YOUNG WOMEN LEAD 2021

The Young WOMEN'S Movement

Glasgow: A Feminist City? Young Women Lead Report 2021

Contents

About

Young Women Lead 2021 is a leadership programme for young women aged 16 - 30 who live in Glasgow. It is delivered by YWCA Scotland - The Young Women's Movement. The programme was first launched in 2017 in partnership with the Scottish Parliament and was created from a need to address the underrepresentation of young women in politics. In 2021, the programme was revised to further engage young women with local democracy.

Every year, the Young Women Lead cohort collectively chooses to research an issue facing young women. Over several months beginning in January 2021, participants from all across Glasgow came together virtually to attend training sessions and conduct social research on the subject of feminist town planning.

GLASGOW'S PARKS CATER TO YOUR NEEDS

Young Women Lead want to hear what women and non-binary people think about Glasgow's parks; how you use them, how often you visit them, and how can they be made more accessible and convenient for you!

Executive Summary

The Young Women Lead (YWL) cohort 2021 have undertaken a 9-month long study into Glasgow's urban infrastructure and whether it reflects and supports the diverse needs of women and non-binary people living in the city. The cohort collected gender-disaggregated data through two surveys focused on attitudes towards Glasgow's bus system and public parks. With this approach, they aimed to centre women and non-binary people's experiences within urban design and development. This report presents their findings through a lens of feminist town planning, with a view of projecting this perspective onto Glasgow's urban infrastructure.

Why is it important?

Town planning has overwhelmingly been a male-dominated industry, with planners projecting their own gendered experience onto considerations of who urban residents are, and what their needs may be. Since the 1970s, feminist critics have seen town planning as a sector in which women's experiences and specific needs have not been integrated into decisions on urban design and service development. This has highlighted many areas for improvement, such as lighting and toilets in public areas and infrastructure that accommodates who are pregnant or have unpaid caring responsibilities. This leads to the conclusion that maintaining a stance and not considering women's specific needs when creating cities is disadvantaging women and non-binary people.

What have we found?

YWL found that many women and non-binary people have concerns over safety, accessibility, convenience, and affordability. The surveys conducted have highlighted real concerns over violence and harassment that women have experienced due to the poor infrastructure that is a catalyst for unsafe situations. In addition to this, the data gathered highlighted failures in the provision of public services, particularly public toilets within parks, that have a consequence on the ease of day-to-day city living for women and non-binary people. Looking at examples of best practice and implementing a feminist town planning perspective can provide real solutions to a plethora of concerns that women and non-binary people shared with YWL.

We present specific and measurable recommendations for Glasgow buses and public parks, focusing on safety, accessibility, convenience and affordability.

1. An Introduction to Feminist Town Planning

What are our cities like and how does this answer differ for people of different genders? Since the 1980s, scholars from across fields such as urban planning, geography, anthropology, architecture and psychology have turned their attention to urban planning and its relationship with women (Day, 2011). One of the strands that emerged from this turn is feminist town planning.

Feminist town planning, or feminist urbanism, centres around the idea that towns, cities and urban spaces are generally designed by men for men, with a lack of consideration for the needs of women, non-binary and genderfluid people. Feminist considerations of urban design and planning aim to demystify the 'neutral' resident or user. The 'neutral' resident which is traditionally spoken about in town planning is almost always quietly assumed to be male. Feminist town planning places the focus on people and the relationship which they have with the places and spaces they inhabit (Day, 2011).

This focus includes the people who build cities, who are not 'neutral' - they are real people with lived experiences, norms, and perspectives that drive the decisions being made (Kern, 2020). With town planning being a male-dominated industry (Matrix, 1984), the norms, thoughts and values of the very diverse public are often missing in the decisions being made. Consequently, the cities we live in are not designed to work for people who are not single men: such as mothers; parents, working women; women in low income households; children; families; non-binary people or disabled people. This is problematic because responsibilities such as hygiene, care, education, and nutrition, which are essential to human life and wellbeing, fall disproportionately on people who are not male (Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia, 2015). These tasks are not limited to home or private life but are essential to every society, and should therefore be included in the town planning process (Ortiz Escalante & Gutierrez Valdivia, 2015). Thus, cities should be planned in ways that ensure a more equal redistribution of resources both physically and socially, as this is essential for every member of the community (Cohen & MacGregor, 2020).

One way the 'neutral' approach to town planning has been far from inclusive is that it often does not consider the daily lives and tasks of women (Ortiz Escalante & Gutierrez Valdivia, 2015). Urban environments are created based on a set of societal beliefs that have been deeply ingrained into basic social functions and understandings. Issues of safety, mobility, and accessibility have often been viewed only through the male perspective, neglecting that women have different needs.

As Boys et al. (1984) explain, councillors and town planners, both usually male, consequently make decisions without the consideration of the impact on women. This has resulted in women taking a stand for their place in urban planning through campaigns, especially addressing safety and public transportation. 'Take back the Night' (Listerborne, 2016) and 'Everyone Aboard' (Murning, 2021) are just a couple of the campaigns that have been launched to raise awareness of the gendered differences in needs women face in their everyday lives.

When approaching the topic of town planning from a feminist perspective, we are striving to bring attention to voices that have been ignored or silenced, in order to better serve the community. Feminist town planning is an effort to codesign communities for all who live and work in them. Codesigning a city means expanding on the narrow lens in which they currently exist (Cohen & MacGregor, 2020; Ortiz Escalante & Gutierrez Valdivia, 2015). In this report, we will expand this lens by looking at how two important elements of urban planning, public transport and public parks, are perceived by women and non-binary people in the city of Glasgow, Scotland.

Take back the Night is an international movement that stands against sexual violence. The name stems from efforts that focused on the basic right for women to walk alone at night without fear of being raped, harassed, or otherwise harmed. Events began in the 1960s in Belgium and England with protests about women not feeling safe walking down the street alone at night. In 1973 in the United States, a group of women at the University of Southern Florida dressed in black sheets, held broomsticks, and marched through campus demanding a women's center and in 1975, a crowd in Philadelphia held a Take Back The Night Event to protest the murder of a microbiologist walking home after work. These early protests sparked hundreds of later events on college campuses and in communities of all sizes and locations, all hoping to bring awareness to sexual violence and provide support for victims.

2. The Glasgow Context

As the largest city in Scotland with a population of 633,123 of which 51% are women, Glasgow is a city with a rich history of changing urban design, population diversity and a dynamic social landscape (National Records of Scotland, June 2019). From a centre for commerce, manufacture and trade within the Industrial Revolution, to a site of post-war deindustrialisation, Glasgow's shifting urban identities have had a direct effect on its residents, their socio-economic situation and their sense of wellbeing. For example, the building of high-rise tower blocks and the exodus of a large proportion of the working population to satellite towns during the mid-20th century has been linked to the breakdown of community support and for many working class families who had previously lived in more densely populated tenement buildings (McLean, 2020). Coupled with the economic effects of deindustrialisation, these recent urban changes have arguably placed Glasgow's residents in a vulnerable position that may explain Glasgow's excess mortality rates (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2016) *1.*

Although Glasgow has seen significant regeneration since the 1990s, the decisions made around its urban infrastructure have an enduring effect on the lives of its residents. This report will centre women and non-binary people within this narrative.

2.1 Glasgow Public Transport

Research conducted by Sustrans revealed that the preferred option for navigating a Scottish city is 'multi-modal'. Residents use a combination of car (if available), public transport, walking and often cycling (Sustrans, 2019) *2.*

In Glasgow however, only 51% of the population have access to a car (Sustrans, 2019) whilst 26% have access to a private bike (Scottish Household Survey, 2018). This indicates a reliance on a public transport system, or safe walking routes, as a means of getting from A to B.

Public transport is integral to accessing a city's resources and services, connecting its various neighbourhoods, and giving residents autonomy over their lives.

Additionally, domestic transport currently represents Scotland's largest source of carbon emissions which needs to be tackled in order to mitigate climate change (Scottish Government, 2021). Incentivising people to use public transport rather than taking cars or taxis is crucial to lowering carbon emissions.

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1. *5,000 more people die every year in Scotland than the rest of the UK. Premature mortality, deaths under 65, is 20% higher in Scotland than in England & Wales; whilst Glasgow has 30% excess compared with Liverpool, Manchester and Belfast.*
2. *In Scotland as a whole, 77% of men have a driving license compared to 64% of women (Transport Scotland, 2018, p17).*

A cheap, accessible and well-connected public transport infrastructure is therefore essential for equality of mobility (Visakha, 2021) and reducing carbon emissions. When considering a public transport system from a feminist perspective, it must also be reflective of the distinct ways in which women, when compared to men, travel around a city: where they need to go, when they go, how many times, with what and with whom.

Public transport systems have been scrutinised by feminist town planners across the world, who have critiqued the concept of the 'neutral' and 'typical' traveller with assumed universal needs, that are fed into system design (Day, 2011). In fact, gender proves to be 'a robust determinant of journey purpose' and journey experience (UK Women's Budget Group, 2020, p7). For example, research has shown that men are more likely to have a straightforward, twice daily travel pattern, commuting back and forth to their workplace. Women, however, often follow more complicated routes with multiple stops and connections, known as trip-chaining, due to persisting gender roles that place disproportionate responsibilities for care and unpaid domestic tasks on women, often carried out concurrently with paid work (Criado Perez, 2019). Consequently, women may be accompanied on transport by children, including prams and buggies, older people, and larger quantities of bags. Whether or not these various responsibilities are supported by a flexible and accommodating public transport system in Glasgow is an area for enquiry.

The Everyone Aboard Campaign is a campaign run by The Poverty Alliance, supported by over 120 other organisations in Scotland, which calls for free bus travel for everyone receiving Universal Credit and for all under 25s in Scotland. It urges the Scottish Government to include low-income households in its COVID-19 recovery strategy and demands free bus travel as a way of easing financial pressures and offering opportunities as lockdown restrictions ease.

Glasgow's buses are a particularly interesting case study for investigating women's experiences of public transport in the city. In a recent study by Glasgow City Council, only 16% of respondents felt that the city's buses met their needs (Glasgow City Council, 2020) *3.* This indicates that a high level of Glasgow's population find it increasingly difficult to conduct their daily routines and access services using the bus networks alone.

3. By comparison, 42% and 32% agreed or strongly agreed that trains and the subway respectively meet their needs.

Glasgow's buses have already been recognised at a local level as an important development priority when considering reduction of carbon emissions, interconnecting neighbourhoods and ensuring resident wellbeing *4.* Our report provides gender-disaggregated data to better understand how women and non-binary people specifically feel about Glasgow's buses and how this intersects with other areas of gendered experience.

2.2 Glasgow Parks

Known as the 'Dear Green Place', Glasgow's city blueprint is dominated by 91 public parks and an abundance of green spaces (Glasgow City Council, 2020). Glasgow's parks are the most used of Glasgow City Council services, with 71% of people having made use of them over the last number of years (Glasgow City Council, 2019). Acting as meeting points, community hubs, and thoroughfares, public parks are central to Glasgow's citizens' engagement with the city at a neighbourhood level, and act as important spaces for enjoying the benefits of nature and the outdoors.

Public parks, and open spaces more generally, can be considered microcosms for the city as a whole; with women's experiences within them indicative of how urban design decisions more broadly cater to women's needs either supporting or barring their access. As Visakha argues 'the right to public space, and by extension the right to the city, is linked closely to the provision of public spaces and services'. Designing and developing public parks involves planning physical infrastructure, such as walk and cycle ways, lighting, toilets, as well as social infrastructure such as playgrounds, community gardens, sports grounds and picnic areas (Visakha, 2021). The level to which this infrastructure, or lack thereof, positively or negatively affects women and non-binary people can determine whether they feel that the park is safe, useful, hygienic, and welcoming.

It may be encouraging to note that in 2019, 87% of Glasgow residents were satisfied with parks in the city (Glasgow City Council, 2019). But a lack of gender-disaggregated data, as well as data on other Protected Characteristics *5,* suggests that this figure may not be truly representative of the range of experiences of Glasgow's diverse women and non-binary people.

This concern is compounded when considering that there are only four toilets maintained by Glasgow City Council across the city's many parks *6*. Even more concerning, only one of these could be considered accessible. This inadequate provision of accessible toilets would suggest a direct impact to many people's experience of enjoying parks. This could be particularly true for pregnant women, people with children, disabled people and people with underlying health conditions, all of which may require more frequent use of a toilet.

Glasgow's parks also elicit safety concerns, and have been linked to incidences of harassment, physical and sexual assault, and femicide *7*.

Women and non-binary people often face different challenges than men in public transport and public places. For example, respondents mentioned:

Safety:
"I don't feel much safer at a bus stop at night than I would stood on any street alone."

Childcare:
"It's just too expensive and slow. I can't get my child to care before work as it would take hours and cost a fortune"

Harassment:
"[...] a man approached me whilst I was [in the park] [...] I said I was reading but he sat anyway [...] till he eventually left (after trying to get my number, social media details & a kiss)"

Physical needs:
"[I] am pregnant, and even prior to pregnancy toilets were an issue when I was menstruating [...] [A]s people with vulvas are more likely to get urine infections, and therefore potentially need to pee frequently, this is a big issue."

6. Toilets run by the Council can be found in Victoria Park, the Botanic Gardens, Kelvingrove Park and Pollok Country Park. Only Pollok Park has accessible toilets.
7. One painful example of the association of Glasgow's parks with violence against women and girls, is the murder of Moira Jones in Queen's Park in 2008. The Moira Fund was set up in her memory to support families affected by homicide and femicide. More information can be found here: http://www.themoirafund.org.uk/

3. Methodology

To produce this report, two working groups were established that focused on collecting data on women and non-binary people's experiences of Glasgow's buses and Glasgow's public parks respectively. Both groups produced surveys using Survey Monkey with a mixture of free-text and multiple choice options. A full list of both survey questions can be found in the Appendix.

To analyse the qualitative responses, the groups coded each response and looked for emergent patterns which then were categorised into themes from the findings. The team divided up questions with free-text answers among members. The individuals were then responsible for conducting a deeper analysis of their own questions and responses. In the next step, the group came together to provide feedback on their findings and examined their collective findings for links and intersections between the coded responses.
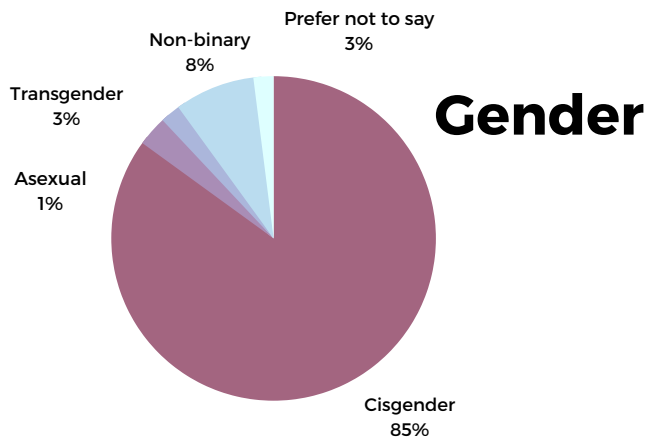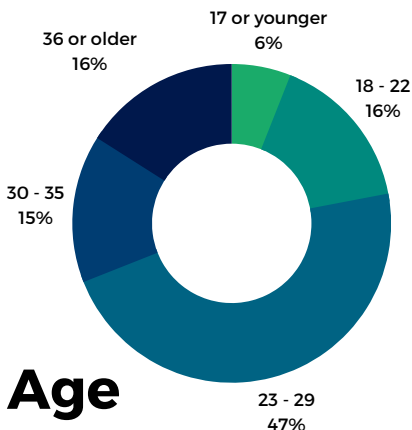
This qualitative data then was combined with quantitative data to generate a list of recommendations and themes of highest concern. To decide on the final recommendations, the groups only excluded outlying data or data that had the weakest support among participants. For example, if only one or two responses mentioned wanting more benches in parks, they chose not to include it as part of the recommendations in favour of a stronger presentation of data such as increased lighting. The groups also chose to exclude when respondents explained they felt 'unsafe in particular places' as not to target certain areas of the city, and in other instances, respondents didn't elaborate on the particular areas. Finally, there were certain aspects both groups felt did not have the space to explore fully, such as individuals with child-caring responsibilities and motherhood, the fact respondents found the bus to be a sustainable mode of transport, and how to improve late-night bus routes. We recommend further research into this.

3.1 Buses

To find out how to improve Glasgow's bus services for women and non-binary individuals across the city, the Young Women Lead transport research group developed a survey comprised of thirty-five questions.

This survey aimed to find out how bus users utilised the services available, their experiences of such services, and what improvements they would make. The survey was distributed digitally through social media and QR code stickers placed on bus stops across the city.

Demographics

Gender

Prefer not to say 3%

Non-binary 8%

Transgender 3%

Asexual 1%

Cisgender 85%

Age

17 or younger 6%

18 - 22 16%

23 - 29 47%

30 - 35 15%

36 or older 16%

293 respondents

Religion

No religion
Church of Scotland
Roman Catholic
Other Christian
Muslim
Jewish
Hindu
Pagan
Other**

Racial or ethnic identity

White Scottish
White Other British
White Irish
Other White
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British
Latin
Other*

Sexual orientation

Heterosexual
Lesbian
Bisexual
Gay
Asexual
Queer
Pansexual
Prefer not to say

Refugee status

The majority of individuals who answered the survey are not refugees or currently seeking asylum in Glasgow with <1% answering yes.

Health & Disability

The majority of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition. From the 34% that selected yes, the most common impairment was mental health conditions.

 * Other includes Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British, Any other Asian, African, African, African Scottish or African British, Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British and Prefer not to say at less than 1% respectively.
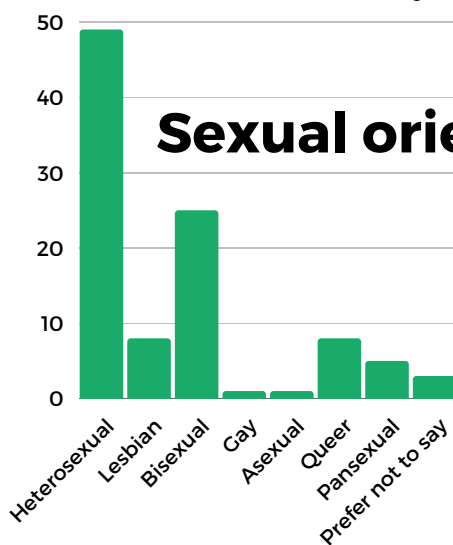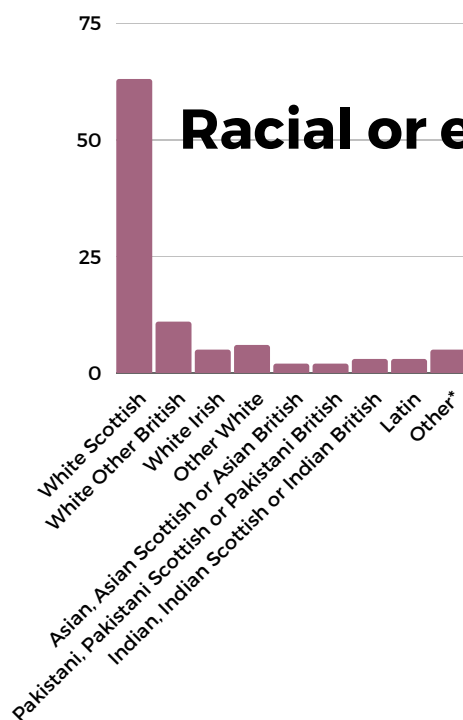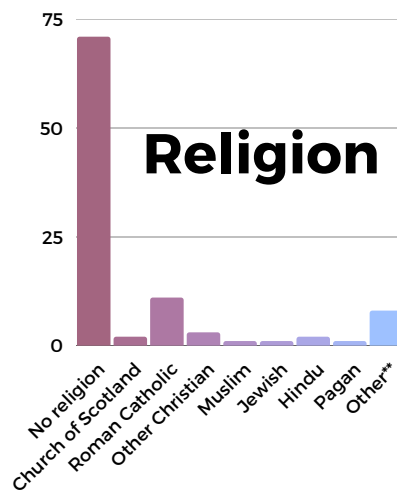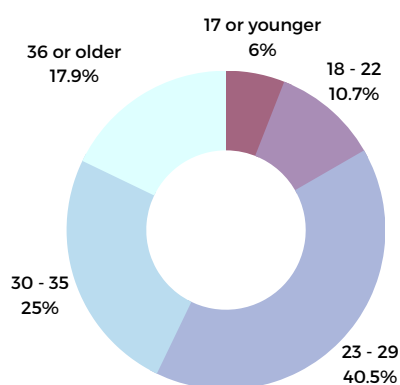 ** Other includes Sikh at less than 1% and Prefer not to say

3.2 Parks

To find out how to improve Glasgow's parks and open spaces for women and non-binary individuals across the city, the Young Women Lead open spaces research group developed a survey comprised of 32 questions.
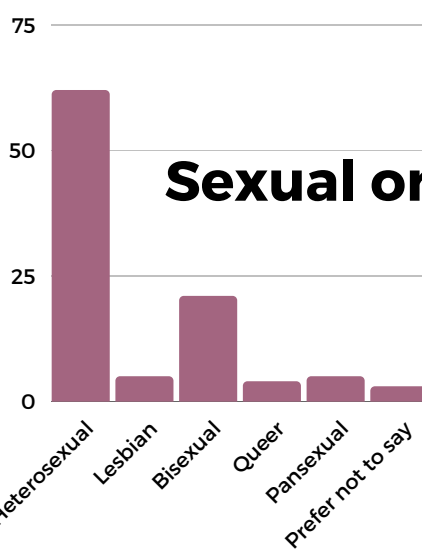
This survey aimed to find out who uses Glasgow parks, their experiences in these parks and what improvements they would make. The survey was distributed digitally through social media.

Demographics

290 respondents

Age
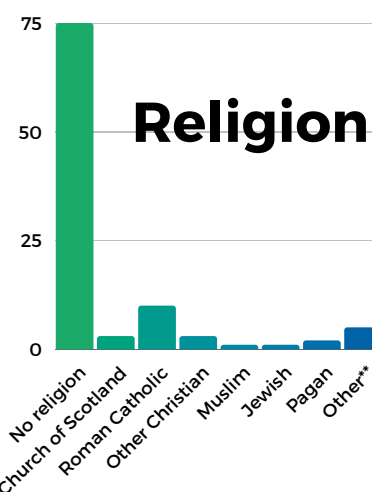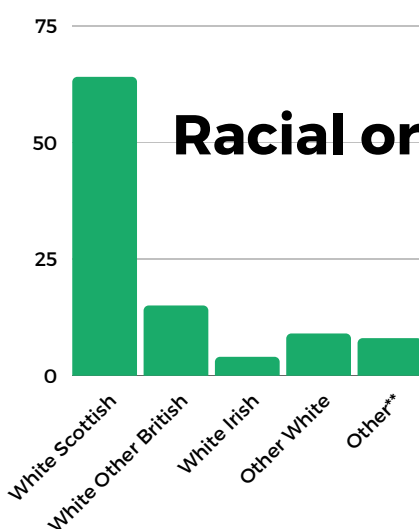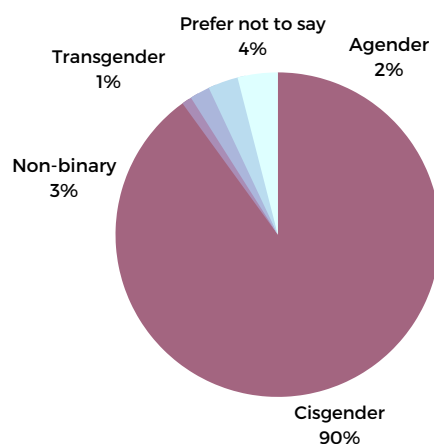
- 17 or younger 6%
- 18 - 22 10.7%
- 23 - 29 40.5%
- 30 - 35 25%
- 36 or older 17.9%

Sexual orientation

(bar chart: Heterosexual, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Pansexual, Prefer not to say)

Religion

(bar chart: No religion, Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Other Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Pagan, Other**)

Racial or ethnic identity

(bar chart: White Scottish, White Other British, White Irish, Other White, Other**)

Gender

- Transgender 1%
- Prefer not to say 4%
- Agender 2%
- Non-binary 3%
- Cisgender 90%

Refugee status

The majority of individuals who answered the survey are not refugees or currently seeking asylum in Glasgow with <1% answering yes.

Health & Disability

The majority of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition. From the 27% that selected yes, the most common impairment was mental health conditions.

* Other includes Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British, Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British, Any other Asian, African, African Scottish or African British, Black, Black Scottish or Black British,Latin, Latin, Latin Scottish or Latin British and Prefer not to say at less than 1% respectively.

** Other includes Jewish at less than 1% and Prefer not to say

4. Women and non-binary people's experiences of Glasgow's buses

In our survey, 76% of respondents or young women found their travel habits changed during the pandemic. 77% of responders of young women consider buses a sustainable mode of transport. With the large majority of people seeing buses as sustainable, we see research into bus use and the issues women and non-binary people of Glasgow experience with this mode of transport as vital in improving Glasgow and combatting climate change.

In this chapter, we will provide an overview of how buses are generally used in Glasgow, and discuss three major themes that emerged in the survey about public transport by analysing quantitative and qualitative data from our surveys.

4.1 Bus use

The average Glasgow bus user surveyed prefers to use the bus during the afternoon (67%) and morning (63%), will spend on average £14.50 per week, and use the 4, 6, 3, 57 and 38 bus routes most often. Furthermore, women and non-binary bus users in Glasgow tend to use the services for leisure (69%), closely followed by work (62%).

The individuals surveyed found 67% of their journeys required 0 changes with only 1% selecting four or more changes. However, significantly, 25% found their journeys required one change. Overwhelmingly, 84% of respondents preferred other modes of transport primarily citing safety and reliability concerns, both of which are covered in more depth in this chapter.

4.2 Safety
On Glasgow buses

In our survey, 67% of women and non-binary people indicated that they often felt unsafe or uncomfortable on buses in Glasgow. Respondents felt that their safety was being threatened by three main behaviours:

1 Unsolicited behaviour from men, both verbal and physical. One respondent wrote:

"[a] man pulled [my] headphones from my ear. Men just feel entitled to touch you and no one does anything about it and you're stuck there because you still need to get home"

2 Anti-social behaviour, whether being drunk or participating in fights on the bus, also often from men

3 Encroaching behaviour on a woman or non-binary person's personal space from passengers

It was also repeatedly mentioned that night-time services made respondents feel more unsafe and uncomfortable when travelling around the city. It's worth noting only that 20% of respondents would use the bus at night, while bus usage rises to around 60-70% at other times of the day.

Harassment was mentioned amongst many comments from respondents, with 14 respondents sharing that they had been either sexually, physically, or verbally harassed on the bus. One respondent explained:

"I've experienced and witnessed harassment on the bus and it is rarely if ever challenged. It doesn't feel like you would be supported if something bad happened to you on the bus - the drivers don't see it as their problem."

At Glasgow bus stops

70% of respondents indicated they do not always feel safe when they are waiting for a bus. Similarly to being on a bus, unsolicited behaviour from men and anti-social behaviour were cited as reasons for feeling unsafe at bus stops.

Respondents stated that unreliability and long waiting times contributed to feeling unsafe and this tended to be mentioned in conjunction with late night services. In particular, five respondents mentioned they were afraid of being harassed at bus stops. One respondent stated:

"[I] have experienced harassment at bus stops and never know what to do about it, there's nothing to stop that person from following you onto or off of the bus."

4.3 The role of respondents' social identity in feeling safe

When respondents were questioned on if they felt that their social identity - whether that be gender, sexuality, or religion - impacted their safety on and around the bus, a range of concerns emerged.

66% felt their social identity impacted their safety and when asked to expand on their answers the most common theme which emerged was bus users felt "being a woman" impacted their safety onboard and around the bus. Other themes which emerged strongly throughout this question were 'sexuality', 'disability', and negative mentions of men.

Issues surrounding how individuals presented themselves on the bus, or were perceived by others, appeared throughout the data; for example, wearing queer iconography, being trans, or dressing in feminine ways opened them up to harassment, objectification, and hypersexualisation. One respondent elaborated by writing *"being a queer, trans, POC puts a target on my back"* and another wrote *"When I stopped wearing dresses I stopped getting hassled as much"*.

4.4 Affordability, Reliability, and Accessibility of Information

Our survey suggests women and non-binary bus users mainly do not find the Glasgow bus services affordable or reliable, with 68% finding them "not affordable" and 66% finding them "not reliable".

When questioned on what barriers bus users face using Glasgow's bus network, four key themes emerged; service, cost, reliability, and accessibility. Regarding service, bus users said the bus service, including staffing, cleaning, and bus stops, needs to be improved. Many respondents reported feeling staff were at times rude or unhelpful, with one respondent claiming:

"I am scared to use the buses after an experience where I was dragged off a bus and assaulted by 6 people, the bus driver drove off leaving me lying there".

Respondents also noted more attention needs to be paid to bus shelters as they are unclean, poorly lit, and have minimal information for users.

In terms of cost, respondents did not find the bus network affordable and advocated for a one ticket system that works across all transport services in the city, or a spending cap. Issues around cost were also linked to journey time and frequency of services; for instance, one respondent wrote:

"It's just too expensive and slow. I can't get my child to care before work as it would take hours and cost a fortune".

Finally, regarding reliability and accessibility of information, users found bus services were not frequent enough. Bus users found unclear signage of buses and clarity on service routes and timetables negatively impacted those with physical and mental disabilities, and exacerbated sensory barriers. One respondent further indicated that in comparison to Edinburgh's bus services, Glasgow is failing in providing an affordable and reliable service:

"Having lived in Edinburgh in the past, where buses are reliable and affordable, the difference is vast. Glasgow deserves better."

4.5 Accessibility

On average, respondents rated their experience of the buses as "less than accessible", with six people saying it was entirely inaccessible to them and only five people rating it 100% accessible.

With regards to physical barriers, busy services stopped people from getting on the bus. One respondent highlighted that there is only one bus every 30 minutes on her route. She has a pram and if there is another pram user or wheelchair user on it already, she struggles to get on. This results in a further 30 minute wait for the next bus, highlighting a significant barrier to service use on Glasgow buses for disabled people and those with caring responsibilities.

Respondents further indicated that buses do not provide enough support for disabled people, and those with anxiety, and sensory impairments. Eight different respondents highlighted the bus was a difficult sensory experience for them or that it heightened their anxiety. In terms of what's stopping people from using the bus, one respondent stated:

"At present - risk from COVID, more generally poor support in place in Glasgow buses for the visually impaired stops me travelling at night and on unfamiliar routes. Staff attitudes and training regarding disability is notably poorer on Glasgow buses compared to experiences elsewhere."

In addition to this person's experience, it's worth noting 15% of respondents use the bus to get to their healthcare appointments so having buses be accessible, clean and safe is important for public health. In terms of how well the bus routes connect with other transport options in Glasgow, respondents indicated this was not positive; with only 7% voting the bus routes are well connected with cycling routes, 8% with the subway, and 15% with train services. Regarding pedestrian routes, 23% found the bus routes connect well with walkways throughout the city.

Digital accessibility

The majority of bus users surveyed (72%) search the bus times before using the services indicating there is a need for accessible digital information regarding buses. Whilst 87% of respondents answered that they would use an app that tracked their bus journey, only 46% of respondents claim to use the First Bus app, highlighting improvements must be made to online information and tracking to provide more accessible services to users.
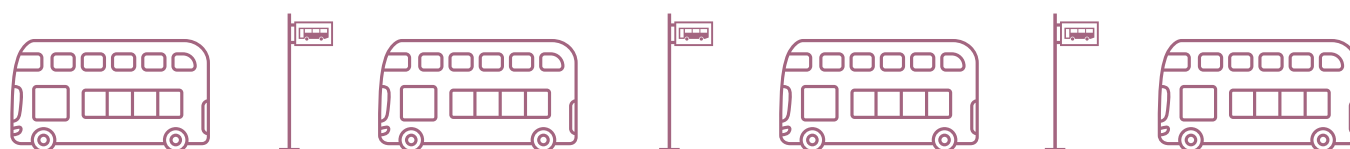
5. Women and non-binary people's experiences of Glasgow's Parks

Our survey indicated that over the past 12 months, women and non-binary people used Glasgow Parks more than they had previously. The Covid-19 pandemic presents a potential explanation for this finding, and while further research is required to confirm this, the current increased use of parks motivates our commitment to ensuring that Glasgow's parks are reflective and supportive to the needs of all users.

In the following chapter, the emerging themes and findings from data collection on the experience of women and non-binary people of Glasgow's parks will be presented with an awareness of the importance of implementing a feminist lens for future park development.

5.1 Choice of park

56% of respondents indicated proximity as their main reason behind the choice of what park they attend on a regular basis. As one respondent pointed out:

"Convenience plays a big part. I also really like the forestry bits and the poetry rose garden."

Respondents noted that the level of convenience was relative to the proximity of the park to their home, work, or amenities, including events spaces, bars, and coffee shops. A participant shared:

"It is near to where I live and work, and often near to where my friends live too."

This aspect proved particularly important in terms of accessibility:

"I love green spaces and trees, [there are] plenty of paths that take my wheelchair."

And affordability:

"It's the closest to me, and I can't very often afford the bus fares to other parks."

The survey also highlighted socialising as one of the main reasons for preference of a particular park (30%). Participants reported attending the park to meet friends and let children play. For those that visit by themselves, accessing parks for recreation and relaxation was a dominant theme, with 17% of respondents pointing out the need for fresh air and green spaces as a break from their flats. This has been particularly pertinent during the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant shared:

"I live nearby and it was the most accessible park during lockdown when we were confined to GCC boundaries."

Others added:

"Breaks from my flat"
"Break from working from home, fresh air"

Safety was also mentioned as a relevant factor in deciding the best park to relax, exercise or meet friends in, with respondents stating:

"It feels safer to me than other parks because I feel like there is more of a community."
"It provides me with a large open area, which is safe."

5.2 Use of parks

From our survey we saw that the most common uses for parks were social activities (81%) and for exercise (69%). Sunbathing was ranked third at 34%.

Other common trends highlight that women and non-binary people enjoy visiting parks due to a general love and appreciation of nature and wildlife, as well as wanting to partaking in recreation or having childcare responsibilities. Commuting practicalities were also raised. Participants wrote:

"To be among the trees, I suppose it's spiritual."
"Taking a route from A to B"
"Enjoying some outdoor space."

The "taking a route from A to B" aspect is specifically interesting from a Feminist Town Planning perspective - parks represent a (potentially underestimated) aspect of transport networks. Therefore, parks should ensure that any person can walk through them, rather than taking a detour around them, at any time of day or night. The need for safe public spaces is directly related to the Feminist Town Planning. By understanding the source of fear, these unspoken elements can be brought to the forefront and incorporated into physical change. As we will see in the following section, this is not necessarily the case for women and non-binary people, indicating that Glasgow's parks are not built in line with Feminist Town Planning principles.

5.3 Safety in parks

A sobering result was that only 20% of all 214 participants who provided a response to this question felt very comfortable in their chosen park. This highlights that while these spaces are invaluable to many and serve multiple purposes, safety is a major issue for the majority of visitors. Additionally, of the respondents who had children, 63% indicated they would not be comfortable for children to visit this park unaccompanied by an adult. Even respondents with older children seemed disinclined to leave them unaccompanied.

There was a strong consensus for reasons behind why women and non-binary people feel uncomfortable, especially when visiting at night. The key factors that emerged were: inadequate lighting, increased use of alcohol and drugs by other people in the park and a heightened risk of assault, harassment, abduction or even murder.

While this survey did not initially look to link length and frequency of visits to a particular time of day, there seems to be a relationship between feelings of safety and time of day, with the majority of answers cited only feeling safe when visiting during daylight hours.

In the following section, we will further explore how respondents perceive safety at different times of day in Glasgow's parks.

Safety at night

Many of the women and non-binary people surveyed indicated that they simply did not visit parks at night, beginning as early as dusk/sundown. Several shared stories of negative experiences of being there after dark, or stories and incidents that cautioned them against visiting parks at night. Participants shared:

"Past instances where women have been raped/sexually assaulted/harassed/murdered in this park make me scared to visit alone unless it's busy. Next to no lighting makes it scary after a certain time. A man once jumped out at me when I was alone and it was dark. Too many women sharing similar stories[.]"

"I feel uncomfortable in this park at night and as a young person was always told to stay out of it and to take routes home that avoided going near the park. I have been threatened and chased multiple times through this park, although with less frequency in recent years."

"The park has [a] reputation for some attacks although I have never directly experienced any specific threat. It is perception [and] discussion across the community. Some areas are very overgrown[and] isolated from busier areas, so I stick to busier areas near the exits when alone."

Feelings of unsafety in parks at night are bolstered by the finding that increased lighting was selected by 81% of survey respondents as how they would improve public parks with 20% proposing improved lighting as a specific solution to feeling unsafe and uncomfortable. Additionally, one visually impared participant wrote:

"Better lighting however LED streetlights are not optimal - difficult to visually transition between dark/low light and bright directed light. So optimal lighting would be dispersed, warm and at floor hip level."

In addition, respondents frequently cited overgrown shrubbery that obscures paths as causing distress. According to one participant, *"during winter post work walks are basically undoable as it is dark and bushy. I had to run out of [the] path after being approached next to bushes at 5pm."* This also links to the high number of people who stated that visibility was key to how they experienced the park and their feeling of safety, from the improvement of cutting back hedges, to having more open areas and even the suggestion of removing perimeter fences. One participant stated:

"I feel unsafe knowing I couldn't easily exit the park without searching for ages for a gate, remove perimeter fencing, or increase the number of entrances/exits."

Additionally, the third most frequently suggested improvement chosen by participants was an increased security presence at night (54%). However it was noted that people did not necessarily mean this to be an increased police presence. One survey respondent said:

"I have ticked increased security but by this I do not mean more police presence as this would make the space more unwelcoming for me. Instead it would be park security/rangers."

It is important to note that certain types of security do not always represent a feeling of safety for different communities and individuals, and that decisions around security presence should be mindful of this.

Overall, these findings strongly indicate that improvements regarding safety in parks at night are a high priority for women and non-binary people in Glasgow.

Safety during the day

While the majority of participants indicated they felt safer in parks during daytime hours, there were also mentions of instances of harassment or 'cat-calling' as well as being approached by 'strange' men whilst visiting the park. One person shared their specific experience saying:

"I recently stopped going to this park (I miss it!) because a man approached me whilst I was there [and] asked if he could sit with me. I said I was reading but he sat anyway [and] it wasn't till he eventually left (after trying to get my number, social media details [and] a kiss) that I realised I was completely alone [and] so I've not felt comfortable going back. I'm sure he was harmless but it left me feeling quite uncomfortable [and] I think I'd only go back to that park for a walk rather than to relax/read/study etc. If it was busier I'd feel more comfortable but at the same time I went because I sought solitude outdoors."

This experience of being unwantedly approached in broad daylight and the subsequent thoughts about being isolated from others, yet still wishing to still be in a peaceful environment, reinforces the need for better management of hedges and bushes. If these were planted and kept in ways that allowed people to feel seen more, even in less busy times, this could help the safety-versus-solitude dilemma the participant describes here.

5.4 Dogs in parks

Being in the company of friends, partners (especially male partners) or dogs were listed as positive influences on feeling safe as well as parks which catered to families and young people.

However, some respondents felt otherwise, and indicated that dogs, as well as groups of adolescents, would instead lead them to feeling less comfortable.

The behaviour and presence of dogs in parks were rather contested topics having both positive and negative comments throughout the survey. There was unity, however, in proposing that this could be resolved by creating dedicated and fenced-in dog run spaces. Dog owners suggested that such areas would allow them to more confidently let their dogs play without fear of broken glass or busy roads. Others suggested that designated off-leash areas would also increase their own level of comfort and use of Glasgow Public parks. As one dog owner pointed out:

"I walk my dog here because I live close by and he regularly meets his wee pals here to play, but there are 5 exits to the park and usually the gates are wide open or broken. A lot of owners don't feel comfortable allowing their dogs off lead and everyone has had their dog run out onto the street at some point. Not only is this dangerous for the dog, it can cause traffic accidents if cars brake or swerve."

Another respondent also discussed how dedicated dog spaces would improve accessibility for individuals with "hidden physical disabilities." They went on to share that *"larger dogs off leads, or on leads but not well controlled, make me feel uncomfortable. People can easily be tripped up by dog leads or exuberant dogs[.]"*

5.5 Public toilets

Another factor leading to women and non-binary people feeling uncomfortable in Glasgow parks is the lack of public toilets. 55.4% highlighted that there were no toilets in the park they most frequently visited, and 35.8% of participants indicated that the provision of more toilets would encourage them to visit parks more frequently and for longer periods of time.

It is positive that 38% of women and non-binary people stated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that currently available public toilets in parks are always accessible. However, opinion was split of whether toilets are in good working order, and that faults are dealt with quickly, with 30% agreeing with the statement whilst 43% either strongly disagreed or disagreed. The rest of respondents were unsure or had never used the public toilets, which may suggest a lack of provision.

It is notable that only 5% agreed with the statement that public toilets cater to those who require a gender neutral toilet and only 8% of respondents felt that the toilets were fit for purpose for disabled people, or provide sanitary products for those who need them.

This data shows that women and non-binary people's experience of using public toilets was varied, although there is certainly room for improvement. When asked how an individual would improve public parks in general, 78% of respondents answered free public toilets. When asked what other public spaces women and non-binary people felt would benefit from free, public toilets, 34% responses mentioned shopping spaces/ the city centre and 27% comments felt all public spaces would benefit. Other responses mentioned a specific park (13%), felt all parks should have public toilets (13%) and 10% responses stated that transportation stations/car parks should include public toilets. Respondents felt strongly that all areas should have access to toilets, saying:

"It is a human right to have access to a toilet."

"During the pandemic and spending a lot of time outdoors, there are zero public toilets and it's a disgrace. People were left with no choice but to pee etc in bushes[.....] Queens park is a brilliant park, people love it and want to spend a lot of time there but when nature calls there is nowhere to go and people either have to leave and try and make it home or pee in a bush. Reopen the toilets at Langside Hall. Open some at the Tennis Court side."

This highlights that although people want to enjoy public open spaces, they are unable to stay for as long as they might because they need the toilet. More public toilets would encourage people to spend more time outdoors, and make Glasgow parks more accessible in general. The issue of a lack of public toilets is more of an issue for some than others, with one pregnant person saying:

"I am currently pregnant and needing a wee more frequently, not having access to a toilet makes things very difficult, I have had to squat behind bushes etc as I've been desperate. Clearly this is not good from a hygiene or safety perspective. Also thinking ahead to when my children are born, toilets would be useful then."

This response highlights that if anyone has less bladder control the lack of a toilet is a big issue. Considering that relieving oneself in public is a criminal offence in Scotland (UK Government, 1982), residents should be provided at local authority level with abundant opportunities for avoiding this situation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Young Women Lead 2021, as a cohort of women based in Glasgow, have a vested interest in the city, and the level to which all of its residents feel empowered by its design. We need to be able to safely connect within and have equality of access to the city's public spaces and services, and extend this wish for every other woman and non-binary person living in Glasgow.

As we have heard, urban planning decisions have a very real impact on the ease and comfort of city residents' lives, and our report has aimed to understand why that is specifically true for women and non-binary people in Glasgow. The intersectional understanding of feminst town planning overcomes traditional barriers to create a more supportive city. In order to ensure that Glasgow's city infrastructure, specifically its public transport networks and public parks, is supportive and reflective of women and non-binary people's complex needs, we believe it is critical to integrate a feminist town planning perspective within the development of Glasgow's city infrastructure.

Currently in Glasgow, public transport is focusing on the positive effects of public health by seeking to promote active travel (Murie, 2017). National and local policies have been implemented to achieve a long-term vision of better health in Scotland through cost-effective, sustainable means of travel (Murie, 2017). Key strategies in Glasgow have included: Glasgow Physical Activity Strategy, Growing a Healthier Glasgow, Glasgow's Local Transport Strategy, Glasgow City Plan 2, Glasgow Strategic Cycling Plan, Strategic Cycling Plan, and Glasgow City Centre Transport Strategy (Murie, 2017)

Glasgow City Council has embarked on a strategy to create a "modern, resilient, and sustainable transport system" based on the needs of the city and its citizens (GCC, 2020). In addition, Glasgow has developed an infrastructure that provides additional public spaces for walking, wheeling, and cycling during Covid-19 (GCC, 2021). The aim of these reports is to create more green spaces to encourage people to spend more time in parks and bring communities together.

Importantly with this perspective, town planning decisions are made with an evidence-based and intersectional understanding of what women and non-binary people truly need. This is where data, disaggregated across gender and other Protected Characteristics, plays an integral role in highlighting women's diverse lived experience. We found that existing studies on Glasgow residents' experience and satisfaction rates with their city, when published, did not often break down their findings by gender. It was therefore difficult to translate these findings into an understanding of gendered experience. In surveying women and non-binary people within Glasgow, we have aimed to fill this data gap, and in doing so have been able to present a richer picture of what they feel about their city and its infrastructure, and how they would like to see change implemented.

6.1 Convenience and fit for purpose

In both surveys, respondents noted that buses and parks serve certain purposes within their city lives, but that at times elements of their design and maintenance create situations where women and non-binary people find them less useful or in some cases unreliable and problematic. Respondents spoke of high ticket costs, disconnected routes and timetabling issues within the Glasgow bus service, whilst park users raised an expectation of open spaces that cater to a variety of activities.

Our recommendations:

- **Make bus information accessible e.g. live time departure boards**
- **A weekly spending cap on bus travel in the Glasgow City area**
- **One simple ticket for all modes of public transport**
- **Improved rubbish removal including bin collection and litter-picking on park thoroughfares, play and picnic areas in parks**
- **Increasing seating and sheltered areas within parks**
- **More fenced-in dog run spaces**

6.2 Accessibility

Town planning decisions in Glasgow should be mindful of the diversity of experience of its residents and their access requirements. However, the data collected suggests that within our bus network and parks this is not the case, and there remain degrees of (un)conscious bias in considerations around who these services seem to be designed to serve and whose bodies are seen as 'typical'.

Our recommendations:

- **Review of bus layouts to allow more room for bikes, prams and wheelchair users**
- **More frequent nighttime services, e.g a women's bus**
- **On board bus stop tracking showing the upcoming stops and announcing them**
- **Better training for bus drivers on supporting disabled people and those with sensory impairments**
- **Extensive provision of public toilets in every public park, which**
  - **Have baby changing facilities**
  - **Are free or donation-based and do not require cash**
  - **Are fully accessible**
  - **Provide gender-neutral options**
  - **Provide sanitary products**
- **Develop a city partnership with Vienna, a world-leader in feminist town planning**

A successful example of good practice of Feminist Town Planning has been demonstrated within the city of Vienna, Austria. The suburb of Aspern represents a new view of urban planning that started 30 years ago, adopting the needs of women into the infrastructure. Vienna "forc[ed] planning to be approached from different perspectives". Their objectives continue to be to create equal opportunities for access for all in the city. Examples include widened pathways for prams and wheelchairs, additional benches for socialising and increased lighting to reduce anxiety in streets. As a result, Vienna has been named the city with the highest quality of life in the world every year from 2009-2019. *8*

8. Mercer Quality of Living City Ranking.
https://mobilityexchange.mercer.co m/insights/quality-of-living-rankings

6.3 Safety

A golden thread running through our findings is women and non-binary people's concerns over safety, both using Glasgow's buses and in public parks. In both surveys, respondents spoke of fears over, or real lived experience of, harassment and violence that was compounded by their gender identity. We call upon Glasgow City Council, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Glasgow's private bus companies to take affirmative action to challenge the behaviours or conditions that create unsafe environments and ensure that women and non-binary people feel supported in reporting issues of violence and harassment. We believe harassment should never be considered 'par for the course' for women occupying public space.

Our recommendations:

- **Clearer pathways to report harassment and assault on board and at bus stops**
- **Improve the First Bus app to allow users to track their bus's journey (similar to Lothian services) and include a safety feature to allow for instances of harassment to be reported via the app**
- **An awareness-raising campaign on how women, girls and non-binary adults and youths feel on buses; with Young Woman Lead working with SPT, Firstbus and McGills on tackling hate crimes and discrimination against women and non-binary people, particularly looking at the intersections of gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disability, and pregnancy**
- **Better lighting infrastructure and seating at bus shelters**
- **Work together with bus companies, bus drivers and their trade unions to establish how buses can be safer for women and non-binary people**
- **Lighting and pathway maintenance within Glasgow's parks**
- **Increase the number of fixed lights within Glasgow's parks. These should be mindful of different sensory needs – for example, dispersed, warm and hip level lighting is better for those within visual impairments**
- **Regularly tackle overgrown shrubbery that obscures paths or possible hidden individuals in public parks**
- **Increase security at night in the form of park rangers**

7. Thanks

Young Women Lead 2021 would like to extend sincere thanks to all of the individuals and organisations that contributed to this research and supported this vitally important piece of work. We believe that this report highlights the many opportunities for positive crucial change, and we look forward to Glasgow City Council's response to our recommendations.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Glasgow bus survey questions

1. How often do you use the bus to get around Glasgow?
2. What bus routes do you use?
3. What time of day do you tend to use the service?
4. How many changes does your journey tend to require?
5. How do you find the bus routes connect with cycling routes?
6. How do you find the bus routes connect with the subway?
7. How do you find the bus routes connect with train services?
8. How do you find the bus routes connect with walkways?
9. If you use the bus, what do you use it for?
10. How much do you spend on public transport a week?
11. Do you search the bus times before using services?
12. Do you use the First Bus app?
13. Would you use an app that tracked your bus's journey?
14. Have your travel habits changed during the pandemic?
15. Do you find the service affordable?
16. Do you find Glasgow bus services reliable?
17. How would you rate your experience using Glasgow bus services?
18. How have you found the accessibility of services?
19. What barriers do you experience using Glasgow's bus network?
20. Do you consider the bus to be a sustainable mode of transport?
21. Do you feel safe on the bus?
22. Do you feel safe waiting for the bus?
23. Do you feel like your social identity has an impact on your safety on and around the bus?
24. Do you prefer other public transport options?
25. How do you think buses in Glasgow could be improved?

CALL FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

YOUNG WOMEN LEAD ARE CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON HOW GLASGOW'S BUS SYSTEM FUNCTIONS FOR WOMEN AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE. VISIT THE LINK TO TAKE PART IN OUR SURVEY AND HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

HOP ON BOARD WITH OUR SURVEY

YOUNG WOMEN LEAD

8.2 Glasgow parks survey questions

1. Please select which park you visit most often:
2. Why do you visit this park?
3. Is this the closest park to where you live?
4. Over the last 12 months have you visited this park more or less?
5. What method of transportation do you take to reach this park?
6. What do you use this park for?
7. How often do you visit this park?
8. How long does your visit last?
9. What would encourage you to spend more time in this park?
10. How do you feel visiting this park at night?
11. What is the reputation of this park with regards to safety?
12. How comfortable do you feel in this park?
13. What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable in this park?
14. Do you belong to a marginalised community (for instance if you belong to an ethnic minority, the LGBTQIA+ community, or have a disability)?
15. Do you feel this park is just as safe for you as it is for others?
16. Do you feel this park meets your needs?
17. How would you improve public parks?
18. Do you have children or care for a child?
19. If you bring children to this park, how old are they?
20. Would you be comfortable for children to visit this park unaccompanied by an adult?
21. Do you know if there are public toilets in this park?
22. In your experience of public park toilets, tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements
    a. The public toilets are always accessible at the times I need them
    b. The public toilets are in good working order, and faults are dealt with quickly
    c. The public toilets are conveniently located within the park
    d. The public toilets are a safe environment
    e. The public toilets cater to those require a gender neutral toilet
    f. The public toilets cater to those with disabilities, and are accessible
    g. The public toilets provide sanitary products for those who need them
23. What other public spaces would benefit from free, public toilets?

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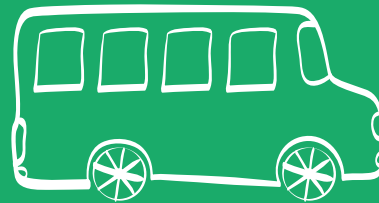[Accessed July 2021]

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