

South Gloucestershire Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Needs Assessment

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About this needs assessment

This violence against women and girls (VAWG) needs assessment has been produced by South Gloucestershire Council on behalf of the former South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership.

This needs assessment was first written in 2023 by authors listed below. It was reviewed again in July 2025 and a decision made to publish the chapter with a small number of edits rather than a full data review. To our knowledge, where more up-to-date data now exists, the conclusions drawn from their analysis would be very similar to that concluded in 2023. In other words, the available data nor context has not changed significantly to warrant delay in publication of this important body of intelligence to wider partners.

The creation of this needs assessment has been informing and continues to inform strategic work and action planning for South Gloucestershire around prevention of violence against women and girls, and the feedback and input from residents is invaluable in shaping this process. We are grateful to the local individuals and organisations who shared their stories with us and to those who participated in the surveys and engagement events to facilitate this work.

With notable thanks to South Gloucestershire Council's Community Safety team and Communications team for their support with local consultation and engagement activities, and to Plymouth County Council for sharing the details of their VAWG survey.

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Background context

The South Gloucestershire context

[South Gloucestershire's Community Safety Partnership.](#)

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Police Reform Act 2002 made statutory requirements for responsible authorities to work in partnership to deliver strategies that help to tackle local disorder and crime, in turn creating safer communities.

South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership (the SSCSP) was a multi-agency partnership group which served this function until May 2025. As both the 'Safer and Stronger' elements of the partnership had grown substantially, including a significant addition in the number of statutory duties placed on Community Safety Partnerships nationally, it was decided that the South Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership be dissolved, and separate Community Safety and Stronger Community structures be developed in its place.

The new South Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Executive Board was established in June/July 2025 and is responsible for exercising the statutory duties of the Community Safety Partnership within South Gloucestershire as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The primary purpose of the new Community Safety Partnership is to oversee the successful implementation and delivery of the South Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership strategy 2025 – 2028, that supports the development of safer communities within South Gloucestershire. The Executive board will consist of the five statutory partners as directed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998: Police, Fire and Rescue Services, Local Authority, Probation and Health (ICB). The Police and Crime Commissioner and Avon & Somerset Constabulary will work closely together to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and offending in South Gloucestershire. This involves protecting local residents by preventing these behaviours, not just responding when offences have been committed.

In addition, other community safety partners will attend meetings and support the work of the Partnership.

Priorities

The role of the Partnership is to provide strategic direction and leadership on wider issues and priorities identified and led by local need. The Partnership has identified four strategic priority areas which have been selected based on crime data, the impact on our communities and the strategic priorities of our partners in relation to crime and disorder. All align with the [Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2024-2029](#).

The priorities are:

- Taking Action against Serious Violence
- Responding to Community Based Crime and Disorder
- Supporting those most vulnerable to crime
- Tackling Offending

This document will focus on violence against women and girls (VAWG). The work of our partnership in relation to VAWG is led by our VAWG Delivery Group. This group have developed a delivery plan which incorporates a number of actions to enable us to take action against serious VAWG crimes, respond to incidents of VAWG within our communities and identify any hot spot locations where we can prevent incidents of VAWG, support victims of VAWG and tackle the offending behaviour.

This needs assessment will be used to ensure that the delivery group are informed of any changes in the landscape and to identify any additional activities which may be missing. This information will be assessed, and any recommendations will be fed into the VAWG delivery group to identify any actions which may need to be taken over 2025 – 2028.

South Gloucestershire Prevention Programme

One-off funding from the public health grant and match funding from Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board (ICB) enabled the creation of the South Gloucestershire Prevention Fund to deliver a Prevention Programme. This programme took a 'population health approach', acknowledging that there are a wide range of determinants of health and wellbeing, many of which lie beyond the reach of health and care services, that determine the health of a population. There was an emphasis on reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing as well as improving health and wellbeing overall.

As part of this programme, and under the programme theme of 'Live Well', funding was allocated to the prevention of violence against women and girls, including the production of a VAWG needs assessment to support the next stages of strategic work.

National context and strategy

The UK Government published its latest strategy 'Tackling violence against women and girls' in 2021². The strategy outlines the need for all partners to work together to tackle VAWG including national and local government, charities, schools, colleges, universities, businesses and the private sector, local communities and others. The strategy outlines three ambitions:

- To increase support for victims and survivors
- To increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice, alongside increased reporting to police (recognising general under-reporting of VAWG crimes) and increased victim engagement with the police and wider public service response
- To reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls (longer-term decrease in the number of victims experiencing VAWG-related crimes)

The ambitions are then set to be delivered around four key themes:

Prevention

The national strategy prioritises prevention, noting the need to raise awareness and understanding of the attitudes and behaviours that underpin crimes of violence against women and girls amongst both professionals and the public. Alongside this, the strategy highlights ensuring more children and young people understand what healthy relationships and behaviour look like.

Within local work in South Gloucestershire, a focus on prevention is a central tenet of the priorities of both the new Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the previous South Gloucestershire Prevention Programme.

Supporting victims

The national strategy is committing to investment in advice and support services for victims and a new Victims' Bill consultation alongside a Victim Funding Strategy.

Pursuing perpetrators

The strategy identifies additional work to review the police management of sex offenders in the community, working with police to provide advice to enable officers to respond more effectively to street harassment, sex for rent and Stalking Protection Orders, and considering recommendations around abusive and harmful online communications.

Strengthening the system

The strategy presents the need for a whole-system approach with improved partnership working to ensure better joint working and more effective interventions. To help with this, the strategy notes the development of the MAPPS system (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) to improve management of all offenders (including registered sex offenders, domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators). Other elements of the strategy include introducing a new National Policing Lead for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, a review of the disclosure and barring regime, a new Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champion (public transport), and efforts to improve data collection.

[Government VAWG commissioning toolkit](#)

The Government have produced a toolkit¹ using findings from their 2020/21 Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence. The toolkit provides advice for how commissioning services to tackle VAWG can be done to best effect. As with other Government guidance in the sphere of VAWG, it does lean towards an emphasis on domestic abuse and violence, so the key points highlighted here need to be understood within this context.

The toolkit advocates for a whole system approach amongst professionals and agencies, local and national Government, charities and others. It also recognises certain groups or sub-populations of victims and survivors who, by nature of compounded multiple inequalities alongside social exclusion and marginalisation, may require specific consideration in the commissioning of services, these include:

- Those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Those with disabilities (including deafness)
- LGBTQ+ people
- Women with insecure immigration status, no recourse to public funds and migrants

The toolkit recommends undertaking a needs assessment to understand the local VAWG landscape, demographics of the population and estimated levels of need and an understand

¹ Home Office (Gov.uk). (2022). Violence against women and girls services: commissioning toolkit. Available at: [Commissioning services to tackle violence against women and girls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-services-commissioning-toolkit)

of local specialist services and the current offer. This combined will help to identify gaps in provision.

It recommends undertaking a separate provision mapping exercise to understand existing provision of both commissioned and non-commissioned services as part of the commissioning cycle. Alongside this, mapping of service spend should be undertaken to help identify opportunities for joint commissioning and pooling of budgets.

The guidance recommends the establishment of a VAWG joint commissioning group, and where feasible, to involve or represent the voices of those with lived experience or those with specific additional needs or those facing additional inequalities in the process. This would support the co-production of services and allow victims and survivors to contribute in a meaningful and empowering way.

[Government guidance: Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations](#)

Alongside the strategy and commissioning toolkit, the Government have produced a National Statement of Expectations² which sets out how local areas should commission effective services to facilitate a whole-system response to VAWG. Whilst much of the guidance again focuses upon domestic abuse, its central tenets are applicable to wider instances of VAWG, particularly around support for victims and survivors.

The expectation is that local strategies and services will:

- Put the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery
- Have a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims and survivors safe
- Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG
- Be locally led and safeguard individuals at every point
- Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG

A summary of the expectations for commissioners is below (focusing primarily on the actions that relate to wider community VAWG as opposed to domestic abuse and violence), with further detail in Appendix 1. A number of actions relate to the undertaking of a local VAWG needs assessment and as such they are not included here in this list:

1. Put the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery
2. Have a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims and survivors safe
3. Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG
4. Be locally led and safeguard individuals at every point
5. Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG

² Home Office (Gov.uk). (2022). Guidance: Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations. Available at: [Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-national-statement-of-expectations)

National campaigns

A number of national campaigns on the topic of VAWG have been delivered over recent years. As discussed previously, many of the campaigns focus upon domestic abuse and violence but some have a wider remit, or the content is applicable to the broader VAWG context which would include 'community' VAWG. Major campaigns are highlighted below:

Enough campaign

The Government's current '[Enough](#)' campaign aims to make a cultural shift in perceptions of VAWG and to encourage and empower individuals who witness instances of VAWG to intervene safely. It suggests four simple ways to step in safely: say something; tell someone; offer support; and provide a diversion. Resources include social media assets, videos, posters and internal communications assets.

The resources have been used and shared by various members of the South Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership.

16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence

This campaign aims to bring attention to gender-based violence and to increase awareness and understanding. It focuses on prevention, identification of and approaches to tackle the root causes and to transform the harmful social norms around the topic. Several members of the Partnership have engaged with the campaign and have made use of available resources and information to raise awareness.

End Violence Against Women campaigns

The End Violence Against Women Coalition brings together frontline support services, survivors and researchers and is trying to drive change through campaigning and policy shaping. They have a number of campaigns including 'School: It's About Time Things Changed' tackling the sexual harassment and assault girls are experiencing, and 'End Online Abuse', a campaign to reform laws relating to online abuse such as cyberstalking, sexual harassment and grooming for exploitation.

White Ribbon campaign

The [White Ribbon campaign](#) and charity aims to engage men and boys to end violence against women and girls by tackling the root causes of the violence e.g. harmful and long-established attitudes behaviours and systems around masculinity that perpetuate gender inequality against women. Over recent years, members of the local Partnership have engaged with the campaign. South Gloucestershire Council gained White Ribbon UK accreditation in 2018.

Crimestoppers campaign 2022

To launch their report into VAWG with an emphasis on attitudes to sexual harassment, Crimestoppers developed a [campaign](#) on the topic to highlight their key findings and encourage victims and survivors to report incidents of VAWG.

Effects of VAWG on individuals and communities

The consequences of VAWG are wide ranging with a profound impact on the victims, survivors and their loved ones. The impact of VAWG can lead to the loss of life (through homicide or suicide), short and long-term health and wellbeing impacts and damage to the future of victims through isolation, inability to work, lack of participation and other issues.

There are wider effects for society by curtailing values of freedom and equality, and social and economic costs including public expenditure on managing and investigating cases and supporting victims and survivors³. It was estimated that providing public services to victims of VAWG, alongside the lost economic output of affected women, costs the UK a minimum £74 billion annually². This figure focuses primarily on instances of domestic abuse and is likely to be an underestimate given known under-reporting of incidents of VAWG. High profile cases in the media such as the death of Sarah Everard have brought VAWG into sharp focus and have demonstrated continued and growing concern amongst communities.

Health impacts

Violence can negatively affect the physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health of women and girls. Figure 1 indicates some of the health effects of violence on women⁴. Whilst the model focuses upon intimate partner violence, the impacts are very similar for a much broader range of VAWG incidents including those occurring in the community:

³ WHO. (2021). Violence against women. Available at: [Violence against women \(who.int\)](#)

⁴ WHO et al. (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. *Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organisation*. Available at: [Global and regional estimates of violence against women \(who.int\)](#).

provision and concludes with recommendations for priorities and action. An important part of this is the gathering of local intelligence through engagement with South Gloucestershire residents and organisations.

Limitations

It is important to note some key limitations identified during the development of this needs assessment:

Limited data was available regarding incidents of VAWG across South Gloucestershire. Data is held by Avon & Somerset Police on reported and recorded incidents of VAWG but much classification of these incidents as VAWG is a manual process; and data are only collected on incidents that are reported to the police. It is reasonably expected that there is considerable under-reporting of VAWG across the full spectrum of VAWG-related crimes and incidents. Therefore, any data included here is to be considered an under-estimate of the total number of incidents and a reflection of only that which is recorded. It is also representative of reported crime only and does not note if the incidents progressed further through the criminal justice system nor the outcomes of investigation.

It is acknowledged that some population groups may be less likely than others to report instances of VAWG for a range of reasons including cultural, religious or other beliefs. Some demographic groups or communities may therefore be further under-represented in the data.

Whilst we believe the data and intelligence used here is the most up to date available or has changed only marginally since the time of writing, 2 years have passed between authorship and publication which could present small limitations for its applicability to all areas of related work. The intelligence in this needs assessment has been used to influence the strategic work of the new Community Safety Partnership during this 2-year period. It is assumed that the wider benefit to partners of publishing this work outweighs any small risk of the data not being applicable, and it is this which drives us to publish it now in 2025.

Aims and objectives

The overarching purpose of the needs assessment is to produce an overview of the estimated prevalence and scale of VAWG incidents in South Gloucestershire, the provision in place to meet the needs of residents in relation to these incidents, and to identify actions required to prevent and reduce future incidents of VAWG in the locality. Specifically, there are these aims and objectives.

Aims:

- To highlight inequalities in the experiences of residents with regards to VAWG and identify areas for targeted work or intervention.
- To support the VAWG work programme to improve overall outcomes for all local residents including preventing and reducing instances of VAWG in the first place.

Objectives:

- To collate and analyse local data on VAWG including incidents reported to Avon & Somerset Police for South Gloucestershire and other locally collated data
- To review the evidence around interventions and good practice to help tackle or prevent VAWG in communities
- To map current services and local assets to support victims of VAWG and local interventions to prevent and respond to VAWG
- To engage local individuals, communities and organisations on the topic of VAWG to gather evidence around local priorities and views.
- To produce recommendations that will support strategic work and action to address VAWG as part of community safety in South Gloucestershire

Scope of work

At the outset of the production of this needs assessment, the scope and included demographics were agreed. These are indicated below:

Defining Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The Government's definition of VAWG⁵ covers a range of unacceptable and deeply distressing crimes:

“Violence against women and girls’ refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and ‘honour’ killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online.’

Whilst it is recognised that men and boys can also be victims of these crime types, it is noted that these crimes disproportionately affect women and girls and this needs assessment is conducted within this context.

Exclusion of domestic violence and abuse and focus on ‘community’ VAWG

In 2022 South Gloucestershire produced a needs assessment, strategy and action plan on the topic of domestic violence and abuse. In order to avoid duplication and to clarify boundaries, it was decided that this needs assessment would focus on the ‘community’ element of VAWG i.e. violence and abuse that takes place outside of the home and/or not by domestic partners. This needs assessment does not therefore focus or specifically include domestic abuse, though there are instances of cross-over. The South Gloucestershire domestic violence and abuse strategy 2022-2024 can be found here: <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/domestic-abuse>. There is now work underway to redo a full Avon and Somerset Domestic Violence and Abuse needs assessment to inform a new strategy for 2025.

This needs assessment aligns with Avon & Somerset Constabulary's definition of VAWG (with the omission of domestic violence & abuse and related crimes), which reflects the national Government's definition and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Acts of violence or abuse that concern women and girls
- Rape and other sexual offences
- Stalking and harassment
- Serious violence, homicide and violence with injury
- Public fear, alarm or distress
- Exploitation of prostitution
- Online acts of abuse including pornography

This work has been undertaken at a South Gloucestershire level to allow a local lens to be applied to the topic of VAWG.

⁵ UK Government. (2021). Tackling violence against women and girls strategy. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

Gender

This work has focused on women and girls as indicated by gender and those identifying as women and girls. It is recognised that trans people are more likely to experience violence and abuse than others⁶. It was agreed that it was important that local data collection should include reports by, and information from, those who identify as women and girls and gender was identified as the preferred characteristic over sex.

Whilst it is recognised that men and boys can be victims of all the aforementioned crime types, in line with national Government strategy this needs assessment, and the future strategy and action plan is focusing on violence against women and girls including trans women and trans people.

Age

This needs assessment spans all age groups. Whilst the local engagement and survey work was not specifically directed at children and young people (please see section 'Engagement with the local population' for reasoning for this), instances of VAWG across all age groups have been considered alongside evidence, best practice and interventions across the life course.

Location

This work has focused on those living or working in South Gloucestershire as defined by the unitary authority area. It is recognised that residents live their lives across local authority boundaries and there may be instances where issues cut across these borders.

⁶ Arayasirikul et al. (2022). A global cautionary tale: discrimination and violence against trans women worsen despite investments in public resources and improvements in health insurance access and utilization of health care. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 21 (32).

Analysis of need

National data

The Crime Survey for England and Wales: trends in VAWG

The Crime Survey for England and Wales provides the best estimate of prevalence for several VAWG crimes, including stalking, rape, indecent exposure and unwanted touching. Data shows that the prevalence of these crimes has remained broadly the same since 2008/09. However, the data does not cover other crime types such as revenge porn.

Some key statistics can be identified from an Office of National Statistics (ONS) analysis⁷ (using the Crime Survey for England and Wales amongst other sources) into the lasting impact of violence against women and girls in 2021. Whilst this data is not broken down to local authority level, it is not unreasonable to assume similar prevalence and incidence of VAWG and sexual violence in South Gloucestershire.

- In the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that **3% of women aged 16 to 74 years in England and Wales experienced sexual assault (including attempts) and 5% experienced stalking**. The figures had remained similar over the previous 10 years.
- In June 2021, the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey⁸ showed that **around a third (32%) of women over the age of 16 years in Great Britain had experienced at least one form of harassment in the last 12 months**. Women aged 16 to 34 years were more than twice as likely (65%) to have experienced harassment in the last year than women aged 35 years and over.
- Of women who were victims of rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) since the age of 16 years, the crime survey, year ending March 2017 and year ending March 2020 combined, estimated **63% reported mental or emotional problems and 10% reported that they had tried to kill themselves as a result**.
- In June 2021, the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey showed that **89% of women** in Great Britain who had experienced harassment said they felt **“very or fairly unsafe” walking on their own after dark** in a park or other open space.
- 1 in 4 women (25%) who were victims of rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) before the age of 16 years told someone about the abuse at the time. **More than half (56%) gave embarrassment as a reason for not telling someone, and just under half (48%) said they did not think anyone would believe them**.
- **Fewer than 1 in 6 female victims of rape** aged 16 to 59 years who had experienced rape since the age of 16 **reported it to the police**⁹.

⁷ Office for National Statistics (ONS). (2021). The lasting impact of violence against women and girls. Available at: [The lasting impact of violence against women and girls - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/ethnicity/articles/the-lasting-impact-of-violence-against-women-and-girls)

⁸ ONS. (2022). Opinions and Lifestyle survey: Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment. Available at: [Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/articles/perceptions-of-personal-safety-and-experiences-of-harassment-great-britain)

⁹ ONS. (2021). Crime Survey for England and Wales: Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales, year ending March 2020. Available at: [Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/articles/nature-of-sexual-assault-by-rape-or-penetration-england-and-wales) [nb. Data is for the year ending March 2017 and year ending March 2020 combined].

Additional inequalities analysis using the Crime Survey for England and Wales¹⁰:

- Amongst adults aged 16 to 74 in the year ending March 2020, **disabled people were more than twice as likely to have been victims of domestic abuse, stalking or rape than people without a disability.**
- Individuals from ethnic minority groups may be more likely to be a victim of some types of VAWG. For example, for the year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020 combined, those in the **Black or Black British and Mixed ethnic groups were more likely than those in the White, Asian or Other ethnic groups to experience sexual assault.**
- **Gay, lesbian or bisexual people were more likely to be victims** of stalking, sexual violence and rape than heterosexual people.

Young peoples' attitudes towards VAWG

The ONS analysis also looked at attitudes towards VAWG and evidence on prevention:

1. An OFSTED report published in 2021 investigated sexual abuse in schools. It found nearly **90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens “a lot or sometimes”** to them or their peers.
2. Children and young people said sexual harassment occurs so frequently that it has become “commonplace”. **92% of girls and 74% of boys said sexist name-calling happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers.** The frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal.
3. A 2017 survey on girls' attitudes¹¹ found **a quarter of young women (aged 18 to 21 years) believed sexting is normal in a relationship**, and 16% said they had felt pressure to send a nude picture.

Demographic risk factors of victims/survivors

The Government's VAWG strategy² highlight that there are some demographic characteristics that make it more likely for an individual to be a victim of VAWG. Using the Crime Survey for England and Wales data, these include:

- **Disability:** disabled people were more than twice as likely to have been victims of domestic abuse, stalking or rape than people without a disability
- **Sexual orientation:** gay, lesbian or bisexual people were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse, stalking, sexual violence and rape than heterosexual people
- **Age:** For domestic abuse, sexual assault, rape and stalking those aged 16-19 and 20-24 were more likely to be victims of these crimes than any other age group. This difference across age groups is particularly apparent for sexual assault, where 12.9% of women aged 16-19 and 10.5% of women aged 20-24 had been a victim in the last year compared to 3.2% of women aged 25- 34, the next highest group.

¹⁰ ONS. (2021). Crime survey for England and Wales: Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics. Available at: [Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/sexualoffences/articles/sexualoffencesprevalenceandvictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/2021)

¹¹ Girlguiding. (2017). Girls' attitudes survey 2017. Available at: www.girlguiding.org.uk

The strategy reports that evidence around ethnicity and likelihood of being a victim of VAWG is less clear.

Violence against women and girls in public spaces

Further data from the Government's national strategy² highlights the following:

- A 2018 survey showed that as many as **38% of young girls aged 14 to 21 have experienced verbal harassment, including sexual comments in public places, at least once a month.**
- The Crime Survey for England and Wales (2022) indicated that **young people are more likely to experience rape or serious sexual assault in a public space** compared to their older counterparts. 9% of those aged 16 to 19 years who experienced sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts) since the age of 16 were victimised in a park or open public space compared to 2% of victims aged 25-34.

Violence against women and girls online and in digital spaces

- A 2017 survey¹² relating to online abuse or harassment of women aged 18-55 years found that in the UK, **21% of respondents had experienced abuse or harassment online at least once.** 18% of these women said that they had received abuse or harassment from a current or former partner, and **59% that they had received abuse from someone that they did not know personally at all.**

Local data

This section covers what we know and understand about the population, and it in South Gloucestershire and their experience of violence against women and girls.

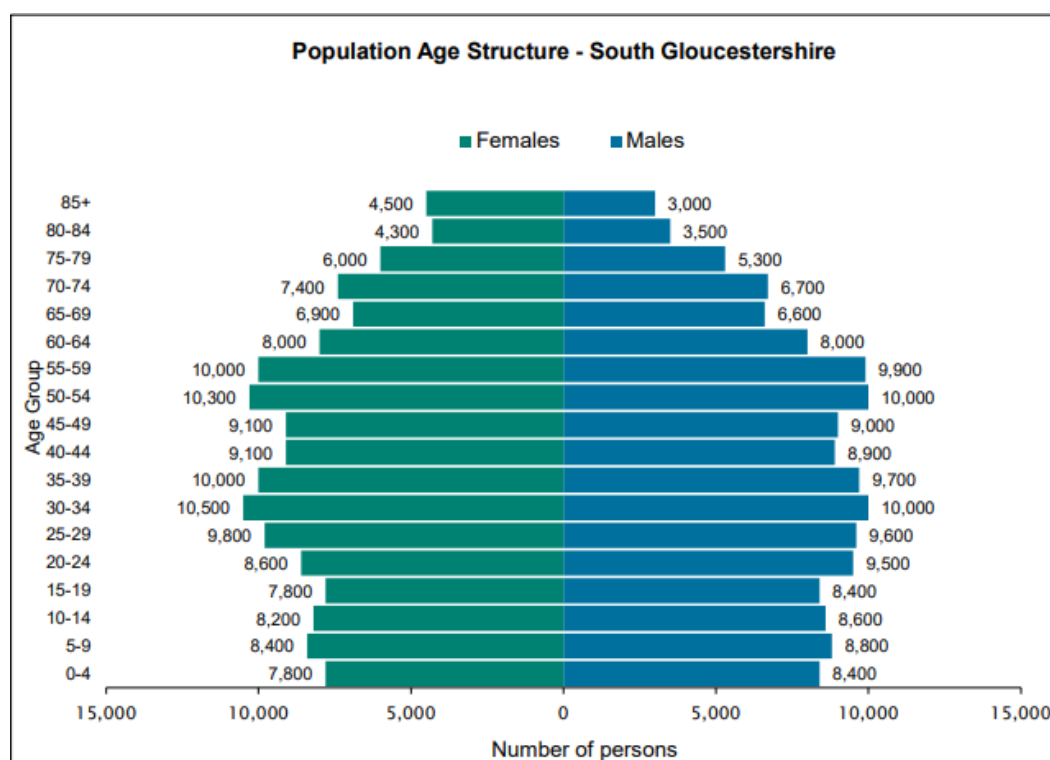
Background: key demographics – the population of South Gloucestershire (2021 Census)

As of the 2021 Census¹³, the population estimate for South Gloucestershire is 290,423. 51% of the population recorded their sex as 'female', and 0.39% of people aged 16 years or over identified that they have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. The median age of residents is 40 years (this varies considerably across wards). 92% of the population identifies as 'White' (incorporating several White ethnic identities). The population's age structure is illustrated as below in Figure 2.

¹² Ipsos Mori. (2017). Online abuse and harassment. Available at: [Online abuse and harassment | Ipsos](#)

¹³ See analysis by South Gloucestershire Council: <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/census>

Figure 2 South Gloucestershire's population age structure using 2021 Census data



Source: South Gloucestershire Council (2022): <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/census>

VAWG data sources

Very few national VAWG data sources are broken down to local authority level. ONS Centre for Crime and Justice were contacted regarding their VAWG data landscape¹⁴ which provides a comprehensive list of data sources relating to VAWG (including non-ONS sources) but these are unfortunately not analysed at sub-national level. Sexual offences and domestic abuse data is available at police force area level but this does not allow us to extract South Gloucestershire level data. There is an analysis produced at Community Safety Partnership level which provides an overview of headline recorded crime data, but it does not show if victims are female.

There are therefore only a small number of data sources that help to build a picture around local incidence or prevalence of community VAWG (in comparison there are a greater number of data sources available for domestic abuse and violence). Unfortunately, as is well-documented, many more instances go unreported (at all ends of the spectrum for VAWG incidents) than those that make it through formal reporting processes and this under-reporting means that any data presented here is likely to be a fraction of the true incidence and prevalence of community VAWG across South Gloucestershire.

It is recommended that the data included here is viewed as an indication only of the reported cases of VAWG and that the figures are not therefore representative of all the cases of community VAWG. It is notable that some communities and population groups may be less

¹⁴ ONS. (2022). Violence against women and girls: data landscape. Available at: [Violence against women and girls: Data landscape - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/violenceabuseanddomesticabuse/articles/violenceagainstwomenandgirls/datalandscape)

likely to report instances of VAWG due to cultural, religious or other beliefs or because they are concerned that they will not be believed or there may be repercussions from the reporting¹⁵¹⁶. Reports of volume do not correlate with level of harm, however police and other data regarding reporting of incidents of VAWG may assist in allowing resources to be deployed effectively to support those individuals and areas in need.

A series of local data sets are considered below which include:

- Data provided by Avon & Somerset Police
- Data from the South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey 2021
- StreetSafe reporting

Bespoke data collected via surveys and engagement events with local residents and organisations are considered later in this report.

Other data were requested from local organisations such as British Transport Police, Victim Support, and the local higher educational institution, however data were either not available or not provided within the necessary timescales to be incorporated into the needs assessment.

[Avon & Somerset Police data](#)

We were able to analyse Avon & Somerset Police data on all recorded crime incidents coded as 'violence against women and girls' which occurred (and had been recorded on their system) between January 2018 and December 2022. The data were extracted by ASP and shared with the public health team. They were cleaned and incomplete / erroneous records removed before analysis. Mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) were used to provide population estimate denominators in order to calculate rates. Data were grouped by 2011 Census LOA and IMD 2019 to analyse according to deprivation decile. Full details of the methodology and results are available on request from the public health team; a summary of key points is highlighted below.

[Inclusion and exclusion criteria](#)

Consistent with the scope of this needs assessment, which did not include domestic abuse, crimes that were coded as such were removed from the data. Only incidents in which the victim was listed as female and aged 10 years and older were included. Ten years was used as the age cut-off value due to the coding limitations with the dataset. Victims of crimes may have been the subject to multiple offences and so each count refers to an occurrence of that crime type or incident.

[Limitations and caveats to the data](#)

As the age-band thresholds differed between the police data and population data, it was not possible to calculate age-standardised rates. Likewise, the ethnicity coding in police data differs from standard ONS approaches to categorising ethnicity in the general population and therefore analysing according to incidence by victim ethnicity was limited.

¹⁵ Women's Aid. (2014). Women's access to justice from reporting to sentencing: All-party parliamentary group on domestic and sexual violence. Available at: www.womensaid.org.uk

¹⁶ ONS. (2021). The lasting impact of violence against women and girls. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk

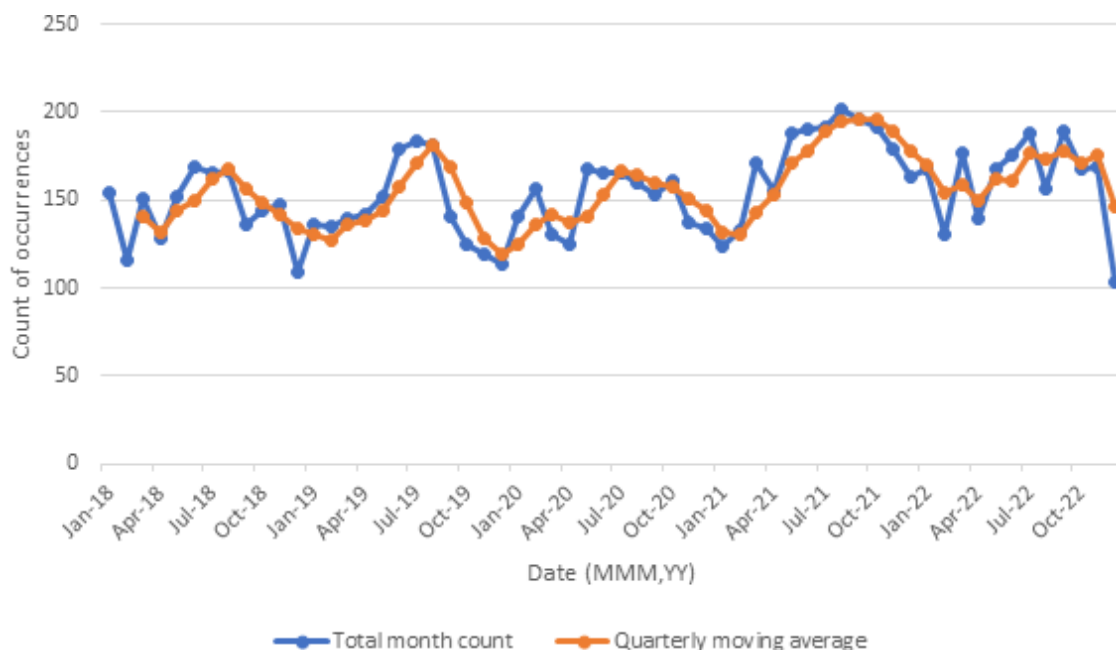
Data are manually entered by the police officer contemporaneously and cannot be validated retrospectively for this needs analysis. Therefore, the data may contain errors or inaccuracies such as missing fields, wrong categories, or typing errors. The reporting of incidents by victims may change over time as a result of awareness campaigns, increased media coverage, and changes in support services and advocacy groups. Moreover, police data may be subject to influence from changes in policy or strategic direction which may correlate with changes in recording or coding practice and therefore rates. Changes in incidence over time should therefore be interpreted with caution. Given the retrospective nature of recording criminal incidents, there is a potential for inaccuracy in recall and potentially recall bias if aspects of the report are influenced by external variables. Finally, it should be recognised that this data covers reported crime only, this means that data are based upon those crimes reported by members of the public or others and does not mean that the report necessarily resulted in a charge or conviction.

VAWG incidents between Jan 2018 - Dec 2022

Seasonality

Between January 2018 and December 2022, there were 9,299 reported occurrences of VAWG across South Gloucestershire. A crude calculation, assuming equal distribution over the five-year period, suggests this is the equivalent to 5 incidents of violence against women and girls being reported as occurring in South Gloucestershire every day. Figure 3 shows the incident occurrence plotted over time; there appears, on visual inspection only, to be a tendency towards an increase in occurrences in the summer months and a decrease in winter months, however this has not been tested for statistical validity.

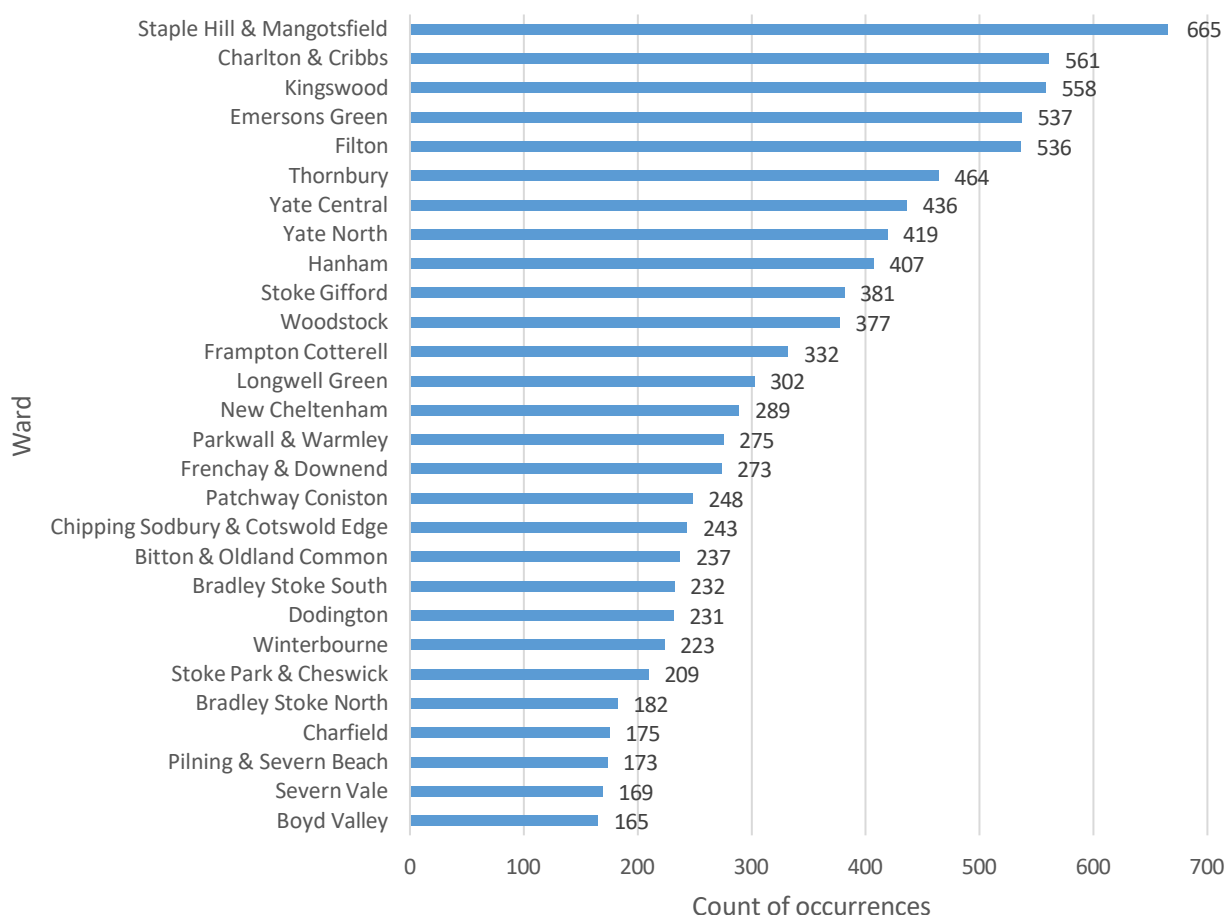
Figure 3 Line graph of the monthly count of occurrences of VAWG-related incidents in South Gloucestershire between January 2018 and December 2022 with a quarterly moving average for females aged 10 and older



Geographical distribution

Figure 4 shows the distribution by ward of 9,299 VAWG-related incidents that occurred between January 2018 and December 2022 across South Gloucestershire. Over this period, the highest combined number of occurrences was in Staple Hill & Mangotsfield with 665 reported incidents. If the distribution was even across the five-year period this would equate to roughly 133 incidents occurring and being reported to police each year, or one roughly every three days. The lowest was in Boyd Valley with 165 incidents.

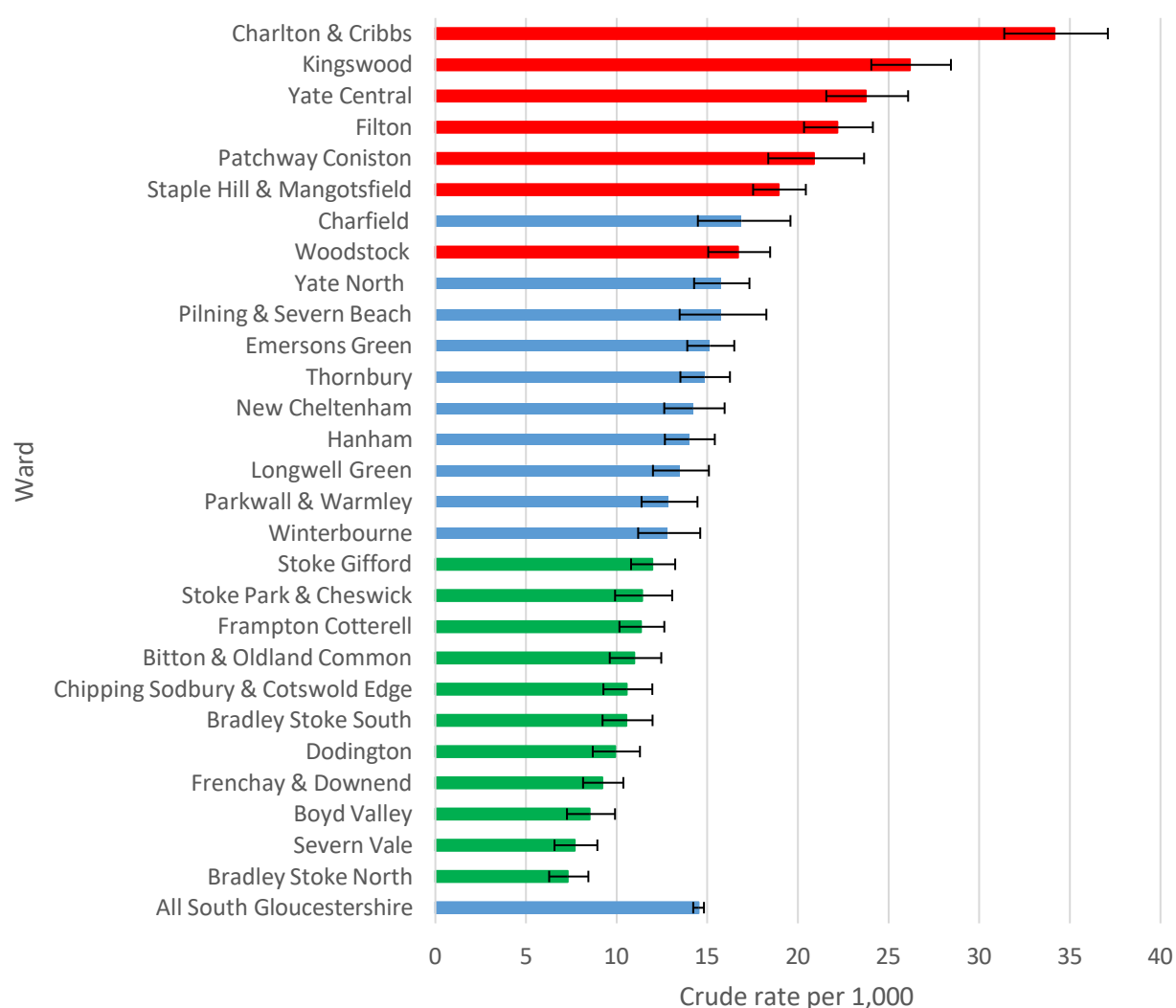
Figure 4 Bar chart showing the number of recorded VAWG-related incidents by 2021 Wards within South Gloucestershire between January 2018 and December 2022.



At a more granular level, there are some postcodes with multiple counts of VAWG occurrences, such as shopping centres which have high footfall. The postcode with the highest count of VAWG is at HMP Eastwood Park women's prison (GL12 8DB) located in the ward of Charfield, with a count of 95 occurrences of VAWG. This accounts for 54.3% of all occurrences in Charfield; it is not possible to identify whether these incidents involved prisoners or staff. There are also 6 postcodes with 20 or more counts of VAWG which belong to Secondary Schools and Sixth Forms.

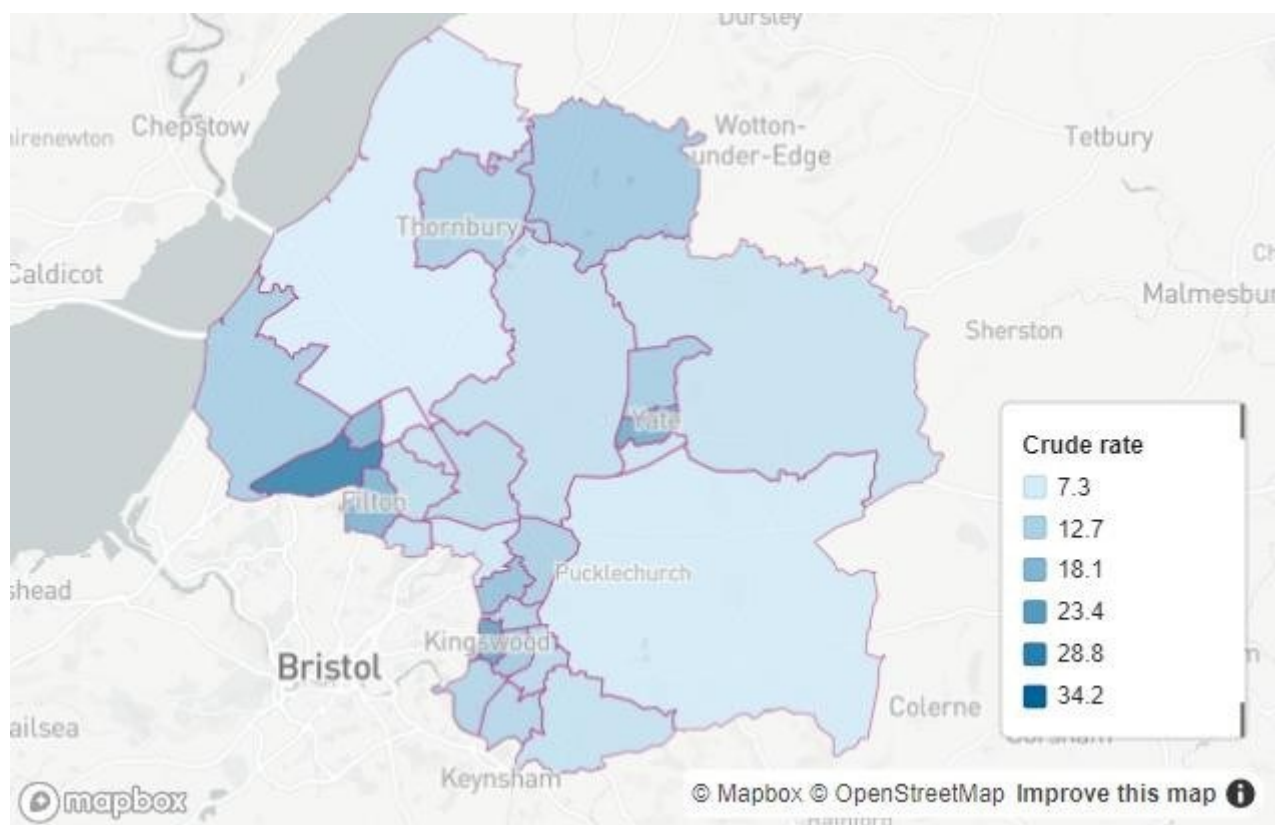
There are many reasons why a ward may have more VAWG recorded incidents, and one of these is population size: it is feasible that areas with larger resident populations would be expected to have more incidents in the local community. We have therefore converted the number of incidents into a rate, which takes account of the population in each area (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Bar chart showing the 5-year-pooled crude rate of occurrences of VAWG per 1,000 females aged 10 and older in South Gloucestershire from January 2018 to December 2022 by 2021 ward



When underlying population size is taken into account, Staple Hill and Mangotsfield is no longer the ward with the most VAWG, though significantly more VAWG incidents occurred in Staple Hill and Mangotsfield compared to South Gloucestershire as a whole. The pooled data between January 2018 and December 2022 indicate a crude rate of 15 VAWG incidents per 1,000 females aged 10 and older over the five-year period. As illustrated in Figure 5, the highest crude rate of incidents of VAWG was in Charlton and Cribbs, at 34 per 1,000 which is significantly higher than the average for South Gloucestershire as a whole. There is also strong evidence of higher rates in the wards of Kingswood, Yate Central, Filton, Patchway Coniston, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield, and Woodstock. The lowest crude rate of incidents of VAWG was 7 per 1,000 in the ward of Bradley Stoke North. The same information on rates by ward is shown in a map of South Gloucestershire (Figure 6).

Figure 6 map showing the 5-year-pooled crude rate of occurrences of VAWG per 1,000 females aged 10 and older in South Gloucestershire from January 2018 to December 2022 by 2021 ward



For the following analyses, the crime descriptions of the 9299 VAWG incidents were reviewed and grouped into categories, including “rape”, “sexual offences”, “stalking and harassment”, and “violence against the person”.

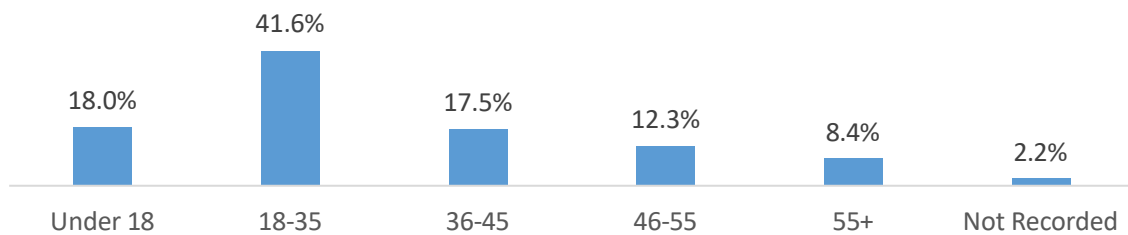
Age distribution

Data on age of victims were relatively complete (98% of incidents had the victim’s age recorded). However, the offender age was often missing from the police reports (only 57% of incidents had data on the offender age); data on offender age is therefore not analysed further due to potentially misleading conclusions. Most victims were over 18 (82%), and most incidents occurred to women aged 18-35 years (42% of all VAWG incidents analysed). Figure 7 shows the distribution of age categories for incidents that occurred and were reported between January 2018 and December 2022. When population age distribution is considered by calculating rates, under 18s experience the highest rates of VAWG incidents, sexual offences, and violent offences. The rate of stalking and harassment incidents was highest in women aged 18-35 years.

The proportion of victims reporting the crime within one day of it occurring differs by age: more than 70% of all age groups reported the crime within one day except for those under 18, where only 59% reported it within this period.

The data also show that the majority of incidents of sexual offences (including rape) involved victims under 18 (47% of all incidents), compared to just 3% of sexual offences being reported by women over 55 years. Conversely, most violent and stalking and harassment incidents were reported by women aged 18-35 years (39% and 45% respectively).

Figure 7 Bar chart showing distribution of age of VAWG victims in South Gloucestershire 2018-2022



Occupational status

Data on occupation were incomplete, with only 31% of incidents recording the victim's occupational status. It is therefore not analysed in this needs assessment.

Gender

Offender gender was recorded in only 60% of incidents and this degree of missing data means further analysis on gender would be unreliable.

Ethnicity

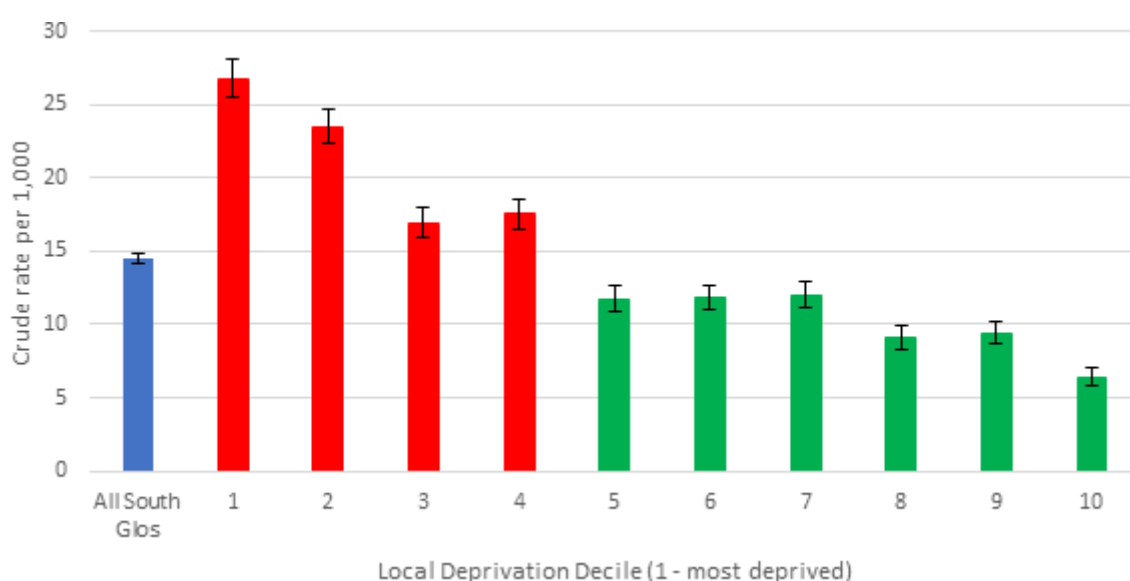
As described previously, ethnicity recording in police data does not follow the standard categorisation of population ethnicity coding used by e.g. ONS. Furthermore, there was a considerable volume of data on ethnicity missing (over 1/3 of incidents did not have a victim ethnicity recorded, and over 50% did not have an offender ethnicity recorded).

Two hundred and sixty-seven incidents (2.8% of the total) were described as racially or religiously aggravated. The ethnicity of victims was only recorded in 67% of these incidents and therefore further analysis on the limited data source would lead to potentially unreliable conclusions.

Deprivation

There is a clear social gradient in the rate of incidents occurring and reported between January 2018 and December 2022. Figure 8 shows that the rates of incidents of violence against women and girls are significantly higher in areas of low socioeconomic status and high deprivation. The five-year rate of VAWG incidents occurring in the most socially deprived areas of South Gloucestershire is 27 per 1,000, more than four times higher than the rate in the least socially deprived areas (6.4 per 1,000). This social gradient between areas of highest and lowest deprivation persists when rates are broken down by age categories (data not shown but available from the public health analyst team on request). Note these data pertain to the location of where the incident occurred and not the home postcode of the victim.

Figure 8 Column chart of the 5-year-pooled crude rate of occurrences of VAWG offences per 1,000 females aged 10 and older between January 2018 and December 2022 by local deprivation decile compared to South Gloucestershire



VAWG incidents of rape between Jan 2018 - Dec 2022

The CPS defines rape thus: ‘rape involves penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth by a penis’ⁱ. Crimes of attempted rape were not included here but are considered under “sexual offences” below. Between January 2018 and December 2022, there were 397 reported occurrences of rape in South Gloucestershire which equates to a crude rate of 6.2 incidents per 10,000 females aged 10 and over.

The highest crude rate of incidents of rape reported to police between 2018 and 2022 was 19 per 10,000 in the ward of Charlton & Cribbs. There is strong evidence that this ward and the wards of Filton and Staple Hill & Mangotsfield had a reported rape incident rate that was higher than the South Gloucestershire average.

VAWG incidents of sexual offences between Jan 2018 - Dec 2022

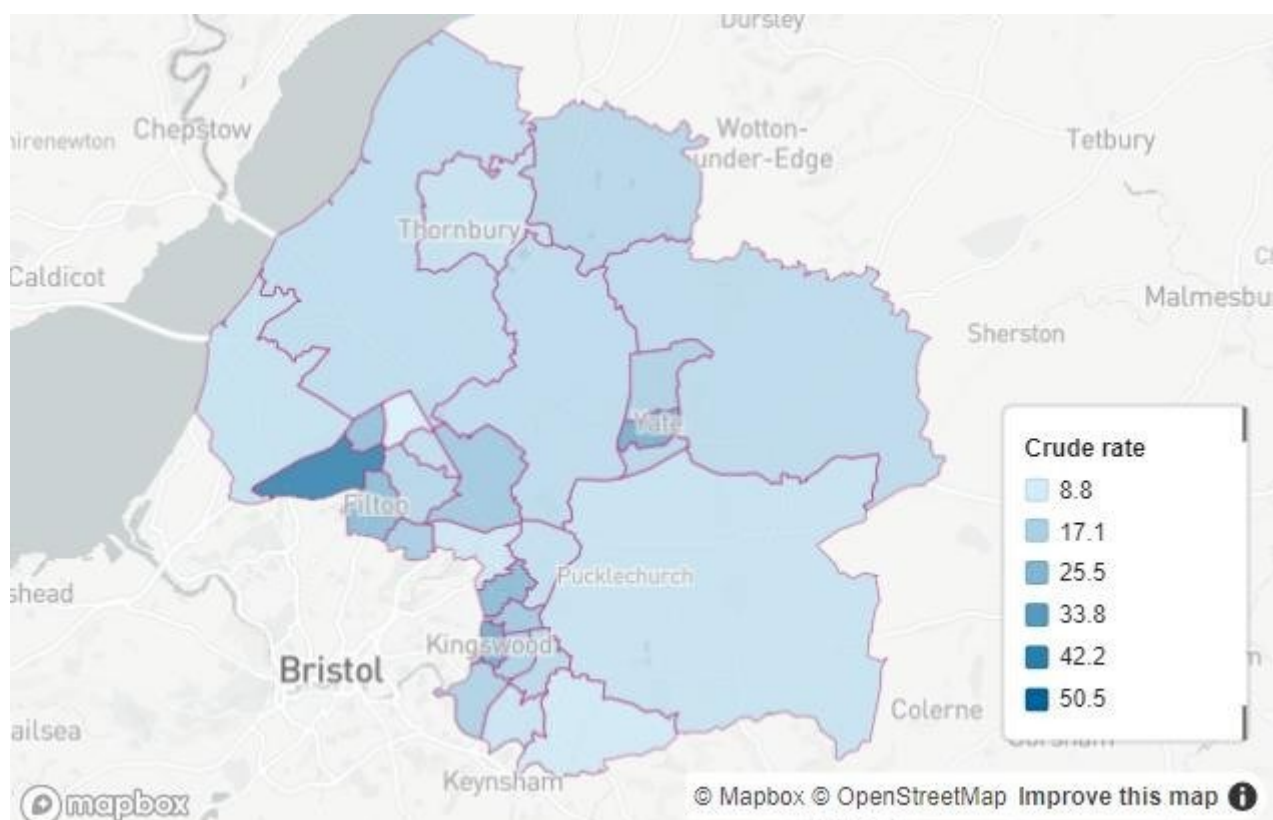
The CPS definition of Sexual Offencesⁱⁱ covers a broad range of offences including non-consensual crimes such as rape or sexual assault, crimes against children including child sexual abuse or grooming, and crimes that exploit others for a sexual purpose, whether in person or online. For this analysis, sexual offences include any crime descriptions that mention rape, sexual offences, and attempted sexual offences.

Between January 2018 and December 2022 there were 1,288 sexual offence (including rape) occurrences reported in South Gloucestershire. Only around 50% of incidents of sexual offences (including rape) were reported within one day of occurrence and two-thirds were reported within one week. Over nine out of ten incidents of sexual offences that occurred between January 2018 and December 2022 were reported within one year.

When incident counts are converted to rates, we observe that the crude rate of sexual offences in South Gloucestershire in 2018 was 21 per 10,000 females aged 10 and older, and in 2022 this rate was 18 per 10,000. The rate of reported sexual offences has fluctuated slightly each year over this period, however no statistically significant changes were noted.

Figure 8 shows a map of the distribution of rate of sexual offences across South Gloucestershire. The highest crude rate of sexual offences over the five-year period was in the ward of Charlton & Cribbs (51 per 10,000); there is strong evidence that this ward had a sexual offences rate that was higher than the average rate for South Gloucestershire. The lowest crude rate of sexual offences was 9 per 10,000 in the ward of Bradley Stoke North and there is strong evidence that this ward had a rate of sexual offences that was lower than the South Gloucestershire rate.

Figure 9 Map showing the crude rate per 1,000 of occurrences of sexual offences in South Gloucestershire from January 2018 to December 2022 by 2021 Ward for females aged 10 or older



VAWG incidents of stalking and harassment between Jan 2018 - Dec 2022

The CPS definition for stalking and harassment addresses behaviour which is repeated and unwanted by the victim and which causes the victim alarm or distressⁱⁱⁱ. The term harassment is used to cover 'causing alarm or distress' offences and 'putting people in fear of violence' and includes repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person. The CPS notes there is no strict legal definition of 'stalking' but it identifies examples that are associated with stalking such as following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing contact with a victim through any means, including social media. It is noted that when taken in isolation, some cases of conduct might appear innocent, but when carried out repeatedly it may amount to significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim. For this analysis, occurrences were grouped under stalking and harassment if the crime description mentioned harassment, voyeurism, stalking, or causing distress.

Between January 2018 and December 2022, there were a total of 6,281 recorded occurrences of stalking and harassment across South Gloucestershire; or roughly 3 per day

if distributed equally across the five-year period. The highest crude rate of stalking and harassment offences was 23 per 1,000 in the ward of Charlton & Cribbs. There is strong evidence that this ward and the wards of Kingswood, Yate Central, Filton, Patchway Coniston, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield, and Yate North had a stalking and harassment offences rate that was higher than the average rate for South Gloucestershire (data not shown).

VAWG incidents of “violence against the person” between Jan 2018 - Dec 2022

For this analysis, occurrences were grouped under “violence against the person” if the crime description mentioned assault, grievous bodily harm (GBH), actual bodily harm (ABH), or threat of violence; this category includes incidents of female genital mutilation. Between January 2018 and December 2022, there were 1,662 occurrences of VAWG “violence against the person” across South Gloucestershire: the equivalent of almost one incident every day. The rate has fluctuated each year, with no statistically notable changes (25 per 10,000 in 2018 and 26 per 10,000 in 2022).

We can see from the ward level data in Figure 11 that the highest crude rate of violent offences was 78 per 10,000 in the ward of Charfield. However, as mentioned previously, HMP Eastwood Park resides in the ward of Charfield and of the 81 violent offences in Charfield, 70 of those occurred at the prison. The next highest rate of VAWG “violence against the person” offences is Charlton & Cribbs.

Other categories of VAWG

There are several other types of VAWG crimes reported in the dataset which do not fit into the above categories and, due to relatively small numbers, could not reliably be analysed collectively. These include abduction, attempted murder, forced labour/human trafficking/slavery, neglect and safeguarding concerns, and poisoning or administering a substance without consent.

South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey

South Gloucestershire’s Online Pupil Survey has been funded by the Public Health & Wellbeing Division of South Gloucestershire Council since 2015¹⁷. In the 2021 dataset, responses were gathered from 2,720 pupils in Years 8 to 11 (ages 12 to 16 years) on their experiences of harassment and violence. The results from the survey are explored below¹⁸. Note, whilst this needs assessment focuses on violence against women and girls, the responses from all pupils are presented here as preventive work must involve all potential perpetrators of violence and abuse, regardless of sex or gender.

Data have been analysed according to whether the respondent defined themselves as male or female. The analysis is based on the 2,720 respondents to the 2021 survey. School pupils were asked whether they were male, female, or other and the male/female split was fairly equal with 49% boys, 48% girls, and 3% “other” (89 pupils described themselves as “other” for the purposes of this question and will be reported as “other” below).

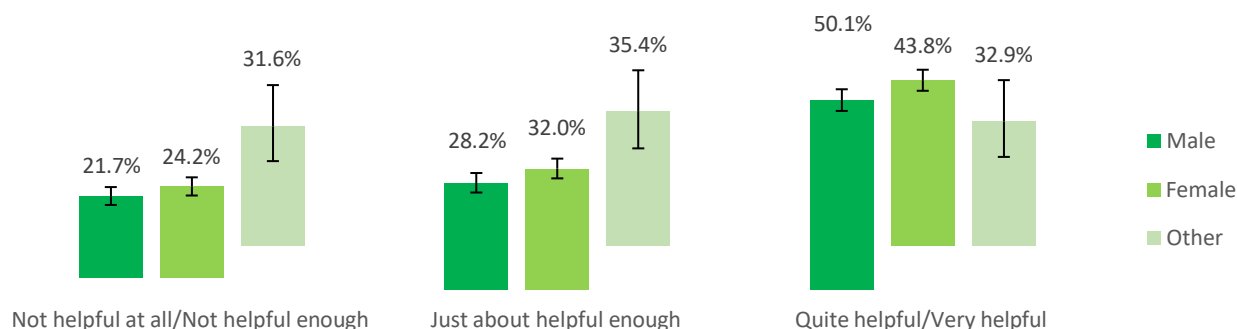
¹⁷ For further detail regarding the South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey please contact the South Gloucestershire Council Public Health Team publichealthsouthgloucestershire@southglos.gov.uk

¹⁸ Original analysis by Olivia Ford, South Gloucestershire Public Health Team.

Healthy relationships and sex education

Pupils were asked: “How helpful have you found it to learn about: Healthy relationships and sex education?” Only 50% of male, 44% of female, and 33% of other pupils described their education on this quite or very helpful.

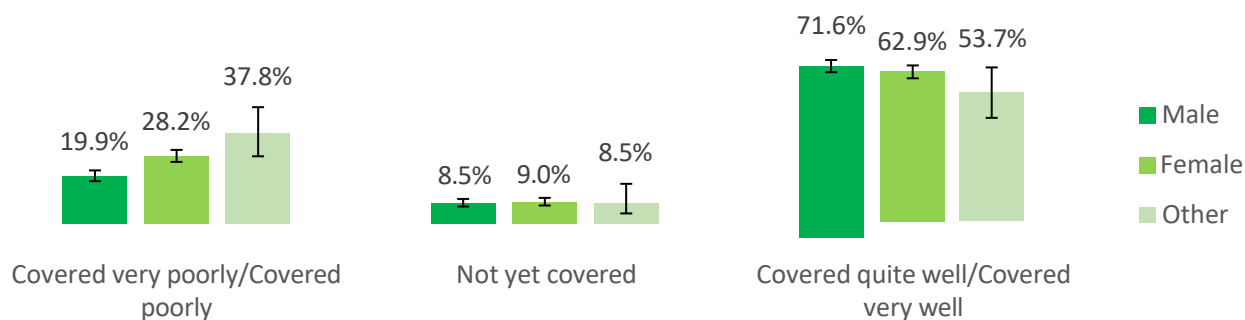
Figure 10 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, helpfulness of healthy relationship and sex education



Sex and relationships in PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education)

Pupils were asked, “How well has sex and relationships including puberty, pregnancy and contraception been covered in PSHE?”

Figure 11 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, quality of sex and relationships education in PSHE

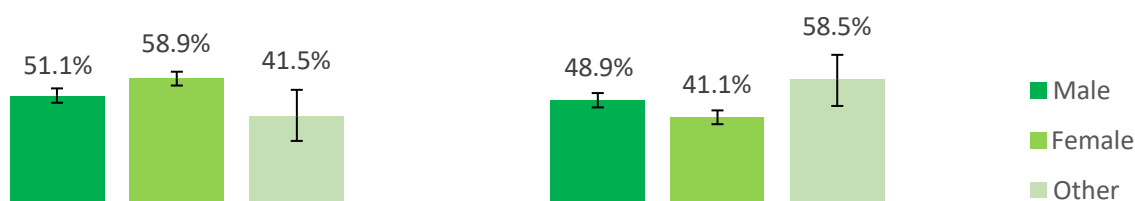


The graphs illustrate that around 8-9% of pupils (~200 pupils) said that sex and relationships has not been covered yet in PSHE. These results show that even though female sexual health and LGBTQ+ relationships are now taught in schools to a greater extent, the information being provided is not yet satisfactory for their needs.

Saying no to sexual activity

Pupils were asked “Do you feel you can say no to having sexual activity?”

Figure 12 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, perceived ability to say no to sexual activity



Always

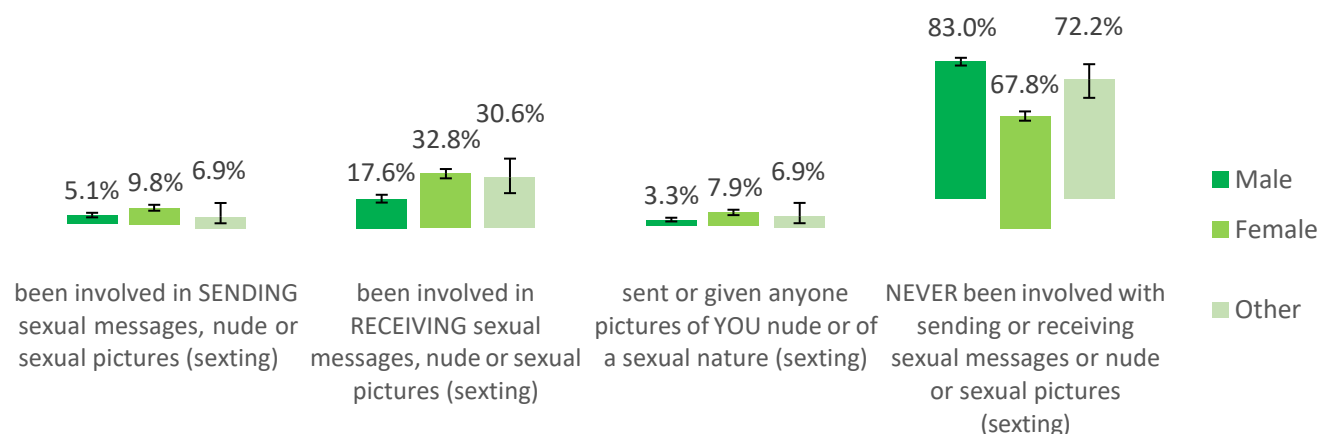
Not always

A greater proportion of males and those pupils describing themselves as other feel they cannot always say no to having sexual activity when compared to females (49-59% v 41%). Strikingly, 41% of female pupils surveyed do not feel like they can always say no to sexual activity.

Sending and receiving sexual messages or pictures

Pupils were also asked a multiple-choice question (totals = >100%) about the sending and receiving of sexual messages or pictures: “Regarding messages or pictures, have you ever...” [options listed below in the graph]:

Figure 13 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, involvement in sending or receiving sexual messages or pictures



The responses indicate that a greater proportion of females have been involved in sending (10%) and receiving (33%) sexual messages, nude or sexual pictures, including sending sexual pictures of themselves (8%), compared to males.

Areas for more knowledge and support

As a multiple-choice question, pupils were asked “Are there any areas in your life that you feel you need more support or knowledge in?”.

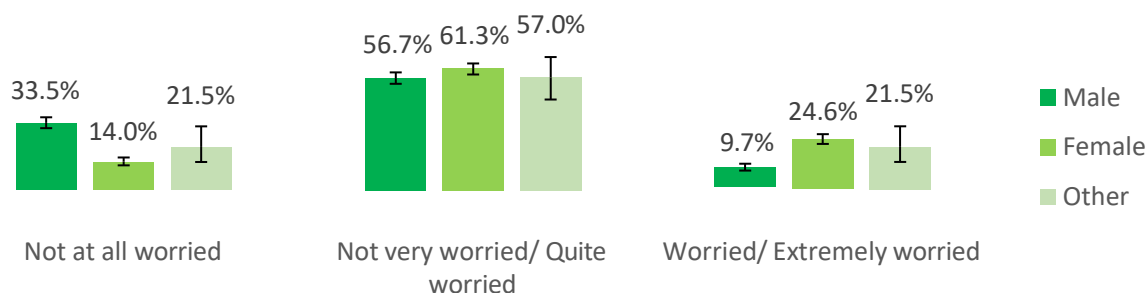
The results relevant to VAWG-related topics can be summarised as below with the following proportion of female pupils wanting further knowledge and support:

1. Keeping safe from exploitation and abuse: 11% of females
2. Relationships and sex education: 19% of females
3. Sexting or sextortion: 11% of females
4. Domestic abuse: 15% of females
5. Hate crimes: 13%

Staying safe from crime and violence

Pupils were asked “To what extent do you worry about: Staying safe from crime or violence?”

Figure 14 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, concern regarding staying safe from crime or violence

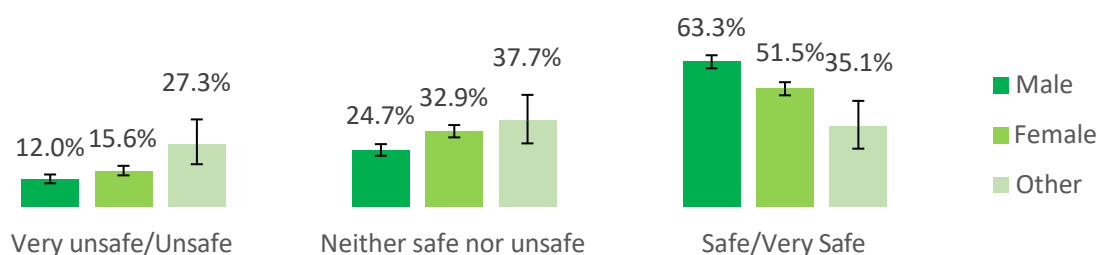


The results show that a greater proportion of female and other pupils feel worried or extremely worried about staying safe compared to males.

Safety at school

Pupils were also asked, “When you are at school, how safe do you feel?” This shows that a smaller proportion of females and pupils of other genders feel safe or very safe compared to male pupils.

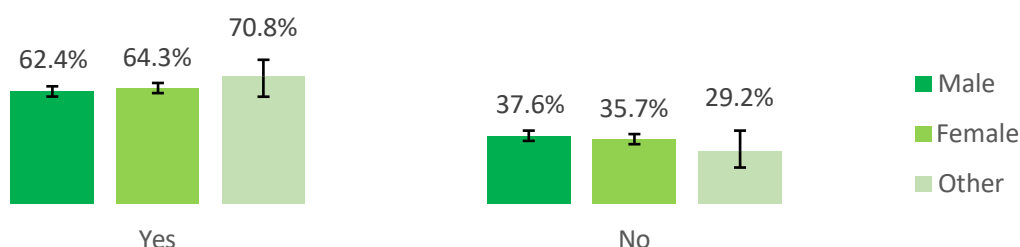
Figure 15 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, level of perceived safety at school



Abusive friendships or relationships

Pupils were asked “Have you received information from school that enables you to tell whether a friendship or relationship is abusive?”

Figure 16 Respondents to the 2021 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey, receipt of adequate information on whether a friendship or relationship is abusive



Approximately a third of all pupils feel that school has not given them the knowledge to understand whether a relationship or friendship is abusive.

StreetSafe reporting tool

In 2021 a new national service, StreetSafe, was produced through which members of the public can report anonymously any public places where they have felt or feel unsafe,

because of environmental issues, such as street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism

or because of some behaviours, for being followed or verbally abused. The service is not for reporting crime or incidents.

The service's reporting tool has been (and continues to be) promoted across South Gloucestershire by the local Police teams and the Council's Community Safety Team amongst other partners.

It is envisaged that this could be a useful resource for identification of local issues around VAWG. Data can be accessed by Police teams and the Council. However, at the time of production of this needs assessment, the level of data gathered through the service is low and meaningful analysis cannot be performed.

Engagement with the local population

It was recognised that there would be significant benefit in engaging with the local South Gloucestershire population to understand views on the topic of VAWG, personal experiences and recommendations for action from local communities.

To facilitate this, two surveys were created alongside a series of focus groups and engagement events. As discussed previously, with the short timescale for the production of this needs assessment it was agreed that without adequate time to test questions and engage comprehensively with education settings and youth organisations, additional local engagement or survey responses with children and young people would not be sought at this point. It is a recommendation of this needs assessment that this work is undertaken comprehensively and sensitively as a next step to understand better the needs, experiences and beliefs of local children and young people around the topic of VAWG.

Surveys

Two surveys were produced, one for South Gloucestershire organisations and one for residents. The surveys were live between 23rd January and 24th February 2023.

The resident survey questions were based upon the questions asked in the national VAWG call for evidence undertaken in 2020-2021 and Plymouth City Council's 2022 version of the same consultation activity. Some questions were altered to reflect South Gloucestershire locality specifics and to enable key questions to be asked based on current priorities for the local area. The resident survey questions can be found in Appendix 2 and the organisation survey question in Appendix 3. We are grateful to Plymouth City Council for the sharing of their resources.

The surveys were open to all those living and working in South Gloucestershire, there was no limit on participation by gender, age or any other demographic.

Promotion

Both surveys were promoted online. A wide distribution list was produced to share the survey with a broad range of stakeholders: health colleagues, partners in the voluntary and community sector and local networks and groups via email. Organisations were asked to complete the survey for organisations but also to share the resident survey widely with staff, service users (where appropriate) and with wider contact groups.

Social media was used particularly to promote the resident survey. This included the use of boosted posts to increase reach as well as sharing of posts into local groups and organisations.

Promotional materials (posters and postcards) for the resident survey were distributed to community sites across South Gloucestershire including One Stop Shops, Libraries, Children's Centres, Warm Spaces and other community venues. Alongside this postcards were taken into local hair and beauty salons and to licensed premises. As a significant proportion of South Gloucestershire Council staff live and work in South Gloucestershire, resources were distributed via Council sites.

Children and Young People

Due to the timescales for the needs assessment development, it was decided that the survey questions for residents would not be targeted specifically towards children. The survey timescales coincided with schools being asked to undertake multiple surveys including South Gloucestershire's Online Pupil Survey and a survey on knife crime.

Undertaking research with children and young people requires significant preparation and the testing of questions to ensure they are age appropriate or accessible to that age group. With short timescales for delivery, the aim of the resident survey was largely to gather responses from those of adult age. Both survey links were, however, shared with schools and educational settings across South Gloucestershire and schools were encouraged to complete the organisational survey.

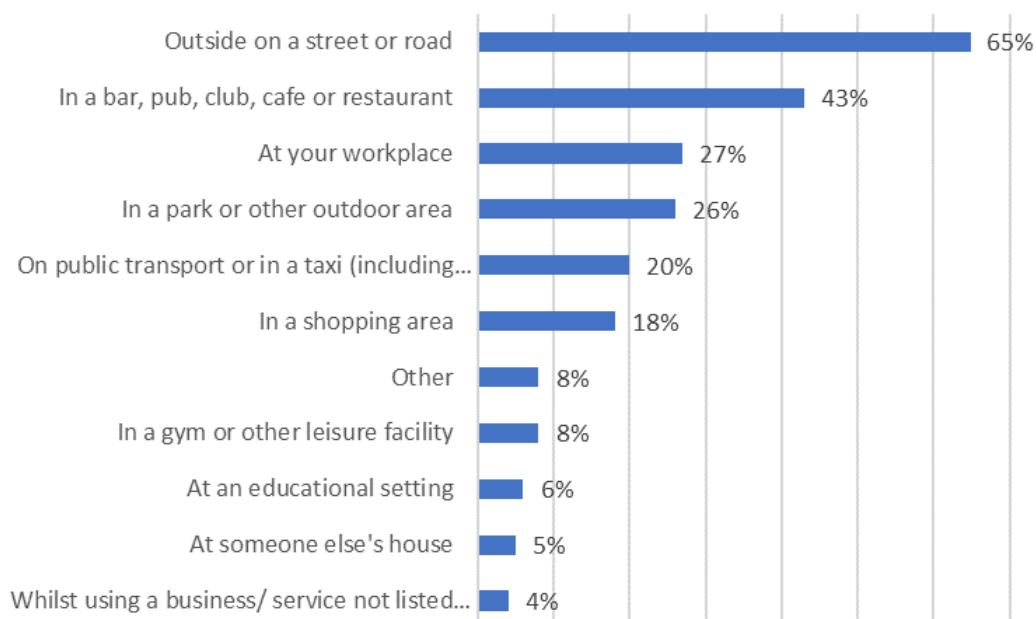
A recommendation within this needs assessment is that further engagement should be undertaken with local children and young people on the topic of VAWG to understand issues pertinent to them, their thoughts on the topic, and their recommendations for action.

Findings

The resident survey was completed by 724 local people. A summary of key results is provided below; full details are available from the South Gloucestershire Council Consultation team.

- The majority of survey respondents (59%) felt that violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a problem in South Gloucestershire, only 9% disagree
- 75% of all respondents have experienced some form of violence or abuse in the last five years. Age is the strongest determining factor, with 98% of under 25s experiencing some form of violence in the last five years. Respondents who are LGBTQ+, disabled or from an ethnic minority are also more likely to have experienced violence/ abuse
- The majority of incidents reported by respondents who have been subjected to violence or abuse outside of the home in the last five years were experienced on a street or road (65%) (Figure 17). This is more likely to have happened to respondents who are aged under 45, but more than half of those aged 45-54 have also been affected (59%). A hospitality venue was the second most frequent location, with 43% of all of respondents who had experienced an incident in the last 5 years selecting one of these locations. Women aged under 45 were significantly more likely to be affected. And an individual's workplace is the third most common location (27% of all respondents).

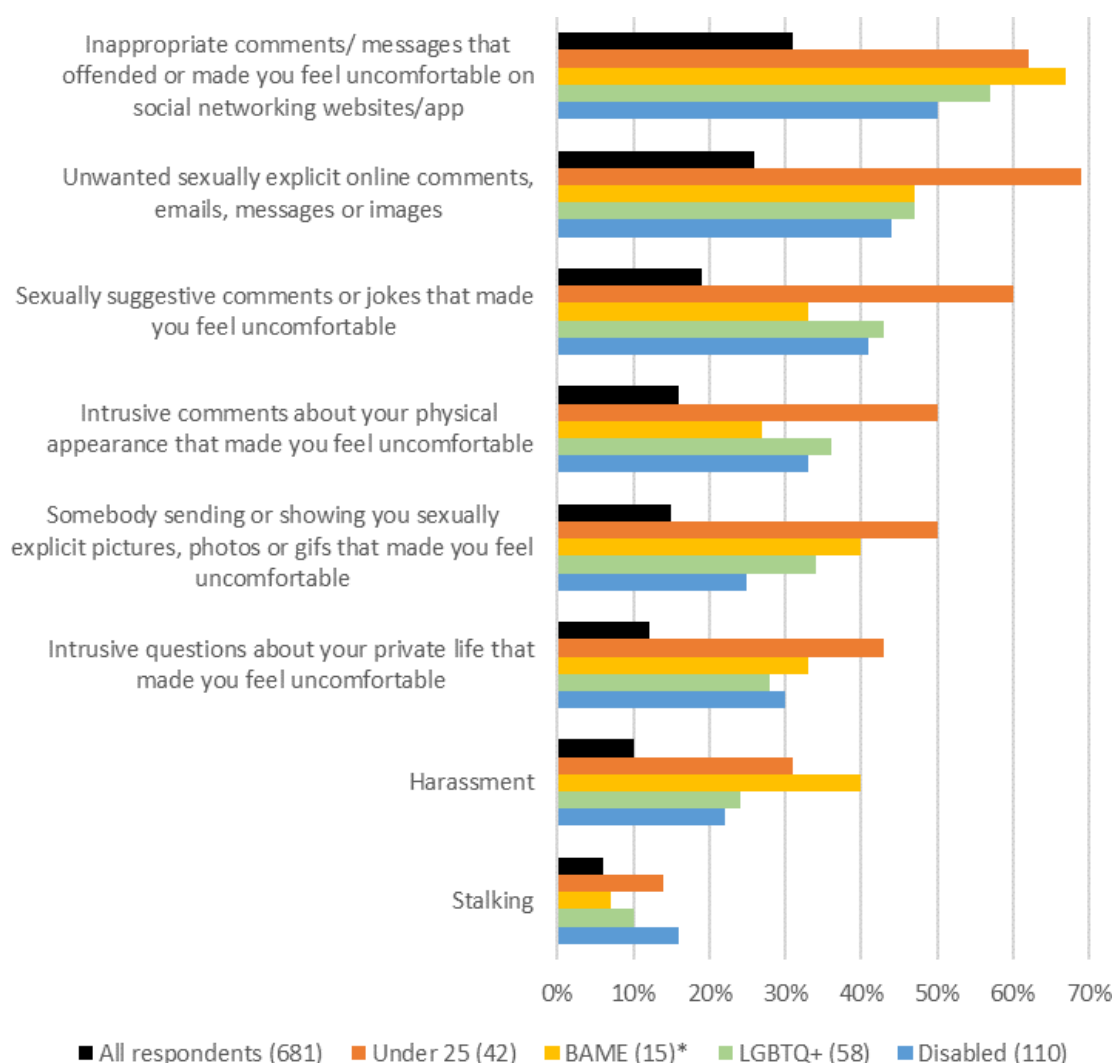
Figure 17 Responses to the survey question “Where did the incident(s) take place? (please select all that apply)”



- To reduce VAWG locally, respondents reported that creating awareness alone is not enough – the actions have to involve teaching people ‘how to...’ or give them actual support
- Only 16% of respondents believe that it would be easy for a woman/girl in their local area to get help or support for violence or abuse. This is particularly low for respondents aged under 25 (2%), LGBTQ+ (7%) or ethnic minority groups (6%)
- The inequality with VAWG needs to be addressed:
 - Under-25s are significantly more likely agree that VAWG is a problem (85%), only 55% feel safe outside during daylight hours and 5% feel safe after dark
 - LGBTQ+ respondents are more likely to see VAWG as a problem (76%) and are also more likely to experience abuse out of the home (81% vs 64% non-LGBTQ+) and less likely to feel safe online
 - More engagement should be done with ethnic minority communities since the survey sample was too small to be confident that the results accurately represent the wider population. However, there is indication they may be significantly more impacted than white British respondents by VAWG, e.g. they are more likely to experience abuse out of home (80% vs 65% white British) and in the home (33% vs 16% WB)
 - Disabled respondents also faced a number of issues far more often
- To prevent potential abuse out of home, 82% of all respondents have adjusted their behaviour through some form of avoidance. The most likely respondents to avoid certain places or situations include those aged under 25, disabled or LGBTQ+
- Almost half of respondents who experience abuse out of the home (44%) did not tell anyone about it

- **44%** of respondents say they have experienced **online abuse** in the past 5 years, this is significantly higher for respondents who are under-25 (77%), LGBTQ+ (66%), from ethnic minority groups (73%) or disabled (60%). When asked whether they had experienced specific types of online abuse, the most commonly experienced type of online abuse was inappropriate comments or messages on social networking sites or apps (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Responses to the survey question "At any time in the past 5 years, have you experienced any of the following when online? (please select all that apply)"



The organisational survey findings were analysed separately and are available from the South Gloucestershire Council Consultation team.

Focus Groups and Community Engagement Events

It was recognised that there was a need to provide further opportunities for engagement and to elicit input from a wider section of the local community. A series of in-person focus groups were facilitated by South Gloucestershire's Community Safety Team to allow residents to have input to the work via face-to-face engagement. This included seven focus groups with

local Community Projects, residents of a retirement village, South Gloucestershire Council staff members, a Youth Centre and a young mother and baby group:

Focus group type	Number of attendees
Mixed ages, local community project	8
Mother and baby group (young mothers)	15
Older people	10
SGC staff members	10
Older people	9
Older people	10
SGC staff members	6

Online pop-up community engagement events were also run including two sessions open to the public and one closed session for South Gloucestershire Councillors and Town & Parish Councillors. These were delivered by members of the Community Safety Team, Public Health Team and a representative from Avon & Somerset Constabulary:

Online community 'pop-up' engagement events	Number of attendees
Closed group for Town & Parish Councillors and SGC Councillors	5
Open public event (daytime)	12
Open public event (evening)	9

These events were run with a short introduction to the topic followed by either open discussion with prompt questions in the case of the online sessions or facilitative questions as a semi-structured method of guiding discussion. Both terms 'violence against women and girls' or 'women and girls' safety' were used in the discussions.

Across all sessions there was a general consensus that participants felt that VAWG and women and girls' safety were issues of concern in South Gloucestershire. In both the online and in-person sessions, participants shared first-hand instances of VAWG they had experienced or witnessed in the local area and detailed the impact this had on them. In some instances, the lasting impact from these incidences was considerable.

In several engagement sessions understanding of VAWG tended to centre around domestic abuse and violence. For the purposes of this analysis, the focus is upon issues of 'community' or non-domestic VAWG.

From these focus groups and community engagement events, a number of themes developed, these are summarised below.

Main concerns identified by participants:

Concerns (themed)	Detail
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Nighttime and being out alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being out after dark or at dawn/dusk especially alone • Lack of or reduced street lighting • Groups of young people (feeling intimidated)
Lack of knowledge/awareness of support and support services generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing where to go for help/support or how to report concerns and what should be reported • A sense that there would be waiting lists for any specialist support needed after an incident • Victims don't always 'fit' into services for support
Confidence to report and to challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many cases would not report issues • Don't feel confident to intervene if witnessed an incident • Worry about repercussions of reporting, not knowing if would be believed, not wanting to cause a fuss, being taken seriously
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knife crime • Older people are concerned about scooters and being targeted for abuse or harm by those using them • Concern about those with deafness – not knowing who is around them • Older people may be affected differently than younger people (may be more likely to feel unable to leave home)

Locations of concern (spaces in South Gloucestershire)

N.b. these locations were identified by a small number of residents, and these data are not intended to be representative of the opinions of the whole South Gloucestershire population.

Locations of concern	Detail
Cribbs Causeway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mall
Chipping Sodbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chipping Sodbury Rugby Football Club
Downend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shops on Beaufort Road, Downend • Cleeve Court
Filton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elm Park, Filton • Millennium Green, Filton
Kingswood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingswood pubs • Kingswood Park
Patchway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlton Hayes, Patchway • Coniston Road, Patchway

Warmley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmley cycle path
Yate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yate Shopping Centre • Ridgewood, Yate • Westerleigh Common (Yate Common) • Yate Cranleigh Court • Yate Tesco car park

What would help to reduce VAWG or improve women and girls' safety?

A number of actions or ideas were also produced during these sessions which are summarised below:

Actions: overarching topic area	Detail
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for young people (esp boys and young men) incl. healthy relationships, respecting others and respecting yourself (schools, universities and other settings for children and young people) • More activities for young people so they are away from the streets • Mentors for young men • Positive role modelling in schools, youth clubs and other settings with children and young people • Building girls' and women's self-worth and confidence • Self-defence classes • Outreach workers for young people
Environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased street lighting • More police presence / beat patrols • More safe spaces / Rolling out Ask for Angela (or similar) beyond pubs/night time economy into shops, cafes and community hubs • Environmental changes – keeping trees/plants from being overgrown, stopping parking on pavements • Increased CCTV coverage
Support, knowledge and awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing what support is available – better sharing of this information • Provision of personal alarms/bells • Pool of resources for those working with young people (to help tackle, raise conversations and discuss, signposting) • Media focus / campaigns / targeted advertising on social media incl. positive social media messages to counter the

	<p>misogynistic leaning of some accounts/influencers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging others (bystanders) to challenge inappropriate behaviour • Promotion of apps where can share location services (incl. WhatsApp and others)
Actions for professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Police and other relevant professionals to be trained in VAWG (particularly call handlers) • Greater action on knife crime incl. knife education • Training and support for those involved in the nighttime economy, a certain level of inappropriate behaviour is to an extent tolerated • A need to rebuild trust in the Police (recent high-profile cases of VAWG) • Understanding at a strategic level of the intersections between poverty, lack of access, deprivation etc and a drive towards toxic masculinity and young people who are at the margins feeling alienated • Support services that can meet particular needs, e.g. those with disabilities • Provision of training and spiking packs for pubs
Education (other than for Children and Young People)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education targeted at mature men/adult males – tackling old-fashioned beliefs/views • Education for parents to help reinforce messaging at home • Training (e.g., bystander or other appropriate) for Neighbourhood Watch groups and other local community groups

We are very grateful to the individuals and organisations who participated in and supported the engagement events and survey.

Analysis of provision

Interventions and support funded by the Avon & Somerset Office for the Police & Crime Commissioner

A number of services are funded across Avon & Somerset by the Officer for the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC). All services are available to residents of South Gloucestershire but note it is often not possible to pull out the level of provision that is delivered in South Gloucestershire specifically, or where the service may tend to support more victims of domestic abuse and violence than community VAWG. Services include:

Service	Brief description	Further detail
Lighthouse Victim Care	A team of staff from the police and victim support organisations, working together to guide, advise and support victims and witnesses.	Nb. Approximately half of users are victims of Domestic Abuse. ~9% are victims of rape and sexual assault
Safe Link	Provision of support for anyone (women, men, children) who has been the victim of rape and sexual abuse across the whole of the Avon and Somerset area.	In 2021/22 the service received 1,448 adult referrals, of which 1,023 were accepted into the full service and 414 were supported by triage. 355 children were referred with 275 accepted into the full service and 87 supported by triage.
Next Link	Provision of domestic abuse support services, women's mental health support services, and independent support for victims of rape and sexual abuse.	
Victim Support	Confidential support for all victims of crime. Includes young victims of crime.	Many referrals from Lighthouse/the Police
Young Victims' Service	Supports young people aged 5 to 18 years who have been the victims of crime, anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse	Limited information available online but tends to support more female victims with the majority aged around 13-15 and in Bristol.
Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service (SARSAS)	Provides support for victim-survivors of sexual violence.	4,315 clients supported in 202/21. Also provides training for schools, colleges and other education settings, workplaces, and professionals.
Bristol BASE Hub and Spokes Project	Barnardo's Against Sexual Exploitation (BASE)	

	provides specialist support to victims of child sexual exploitation. Providing advice, support and guidance to young people up to age 18 (or up to 25 for care leavers or those with a learning disability).	
The Bridge (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)	Medical care, advice line and emotional and psychological support for survivors of sexual assault	Between 2018-2021, 1,338 forensic medical examinations were undertaken and 4,061 children, young people and adults were supported following sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault. Nb. This figure will include males and covers the Avon area, Somerset and Gloucestershire, Swindon & Wiltshire.
Womankind Bristol	Provision of a helpline, individual counselling and group therapy for women including for those who have experienced rape and sexual assault	In 2021/22, 91 women across Bristol, South Glos and North Somerset had specialist counselling for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. 16 young women aged 16-18 were supported for sexual trauma.

Training

Avon and Somerset Police have recently invested in DA Matters training for all staff. Whilst this primarily relates to domestic abuse and violence, many of the themes covered within the training are cross-cutting across the VAWG field. The training aims to enable a cultural change for police, designed to transform the response to domestic abuse, putting the voice of the victim at the centre and challenging attitudes, culture and behaviour.

South Gloucestershire communications and campaigns

Over recent years a number of communication campaigns have been supported across South Gloucestershire. Several of these have centred on the topic of Domestic Abuse and Violence but the wider campaign messaging is often applicable to other forms of VAWG including broader safety messages.

South Gloucestershire Council's campaigns on the topic of Domestic Abuse and Violence over the previous two years have included the following:

- Avon Fire and Rescue Service campaign showcasing that anyone can be a victim including men
- COVID-related messages about leaving home if the location is unsafe
- [‘It's Not Love’](#) young people's coercive control campaign revealing different types of behaviour which can be considered controlling and signposting how to recognise signs

and get help. This was sent to South Gloucestershire and Stroud College who have requested a series of talks/workshops for students in February

- World Cup, Yate Town FC awareness raising campaign focusing on the rise in instances of domestic abuse when England play an international match
- Christmas and New Year domestic abuse and violence messages on social media
- Women's safety campaign live in pubs with posters focusing on different aspects of women's safety including drink spiking and getting home safely

Some examples of recent media campaigns more specific to community VAWG are highlighted below:

- May 2022: Promotion of the 'Enough: Be Part of the Change' action plan making a pledge to combat violence against women and girls
- November 2022: support to the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign and Elimination of Violence Against Women Day (25th November 2022)
- September 2022 - January 2023: Continued promotion of the Government's 'Enough' campaign and 'Girls Just Wanna be Safe' campaign

Current communications planning is underway alongside the Violence Reduction Unit which aims to include a new information, advice and guidance section on the Council's website. This will also link to the South Gloucestershire 'Mind You' website¹⁹ (a mental health and emotional wellbeing hub for young people) which contains information and advice on issues including exploitation, harassment and controlling relationships.

The South Gloucestershire Council Communications Team are also connecting with the Police to promote their existing campaigns and working with the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner's dedicated Violence Reduction Unit Communications Lead to develop comms plans across the local units.

Schools-based prevention work

A planned mapping analysis of the work taking place in schools in South Gloucestershire to teach and support pupils about VAWG and its prevention was not completed in sufficient time to include in this needs assessment; this work will be helpful to include as an addendum when completed.

¹⁹ [Mind you | A mental health and emotional wellbeing hub for young people in South Gloucestershire \(southglos.gov.uk\)](https://southglos.gov.uk/mind-you)

Review of the evidence: good practice, interventions, and guidance

To generate an understanding of good practice, recommended guidance and effective interventions on the topic of VAWG, a literature review was undertaken. A search strategy was shared with the UKHSA Knowledge and Evidence Team who prepared a list of relevant literature. This included using journal publications alongside the grey literature (e.g. literature that isn't formally published in books or journal articles such as government reports and guidance). This database of resources was reviewed and key documents and findings are discussed below.

Much of the literature in the field of VAWG primarily relates to domestic violence and abuse or intimate partner violence. In using results from the literature review, emphasis was placed on resources that focused on community VAWG or where the information had wider applicability to other types of VAWG (e.g. non-domestic or non-partner).

A summary is provided here of the main findings in relation to good practice and interventions.

1. College of Policing: interventions to reduce violence against women and girls in public spaces

In 2022, the College of Policing²⁰ produced a briefing outlining the evidence-based strategies and approaches that have the potential to reduce VAWG in public spaces. This included a summary of many of the other journal articles returned through the literature search.

Whilst many of the interventions in this briefing do not focus on specific prevention of VAWG, the approaches support a reduction in risk or prevalence of violence more generally, with an understanding that this is likely to result in a decrease in VAWG. It is important to note that several other interventions were considered where the evidence is untested (e.g. specific communication campaigns). However, recommendations with 'moderate' or 'strong' evidence include:

Effective police strategies for reducing crime

- "Hot spots" policing and "problem-orientated" policing: targeting resources to those places where crime and harm are most concentrated

Improving understanding of the problem

- Improved data sharing, particularly combining police data with health data to inform the development of interventions resulting in reduced assaults, as well as reduced accident and emergency admissions

²⁰ College of Policing. (2022). Interventions to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces. Available at: <https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/interventions-reduce-violence-against-women-and-girls-vawg-public-spaces>

Physical environment interventions

- Improved street lighting has proven reductions in violent and property crime in areas where lighting was improved
- Increased CCTV coverage where the live footage is actively monitored and when used alongside complementary measures (such as street lighting). *Nb. There is not evidence specific to VAWG, rather to a general reduction in violent crime*
- Maintenance and guardianship of areas, e.g. improving surveillance and visibility, maintaining areas so they do not fall into disrepair or vandalism. These measures support the public's perceptions of safety

Reducing sexual offending on public transport

- A multi-faceted approach including:
 - Increased surveillance (extra staffing and police, and CCTV)
 - Crime prevention through environmental design measures, e.g. increased visibility, lighting, alarms, good maintenance of transport facilities
 - Alternative means of reporting, e.g. hotlines, texting and phone apps
 - Awareness campaigns through advertising, grassroots action and online platforms
 - Smartphone apps for reporting, using new technology to record experiences and creating maps with hotspots of offending

Reducing violence in the night-time economy

- Increased police presence - police measures that target specific licensed premises with violence problems in collaboration with local agencies are more effective at reducing alcohol-related violence than measures that do not include collaboration. *Nb. Untargeted measures that heighten officer presence in and around licensed premises, as well as increased monitoring of licence law violations, in general have a mixed impact on police-recorded assaults and violence*
- Multi-level community interventions: the most effective programmes involved engagement with stakeholders, e.g. license holders, combined with enforcement where the stakeholders share the same objectives as the police. Interventions include:
 - Stricter enforcement of licensing laws
 - Community information campaigns
 - Training for bar staff and door staff
 - Police engagement of licensees in considering aspects of bar management that can reduce risks, e.g. responsible beverage service training

Education interventions

- Bystander programmes usually delivered as single training or education sessions and sometimes accompanied by advertising campaigns. Often delivered as part of university inductions. These programmes were found to have a positive effect on an individual's identification of incidents, knowledge of strategies and confidence in taking responsibility for intervening in sexual assault. *Nb. The College of Policing noted no evidence was found to suggest that bystander programmes affect self-reported sexual assault perpetration among participants.*

- School-based interventions showed moderate increases in knowledge about dating violence, a lower acceptance of stereotypical 'rape myths', and moderate improvements in appropriately resolving conflicts in interpersonal relationships.
- Empowerment or feminist self-defence classes, especially those focused on awareness raising among girls, supporting them to recognise inappropriate behaviour by others, learn ways to keep themselves and their friends safe, feel empowered and enhance self-esteem.

2. Wales Violence Prevention Unit findings

The Welsh Violence Prevention Unit²¹ undertook a systematic review of evidence to find what works to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. They grouped successful interventions under individual level, relationship level, community level and societal level.

Individual level

- Strong evidence exists for gender transformative approaches, e.g. changing of attitudes and beliefs, through programmes such as the 'Real Consent' programme (though evidence related primarily to impacts on intimate partner violence and domestic violence)
- Programmes that focus on empowerment of girls (e.g. self-defence) with an emphasis on awareness raising, recognising inappropriate behaviour and learning ways to keep yourself and others safe

Relationship level

- Programmes such as Safe Dates (school-based activities consisting of a theatre production, 10-session curriculum and community activities) found that students in the intervention group of the study were less likely to be victims or perpetrators of self-reported sexual violence.
- Other programmes such as Shifting Boundaries were effective in reducing self-reported perpetration and victimisation

Community Level

- Reviews of interventions undertaken in the school setting also highlighted the 'Fourth R' programme as resulting in a decrease in the perpetration of physical dating violence
- Theatre interventions (schools-based), reported positive outcomes in relation to creating awareness of intimate partner violence, reducing gender stereotyping and encouraging engagement in non-violent conflict resolution
- In university settings, bystander programmes were overwhelmingly found to be promising, with evidence of a positive impact on changing attitudes and beliefs, however, the impact on behaviour was less clear cut
- The majority of interventions undertaken in healthcare settings had an impact on domestic abuse and violence or intimate partner violence as opposed to community VAWG

²¹ Wales Violence Prevention Unit. (2021). What works to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). Available at: www.violencepreventionwales.co.uk

Societal level

Much of the evidence focused on interventions relating to alcohol policy and there was limited direct evidence of the impact of these policies on VAWG outcomes, rather it was on related outcomes that could act as potential mediators of VAWG.

- Alcohol pricing and other associated interventions: Overall the evidence supports a consistent link between policies which increase alcohol price (or prevent low prices) and relevant health outcomes including prevention of sexual violence perpetration. Several policy areas demonstrate initial evidence of a direct association with sexual violence, including those affecting price, outlet density, bar management, sexist alcohol marketing content.

3. Universities UK Taskforce report

Universities UK²² produced a report on changing the culture in universities around women, harassment and hate crime. The report outlines that a coherent, systematic approach across the whole university institution is required for best effect, particularly on prevention activities. An institution-wide approach should draw together activities across the university from promoting positive behaviours through to ensuring that appropriate support is in place for students. Effective data collection, appropriate governance, robust risk management and regular impact assessments are vital in this approach. Alongside this, regular and ongoing engagement with students is essential.

The report makes a number of recommendations which include (amongst others):

Senior Leadership and an institution-wide response

- Tackling VAWG should have priority action status within the university setting
- Universities should report on progress and carry out regular impact assessments of their approach
- The Student Union should be involved in developing, maintaining and reviewing the approach

Prevention

- Universities should adopt an evidence-based bystander intervention programme
- Agreements between students and the university should highlight up-front the behaviours that are expected from all students as part of the university community, set out disciplinary sanctions and state the university's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students

Response

- Universities should develop a clear, accessible and representative disclosure response for incidents of sexual violence and rape, working with relevant external agencies where appropriate (including a centralised reporting system where feasible)
- Universities should conduct a thorough assessment of which staff members need to be trained and what training needs to be provided

²² Universities UK. (2016). Changing the culture: report of the Universities UK Taskforce examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students. Available at: www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

- Universities should build and maintain partnerships with local specialist services to ensure consistent referral pathways for students.
- Universities should establish and maintain strong links with the local police and NHS in order to develop and maintain a strategic partnership to prevent and respond to incidents

4. University of Leeds research “What makes a park feel safe or unsafe?”

A large research project conducted by the University of Leeds called “What makes a park feel safe or unsafe?” studied the views of women, girls, and professionals on factors that influenced how safe they felt in public parks.

The following list is quoted directly from the research report and highlights the areas of consensus from the discussions with women:

“1. Well-used parks feel safer because of increased passive surveillance and opportunities to seek help. Facilities, activities, mixed uses and staffing throughout the day support busyness.

2. The presence of other women in parks is reassuring and signals a safer place, but women-only areas are not the solution.

3. Organised group activities support women to feel safer and extend their use of parks, though choice and timing of activities should be expanded.

4. Fences or walls around the edges of parks limit escape and visibility, whilst openness feels safer by helping women to spot dangers and take action.

5. It is safer to ignore than challenge unwanted comments and attention in parks, so as to avoid escalation and unsafe situations. Yet, leaving male harassment unchallenged perpetuates injustice.

6. Seeing other users of a similar identity in parks feels reassuring, though a diversity of users suggests parks are inclusive.

7. Women can’t rely on other park users to intervene in instances of harassment, but well-used parks increase the probability for bystander intervention.

8. Mobile phone apps where women can allow trusted contacts to track their journeys may be useful in parks but trade freedom for safety.

In addition, there was general agreement among women that parks feel unsafe after dark, but women differ as to whether they think something can be done to parks to make them feel safe enough to use at these times, with diverse views on lighting.”²³

For girls, the following areas of consensus were drawn out of the research study (verbatim quote):

“1. Help points in parks would be reassuring if they provided access to assistance quickly.

2. Being near the edges of parks feels safer because it is easier to escape and you can be seen by people in surrounding streets and buildings.

²³ [Parks Report FINAL 7.12.2022.pdf \(whiterose.ac.uk\)](#)

3. Like other public spaces, parks do not feel safe after dark. But fears are heightened by a lack of lighting and limited sightlines in parks as well as secluded areas or dense vegetation.
4. Secluded or hidden areas of parks feel unsafe because they can conceal threatening people, provide places to be trapped and impede being seen or seeing others.
5. Parks feel safer during daylight hours, but not always due to unsafe situations and knowledge of attacks or harassment in certain parks.”²⁴

5. Local Authority case study: Lambeth Made Safer

Lambeth’s VAWG Strategy²⁵ involves collaborative work across a range of partners. Whilst it has a large emphasis on domestic abuse, it also includes sexual violence and stalking and harassment. It places weight on the involvement of victims and survivors and affected communities in the design and delivery of services.

Key elements of their strategy include:

- All victims and survivors knowing where to go for help and can access the right support easily and flexibly based on their individual needs
- All victims and survivors will be believed and provided with free, independent, non-judgemental support from any service in the area
- All services will understand the impact of trauma and promote a culture of safety, empowerment and healing (including development of a workforce development programme to build knowledge, skills and capacity across the Partnership)
- Community engagement and lived experience will inform the work and interventions reflecting the individual needs of communities
- A strong co-ordinated community response will be delivered by involving all partners
- Coordinated and targeted campaigns that support prevention and early intervention and help to tackle societal attitudes will be delivered to ensure residents and communities are aware of all forms of VAWG, how to recognise it and where to get information and support
- All children and young people understand consent, healthy relationships and the different types of VAWG
- Those working with children and young people can identify VAWG (and risk factors) and respond appropriately and rapidly
- Identified perpetrators have their behaviour challenged and are held to account for their actions

²⁴ [Parks Report FINAL 7.12.2022.pdf \(whiterose.ac.uk\)](#)

²⁵ Lambeth Made Safer. (2021). Violence against women and girls strategy 2021-2027. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls>

Conclusion

- Incidents of violence against women and girls remain significant. There has been little change or improvement in rates according to national prevalence data, and local police data, over the past 5-7 years.
- In South Gloucestershire, there is the equivalent of 5 community VAWG incidents every day; an incident of sexual violence every 2 days; an incident of ABH/GBH every day
- Some notable geographic variation is evident in the data: Charlton and Cribbs as a ward that stands out from police data and was also mentioned in the focus groups: likely to be related to commercial and night-time economy in this area
- Online Pupil Survey data suggests young people would value more learning on prevention of VAWG and VAWG-related behaviour
- Feedback from local people who took part in a survey and focus groups felt that violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a problem in South Gloucestershire; with a large majority having experienced or witnessed it recently.
- A number of services are funded across Avon & Somerset by the Officer for the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC), with additional work being undertaken in schools, as well as community focussed communications. However, feedback has highlighted a need to both expand the scope of the services, as well as to increase awareness of them.
- Interventions may be broad in scope and span targeted increases in surveillance including CCTV and community police presence, environmental design changes to elements such as street lighting and local parks, and prevention programmes through school, universities and wider community bystanders.

Recommendations

Areas of focus:

- Partners should use the data provided to understand and highlight areas to prioritise need. This should include geographic areas as well as types of setting (eg shopping malls) and communities at higher risk and reduce likelihood of reporting (such as LGBTQ+ communities). This should take into account:
 - Impact – the severity and size of the issue
 - Changeability - the realistic chance of achieving change
 - Acceptability – acceptable solutions available?
 - Feasibility -resource implications of solutions are feasible

Prevention:

- Prioritise actions with schools, colleges, education settings and those settings working with children and young people around topics such as healthy relationships and toxic masculinity. This should include work within the curriculum as well as topic and setting specific opportunities
- Work with partners in the community to understand opportunities and develop actions and programmes to support adults, particularly men, on topics such as healthy relationships and toxic masculinity
- Ensure the action plan includes a focus on the built environment to understand local needs and concerns, working with partners such as community groups and the Council's public open spaces teams to identify areas of improvement in eg street lighting and parks access
- Work with communities on the best way to build confidence in the local population to report concerns about, or incidents of, VAWG. This would allow the Police and others to notice trends earlier, potentially to identify perpetrators and put in resource where needed.

Data collection and analysis

- It is recommended that further data is gathered on the topic of VAWG from school-age children in South Gloucestershire. This needs assessment has not involved new research on the views of local children and young people. It is recognised that this needs to be undertaken sensitively and with the involvement of key stakeholders. Research could be conducted by adding additional questions to the Online Pupil Survey or by specific survey or engagement work with education settings and other community methods of participation. This would help to add the children and young people's element of community engagement and consultation alongside the adult survey and workshop findings. Young people should be fully involved in the development of any new services and represented in any future strategy and action plan development on the topic of VAWG.
- It is acknowledged that there are limited data sources on the topic of community-related VAWG available at a South Gloucestershire level. Whilst it is recognised that reporting of instances of VAWG is under-representative of the true level of activity nationally, locally the Partnership should make attempts to encourage and increase

reporting of incidents and improve recording of these instances, so they are recorded as VAWG to improve opportunities for analysis of the data. The principal sources of this information will be Police data and the StreetSafe service.

- There are a number of identifiable gaps in the data and this analysis. It is recommended that additional work is undertaken by Avon & Somerset Police on their datasets to look at the characteristics of offenders, to separately record and analyse online offences.
- It is recommended that specific work is undertaken with university sites and students to understand any increased risks posed to these individuals and to understand the provision that is in place in university settings to support students.

Partnership working and a whole-system approach

- The Government VAWG Commissioning toolkit guidance recommends the establishment of a VAWG joint commissioning group, and where feasible, to involve or represent the voices of those with lived experience or those with specific additional needs or those facing additional inequalities in the process. This would support the co-production of services and allow victims and survivors to contribute in a meaningful and empowering way.

Raising awareness, campaigns, communications and promotion

- Members of the Partnership have undertaken some communication and campaign activity around VAWG over recent years. It would be beneficial for further promotion of national programmes such as the national 'Enough' campaign to be undertaken. This should include targeted work with communities, particularly those identified in this needs assessment as having a higher incidence of VAWG related incidents.
- Engagement activities with the local population highlighted some need for building trust with the Police and other official reporting agencies, with reference to recent high profile incidents of VAWG. This could be supported by the promotion of stories with positive outcomes for victims/survivors and for general messaging around the importance and benefits of reporting incidents.
- The StreetSafe service has the potential to be a useful tool for South Gloucestershire to understand better local concerns around safety. It is recommended that all members of the partnership encourage continued promotion of the StreetSafe tool. This in turn will provide a more meaningful level of data that can be gathered on hyper-local issues and areas of concern, allowing authorities to take targeted and timely action.
- Members of the Communities Safety Partnership should provide clarity on their websites regarding where individuals affected by VAWG can access support, how to report incidents of VAWG and general information that would encourage an individual to engage with services around their experience. There could be a potential for this information to be created collaboratively and then repeated on each site. A cohesive

and combined effort around this would mean that members of the public would access the same information regardless of which organisational website they use.

- It is recommended that work is undertaken to understand more about why individuals may not report incidents of VAWG to the Police or other agencies. This should include awareness raising around the importance of reporting, the types of crimes/incidents that should be reported and how to report. It would be important to share stories that illustrate the importance of reporting and outcomes.

Training and support

- Opportunities to support schools, colleges, education settings and those settings working with children and young people around topics such as healthy relationships and toxic masculinity
- Work with partners in the community to understand opportunities and develop programmes to support adults, particularly men, on topics such as healthy relationships and toxic masculinity
- Support for businesses – including local night economy venues to promote and develop existing interventions such as Ask for Angela and drink spiking.
- Training for those who are likely to come into contact with those reporting incidents – such as Police and other professionals (for example healthcare, social care, school staff etc) to ensure they are working in a trauma-informed way, understand VAWG and are non-judgmental
- Review opportunities to work with key partners and settings to provide Bystander training

Provision of services

- There is a need for services to reflect the diverse needs of victims and survivors, considering the multiple inequalities that might be experienced by populations such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds, deaf and disabled individuals, LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, women with insecure immigration status.
- The Government's VAWG Commissioning toolkit recommends undertaking a separate provision mapping exercise to understand existing provision of both commissioned and non-commissioned services as part of the commissioning cycle. Alongside this, mapping of service spend should be undertaken to help identify opportunities for joint commissioning and pooling of budgets. It is recommended that existing services and offers, such as educational programmes and training offers should be further promoted to raise awareness of services and to conduct outreach.

Next steps

The findings of this needs assessment including the recommendations have been used and will continue to be used by the South Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership to continue to develop and inform the 2025 – 2028 South Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership Strategic Plan to address VAWG and develop prevention and response activities.

2023 South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey:

The next iteration of the South Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey will have additional questions from the current survey. The surveys for pupils in Secondary Schools and Further Education will provide the following:

Information regarding pupils' perception of whether they have had lessons on:

1. Healthy / unhealthy / abusive relationships (Further Education survey question)
2. Staying safe (including from crime and violence) (Further Education survey question)
3. Online safety (including reporting online abuse and harassment) (Further Education survey question)
4. Child Sexual Exploitation
5. Getting help and support / speaking out when things are wrong (incl. reporting coercion, harassment, abuse and violence)
6. Personal and social skills (i.e. rights, responsibilities, morals and values, respect etc)

As well as new questions on:

- How safe do you feel in your local area?
- Receiving sexually explicit texts or nudes (pictures or videos) that you did not ask for or want
- Being pressured to send sexually explicit text messages or nudes (pictures or videos)
- Having images or nudes taken of you without your knowledge or consent (e.g. when you are changing or having been up-skirted)
- Having your sexually explicit texts or nudes (pictures or videos) shared with other people without your knowledge or consent

Feedback regarding the SGC VAWG Survey:

It is recommended that a 'You said, we did' briefing is completed in future once a VAWG Action plan has been determined, in order to provide feedback to residents and partners who took part in both the online consultation and focus groups and community conversations who are invested in decisions on next steps.

Further resources

- Footnotes have been provided to provide links to referenced information.
- Updates on the progress of South Gloucestershire VAWG work will be shared here:
<https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/violence-against-women-girls>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations (Home Office, 2022)

Detail of expectations for commissioners (focusing primarily on the actions that relate to wider community VAWG as opposed to domestic abuse and violence). A number of actions relate to the undertaking of a local VAWG needs assessment and as such they are not included here in this list:

Full details available at: [Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106422/vawg-national-statement-of-expectations.pdf)

1. Put the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery:

- Have a robust consultation process for identifying which services are needed locally and a safe, accessible and open forum to ensure victims (including children and young people) and service providers can share their views and experiences
- Have sufficient local specialist VAWG service provision, including provision designed specifically to support victims from ethnic minority backgrounds, deaf and disabled victims, victims with learning disabilities, male victims, LGBTQ+ victims, migrant victims, children and young people and older victims. This should include specialist 'by and for' services, which are uniquely placed to respond to the specific needs and experiences of the communities they support
- Consider whether an individual may face multiple barriers and, if so, what services are in place to support these (e.g. mental health issues, drug/alcohol dependencies, poverty etc)
- Consider how other services engaging with victims of VAWG such as mental health, health services etc are able to identify and respond to women and girls' experiences of VAWG
- Assess and build in access to mental health service provision for victims of all types of VAWG. Effectively link up such services with, for example, health services, rape support centres, specialist services for those from ethnic minority backgrounds or support for adult survivors of child sexual abuse to form resourced care pathways
- Consider specialist interventions that provide a complete and holistic programme of support to professionals and victims. This could include training and support for healthcare teams to spot the signs of abuse and understand the impact of trauma and simple referral pathways for their patients into specialist advocates and support workers based in VAWG services

2. Have a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims and survivors safe

- Take a proactive and robust approach to perpetrators, in terms of the risk of harm posed to victims and effective interventions to challenge and change their behaviour
- Ensure that any interventions for perpetrators exist in addition to separate support for victims
- Proactively seek to increase knowledge and understanding of perpetrator behaviours

3. Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG

- Ensure that commissioners understand the dynamics of VAWG and the issues that need to be addressed, for example by attending appropriate training delivered by specialist services where possible
- Adopt a whole system response to VAWG (for example through a Coordinated Community Response) and draw on learning from other pilots to encourage more joined up working and drive improvements in early intervention and prevention.
- Aim to have trained professionals in hospitals and other health and social care settings to identify and support victims and signpost them to services
- Have a robust and useful local VAWG disaggregated data set and develop an effective information sharing protocol that adheres to data protection requirements
- Have a concise local strategy setting out how the impact of local commissioning will be measured, and what victims and survivors can expect from services, including who is accountable locally, how concerns can be raised and how success will be measured and evaluated
- Have a meaningful process for measuring victims' satisfaction, including engaging with local specialist VAWG organisations to understand how they qualitatively and quantitatively measure victims' satisfaction with the services and support they receive
- collaborate and develop shared goals and objectives across local authority and service boundaries to ensure a multi-agency response, recognising that services may be commissioned in partnership or at a regional level

4. Be locally-led and safeguard individuals at every point

- Identify a board of local champions or critical friends, the board should drive challenge and learning on VAWG issues and local progress
- Consider pooling local budgets and funding sources and working with local providers to support a commissioning process that encourages consortia bids which recognise and allow for smaller local specialist providers
- Identify practical steps to take to ensure learning from reviews and inspectorate reports are maximised, put into practice and shared across local VAWG partnerships
- Consider how training provided to local professionals (on all types of VAWG) is evaluated, and how to ensure it is making a difference, increasing learning and awareness of local specialist services and that it builds in the voice of victims.
- Identify any VAWG initiatives being delivered by the local police force with funding from central Government, and whether other VAWG initiatives are being delivered locally by the specialist VAWG sector.

5. Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG

- Be aware of the statutory relationships, sex and health education curriculum and the topics this covers (e.g. consent, abuse, FGM).
- Refer to the Respectful School Communities toolkit²⁶ for advice on creating a culture in which sexual harassment of all kinds is seen as unacceptable.
- Identify when this is being taught in schools and what additional activity is happening, including the use of nationally available campaign materials such as Government

²⁶ Department for Education. (2020). Respectful school communities: self-review and signposting tool. Available at: <https://educateagainsthate.com/>

campaigns or local initiatives that raise awareness of the myths and stereotypes relating to VAWG. Encourage head-teachers and local specialist services to work together on these issues

- Reach out to universities and their representative bodies, to discuss their implementation of the Office for Students' Statement of Expectations for Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct
- Identify whether the right local connections are in place so that schools know where to ask for specialist advice, including referral pathways to specialist children's domestic abuse or sexual violence services. Consider whether there is access to provision that works with young people who are displaying sexually violent or inappropriate behaviour, and how these young people are being supported to change their behaviour
- Identify and promote wider touch points in your community, including, for example:
 - whether local employers have policies on VAWG, or whether the local Chamber of Commerce can encourage them to do so
 - how local deaf and disabled people and people with learning difficulties are able to disclose violence or abuse safely to professionals, giving consideration to any difficulties they may have in leaving the house or in expressing themselves to receive the help they need. Information should be provided in accessible formats (to match the needs of those receiving it) and should include information describing what abuse is, as some people may not recognise that they are victims and require further support to understand what is happening
 - ensuring local Health Visitors, housing and health and social care professionals are trained to spot all forms of abuse and take the appropriate action
 - local initiatives like 'Ask for ANI'²⁷, 'Safe Spaces'²⁸ and 'Ask for Angela'²⁹, and whether they can be part of a strategy to provide safe spaces where people can disclose abuse in the course of daily life to someone who will know what to do
 - local authority housing and homelessness policies that include VAWG
 - sexual violence bystander programmes, and how they might be used locally to raise awareness and help increase reporting
 - opportunities to access the latest technologies and online methods to identify and support victims and survivors and those worried about their own behaviour

²⁷ 'Ask for ANI' (Assistance Needed Immediately) is a codeword scheme that operates in over 50% of pharmacies in the UK. Pharmacies voluntarily sign up to the scheme which provides a route for victims of domestic abuse to contact support services via pharmacy staff. Can also be used for broader instances of VAWG.

²⁸ Similar to 'Ask for ANI'. Primarily promoted for reporting instances of domestic abuse but wider applicability. Available in a number of pharmacies and banks. See [Safe Spaces Locations - UK SAYS NO MORE](#) for more information.

²⁹ 'Ask for Angela' is a safety initiative in bars, clubs and other licensed businesses where people who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'. General information available on the national Pubwatch website: [National Pubwatch supports Ask for Angela campaign - National Pubwatch](#)

Appendix 2: South Gloucestershire resident survey questions

Insight and Engagement Team



Violence Against Women and Girls in the Community Survey

South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership has made tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) a priority area. Compared to the national average, South Gloucestershire is a safe place to live and work. Whilst we know this, we recognise that not everyone feels safe and we want to understand more about this topic. To do this, we need input from people living and working in South Gloucestershire to tell us your experiences, how you think violence against women and girls can be prevented, and how victims can be supported.

For this work, we are mainly considering violence against women and girls that takes place in the community, e.g. outside of the home or not by domestic partners. This is because South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership have already undertaken a needs assessment and have developed a strategy around Domestic Violence and Abuse. You can view the Domestic Violence and Abuse strategy [here](#).

When thinking about violence against women and girls, we are considering the following types of crimes, amongst others:

- Acts of violence or abuse that concern women and girls
- Rape and other sexual offences
- Stalking and harassment
- Honour-based abuse
- Serious violence, homicide and violence with injury
- Public fear, alarm or distress
- Exploitation of prostitution
- Online acts of abuse including pornography

This survey is predominantly seeking the experiences of women and girls in South Gloucestershire but we welcome views and comments from all members of the community.

Please complete this survey by **Friday 24th February** - it should take around 10 minutes to complete. We really value your response.

At the end of the survey there are some links to where you can get help and support in relation to violence against women and girls.

This is an anonymous survey, therefore we are unable to respond to any disclosures of violence against women and girls made in this survey.

Your gender

- Q1 Are you?
- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | Go to Q2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | Go to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | Go to Q19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say | Go to Q2 |

Your perception of violence against women and girls in your local area

This section of the survey asks you to share your views on how much of an issue you think violence against women and girls is in South Gloucestershire and your local area. By local area, we mean the area that is within a 15-20 minute walk of where you live.

- Q2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that violence against women and girls is a problem in South Gloucestershire?
- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Don't know
- Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that violence against women and girls is a problem in your local area?
- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Don't know
- Q4 Thinking about the frequency of violence against women and girls in South Gloucestershire compared to 5 years ago (2017-18), do you think it's happening...?
- ☐ More often
 - ☐ About the same
 - ☐ Less often
 - ☐ Don't know

Your experience outside your home

This section of the survey asks you about how safe or unsafe you feel when out in the area where you work or socialise. We understand that you may work and socialise in different areas of South Gloucestershire or surrounding areas.

- Q5 How safe or unsafe do you feel outside during daylight hours?
- ☐ Very safe
 - ☐ Fairly safe
 - ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe
 - ☐ Fairly unsafe
 - ☐ Very unsafe
 - ☐ Don't know

Q6 How safe or unsafe do you feel outside at dusk or in the dark?

- ☐ Very safe
- ☐ Fairly safe
- ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe
- ☐ Fairly unsafe
- ☐ Very unsafe
- ☐ Don't know

Q7 At any time in the past 5 years (since 2017-18), have you experienced any of the following when out or in the workplace? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing
- ☐ Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated
- ☐ Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Unwanted sexually explicit online comments, emails, messages or images
- ☐ Inappropriate advances that offended you or made you feel uncomfortable on social networking websites
- ☐ Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you
- ☐ Somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material
- ☐ Physical harm
- ☐ Verbal or emotional distress
- ☐ Sexual harm
- ☐ Drink and/or drug spiking
- ☐ Other (if you wish to share, please state below)
- ☐ None of the above

If you have another experience that you wish to share and it is not listed above please use this space:

Q8 Where did the incident(s) take place? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Outside on a street or road
- ☐ In a park or other outdoor area
- ☐ In a shopping area
- ☐ In a bar, pub, club, cafe or restaurant
- ☐ In a gym or other leisure facility
- ☐ On public transport or in a taxi (including whilst waiting for transport e.g. in a bus station or similar)
- ☐ At someone else's house
- ☐ At your workplace
- ☐ Whilst you were using a business or service not listed elsewhere
- ☐ At an educational setting (e.g. school, college or University)
- ☐ Don't wish to answer
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other (if you wish to share, please state below)
- ☐ None of the above

If you would like to tell us about another location which isn't listed please use this space:

- Q9 If relevant, please tell us who (if anyone) you reported or shared your experience(s) with:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I did not talk to anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> A national victim support organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colleague/another employee at my workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> Police |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Union representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/professor | <input type="checkbox"/> A family member or relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another pupil at my school/university/college | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor/health care worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer / solicitor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone else (please state below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A local (South Gloucestershire or Bristol based etc) victim support organisation | |
-
- Q10 At any time in the past 5 years, have you done any of the following for fear of, or as a result being physically, verbally or sexually abused whilst out and about? (please select all that apply)
- ☐ Avoided leaving your home on your own
- ☐ Avoided taking certain streets or going to certain streets/area
- ☐ Avoided going to places where there are few people around
- ☐ Avoided using public transport
- ☐ Avoided going to bars/pubs/clubs
- ☐ Avoided situations at your workplace, stopped going to work, or changed jobs or role
- ☐ Another experience (please state below)
- ☐ None of the above
- If you have another experience that you wish to share that is not listed above please use this space to provide further detail:
-

Your experience at home

This section of the survey asks you about how safe or unsafe you feel in your home, including the outside space/garden. If you do not have a fixed address this could include the place where you are currently staying or resting.

- Q11 How safe or unsafe do you feel whilst at your home, including your garden or outside space?
- ☐ Very safe
- ☐ Fairly safe
- ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe
- ☐ Fairly unsafe
- ☐ Very unsafe
- ☐ Don't know

Q12 At any time in the past 5 years, have you ever experienced any of the following whilst at home, including your garden or outside space? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing
- ☐ Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated
- ☐ Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Sexual harm
- ☐ Verbal or emotional harm
- ☐ Physical harm
- ☐ Somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material
- ☐ Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you
- ☐ Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Somebody showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Drink and/or drug spiking
- ☐ Another experience (please state below)
- ☐ None of the above

If you have another experience that you wish to share and it is not listed above please use this space to provide further detail:

Q13 If relevant, please tell us who (if anyone) you reported or shared your experience(s) with:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I did not talk to anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> A national victim support organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colleague/another employee at my workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> Police |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Union representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/professor | <input type="checkbox"/> A family member or relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another pupil at my school/university/college | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor/health care worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer / solicitor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone else (please state below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A local (South Gloucestershire or Bristol based etc) victim support organisation | |

Q14 At any time in the past 5 years, have you done any of the following for fear of, or because of being emotionally, physically, verbally or sexually harmed whilst at your home, including your garden or outside space? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Avoided returning home
- ☐ Avoided opening your door when you are alone at home
- ☐ Avoided the person/people you live with
- ☐ Avoided asking tradespeople to carry out work in your home
- ☐ Avoided people who live near you
- ☐ Increased security measures around your home
- ☐ Changed your behaviour in any way. E.g. locking internal doors, not going into your garden
- ☐ Avoided using technology
- ☐ Another experience (please state below)
- ☐ None of the above

If you have another experience that you wish to share that is not listed above please use this space to provide further detail:

Your experience online

This section of the survey asks you about how safe or unsafe you feel when online. This could include for example, your experience of using social media, online dating, online discussion boards and internet-based apps.

Q15 How safe or unsafe do you feel when online?

- ☐ Very safe
- ☐ Fairly safe
- ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe
- ☐ Fairly unsafe
- ☐ Very unsafe
- ☐ Don't know

Q16 At any time in the past 5 years, have you experienced any of the following when online? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Inappropriate comments or messages that offended or made you feel uncomfortable on social networking websites e.g. online dating
- ☐ Unwanted sexually explicit online comments, emails, messages or images
- ☐ Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel uncomfortable
- ☐ Harassment
- ☐ Stalking
- ☐ Another experience
- ☐ None of the above

If you have another experience that you wish to share that is not listed above please use this space to provide further detail:

Q17 If relevant, please tell us who (if anyone) you reported or shared your experience(s) with:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I did not talk to anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> A national victim support organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colleague/another employee at my workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> Police |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Union representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/professor | <input type="checkbox"/> A family member or relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another pupil at my school/university/college | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor/health care worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer / solicitor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone else (please state below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A local (South Gloucestershire or Bristol based etc) victim support organisation | |

Q18 At any time in the past 5 years, have you done any of the following for fear of, or as a result of experiencing harm online? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Avoided using an online forum
☐ Avoided using social media
☐ Avoided going online
☐ Another experience (please specify below)
☐ None of the above

If you have another experience that you wish to share that is not listed above please use this space to provide further detail:

Support for victims

This section asks you about your broader feelings about violence against women and girls in South Gloucestershire

Q19 If a woman or girl in the local area experienced violence against them, how easy or difficult do you think it would be to get help and support?

- ☐ Very easy
☐ Quite easy
☐ Neutral
☐ Quite difficult
☐ Very difficult
☐ Don't know

Q20 What support do you think is required for victims of violence against women and girls?

Reducing violence against women and girls

This section of the survey asks you what actions South Gloucestershire organisations could take to prevent and reduce violence against women and girls while continuing to support victims.

Q21 Please rank the things that organisations within South Gloucestershire can do to tackle violence against women and girls in order of importance:

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
Ensure that residents are aware of the different forms of violence against women and girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raise awareness of gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase understanding about the importance of healthy and respectful relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with educational settings to encourage healthy behaviours/ relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide additional support to victims of violence against women and girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide training to people so they can safely intervene if they witness violence against women and girls (this is something known as bystander training)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raise awareness of violence against women and girls in the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q22 What changes to South Gloucestershire's environment do you think would help women and girls feel safer in the local area? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Improved/increased street lighting
- ☐ Increased pruning of trees
- ☐ Increased CCTV
- ☐ Something else (please state below)
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Don't know

If you have another suggestion for how to make South Gloucestershire safer for women and girls that is not listed above please use this space:

Q23 We want everyone to feel safe in South Gloucestershire. If there are areas locally where you do not feel safe please provide this information below. Please be as specific as possible by providing a building name, street name, or postcode if possible.

Location 1:

Location 2:

Location 3:

Location 4:

Q24 Please use this space if you have any further comments on how violence against women and girls in South Gloucestershire can be prevented and reduced:

Q25 How did you find out about this survey?

- ☐ Word of mouth
☐ From social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc)
☐ From South Gloucestershire Council (e.g. the Council website, email alerts etc)
☐ Through my workplace
☐ Through a poster or leaflet
☐ Other (please state below:)

About you

This section is really important. It's vital that we understand the experiences of a wide range of respondents in order to ensure that everyone is treated equally. By understanding more about what people from diverse backgrounds tell us, we can ensure we act appropriately to meet needs. All questions are optional and any responses to these questions will remain confidential. Individuals will not be identified and personal details will not be published.

Q26 Please tell us your postcode.

This is used for analysis purposes only.

Q27 How long have you lived in South Gloucestershire?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a year | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 years |

Q28 What is your age?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 to 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

Q29 Please tell us your sexual orientation:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual/
Straight | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gay Man | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian/
Gay woman | | |

Q30 Do you identify as a transgender person?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|

Q32 Do you have any dependents living in your household in the following age groups?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 18+ years | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-17 years | <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

- Q33 Do you consider yourself to be disabled? **(Please tick all that apply)**
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Yes - Physical impairment, such as difficulty using arms or mobility issues which may mean using a wheelchair or crutches
- ☐ Yes - Sensory impairment, such as being blind/having a serious visual impairment or being deaf/have a hearing impairment
- ☐ Yes - Mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or schizophrenia
- ☐ Yes - Learning disability/difficulty (such as Down's Syndrome, dyslexia, dyspraxia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism spectrum condition)
- ☐ Yes - Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- ☐ Yes - Other (please state)

Q34 If yes, please, please tell us how this affects the way that you access or use council services.

Q35 Please tell us your ethnic origin

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab/Arab British | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic group - White & Black Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Other | <input type="checkbox"/> White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British - Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> White - Other (please state) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African | <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> White - Roma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Other ethnic group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Irish Traveller | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

If other, please state:

Please return your completed questionnaire to South Gloucestershire Council, Insight and Engagement Team, PO Box 1953, Bristol, BS37 0DE

We really appreciate your input to this survey. We know that violence against women and girls is an emotive topic and if you would like further support you can find this on the Government's 'Enough' campaign website: <https://enough.campaign.gov.uk/get-support>

You can also use the Street Safe website to report anonymously any public places where you feel or have felt unsafe: www.police.uk/pu/notices/streetsafe/street-safe/

Please note: StreetSafe is not for reporting crimes or incidents.

Crimes or incidents should be reported to the Police by calling 101 or 999.

To find out more about the work of South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership please visit: www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/stronger-communities/community-strategy/safer-stronger-communities-strategic-partnership/

Appendix 3: South Gloucestershire organisation survey questions



Violence Against Women and Girls Survey for Stakeholders and Organisations

South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership has made tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) a priority area. To help understand the topic better, we need input from people living and working in South Gloucestershire to tell us your experiences, how you think violence against women and girls can be prevented, and how victims can be supported. **Please complete this survey by Friday 24th February** to have your say.

This survey is for organisations. To respond as an individual resident please click [here](#). A range of organisations are involved in responding to and preventing incidents of violence against women and girls (VAWG). This includes the Police, South Gloucestershire Council, schools, voluntary and third sector organisations alongside many others. Many organisations have a role to play in helping women and girls and this may include supporting those who are the victims of violence or abuse. We also know that trans people are more likely to be a victim of crime or abuse

For this work, we are mainly considering violence against women and girls that takes place in the community, e.g. outside of the home or not by domestic partners. This is because South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership have already undertaken a needs assessment and have developed a strategy around Domestic Violence and Abuse. You can view the Domestic Violence and Abuse strategy at: <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/staying-healthy/health-strategies/domestic-violence-abuse-strategy/>

About your Organisation

Please provide the following details about your organisation:

Name of organisation or setting:

If you would like to receive further communications in relation to work on VAWG in South Gloucestershire please provide an email address:

Brief description of how your organisation works with women/ girls and how the topic of VAWG features in your work:

Incidents of VAWG and supporting women and girls

These questions relate to incidents of violence against women and girls that may be reported to your organisation/setting, or where you may support service users who have experiences relating to violence against women and girls. This could include supporting or working with perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

When thinking about violence against women and girls, we are considering the following types of crimes, amongst others:

- Acts of violence or abuse that concern women and girls
- Rape and other sexual offences
- Stalking and harassment
- Honour-based abuse
- Serious violence, homicide and violence with injury
- Public fear, alarm or distress
- Exploitation of prostitution
- Online acts of abuse including pornography

Which types of VAWG do you see reported by the women and girls you support in your organisation? *(please select any that apply)*

- ☐ Acts of violence or abuse that concern women and girls
- ☐ Rape and other sexual offences
- ☐ Stalking and harassment
- ☐ Honour-based abuse
- ☐ Serious violence, homicide and violence with injury
- ☐ Public fear, alarm or distress
- ☐ Online acts of abuse including pornography
- ☐ Exploitation of prostitution
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- ☐ None of these / Not applicable

Other - please specify:

Based on what your organisation has seen over the last 5 years, how would you say the number of incidents and reports of violence against women and girls has changed?

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Not sure / not able to say
Number of incidents (e.g. based on informal mentions by service users or observation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of reports to your organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Over recent years how has the severity of incidents of VAWG reported to your organisation changed?

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Stayed the same
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Not sure

Do you feel your organisation can adequately support women and girls who have experienced violence or abuse?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Please tell us what makes supporting these women or girls difficult, or what barriers exist:

How do you report incidents or concerns of violence or abuse against women and girls? *e.g. if you had concerns how or to whom would you report these issues?*

If you think some population groups are more vulnerable / at greater risk than others, please tell us which groups:

Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls by working together

How do you think that organisations in South Gloucestershire could better prevent incidents of violence against women and girls?

If you have any examples of interventions or support around VAWG that you think are working well please let us know:

How do you think women and girls who have been victims of violence or abuse could be better supported?

If you have any further comments relating to violence against women and girls in South Gloucestershire, please let us know:

How did you find out about this survey?

- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ From social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc)
- ☐ From South Gloucestershire Council (e.g. the Council website, email alerts etc)
- ☐ Through my workplace
- ☐ Through a poster or leaflet
- ☐ Other (please state below:)

If you would like to be kept updated on what we do with these results and how our work tackling violence against women and girls is making progress, then you can provide your email address below. Your contact details will not be used for any purpose other than this project.

If you would be comfortable with your comments being shared as part of this project, for the purpose of promotion and engagement of this survey, and our work on violence against women and girls, then please tick 'yes'. The comments we use are always anonymised and anything that could potentially identify you would be removed.

- ☐ Yes - I am happy for my comments to be used anonymously for promotion and engagement of this project
- ☐ No - I do not want my comments to be shared

Please return your completed questionnaire to Freepost SGC, South Gloucestershire Council, Insight and Engagement Team, Council Offices, Badminton Road, Yate BS37 5AF

We really appreciate your input to this survey. We know that violence against women and girls is an emotive topic and if you would like further support you can find this on the Government's 'Enough' campaign website: <https://enough.campaign.gov.uk/get-support>

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To find out more about the work of South Gloucestershire's Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership please visit: www.ourareaourfuture.org.uk/safer-and-stronger-communities-strategic-partnership/

Any personal information that you have supplied will be held by South Gloucestershire Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations (UKGDPR) 2021. This information will only be used as part of this exercise and personal information will not be published or passed onto any other organisation. Your personal information collected as part of this survey will be kept for two years to help us improve services before being securely destroyed. Our privacy notice, which explains how we will process your personal information, how long we will retain it and your rights as a data subject, is available at www.southglos.gov.uk/privacy

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- ⁱ Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). (2022). Rape and sexual offences – Chapter 7: key legislation and offences. Available online at: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance>
- ⁱⁱ CPS. (2022). Rape and sexual offences: Key legislation and offences. Available at: [Rape and Sexual Offences - Chapter 7: Key Legislation and Offences | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](https://www.cps.gov.uk/rape-and-sexual-offences-chapter-7-key-legislation-and-offences)
- ⁱⁱⁱ 3 CPS. (2018). Stalking and harassment: legal guidance, domestic abuse, cyber/online crime. Available at: [Stalking and Harassment | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](https://www.cps.gov.uk/stalking-and-harassment)