

SAFER STEPS

Wise Women Safety Tours

**Increasing Women's
Safety Together.**

Cadder Woods Tour

November 2024



1. BACKGROUND

Safer Steps

For 30 years, Wise Women has been dedicated to addressing women's fears and experiences of crime and violence by providing Personal Safety and Confidence Building courses and workshops in Glasgow communities.

Across the world, women and girls face sexual violence in many forms—ranging from verbal abuse and unwanted touching to rape and femicide. These offences occur in public spaces such as streets, schools, workplaces, public transport, and parks, as well as in digital spaces. The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns further escalated the violence and abuse experienced by women and girls.

As Glasgow undergoes major structural changes to address climate challenges and align with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals—particularly Goal 5: Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls—ensuring women's safety remains critical.

In response, Wise Women has developed the Safer Steps programme. Working in collaboration with organisations across various sectors—including Glasgow Councillors, Maryhill Housing Association, Sustrans, and Balfour Beatty, and currently with the North West Health Improvement Team on the Cadder Woods regeneration—we are actively engaging with women to ensure their voices shape decision-making processes. By doing so, we are striving to create safer environments for future generations of women and girls.

North West Greenspace Network

The North West Health Improvement (HI) Team chair a six weekly North West Greenspace Network meeting. These meetings aim to facilitate a space where local partners and agencies come together to network/share updates and form links. The Cadder Woods improvement work is one of the main agenda items. Network members include: Green Action Trust (GAT), Glasgow City Council Neighbourhood Regeneration Services (GCC), Lambhill Stables, Cadder Housing Association and many more.

Cadder Woods Improvement Work

Local partners were keen to engage with the local community regarding their current thoughts on the Cadder Woods. Community consultation took place over the summer of 2022 at Lambhill Stables. Over the course of 6 weeks and a series of consultation events, over 150 responses were received. This information was then used to support an application to The Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund. GAT submitted the application on behalf of GCC in November 2022, and were notified of the success in March 2023. Paths for All have part funded this work and Sustrans have awarded funding for the path areas, included within the work.

'Our Voice' report was produced to highlight the responses from the community engagement in 2022 and safety was a common theme throughout. In response to this, the NW Health Improvement informed the Greenspace Network about the work that Wise

Women do and set up meetings to discuss the potential of a Women's safety tour, supported by local workshops.

Meetings were held with HI, Wise Women, Lambhill Stables and GAT to identify dates/times for the work to take place. From this, the Wise Women Safety Tour was organised. Green Action Trust were very supportive of this work and were keen to integrate the responses from woman into their plans for the site.

2. ENGAGING WITH LOCAL WOMEN

Cadder Housing advertised the safety tour with local residents. Lambhill Stables engaged with parent councils, local schools and on their social media. Health Improvement also engaged with The Cadder Pensioners Group. A number of local women contacted Wise Women to say they would attend but were unable to make it on the day. This could have been due to a number of reasons, such as the time of the tour, as women have complex and busy lives. Wise Women recognise these challenges and for future tours would recommend a longer lead up to tours allowing for more publicity and engagement with groups of women.

The Cadder Safety Steps tour was completed by four women from different organisations who work in the area. Although this wasn't the target group, their input was extremely insightful.

It is Wise Women's experience that targeting women who are residents in the area who are rarely heard, e.g. through workplaces, bring additional information and insight to the tour. This is particularly relevant for women who experience multiple discrimination, such as disabled women. One example that was highlighted during this tour was that women who have attended other safety tours have relied on public transport, however the women who participated at Cadder Woods all travelled by car. This is additionally significant as the tours are not only in relation to the site itself, but how women travel to and from the area.

3. STRUCTURE OF TOUR

Prior to any safety tour, Wise Women complete a risk assessment of the proposed walking route. In the Cadder Woods safety assessment, they found a very isolated spot, with the canal on one side and a housing estate on the other. There was a tarmacked pathway, but this was overgrown and unclear. Overall the site was confusing and there were many obstacles so staff were unsure if this was the proposed path for the Tour.

On the day of the tour, the participants met at Lambhill Stables. The route to Cadder Woods from Lambhill Stables was identified by GAT. During the walk, which took approximately 45 minutes, participants were encouraged to take notes and pictures of anything that stood out to them. There was a lot of conversations amongst the group about different aspects of the Woods. The walk finished at Lambhill Stables, where participants had further discussions and completed the Safer Steps questionnaire.

4. CONTRIBUTION FROM PARTICIPANTS

Feedback from participants is included below and follows the structure of the questionnaire, using the Place Standard Tool. The Place Standard Tool is a tool utilised by a number of organisations, including Glasgow City Council and Public Health Scotland.

Wise Women has used the Place Standard Tool www.ourplace.scot/tool to evaluate the safety and inclusivity of public spaces for women and girls. However, various other frameworks also support this work, including the Human Rights Framework, which upholds protections such as Article 3 of the UK Human Rights Act—safeguarding individuals from mental or physical torture, as well as inhuman or degrading treatment. Additionally, the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, previously outlined, play a crucial role in shaping the Safer Steps programme.

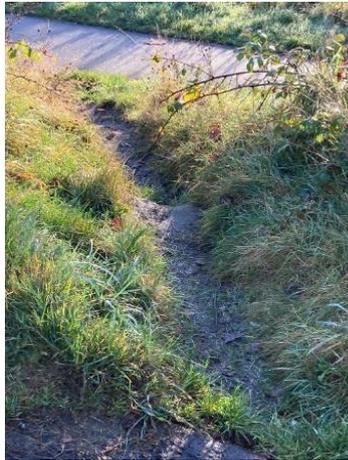


Why did you want to come on the tour	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see how the Woods can be made safer • To see the area – learn about women’s safety + what Wise Women do – meet other women to talk about their safety • Part of my placement • Explore Cadder Woods & get a sense of safety in the space • Felt it would be great to speak to likeminded women about safety in greenspaces 	<p>14 – Influence and control</p>

How safe do you feel in this area?	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the day I felt safe in the group • Felt safe in the group during day – scored 1 if alone at night • In a group of 5 women – I felt safe • Some parts feel ok others could be improved • Not very safe – overgrown paths/potholes for falls and trips 	<p>12 – Feeling Safe</p>



How easy is it for you to get here	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,1, 3,7, N/A + Avg 3 😊 • Able to drive to starting point LHStables – The route wasn't signed. I would have got lost if I hadn't been to the woods before • Some paths need to stay natural others need to be improved – signage accessibility way markings 	1 – Moving Around



Which form of transport did you use to get here?	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car x 5 	2 – Public Transport

Do you have any other comments on improving women's safety in this area?	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the paths/trees to have line of sight • Without a dog I wouldn't walk here by myself at night • Only met 1 other dog walking woman in the space – I would feel safer if more people used the space • No lighting – no signposts • Good if people knew where going – map boards signage • Clean up railway bridge/tunnel – that would put women off • Thinking about elderly, disabled or sensory impaired women 	12 – Feeling Safe

Do you have any suggestions that would improve the area or transport links?	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better paths • More lighting • Signpost/boards • Benches • Local school and nursery presence • Outdoor classes 	2 – Public Transport

Do you think the area is accessible to all women?	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No because slippery paths • Exposed tree roots • Steep path • Need handrail both sides • Not wheelchair/pram friendly • No but natural area so all paths not same level of accessibility • There are enough good quality paths 	1 – Moving Around



Have you ever experienced harassment and/or abuse in public spaces in Glasgow at any point?	Place Standard Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never x 2 out of 5. • Once – More than Once x 3 out of 5. • On numerous occasions x 3 out of 5. 	12 – Feeling Safe

FUTURE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

This project brought many challenges and opportunities with it.

Wise Women are keen to continue with engagement throughout this project, encouraging women's input as often as possible. There may be a potential to hold a future tour after phase 1 of the Cadder Project (expected June-August 2025). Prior to this, Wise Women will

engage with the NW Greenspace network to discuss possibilities to further engage with local women in more innovative ways. To continue engagement, Wise Women hope to:

- Secure future funding, which would enable Wise Women to increase their capacity to more fully engage with the project.
- Allow for more time engaging with women before any tour is prioritised. This will require increased capacity and resources.

5. Recommendations

Following the tour, a number of recommendations have been put forward to Green Action Trust to incorporate into project plans.

Site structure

There are long and short term changes required to this site. Wise Women recognises that the development of the site will improve the situation greatly, however as the public currently uses the site we would recommend the following immediate improvements, which should also be included in long term plans;

- Review of low hanging trees shrubbery to improve visibility on the site.
- Improved general maintenance of site.
- Improved accessibility on steep incline currently only handrail on one side.
- Immediate review of dangerous footpath, exposed steel poles and tree roots.

Longer term recommendations are;

- Improved signage.
- Introduction traffic measures on Balmore Road.
- Improved lighting throughout area.
- Seating/benches – for elderly and disabled women.
- Safety barrier between site and railway line.
- Increased litter bins.

There are areas of the site that are more accessible to women of all abilities and these could be used when developing the site in general.

Wise Women would like to thank the women who contributed to this project. Studies show that when public spaces are designed with input from women they become safer and more inclusive for everyone. Wise Women is committed to increasing women's safety together with colleagues from across sectors, by raising women's concerns and their suggestions for solutions.





SAFETY TOURS

POLICY

1. Background

- 1.1 Wise Women aims to improve women's safety from male violence in Glasgow. Established in 1994, Wise Women has provided Personal Safety and Confidence Building courses to women across Glasgow.
- 1.2 Although these courses have been well received, with positive feedback, the numbers of women that continue to experience violence and abuse in Glasgow has remained consistent.
- 1.3 Wise Women believes that this consistency is due to the structures around women, rather than women's personality, resilience and / or history of violence and abuse, can only be addressed by improving women's safety through structural change and by improving the protection women experience from social institutions, such as women's services, police, HSCP (Health and Social Care Partnership) and criminal justice.
- 1.4 In 2021 / 22 Wise Women, alongside partners, undertook a survey with women to capture information on the experiences of public harassment and abuse. This revealed not only women's experience of harassment and abuse, but also how they are were often left to mitigate against this by themselves, with few protections.
- 1.5 Wise Women believe that women have a key role in influencing structural change in Glasgow City and the surrounding local communities. We are committed to supporting women to have their voices heard in a variety of ways, including through Safety Tours.

2. Safety Tours

- 2.1 Wise Women Safety Tours will be open to any woman who is resident in Glasgow and is over the age of 16 years old.
- 2.2 The aim of the Safety Tours will be to support women to safely walk areas of Glasgow that have been highlighted as high risk of violence and abuse and undertake a session of consultation on their experience. Wise Women will then complete a report based on this consultation and submit to appropriate agency.

3. Planning a walk

- 3.1 Wise Women will recruit 8 women to volunteer to undertake Safety Walks. Additional participants will be attracted through social media advertising and the use of the Wise Women mailing list.
- 3.2 There will be a ratio of 1:6 for Walk Leaders and Participants. Where possible there will be 2 Walk Leaders at each group.
- 3.3 The planning of a tour should consider accessibility of the area and the availability of toilets. To assess this Tour Leaders should undertake a trial run of any walk being planned. Although, particularly during government restrictions, facilities may not be available, Wise Women will, as far as possible, inform potential participants of any access issues.
- 3.4 The beginning and end of any tour should be accessible by public transport via main streets / populated areas.
- 3.5 All travel expenses will be reimbursed to women.

4. Registration process

- 4.1 All participants must register their interest in advance of Tours to ensure numbers are not exceeded. Anyone arriving without registering will not be regarded as a member of the group and will be responsible for their own safety should they walk with the group.
- 4.2 The registration process will consist of a one-page form or registration through Eventbrite. Registration can be facilitated by Wise Women staff.
- 4.3 All registered participants will receive a pack with;
 - Participant Agreement.
 - Information on purpose of Tour, relevant partner agencies and when the final report will be available.

5. Safety Assessments

- 5.1 A Safety Assessment will be undertaken for each planned walk, see appendix 1.
- 5.2 The Safety Assessment will consider risks as they present to an adult over the age of 16 years.
- 5.3 Where risks are identified, women's independent skills will be considered in relation to options to resolve the risk.
- 5.4 The Tour Leaders will be identifiable by aluminium armbands / equipment throughout the walk.

6. Resources for each walk

- 6.1 All Tour Leaders will receive a pack with the following information included;
- A copy of this policy.
 - Hate Crime Information.
 - A copy of the relevant Safety Assessment.
 - Register of participants.
 - Photograph Permission Forms, to be used when photographs are taken for publicity purposes.
 - Hygiene products, such as hand sanitizer, masks.
 - First Aid Kit.

6. Review of Policy

- 6.1 This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.



Working to Improve Safety and Self Esteem since 1994

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