



# Transport Champions for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls:

Recommendations to make  
our transport networks safer  
for women and girls



Transport for  
West Midlands

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# Background

The appointed Transport Champions for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, Laura Shoaf and Anne Shaw, have produced the following list of recommendations to tackle this important issue within the transport sector. The recommendations address the impact that transport solutions can have in reducing the fear associated with using transport and public places, which can in turn improve access to many opportunities.

These recommendations have been shaped through discussions with nearly 200 respondents, who attended eight roundtable workshops with a variety of specialisms from charities, women's transport advocates and victim and survivor groups to enforcement officers, transport operators, planners and placemaking experts to discuss the opportunities in addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWGs) within the transport sector.

The views presented together with the solutions for making it safer across our transport networks were wide ranging, covering various cultures and motivations, with various interventions discussed often combining several cross-sectoral strategies to achieve the greatest impact.



# Key Findings

To date, the work of the Transport Champions has been two-fold. The first phase of the work has involved holding eight roundtable discussions with a wide range of experts in the field of transport and safety to gather extensive data, evidence and insight into the issues and impacts surrounding women and girl's safety.

The second phase has involved developing and shaping the recommendations to improve safety on our transport networks. This has taken account of developments arising from the tackling VAWGs Strategy, the extensive consultation with assembled experts and the evidence from the vast sources of data being shared with the Transport Champions. The aim has been to create a strategic approach in tackling safety issues on our transport networks, which will help collaboration to take place across government departments, devolved administrations, police forces including the British Transport Police (BTP), transport authorities as well as taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities.

The **key findings** were as follows:

## Key finding 1:

A substantial amount of evidence showed that both women and girls do not take up opportunities such as employment and training due to their transport options being limited, with their safety and sometimes racially motivated incidents, acting as a barrier. As women and girls are more reliant on public transport and active travel modes for their mobility needs, their fears can reduce their life opportunities and ambitions. As a result, up to 3.7%<sup>1</sup> of GDP can be lost through women's fears in accessing employment, alongside the wider impact VAWGs may have on deterring tourism and leisure journeys. To echo these findings, Merseytravel documented the negative economic effects of sexual harassment, costing its economy £338M per annum through women and girls feeling unsafe<sup>2</sup>.

## Key finding 2:

There was a common view that no woman or girl should need to live in fear of going out, think about changing their normal route or changing what they are wearing to be safe. It was also strongly felt by all the roundtables that women should not have to change what they do, simply because of unacceptable behaviour by men. The overarching consensus was that it was the perpetrator which needed to change, with unacceptable behaviours being called out by friends, colleagues, family members and society as a whole, with systems in place to support this.

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1- Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) Report 2017 'Violence against Women and Girls, Infrastructure and Cities Briefing Paper'. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/620485/Infrastructure-Cities-briefing-note.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620485/Infrastructure-Cities-briefing-note.pdf)

2- Beilinson, H (2021) 'Safe Woman Economic Impact Assessment & Final Report', iSensing Limited.

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### Key finding 3:

People believed that the safety of the ‘whole, end to end journey’ should always be considered, covering all modes including public transport, active travel, micromobility, taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs), the car passenger and the car driver, together with good placemaking and public realm design including good lighting, maintenance of the environment, information provision, help points, surveillance and car parking provision.

### Key finding 4:

There was a general view of gender blindness and bias taking place, when designing our transport networks, with limited thought given into how women use or perceive the transport system, including the types and numbers of journeys made, modes used and complexity of trips undertaken. Despite women on average making far more trips on public transport and active travel modes than men and being less likely to own a car, they are less likely to have designed the transport infrastructure and the public spaces around our transport nodes. Therefore, there has been minimal attention paid to the needs of women or the importance of addressing violence on our transport systems.

This may partly be explained through only 20% of women working within the transport industry, and those who do, are working in more traditional roles and hence are less likely to be involved in the planning and design process of our transport systems.

### Key finding 5:

There are limited resources or knowledge on how to address gender and other social differences in transport policy making, planning and design. While guidance on how to implement Equality Impact Assessments is available, a true appreciation of the unique experiences of the different protected characteristic groups and bringing out the many different types of hidden gender inequalities, is often overlooked within the transport industry.

### Key finding 6:

Very few incidents of VAWGs are ever reported, limiting our levels of data intelligence into preventing these crimes in the first place. In fact, a common belief was held by the victims that they would not be taken seriously, nothing would be done about it, it wasn’t worth the stress or they were unaware of where to report it – meaning that valuable data is then lost.

### Key finding 7:

There was little evidence of standardisation, co-ordination or collaboration of gender disaggregated data intelligence across the different regions, modes and transport authorities. This was reflected in the crime data itself, in reporting mechanisms, in the systems and monitoring techniques applied and in training materials and campaigns – with no centralised approach for sharing this information.

## Key finding 8:

There was a view that VAWGs was happening across all areas of society and that tackling this was needed across all industries and settings, not just transport. There was common agreement that all government departments will be needed to help change social norms, attitudes and behaviours which is often felt as the root cause of VAWGs, with longer term solutions needed through active agents of change, such as bystander interventions.

## Key finding 9:

The importance of creating more hostile environments for the perpetrator, across all our transport networks through more high visibility police patrols and targeted activity at hotspot locations alongside other enforcement methods as part of a blended model and the work of the BTP for example, signage, CCTV, intel, covert policing etc. In addition, there was a need to send clear messages through education, social media, marketing and communications to offenders of what is unacceptable behaviour, harmful and what won't be tolerated on our services; ensuring that action will always be taken, and the victim would never be blamed.

## Key finding 10:

There was a consensus that the work of the Transport Champions should not simply stop at the recommendations but continue to gain momentum and allow for radical transformation in making our transport networks safer. The recommendations need to be comprehensive, responsive to service delivery and make real on-going changes to enhancing the safety of women and girls, while preventing VAWGs on our networks, challenging attitudes and inequalities that promote it and making clear that such behaviours will never be tolerated.



## Key Survey Findings

Research findings by Transport Focus, together with a national transport staff survey which went out to all urban transport authorities has further helped justify our recommendations. These surveys investigated just how safe women and girls felt, across a range of transport modes and what 'being safe' when travelling, meant to them. Some of these findings from the Transport Focus survey are presented below:

Which of the following apply to you?	%
'I have felt threatened when making a journey on public transport'	49
'I have seen women or girls being subject to verbal aggression when making a journey on public transport'	46
'There are ways of travelling which I avoid where I can because I don't feel safe'	44
'I have been subject to verbal aggression when making a journey on public transport'	42
'I have seen women or girls being physically threatened or assaulted when making a journey on public transport'	17
'I have been physically threatened or assaulted when making a journey on public transport'	14
None of the above apply to me	25
Total answering: 1282	

Which ways of travelling do you avoid?	%
Walking	50
Tube/metro	39
Bus	36
Train	33
Uber/mini cab only available by pre-booking	33
Cycling	30
Taxi - licenced	17
Tram	12
Driving a car	6
Total answering: 568	

Statement	Agree strongly (%)	Agree strongly or slightly (%)	Disagree strongly (%)	Disagree strongly or slightly (%)
I think about my personal safety when planning and making a journey	48	85	5	15
I plan journeys around times of day when I think it is safer to travel	32	66	14	33
I avoid travelling alone when it is dark	31	65	16	34

Total answering 1282

Source: Transport Focus (2022) Experiences of Women and Girls on Transport Report





# Executive Summary

Our roundtable discussions, as well as our wider research, have demonstrated a great deal of best practice examples of how organisations have created safe and sustainable transport networks and public spaces for women and girls both across the UK, and around the world.

Yet at the same time, we cannot ignore how poor perceptions of safety are still one of the most influential factors on women and girls' mobility patterns, with a lack of secure environments often restricting their personal accessibility, especially to key opportunities. As women and girls rely more on public transport and active travel modes than men but are often more vulnerable to violence in public spaces, we strongly feel this has to change and that our transport networks and public spaces need to be safer for all.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, ensuring safe and secure transport should be a basic requirement for inclusive development, with safe access to transport networks embedded in the core objectives of public transport authorities and operators, to fully meet the needs of all segments of society including women and girls and covering all diverse backgrounds, ages and ethnicities.

Despite the roundtables being split into areas of expertise, similar messages were voiced throughout each one. These included the neglect of gender issues being captured in transport planning and policy making, the inherent lack of disaggregated data on gender issues, the absence of any gender responsive budgets and the unequal representation of women in transport decision making, which in turn exacerbated a low awareness of women's specific needs across the transport industry.

There was also unanimous consensus that wider societal norms, misogynistic attitudes and values embedded in cultural viewpoints, together with underlying inequalities had fostered gender-based violence and this profoundly needs to be tackled across all industries, not just within the transport industry alone. Furthermore, the inappropriate behaviours undertaken by perpetrators need to be fully highlighted, with clear messages that these are not in any way acceptable or tolerated.




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<sup>3</sup> - ONS (2018) The commuting gap: Differences between the commuting habits of men and women across the UK. Retrieved from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/thecommutinggapmenaccountfor65ofcommuteslastingmorethananhour/2018-11-07>

Using the available resources such as staffing and deployment of police forces, at locations which will have the greatest impact on our transport networks, providing better training for staff on issues around VAWGs and stricter staffing safeguarding practices, were key suggestions to giving women and girls greater confidence in using our transport systems. Similarly, creating consistency in reporting mechanisms, covering all modes and areas, alongside embracing new technologies and working with schools and colleges, on educating and informing the next generation were also highlighted to improve safety on our networks.

In addition, having the right mechanisms, structures and procedures in place in the form of Safer Travel Teams and having the resources to support these collaborations between the police, transport authorities and operators will make it easier to deliver on many of the recommendations. Yet also acknowledging that the railways will not be devolved in the same way, due to their different structure and appreciating this transport network already has a dedicated policing service through the BTP.

Finally, central government needs to play a key role through devolution and delivering on the appropriate powers, alongside providing vital funding and support to tackle VAWGs. It needs to continue to hear the voices of those with lived experiences of VAWGs to influence and shape changes and most importantly, promote this work in the long term and embed it across all departments and in wider society, to change social norms and behaviours.

Below outlines the 13 recommendations for the DfT, alongside other government departments and the transport industry and trade bodies, to endorse and deliver on over short-, medium- and longer-term periods.



## First order priorities

- **Recommendation 1:**  
Better national transport planning guidance on ways to make transport infrastructure safer with a clear, monitored reporting service for infrastructure damage or issues
- **Recommendation 2:**  
Improvements in the collection of gender disaggregated data
- **Recommendation 3:**  
Undertake a national communications initiative into tackling VAWGs, which is promoted nationally across our transport networks
- **Recommendation 4:**  
Deliver better, effective training across the transport industry to help manage incidents involving VAWGs
- **Recommendation 5:**  
Review current safeguarding practices and standardise Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all front facing staff across the transport industry

## Medium term goals

- **Recommendation 6:**  
Encourage an increased uptake of women working in the transport industry
- **Recommendation 7:**  
Embrace more use of technology to combat VAWGs
- **Recommendation 8:**  
Introduce Gender Responsive Budgets to support the delivery of gender equality infrastructure and policies

## Longer term ambitions

- **Recommendation 9:**  
Create a national, intelligence database which captures incident reporting from all transport modes and areas
- **Recommendation 10:**  
Develop a national education initiative in schools which educates young people on ways they can play a role in preventing VAWGs
- **Recommendation 11:**  
Target available resources including staffing and deployment of police forces at locations which will have the greatest impact on our transport networks
- **Recommendation 12:**  
Establish more Safer Travel Partnerships between operators, local authorities and the police
- **Recommendation 13:**  
Continue to raise awareness and make a positive impact through the tackling VAWG strategy



The background of the page is a collage of stylized, flat illustrations of women's faces. The women have various skin tones, including light, medium, and dark brown. Their hair colors and styles are diverse, featuring black, white, grey, brown, and red. Some women are wearing blue, red, or teal clothing. The overall style is modern and graphic, with a focus on representing a wide range of female experiences and perspectives.

## Recommendations

The views of women and girls, together with the solutions proposed for making it safer were very complex, with various interventions discussed often combining cross-sectoral approaches. A whole systems approach, together with partnership working across a range of organisations is therefore strongly reflected in the recommendations.

The recommendations are presented under three categories. These being first order priorities which can be actioned quickly, medium term goals which may require further funding and resources and lastly, long term ambitions which will require long term changes such as legislative amendments.

## First order priorities

### Recommendation 1: Better national transport planning guidance on ways to make infrastructure safer with a clear, monitored reporting service for infrastructure damage or issues

There has been clear evidence presented that gender-biased design has often influenced our built environment. For example, there has always been a strong focus on the private motor vehicle to enhance access to employment, however as a result of this there has been limited focus on convenient walking, cycling or public transport journeys to and from residential neighbourhoods, which women are more likely to access. In addition, less attention has been paid to the place function of streets and movements through them, resulting in narrow footpaths, inadequate street lighting, fragmented cycle lanes, limited seating areas, and poor-quality play areas for children, as just some examples.

Based on this, we feel there needs to be clearer advice on how the transport industry incorporates gender issues. Building on the current, revised Manual for Streets<sup>4</sup>, a further gender balanced design set of principles should be developed, to help inform on the different needs of men and women with regards to areas such as age, ethnicity and race, at every stage of the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of our transport policies and projects, to ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty delivers on positive gender equality outcomes.

There was also a common consensus that people considered well maintained and managed spaces as being relatively safe, but where infrastructure damage was seen, people felt less safe. The [StreetSafe/Police App](#)<sup>5</sup> is one mechanism, where such information can be currently captured. Yet this has limitations and fails to inform the public of possible unsafe places; only highlighting actual reported crimes. In addition, what is reported through this App, needs to be shared with the appropriate agencies and fully acted upon. Therefore, we feel there is further scope to improve and enhance the StreetSafe/Police App, capturing wider features, such as those captured in [fixmystreet.com](#). Based on these issues, we recommend the following:



4 - Currently being revised by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) and funded through the DfT.

5 - Available at: <https://www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/report-a-crime-incident/>

- DfT to work with transport operators and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation to develop Gender Equality Infrastructure Guidance, capturing standardised gender balanced designed principles for transport authorities to follow.
- Local authorities to undertake mandatory consultation on transport projects with women and girls from various cultures, backgrounds and ages to ensure gender responsive planning plays a key role.
- DfT to develop a national Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit to help deliver on positive gender equality outcomes in transport policy, planning and design.
- Promote and enhance the functions of the existing StreetSafe/Police App and website for reporting unsafe public places; ensuring it captures unsafe transport infrastructure as well as the transport modes themselves.
- Ensure all reported unsafe spaces and infrastructure are fully acted upon and mechanisms are in place to follow up on such issues.
- Develop national audit requirements, to help ensure our transport infrastructure is safe and cared for, with more attention paid to smaller infrastructure like bus stops or where there may be multiple organisations involved.
- Greater consideration be given to ongoing maintenance budgets to ensure the responsible authority has sufficient budgets to manage and maintain safe transport infrastructure and assets.



## Recommendation 2: Improvements in the collection of gender disaggregated data

From our research, the transport industry needs to expand on the data it currently has available on the issues of VAWG on public transport, as well as the actual numbers and types of incidents. This data then needs to be appropriately analysed so that it is responsive to the needs and priorities of all communities and demographic groups.

Ensuring that all data collected on our transport system is gender and offence disaggregated, will provide a better insight to what is happening across our transport systems, and allow for the right targeted solutions to be implemented. Data on VAWGs also needs to be easier to gain access to, appreciated as part of ‘big data’ and where there are any ‘blind spots’ in the data – especially where people may be fearful of reporting an incident or where there is embedded bias amongst staff, this needs to be fully addressed.

Better use of new technologies and digital infrastructure will also help enhance our data, improve monitoring, enable better responses to incidents, and support local authorities and the police to address concerns around safety and prevent VAWGs in the longer term. Based on these above issues, we recommend the following measures be delivered:

- Transport providers to build in resources which collect and evaluate data on women’s safety and inclusion when designing and implementing schemes, and may take the form of big data.
- Transport providers, DfT, Home Office and enforcement agencies to ensure disaggregated gender data and types of offences informs decision making on policies, resource allocations and ways of making our spaces and transport infrastructure safer, with research commissioned where necessary. For example, in deciding on locations of CCTV, where police officers should patrol or where safer transport infrastructure and help points should be installed.
- DfT and Home Office to use disaggregated data to monitor perceptions of safety and transport usage across a range of groups, which will then better inform policies and strategies for gender-responsive transport systems and practices.



### Recommendation 3: Undertake a national communications initiative into tackling VAWGs, which is promoted nationally across our transport networks

From public surveys, only 14% of people who have been sexually harassed on our transport networks, ever reported the incident. We therefore feel a national campaign is required, to ensure that all people report such crimes (even if it is not straight away) and feel confident and reassured to do so; providing greater intelligence and ensuring the right preventative measures are delivered.<sup>6</sup> Through campaign messaging we can provide a clear and consistent message on the importance of reporting incidents and that this can be done in the strictest of confidence.

Such a campaign should also focus on educating the perpetrator on their behaviours and highlighting those which are not acceptable or tolerated. This should be in a wider education piece to inform the general public with good campaign examples being [That Guy](#) by Police Scotland or TfL's [Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment](#) both of which tackle inappropriate behaviours head on.

In addition, encouraging and educating the general public on ways to be an active bystander and acting in a responsible way to incidents should further be captured and at the time of writing this report, we are aware of the Home Offices 'Enough' Campaign at [www.gov.uk/enough](http://www.gov.uk/enough).

As VAWGs is seen not just across our transport networks but across all of society, a national campaign would address the wider societal norms, misogynistic attitudes and values embedded in cultural viewpoints, together with underlying inequalities that foster gender-based violence.

Considering all of this, there are multiple needs for a national campaign; covering many issues in a holistic way including:

1. Educating people of behaviours which are not acceptable and what needs to be reported.
2. Campaigns targeting perpetrators as to what is not acceptable and the consequences of their actions if they choose to undertake them.
3. Encouraging and highlighting the importance of reporting and the methods of doing this, even if this is not straight away by the victim. This is complimented in a longer-term measure of the harmonisation of reporting tools across all transport modes and geographically (see Recommendation 9).



6 - Suzy Lamplugh Trust (2021) Driving Out Violence and Aggression Report





Such a campaign should also involve key stakeholders, employers, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector, educational institutions together with the police and criminal justice system. Then through all our transport networks, such a campaign should be fully promoted. For that reason, we strongly recommend the following actions:

- Central government to develop a national communications campaign on tackling VAWGs - calling on all government departments and covering all industries beyond that of just transport.
- Ensure such a national campaign is promoted and rolled out across all transport networks, highlighting the importance of reporting incidents through one reporting system / database and calling out those behaviours which are not tolerated.
- Monitor and evaluate public opinion on such campaigns and their outputs in preventing and eliminating VAWGs.

#### **Recommendation 4:** Deliver better, effective training across the transport industry to help manage incidents involving VAWGs

From our roundtables, it was evident that although there is a plethora of training available to staff to help them deal with different incidents, there is a broad difference in the type, range and standard of the training given. Best practice examples include training developed by the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and their National Strategy to tackle sexual harassment through the [National Rail Zero Tolerance Campaign](#) alongside TfL, which has been effective in supporting operators deliver in-house training on tackling VAWGs across our rail network, as well as training for bus drivers in the West Midlands to spot sexual harassment and to know when, and how to intervene.

We feel it is vital to upskill all transport workers where there are gaps, by sharing experiences and training from all sectors (not just within transport) including the police, the probation service, third sector organisations and those networks working with ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ groups, disability groups and women's groups.

Where the transport industry is also not meeting the needs of women, particularly those from marginalised populations, we need to reach out to those networks who have the expertise, so that they can teach and help build their knowledge into transport delivery training programmes.

As a result, we support the exchange of knowledge and training across a wide range of organisations. To ensure consistency when dealing with incidents, we further recommend a database

containing standardised training material for all transport staff, which should be used during the induction process and refreshed continually throughout their transport career. This database should also provide access to support services with more focused and expert training material, and we suggest there be an accreditation for organisations to achieve an associated standard through the training of their staff. Based on the above we recommend the following actions:

- DfT to stipulate clear and consistent standards across the transport industry for handling incidents involving VAWGs.
- DfT to work with transport operators and trade bodies to compile a national database on training resources available across the whole transport industry on handling incidents involving VAWGs.
- DfT to work with transport operators and trade bodies to ensure bystander training is delivered to all front facing transport staff and refreshed annually.
- DfT to develop a scheme for relevant transport organisations to obtain and build a network of trainers and training champions and assist with developing accreditation standards.
- DfT to work with transport operators and trade bodies to ensure all front facing transport staff and police working on our networks are fully aware of specialist support services available to those affected by VAWGs and the correct signposting is provided to both the victim and the perpetrator. Such support services should also be joined-up, with input from the health care sector, criminal justice teams and the third sector, to name a few.



**Recommendation 5:**  
Review current safeguarding practices and standardise Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all front facing staff across the transport industry

Every day, thousands of children, young people and vulnerable adults will travel by bus, coach or taxi/PHV, on their own. This means that there are times when people are often alone with a driver or a member of staff, who may not have been screened prior to employment.

Ensuring complete safety of customers as well as transport staff is vital across the transport industry. Therefore, for customers to gain complete confidence in our transport systems, it is imperative that all front-line transport staff are in full compliance with DBS legislation; and build on the existing practices for SEND school transport and accessible transport for disabled and elderly people, where DBS checks are a legal requirement. This will help to highlight any details of both unspent and spent convictions together with any cautions, warnings and reprimands that could be held on the Police National Computer Database. In turn, this will support safeguarding policies and increase trust across our customers and staff within the transport industry. This is particularly important on services where there are fewer people on board, such as in the evening or where more vulnerable passengers are travelling.



This should also be applied to taxis and PHVs; covering safeguarding and enforcement standards which should be consistent for England. Over the next three years, we would like to be at a stage where across the entire transport network, we have maximised compliance and there is a consistent application of safeguarding procedures in place across all transport modes. Although the time taken for this to be implemented may be medium-term (due to legislative changes which are required), we believe it should be prioritised and initial actions should be within the short-term achievements. We therefore request the following measures to support this recommendation:

- DfT to review current practices across every transport mode, and work with operators to standardise enhanced DBS and barred list checks for all front-line transport staff roles, including taxis and PHVs. This may also take the form of a hierarchy approach for those requiring checks, based on their role and interaction with customers.
- DfT to investigate expanding on the use of crowdsourced data (e.g. similar to the star rating and reviews on Uber) for all taxis and PHV operators across their booking systems.
- DfT to develop and stipulate clear and consistent national safeguarding policies across the transport industry for handling incidents involving VAWGs. This should include putting mechanisms in place to ensure all front facing transport workers or those in positions of trust are following safeguarding requirements including DBS checks. Such mechanisms could be in the form of an accreditation standard or delivery of a national code of conduct on safeguarding, consulting with key stakeholders representing passenger safety and should be complimentary to recommendation 4 ‘accreditation’ as part of national safety standards.
- DfT to take forward the appropriate legislation as highlighted in the [Task and Finish Group report on Taxi and Private Hire Licensing \(2018\)](#) to enable more stringent and consistent public protection measures and establish national minimum safety standards across England’s taxi / PHV industry, alongside other transport networks.



## Medium term goals

### Recommendation 6: Encourage increased uptake of women working in the transport industry

Having more representation of women in the transport industry, across all types of roles is critical to enhancing our transport systems. Currently, women account for only 20% of workers in the transport sector and the percentage is even lower in areas like freight and logistics, or for bus and train drivers and within transport security.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently, creating more inclusive environments across the transport industry will be critical to increase workforce numbers and reassure women that the industry is a safe and inclusive workplace. To do this, we need to ensure a diverse range of women are represented and valued as employees across the industry, that they have opportunities to take up senior positions and become leaders and are actively involved in the wider decision-making processes. By having more women working throughout the industry, we can create a more inclusive working environment and demonstrate that transport is a good career path for women to undertake. Our recommendations therefore include:

- DfT to develop a national campaign which profiles and celebrates the diverse range of people within the transport sector, with a particular focus on women.
- DfT to work alongside the transport industry, to support more flexible working policies within the industries culture and deliver on more gender inclusive recruitment and retainment practices.
- DfT to support the wider transport industry to tackle the issues of progression and support opportunities for more senior level positions for women, and especially those from ethnic minority communities.
- DfT to work with the Department for Education to see how they can encourage a greater uptake of females into the transport sector and promote transport as a career path amongst girls (linked to Recommendation 10).
- DfT to work alongside Women in Transport to develop and deliver leadership programmes to support women leaders.<sup>8</sup>

7 - Data provided from Women in Transport. Visit: [www.womenintransport.com/](http://www.womenintransport.com/)

8 - Field, J and Dr Haddad, H (2021) Gender Perceptions and Experiences of Working in Transport (2021) <https://smartransportpub.blob.core.windows.net/web/1/root/gender-perceptions-and-experiences-working-in-transport-final.pdf>

## Recommendation 7: Embrace more use of technology to combat VAWGs

Through our roundtables, it was apparent that technology and digital communications can play a big part in making women and girls feel safer on our transport networks. Through embracing the latest innovations, technology can help prevent incidents, improve safeguarding, provide vital support across a range of specialist services, aid communication and improve the mechanisms for reporting incidents. In fact, there are endless opportunities for technology to help improve protection, mitigate the risks and respond to incidents.

Better technology can similarly create systems that improve information sharing amongst professionals and empower victims by ensuring that they have access to data which helps them make better, more informed choices. Also improving the online systems that enable victims to report incidents minimises the need to share their stories multiple times, which can often be a major barrier for not reporting.

Using technology can also connect us more with younger people, especially through using social media and help us embrace any opportunities we may develop through new trends. We therefore recommend the following actions to be undertaken:

- Transport operators to continue trials of innovative technologies such as body worn cameras across our networks and feed results back to the DfT for monitoring.
- DfT to work with transport operators to continue to roll-out real time information so people know exactly when their bus/train will arrive – reducing the need to wait alone at stops and stations.
- DfT in partnership with the Urban Transport Group to work with transport operators as well as taxi licensing authorities and the BTP to establish a “What works” centre where learning and evidence can be shared on the outcome of technology trials.
- Home Office to continue improving on the functions of the existing [StreetSafe/Police App](#) for reporting unsafe public places, ensuring it captures unsafe transport infrastructure and modes. In addition to this, explore opportunities for crowdsourcing, where people highlight unsafe places which are then shared with others as well as appropriate agencies, and then fully acted upon (see recommendation 1).



### **Recommendation 8:** Introduce Gender Responsive Budgets to support the delivery of gender equality infrastructure and policies

We have gathered a variety of evidence over the last six months which demonstrates that our current transport systems and networks have very different impacts on women when compared to men. Many of our current transport policies and programmes which may appear neutral on the surface, can increase gender inequality, or may not work in the way they were intended, and therefore have detrimental impacts on women and girls.

Providing gender responsive budgets can help highlight these differences and thus improve the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and transparency of our current transport policies and programmes, as well as making significant contributions towards gender equality. We feel specific ring-fenced funding for preventing VAWGs will help ensure that resources are being given over to the needs of women and girls, and that tackling safety becomes a mainstream priority. We therefore wish to ensure funding for preventing VAWG's is prioritised within the next Spending Review and we strongly recommend the following actions:

- DfT to build funding of gender conscious budgets which specifically tackle issues concerning VAWGs into the 2024 Spending Review.
- DfT to ensure VAWG priorities are incorporated as much as possible in upcoming funding rounds based on current budget allocations.

## Long term ambitions

### Recommendation 9: Create a national, intelligence database which captures incident reporting from all transport modes and areas

There are currently a multitude of ways to report an incident, whether through various apps, a local authority's personal website, via a transport operator or taxi licensing authority reporting page, through various telephone numbers and text services or through the police or BTP. However, this multitude of reporting mechanisms can be confusing for the general public, especially when travelling on different modes or across different transport authorities and as a result, many people don't ever report an incident.

Such varying reporting systems also alter in their backend functions with data not being shared in a coherent, intelligent way, with many people never seeing any response or resolution to an incident they reported.

To embed confidence and increase the numbers of people reporting an incident, we request that a national intelligence database be created which captures all incidents reported, across all modes from various reporting mechanisms. This data can then be easily accessed and used by authorities, transport operators and police enforcement teams to work together to respond to incidents, identify areas of persistent or high crime locations and understand where interventions and measures may be needed

And while we understand there may be difficulties in doing this, we would like the DfT to investigate whether there is an opportunity to create one, harmonised reporting system. We fully recommend that reporting is made simple, easily accessible for all, and discrete. The BTP 61016 number was repeatedly complimented as being a memorable and simple way to report an incident on the train. Having something similar to this, which could be applied across all transport modes, would make reporting more straightforward for the general public, and would create less of a barrier compared to the current assortment of reporting mechanisms. We therefore recommend the following actions to be explored:

- DfT to work with the Home Office to explore developing one national reporting database, which captures all incidents and associated data and information from current and existing reporting mechanisms across all transport networks. This intelligence would then be shared with different authorities, transport operators and police enforcements to ensure incidents are fully responded to, which will raise confidence and increase levels of reporting.
- DfT to explore with the Home Office, transport operators and police forces, how a singular reporting method could be applied across all transport modes to provide consistency in reporting.
- DfT to continue working alongside the BTP on their new app for reporting crime and explore new opportunities for enhancing the way people report an incident.





**Recommendation 10:**  
Develop a national education initiative in schools which educates young people on ways they can play a role in preventing VAWGs

Evidence shows that young people are far more likely to be a victim of crime. We therefore recommend that within the curriculum, ways to instil trust in young people to want to use our transport networks, needs to be included. But to achieve this, young people need to be given the confidence to take public transport and active travel modes, encouraging them from a young age to opt for more sustainable travel choices.

Furthermore, we believe initiatives should be rolled out into schools, teaching young people what their correct behaviour should be on our transport systems and within society as a whole, how their behaviour may be perceived and how they can act as a responsible bystander to incidents. We also see the importance of widening the talent pool across the industry and plugging the sector's impending skills gap, so more young people take up careers across the transport industry. Based on these issues, we recommend the following actions:

- Encourage more investment in STEM subjects in schools; particularly picking up transport issues and inspiring young women advocates and leaders in this field.
- Encourage the Department for Education to include tackling VAWG's within the curriculum, covering the importance of positive youth development, correct behaviours, what is not acceptable and on ways to be an active bystander.
- Evaluate and learn from the work undertaken by Safer Travel Teams and the police and provide support for more Safer Travel Education Officers to work in schools to ensure young people are informed of their travel options and on ways of staying safe on our transport networks – with such topics also fully covered within the education curriculum.

**Recommendation 11:**  
Target available resources and funding, including staffing and deployment of police forces in locations which will have the greatest impact on our transport networks

Research has shown that although CCTV can provide an enhance feeling of safety, the preference is to have an increased police and transport staff presence across our networks. Throughout our roundtables as well as research undertaken by Transport Focus, women and girls most feared being ‘left alone’ on the transport network. When asked about solutions, increased visibility of staff presence was seen as the most effective way of making people feel safer.

The roundtables also raised the possibility that volunteers on our transport systems could bring great benefits. Examples such as ‘Street Angels’, where volunteers patrol public transport at night time, offering additional staffing and support were highlighted as schemes to increase the feeling of safety and provide more ‘eyes on the street’ and this could be replicated across our transport networks. These measures, alongside the work of the BTP and their blended model approach covering improved signage, greater intelligence, covert policing and use of drones will further ensure people feel safer on our transport networks. We therefore recommend:

- Through analysing data,<sup>9</sup> focus resources including police patrols and increased staff presence on our transport networks at hotspot areas and at quieter times. This should be complimented with other measures including CCTV, signage, use of drones, covert policing and enhanced online capabilities where increased staff / police presence is not always feasible.
- Explore increasing the number of officers and transport staff, as well as police officers who are trained to handle and investigate sexual harassment on our networks.
- DfT to support transport providers, local authorities and police forces through investigating opportunities for trained volunteers to work across our transport networks; to further increase staff presence.
- DfT to continue working alongside the BTP on their blended model for reducing crime on the rail network and explore other measures which could help reduce crime on our networks.

9 - Using data captured through the StreetSafe/Police.uk (www.police.uk) <https://streetsafetool.com/> or FixMyStreet as examples.

## Recommendation 12: Establish more Safer Travel Partnerships between operators and the police across our major cities

The West Midlands Safer Travel Partnership and Merseytravel's Travel Safe Partnership are highlighted as examples of how local police forces, the BTP and transport operators are working together to successfully reduce crime across our transport networks including rail, bus, tram and active travel modes. Partnerships like this in major cities then put the mechanisms in place for many of the proposed recommendations to be implemented; allowing for more effective collaboration in ways to prevent VAWGs.

To achieve more Safer Travel Partnerships, devolving the necessary powers to appropriate bodies like Combined Authorities is important. Yet changes to legislation need to take place, allowing such partnerships the powers to come together in the first place, alongside a dedicated team of officers, good management of resources, including marketing and communications and strong political leadership. Central government therefore needs to play a role, through devolution, delivering on the appropriate powers, alongside providing vital funding and support. We therefore request the following actions take place:

- DfT to work with Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to allocate appropriate funding mechanisms to establish Safer Travel Partnerships in major urban areas.
- DfT to work with Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to provide the appropriate legislation to deliver on Safer Travel Partnerships.
- DfT to work with Police and Crime Commissioner teams to establish bus byelaws and permit Enforcement Officers to have greater powers over those who commit crimes on the bus network. This will enable the issuing of fines and anti-social behaviour orders and allow for officers to remove perpetrators from the transport system when necessary.



### **Recommendation 13:** Continue to raise awareness and make a positive impact through the tackling VAWG strategy

The work done so far through the Governments Tackling VAWG strategy has been well-received, with many local and regional strategies on tackling VAWGs now being drawn up.

Yet there is still a long way to go. Many women and girl still live in fear of going out and taking public transport, using active travel modes or utilising taxis and PHVs which then limits their life choices and opportunities, something we feel is completely unjust. The issue of VAWGs also impacts greatly on our economy through reducing their access to key services together with much wider social consequences, such as increased levels of loneliness, the undermining of women and girls mental and physical well-being and how VAWGs violates their human rights.

We must therefore ensure that the awareness and focus on finding ways to make life safer for females is continued and is not treated as short-lived or temporary. We believe in a whole-system approach, where all the wonderful work undertaken by all those who attended the roundtables, continues to take place and we want the voices of those with lived experiences of VAWGs, to continue to influence and shape how we deliver these recommendations. For this, we recommend:

- Bring all government departments into the conversation about tackling VAWGs, ensuring they are aware of the issues women and girls face every day and that they buy into all the recommendations put forward.
- DfT to share the proposed recommendations with all its partners and establish regular updates on progress.
- DfT and Home Office to work together to create an implementation plan for the next steps on how to enhance safety for women and girls across our transport networks. Although there should be a transport focus on this, the overall outlook must be broader, targeting the embedded societal issues.
- For the Transport Champions to be updated on progress regularly, and will review all actions undertaken by the DfT and other relevant departments on an 12-18 month basis.



# Acknowledgments

## Roundtable Events

We would like to thank all those who attended and contributed to the roundtable discussions. Their views, thoughts, ideas, research and best practice examples have then shaped our thinking and principles, and ultimately the recommendations put forward in this paper. Without their input, these recommendations would not have been possible.

## Survey Finding Results

To support the recommendations, a range of further evidence has been provided through tailored surveys, focusing on the safety of women and girls. These surveys include:

### **Transport Focus - Experiences of women and girls on transport survey (2021)**

Transport Focus has undertaken research among women about their experiences using transport in relation to safety. In total 1,282 women responded to the survey which was publicised using Transport Focus communication channels and sent to the Transport Focus panel.

### **Transport Champions staff safety survey**

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), alongside support from the Urban Transport Group (UTG) for assistance in distribution and promotion of this survey has enabled a significant number of transport staff to be surveyed across the large, urban transport authorities and other associated members. This staff safety survey has particularly explored how staff feel in terms of safety and what measures would help tackle VAWGs across our urban transport networks including increased training of staff, improved guidance and safeguarding practices.

### **West Midlands Personal Safety Perceptions Report**

The WMCA undertook further customer research through a personal safety survey, aimed at understanding how safe different communities felt whilst travelling around the West Midlands. Membership of the TfWM 'Keep WM Moving! Community' shared their personal experiences of safety when travelling which captured a range of modes including active travel, Demand Responsive Transport and smart mobility. Around 120 people took part in this detailed perception survey, where 3 in 10 people felt unsafe using our networks.



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