and the Glasgow Subway. The pilot will gather data on whether free transport encourages a shift away from private car use and helps address transport poverty.

We believe it is essential that the evaluation of this pilot includes women and girls experience of safety. This should include not only those who use public transport, but requires creative ways to research those who do not use public transport due to fear.

Active Travel

“Lots of aggression from male car drivers about using the 'bike lane' which is actually a poorly managed area partially segregated by 'hedgehogs' which isn't fit for purpose. Honking, threatening, close passing and then continuing aggression when I catch up to them at the lights.”

“The lighting is really poor and often doesn't work meaning commuters are forced to walk in darkness. I use my torch on my phone but it doesn't provide enough visibility to see someone approaching.”

“Feels very unsafe walking to staff car park at 10pm at the end of my shift - there is no security presence and it is a very isolated area.”

7. Intersectional Impacts

All women do not experience the city in the same way. Race, disability, age, class, immigration status and caring responsibilities compound risk and exclusion.

- Disabled women face higher rates of violence and greater physical barriers.
- Black and minority ethnic women experience racism alongside misogyny.
- Migrant women may fear reporting abuse due to immigration enforcement.
- Older women are often invisible in transport planning despite growing numbers.
- Younger women report high levels of harassment in public spaces.

Women and girls cannot be treated as a homogenous group. If Glasgow is serious about freedom of movement for all women

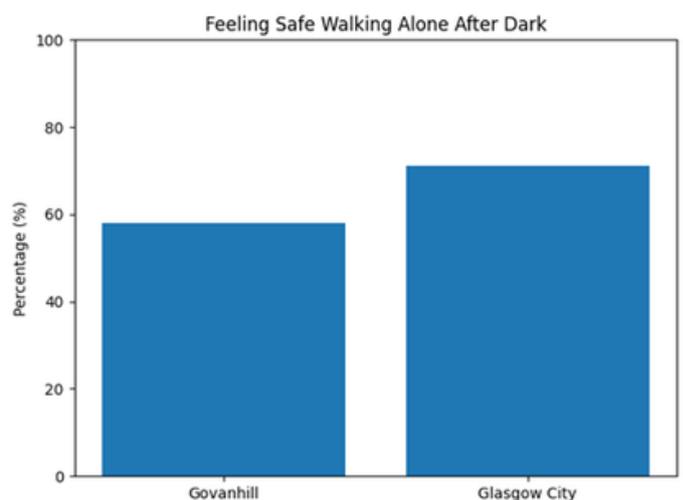
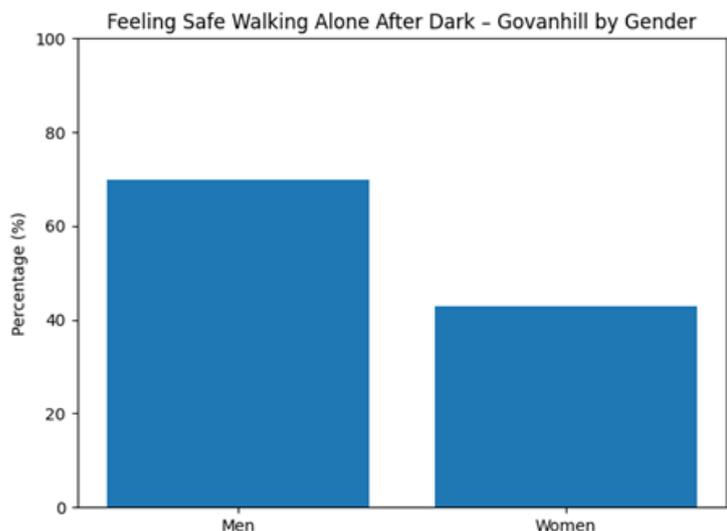
The use of pub and restaurant furniture increased during the covid lockdowns. Where this is a pleasant addition to Glasgow, particularly for tourists, this can cause major challenges for disabled women. Narrower pedestrian pathways, uneven, staged, changing surface materials on pathways and increased numbers of men indulging in alcohol in public spaces can make negotiating the city challenging.

8. City Centre vs Local Areas

Safety interventions often focus on city centres, overlooking neighbourhoods, where women live their daily lives. Local routes to shops, schools, health services and bus stops are critical.

Women's safety must be embedded across the whole city, not concentrated in flagship regeneration zones.

As evidenced by the area of Govanhill, a densely populated, culturally diverse residential district in south Glasgow. The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde 2022/23 Adult Health and Wellbeing Survey, Govanhill Glasgow Report February 2024, highlights that Feelings of Safety in Govanhill are notably lower than the Glasgow City average, particularly for walking alone after dark.



Part 4.3 – Feelings of Safety (Govanhill HSCP Report 2024)

1. Women vs Men (Gender differences).

Walking alone after dark.

- Men: 70% felt safe.
- Women: 43% felt safe.

Large gender gap (27 percentage points), with women far less likely to feel safe walking alone after dark.

2. Using local public transport.

- Men: 92% felt safe.
- Women: 84% felt safe.

Both genders report relatively high safety, but women again feel less safe than men.

3. Overall pattern.

Men consistently report higher feelings of safety than women.

The gender gap is much wider for walking after dark than for public transport, suggesting night time personal safety is a particular concern.

* This high figure of feelings of safety on public transport does not reflect the reported experiences of women using the violence against women sector. Possibly this is more reflective of the fact women use public transport during the day and not at night.



9. What we are doing - Safer Steps

Consultation with Women

Wise Women held a Hear Women's Voices 'Freedom of Movement' consultation event titled "What Every Woman Wants" on 24th August 2025 was overseen by the Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network (GWVSN) and attended by 30 women. The women gave their views on safety, access and dignity in public transport, parks and green spaces, residential communal areas, cycling and walking routes and public facilities. Women described routine avoidance behaviours, changing routes, limiting travel times, avoiding public spaces entirely due to fear and environmental neglect.

Women identified significant safety risks in public spaces linked to poor lighting, limited staff presence, unsafe transport, inconsistent policing and the general neglect of their local area. Disabled women face additional barriers due to inaccessible infrastructure for example beer gardens at front of pubs, and lack of consultation. The absence of basic amenities neglected communal areas, and poorly maintained walking and cycling routes further restrict women's mobility and increase vulnerability, reducing confidence and participation in public life.

Women's safety in public spaces is shaped not only by fear and or the experience of crime, but by design, maintenance, accessibility, and institutional response. All of which must be addressed to prevent violence against women and girls.

Wise Women consulted with the women of the Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network (GWVSN) (<http://www.wisewomen.org.uk/gwvsn>) and also utilised findings from community-based research Reclaim the Right by Wise Women to demonstrate that women in Glasgow routinely alter routes, avoid public transport, restrict travel times, and self-exclude from public spaces due to fear of harassment and violence (Wise Women, 2022).



Worldwide, women and girls fear and experience all forms of sexual violence across public and private spaces, on and offline. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified this violence, exposing it as a parallel pandemic.

In 2022, Glasgow City Council declared Glasgow a feminist city. At the same time, the city is undergoing major structural change in response to climate change and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Wise Women developed our Safer Steps programme to ensure women's voices are central to this transformation. Through engagement, audits and advocacy, Safer Steps works to increase women's safety, freedom and participation now and for future generations.

Safer Steps Overview

Safer Steps is a women-led, community-based safety programme delivered by Wise Women. The programme aims to improve women's safety in public spaces by strengthening individual confidence, capturing women's lived experiences, and ensuring those experiences directly inform local planning, environmental design and safety decision-making.

The programme responds to evidence that women experience public spaces differently from men and are more likely to feel unsafe, restrict movement, or avoid certain places, particularly after dark. Safer Steps places women's voices at the centre.

Programme Structure and Delivery Model

Safer Steps consists of three linked elements, delivered over a short, structured period:

1. Confidence Building Workshop (2 hours)

Delivered as the first session, this workshop focuses on:

- Building confidence and awareness in public spaces.
- Exploring how fear and safety concerns affect women's daily lives.
- Creating a supportive group environment where women can share experiences.

The session helps participants feel more confident, informed and prepared to engage in later programme activities.

2. Personal Safety Workshop (2 hours – one week later)

Delivered one week after the first workshop, this session focuses on:

- Personal safety awareness and practical strategies.
- Understanding risk, boundaries and situational awareness.

Strengthening women's sense of control and decision-making in public spaces.

Together, the first two workshops equip women with confidence, shared understanding and a common language around safety.

3. Safety Tour (2 weeks after workshops)

Approximately two weeks after the workshops, participants take part in a facilitated safety tour of their local area. Utilising Photo Voice, a qualitative research method, to take pictures of the area on their mobiles.

During the safety tour:

Women walk through the chosen area's streets, paths, parks or transport routes identifying environmental features that make them feel unsafe (e.g. poor lighting, blind spots, neglected areas, lack of visibility).

This is input in our 10-point safety questionnaire informed by the Public Health Scotland's Place Standard Tool (<https://publichealthscotland.scot/population-health/environmental-health-impacts/place-standard-tool-pst/application-of-the-tool/>)

Women highlight practical improvements and design solutions.

Findings from the safety tour are recorded and compiled into a report and sent to local partners and decision makers.

How the Programme Works in Practice

The area of tour will be mapped by a drone, where possible, during risk assessment phase.

Women wear a finger heart monitor and periodically record their numbers during safety tour. The heart rate figures will be collated at the end of the tour. Women's experiences are gathered through the workshops and safety tours.

Issues are mapped and documented as community-level evidence.

Findings are shared with councils, planners, housing providers and other partners.

This supports informed action such as environmental improvements, safer design and early consideration of women's safety in development plans.

Who Safer Steps Is For?

- All women and girls in Glasgow, particularly those experiencing safety concerns in their local area.
- Local authorities, planners and housing associations, seeking direct insight into how public spaces are experienced.
- VAWG and third-sector organisations, supporting prevention and community safety work.

Key Message

Safer Steps is a participatory programme that combines confidence building, personal safety and community-led environmental assessment. We work collaboratively with women to identify the barriers that comprise safety in everyday environments. The programme seeks to challenge the systems, cultures and the power imbalances that enable violence against women to persist. By embedding women's experience into planning and decision-making, the programme supports safer, more inclusive public spaces and contributes to wider Violence Against Women and Girls prevention efforts locally and nationally. Our goal is to build safer communities, amplify women's leadership and create lasting change for current and future generations of women and girls.

10. Decision Making in the City

Safer Steps aligns with:

- Place Standard Tool: embedding safety, inclusion and lived experience in place-based decisions.
- Glasgow priorities: a fairer, greener, healthier city.
- UN Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 1 No Poverty, Goal 3 Good Health & Well-being, particularly Goal 5 Gender Equality, Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities. Goal 11 Sustainable Cities lastly Goal 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions).
- Public Sector Equality Duty: eliminating discrimination and advancing equality.

11. Recommendations

1. Embed women's lived experience in all transport and planning decisions.
2. Treat violence against women as a structural barrier, not an individual problem.
3. Design public transport and active travel infrastructure around safety, dignity and care.
4. Apply an intersectional feminist lens to all data, engagement and evaluation.
5. Resource community-led programmes like Safer Steps as essential city infrastructure.
6. Shift narratives from women's responsibility to perpetrator accountability.

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