

# Background

Why tackling violence against women and girls is important.

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2 mins read

In July 2021, the government launched its [Tackling violence against women and girls strategy](#). Evidence presented in the strategy suggests that some forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) are so commonplace that many women and girls don't even think they are worth reporting. This is the case for experiences like being grabbed, touched and/or threatened by strangers.

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey June 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2021) found that from a sample of 16,112 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain, two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years had experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months. In total, 44% of women aged 16 to 34 years had experienced catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes in the previous 12 months, while 29% had felt like they were being followed.

In addition to the experience of violence or harassment, fear of crime can have a profound effect on people's lives. Office for National Statistics (ONS) data (Office for National Statistics, 2021) suggests that while both men and women felt less safe when walking alone after dark than during the day (in quiet streets close to home, busy public spaces, and parks or open spaces), a greater proportion of women reported feeling unsafe than men.

As a result of feeling unsafe, many people reported that they had modified their behaviour in the past month. This finding is supported by research which suggests that, as a result of both experiences and feeling unsafe, women and girls develop and undertake a range and higher amount of safety strategies (Kavanaugh, 2013; Vera-Gray and Kelly, 2020).

## Tags

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