

'Walk in My Shoes' – encouraging women and girls to report crime

A county-wide survey to encourage women and girls to report where they feel unsafe and to provide safer spaces in Nottinghamshire.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence against women and girls Stalking and harassment Community engagement
Organisation	Nottinghamshire Police
Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police Community safety partnership Local authority
Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2025
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Adults Children and young people Communities General public LGBT+ Race/ethnicity Women
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Aim

The aim of 'Walk in My Shoes' is to create safer spaces in Nottinghamshire by:

- identifying areas in Nottinghamshire where women and girls feel unsafe
- identifying areas in Nottinghamshire which may not show up on crime data due to the type of incident reported
- collaborating with community safety partnership (CSP) partners to improve reassurance and safety

Intended outcome

The intended outcome of 'Walk in My Shoes' is to increase the feeling of safety for women and girls across Nottinghamshire.

Description

Nottinghamshire Police conducted a review into the types of crime reported by women and girls. The review revealed that only some crime types were being reported, with incidents of cat calling, staring and other intimidation taking place but not always being recorded. The force also recognised that women and girls may feel unsafe when they are out visiting areas at certain times. In response, Nottinghamshire Police developed 'Walk in My Shoes', to identify areas where women and girls feel unsafe and improve safety.

The planning process involved the communications team working with the prevention hub lead for violence against women and girls (VAWG). The communications team consulted with local partners such as Nottingham City Council, Women's Aid and other local charities to share ideas, content and proposed survey questions. The force also partnered with These Girls Run, Tara's Angels, Equation, and Forest ladies' netball to promote the survey.

The survey is hosted on Notts Alert (local community alert system) and can be accessed via a QR code or link on a social media post. The survey includes the following questions:

- have you experienced unwanted behaviours from men in a public space in the last year?
- what unwanted behaviours from men have you experienced?
- where has this most frequently happened?
- have you changed your walking or running route to avoid certain areas out of worry for your safety in the last year?
- where has this most frequently happened?

To promote the survey, the communications team facilitated filming, photography and designing graphics. The content has been shared on social media, digital screens, television advertisements on Channel 4, printed material and Digi vans. The force have utilised printed QR codes to distribute at community engagement events such as park runs, parishes, local beat surgeries and community meetings. The communication team hosted a media launch event to encourage news outlets to promote the survey.

The survey initially ran for three months and generated nearly 3,000 responses. It was then extended to improve representation among ethnic minority communities, as initial responses did not reflect the diversity of the county.

Actions taken

The survey data was analysed by an internal analyst and identified specific areas where women and girls may feel unsafe. The following actions have been taken to provide reassurance and improve safety:

- Design out crime officer (DOC) reports – DOC officers have visited each site and produced reports outlining recommendations to improve safety.

- Partnership engagement – the DOCO reports are shared with the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC), community safety managers and CSP partners. An action plan will be created and co-ordinated by the force.

Implemented measures include:

- improvements made to street lighting
- installation and enhancement of CCTV coverage
- targeted police patrols in identified areas
- plans to implement safe-points in identified areas
- council funded security teams to conduct targeted patrols

Funding and senior management approval

The 'Walk in My Shoes' initiative has received £18,000 from Nottinghamshire Police's communications budget. The funding has been used to promote and increase completion rate of the survey.

The initiative is sponsored by the superintendent for the Prevention Hub. The chief inspector lead for VAWG is responsible for the delivery of 'Walk in My Shoes'.

Evaluation

An evaluation is planned and will be led by Nottinghamshire Police.

Overall impact

To date, there have been over 3,600 responses from a diverse range of women and girls. 'Walk in My Shoes' has been positively received by the public, who have shared their concerns.

These Girls Run group supported the force in identifying an area on their running route. In response, the area is set to get lighting implemented as well as increased patrols and management of unauthorised encampments.

The results from the survey found:

- more than 2,700 women and girls changed their walking or running route to avoid areas where they felt unsafe
- more than 2,300 women experienced unwanted behaviour from men in a public space in the last year with harassment and staring the most common experiences
- nearly 90% of women and girls felt the most unsafe in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in the evening and at night

The top three suggestions to improve safety are:

- more police visibility in identified areas
- changes to the environmental landscape such as additional CCTV, lighting and cutting back bushes and trees
- a safe space for refuge

CSP's and the PCC's office have supported the initiative, by implementing additional CCTV, safe points, improving lighting, and additional patrols.

Learning

- The communication team's promotion and engagement activities have enabled a high response rate from the survey.
- Data capture could be improved. during the analysis phase, the initial data collected proved difficult to unpick and evaluate.
- It is recommended that Street Safe (anonymous reporting service) is used to capture data from the survey, allowing for better quality data to be displayed using Power BI. This capture form runs year-round, while survey data may only cover a shorter amount of time.
- The majority of CSP partners had already allocated their funding from the PCC before the survey results were analysed and shared. For some actions taken, there was limited time for spending which caused logistical challenges.
- It is essential that CSP funding pots are prioritised to respond to feedback from the survey. Without required budget, the force are limited to providing targeted patrols rather than improving environmental settings.

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