Women's and girls' views and experiences of personal safety when using public transport

Kate Skellington Orr, Elaine Wilson Smith, Monica Barry, Laura Sharp

Contents

Introduction

In early 2022, the Minister for Transport announced that the Scottish Government would consult on the safety of women and girls when using public transport, including both public transport users and those working within the public transport system in Scotland.

The research presented below was commissioned following the Minister's announcement and sought to build on a growing body of international evidence that shows that women and girls have unique travel behaviours and needs, which must be addressed by tailored solutions. Moreover, women are often underrepresented in the strategic planning process for public transport developments. Research has also shown that women and girls (both as transport workers and passengers) view and experience public transport as being less safe compared to their male counterparts.

The consultation commitment also reflected a policy push for 'mainstreaming' equality and inclusion work in developing transport policy and the priority to reduce inequalities, as set out in Scotland's National Transport Strategy (NTS2).

Scotland's Vision for Justice also includes a transformational priority of making improvements to the justice system which will benefit and empower women by addressing inequality, societal attitudes and structural barriers that perpetuate existing gender inequality. Consulting on this topic also aligned with the Scottish Government's Equality Outcomes, which aim to reduce inequalities and advance equality of opportunity - most notably across the protected characteristics of age, disability and gender.

Against this backdrop, Transport Scotland commissioned an independent qualitative research project to explore women's and girls' views and experiences of personal safety when using public transport in Scotland, the findings of which are presented here.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the research was to provide Scottish-specific evidence and personal testimony from women and girls on the impact of concerns around personal safety on public transport. The specific objectives were to:

- understand the extent to which concerns around personal safety on public transport and accessing public transport affect women's and girls' mobility and travel choices;
- understand the impact of public transport related issues on women's and girls' employment, educational and social opportunities; and

- seek solutions from stakeholders on addressing personal safety issues on public transport.

The research was a qualitative exercise which placed individuals with lived experience at the centre of engagement, ensuring that their voices are used to directly inform policy aimed at improving the safety of women and girls accessing and using public transport. For the purposes of the research, public transport was defined as including buses, trains, trams, the subway, ferries and domestic flights.

Methodology

The research primarily involved capturing feedback via one-to-one and group interviews with women and girls living in Scotland with separate recruitment of women who were mainly 'users' of public transport and women who were frontline' workers' on public transport.

Bespoke topic guides were developed for each cohort which focussed on: the nature, frequency and purpose of public transport use; women's feelings and perceptions of personal safety on public transport (including discussions around what informed such feelings and perceptions); the interaction between personal circumstances and feelings of safety; personal testimonies of women in relation to specific incidents which had made them or known others feel unsafe when using public transport in the past; any negative impacts or consequences of safety concerns on restricting or limiting women's travel choices; and discussions around what changes could be made to make women and girls feel safer. In addition, for transport workers, questions were asked around what made them feel safe or unsafe when both at work and travelling to/from work, as well as training received in relation to personal safety to protect both themselves and vulnerable others.

The length of interviews ranged from 18 to 82 minutes and were carried out using a combination of telephone, online and in person approaches to meet the preferences of individual participants. All were digitally voice recorded with permission to allow transcription of interviews for analysis purposes.

An online focus group session with five young women and girls aged 18 and under was also arranged via a national charity (with parental/carer consent), as this was felt to be a more appropriate means of engaging the younger demographic, i.e. participants were able to share experiences together and to compare and contrast their experiences as young female travellers rather than a more intense one-to-one interview approach.

Almost all interviewees were recruited directly via stakeholder organisations using an information sheet shared with potential interviewees in advance. This approach

provided a layer of safeguarding in the event that women and girls found discussing their personal experiences distressing or traumatising in any way (albeit the need for this support did not materialise during the fieldwork). Only a small number were recruited via 'snowballing' or word of mouth, i.e. the information sheet had been shared by participants with their peers and other volunteers came forward as a result. In such cases, signposting to follow-up support was also available, although was not required by any of those who took part.

In addition, an online stakeholder workshop was held which brought together representatives from transport operators, regional transport partnerships, British Transport Police (BTP) and third sector organisations working with and representing the interests of women and girls, among others. The workshop provided an opportunity for the main emerging themes captured from interviewees to be presented to relevant partners, alongside draft recommendations arising from the research, so that stakeholders could discuss and advise on how best these could be taken forward. Data captured at the workshop was used to help contextualise the feedback from women and girls and situate the recommendations.

Participant Profiles

A total of 35 women and girls took part, ranging in age from 14 to 86 years old. Participants came from diverse demographic backgrounds, including those:

- living in both urban and rural areas of Scotland (including island communities);
- women living with disabilities (both physical disabilities and learning disabilities);
- women from minority ethnic communities;
- women with caring responsibilities (including lone parents);
- professional/employed women, unemployed women and students;
- women living in both high and low income communities; and
- female transport workers (from within both the rail and bus industry).

While women were not sampled specifically on their demographic characteristics, Appendix A shows the number of women who took part and their demographic profiles, which provides context for understanding the findings presented below.

A total of 28 individuals took part in the stakeholder workshop, and Appendix B shows the organisations that were represented.

Research Caveats and Report Presentation

The aim of the research was to present personal testimonies and, as such, this report relies heavily on quotes from women directly so as not to distort or misrepresent the feedback that was given. Analytical commentary is provided to add

context to the data but the words of women and girls feature dominantly in the report to maximise authenticity of the findings presented.

The findings below represent the aggregate feedback given by all who took part. Quotes have been used to illustrate some of the main points to emerge, and these have all been anonymised to protect respondent confidentiality. Some of the issues raised came from only one or two respondents, but are still included, not as 'main themes', but to highlight some of the differences in views that were reported as well as some of the more nuanced issues facing sub-sets of the sample.

Qualitative research of this nature does not aim to be representative of all experiences but seeks to capture the lived experience of as diverse a sample as possible of a relevant population. While the relatively small sample size is recognised, the commonality of experiences shared by those who took part, and the congruence of the findings with wider international literature indicates that the research was successful in tapping into and uncovering the issues faced by women and girls, including those from a wide range of backgrounds.

The remainder of this report presents the findings from the research.

Women's and Girls' Reported Travel Patterns

Most of the women interviewed used public transport on a regular basis mainly for work, study/education, medical appointments and recreation. For most, use was either daily or several times a week and only a small number of women said that they used public transport only rarely.

The young women in the sample (those aged 18 and under) were more likely to use public transport most frequently, and also to make interchanges between bus, train, tram and subway more often. Their use was also more spread throughout the week and was more likely to involve night-time travel.

Women and girls mainly used buses and trains (as these were most prevalent in the geographical areas that they lived in), although a few women reported using the Glasgow subway system and Edinburgh's trams. Three women who lived on different islands also reported regular ferry use to travel to the mainland, with one also using internal domestic flights to get to/from the island (albeit not on a regular basis). While not specifically in scope of the research, several women discussed regularly using taxis and Ubers to facilitate their travel.

Reasons for Use

Across the sample, the main reason for using public transport (as opposed to private transport) was cost - it was often the cheapest way for women to travel to work, study or social events. This was mentioned as something that had particularly changed behaviours in recent months/years, as the cost of fuel had increased and women felt that they needed to make cuts to their daily spend.

Young women and girls mentioned using public transport as a way of travelling independently (instead of needing to rely on parents/carers or others with cars). Similarly, adults living with disabilities spoke of public transport being invaluable in allowing them independence to travel freely. Several also reported that they did not have access to a private vehicle and so had no other choice but to use public transport. Whilst some women had never driven, others had forgone the car in a move into the city, or because of ill health/disability.

There was a mix in the sample between those who were private car owners and those who were not. Those who owned a car but chose to make some journeys by public transport usually did so because of a lack of parking at their destinations, and not being able to drink and drive when making recreational trips. Others used their car for convenience, especially at times when there was a reduced frequency of public transport. Only a few participants mentioned using public transport because it was more environmentally friendly.

Safety and Time of Travel

Unanimously, women reported feeling less safe when travelling at night/after dark, and this was mainly because public transport was either quieter at these times (with no other passengers to make women feel safe) or was too busy, with other passengers often under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Women reported feeling far more anxious with a need to be more aware of their surroundings in the dark:

> "I think it's just the timing that makes me feel unsafe. Like in the daytime, I feel fine. If it's night-time or evening time, that matters. I know the crowds will be different. I know it will be night and I won't be able to see properly…It's generally night-time you feel insecure."

Travelling in the dark/at night impacted on the mode of transport some women would prefer to use for their journeys. Some indicated that they would feel safer on a train at night compared to the bus (mainly due to ticket inspectors being visible and accessible on board), however, others preferred the bus over the train when dark (because it felt less isolated):

> "There's always wee kind of incidents on the bus too but I would rather get the bus than the train I think if I had to… You can physically see him [the driver] and everybody can see inside the bus. If there's people there, there's people immediately there to help you rather than being in another carriage and you're stuck in a situation."

Many women mentioned that they simply would not travel alone by bus or train 'at night', with many preferring to use a taxi instead. Thresholds for using a taxi instead of public transport were cited by many - usually 9pm, 10pm or 11pm. Some of the younger women who took part simply said that 'darkness' regardless of time made them feel unsafe.

Several respondents, including one transport worker, suggested that the day of the week also made a difference in how safe they perceived public transport to be. It was felt that weekdays were generally safer, but that Fridays and weekends were less safe - largely linked to the potential for intoxicated passengers and anti-social behaviour that may be encountered.

Safety concerns were also highlighted after events such as football matches or concerts in city areas. Again, the large volume of people attempting to access public transport at the same time, and again, often under the influence of alcohol or drugs, was cited as driving these concerns. As one transport worker explained:

> "…there's so much more potential then for incidents at a football match with the crowds of people, the abuse you get. The last time I did it… there was a massive fight on the platform and it was the last train, the people nearly fell on the tracks, my colleague was injured... So that has also put me right off, it makes me very anxious thinking about any sort of event and having to work that shift."

Despite night time travel being seen as far less safe than daytime travel, several respondents also commented that incidents could occur at any time of the day (and several daytime incidents were reported across the sample). Two transport workers strongly expressed that 'time of travel' was not always a predictor of likely risk:

> "There's no set time for trouble on the railway. Absolutely not at all…I would say every single shift I have, something happens."

Safety and Mode of Travel

There were mixed views in relation to the relative safety of different modes. Several respondents preferred to use the train rather than the bus as they perceived this to be safer - it was seen as more direct, quicker and less likely to be frequented by people making short/unnecessary journeys - several commented that trains were often frequented by more 'professional' people. Conversely, other respondents felt safer on the bus compared to trains, typically because the bus used a busy road where others could see in the windows and it would be easier to leave and get help quickly if necessary, (while trains usually took more obscure routes with fewer regular stops). Some felt that trains were safer because the ticket inspectors were on hand, while several women felt that buses were safer as the driver was more visible and accessible (although this was not supported by all, as discussed more below):

> "It's scary when it's [the train is] really full and when there's no one there that you know in case anything goes wrong cos you can't see anyone to come and help. If anything was to happen on a bus, you can inform the bus driver."

One female passenger who regularly used the underground reported that they felt safer using that mode compared to buses or trains and this was based on previous bad experiences of the latter.

In contrast, one woman who regularly accompanied disabled adults on their journeys explained that the underground made her and her clients feel unsafe, mainly because the platforms were busy, and the trains moved so fast, and they feared being knocked onto the tracks in front of oncoming trains.

Regular ferry users reported that they rarely (if ever) felt unsafe on ferries or at ferry terminals (even if travelling at night), and this was because both were always well staffed, well lit and there was also always plenty of room to move around on ferries to get away from any groups or individuals who might make women feel uncomfortable (i.e. lots of 'safe spaces').

Similarly, one respondent who had experience of internal domestic flights to reach the Scottish islands indicated that they felt safe in the airports due to them being busy, and having safety and security features, and that they felt safe on the aircraft as they would most likely know someone on board given the small community nature of their island home. This same respondent also noted that they typically felt safe also using the ferry to get to/from their island home, until recently when there had been a few thefts onboard. They noted this did not leave them with personal safety fears, but did make them wary about the safety of their personal possessions.

Another feature of journeys that might make women feel unsafe was how well kept the vehicles were, e.g. if buses have smashed windows, graffiti, torn seats, etc. women inferred that it was likely to be a 'bad route'. Similarly, a small number of women spoke about areas around bus stops and train stations needing to be "clean and tidy" to offer reassurance, with some assumptions that unclean or neglected stations were likely to be less safe.

Safety and Routes

On the whole, women equated travel in suburban and some rural areas as being safer than travelling in built up or urban areas. Journeys made in and out of both Glasgow and Edinburgh city centres were described as particularly "hairy" (or scary) late at night and especially at weekends when a large proportion of fellow passengers had been drinking alcohol or were intoxicated. Urban and city areas were also seen to have higher levels of crime *per se* with perceptions that there would be more risk of encountering violence and petty theft, especially late at night.

Women who lived in more rural and remote areas (including the islands) also commented that low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour within these areas *per se* made them view public transport as being safe. This even extended to ferries and, indeed, one island resident joked that she felt so safe in her local community that she often slept on the ferry when travelling by sea - in contrast to the state of high alert and vigilance that she reported when she had made train journeys to the west coast mainland.

Several transport workers mentioned that there were known "bad routes" (including routes from Glasgow to Ayrshire, Glasgow to the Southside and Glasgow to the East End). One woman who previously lived in Aberdeen explained that routes to or

through areas of high deprivation also made her feel unsafe, based on previous experience.

Similarly, another respondent from an ethnic minority background indicated that she knew women from deprived areas of Glasgow who would not attend evening events as they felt too unsafe travelling home afterwards. While she indicated that they perhaps felt safe on the bus journey, they were concerned about their safety walking from the bus stop to their homes at night in certain areas.

Bus and rail routes that were mentioned as feeling safer included those from the city centre into the suburbs (including more rural areas in the north of Glasgow). In contrast, however, one respondent spoke of these bus routes as being "quite scary", as there were no regular pick up/drop off points and so the stretch of the journey between the city centre and the first suburban stop could be quite long (and feel too long if you were in an uncomfortable situation).

Safety and Familiarity

Many women spoke of feeling safer on journeys that were familiar or known to them. Similarly, women who lived in rural or suburban areas spoke of feeling "instantly unsettled" when travelling to larger cities and where the surroundings and fellow passengers were unknown to them, due to being anxious about getting lost as well as being harassed:

> "Not knowing where you're going. That can always be very kind of discombobulating. Because not only are you trying to figure out where you're going but you then have to also make sure that you're keeping an eye out on everything around you as well."

For those living in both urban and rural areas this familiarity also often entailed being familiar with the drivers/staff operating public transport (including bus drivers or ferry workers on the islands) - having familiar faces that women knew and trusted, and that were part of the communities in which they lived offered greater reassurance. As one young woman who lived on an island explained: "…most people know everyone and everyone knows the people that are slightly dodgy."

While familiarity featured in conversations with many participants it was more of a feature of conversations with young women who were perhaps in the early days of expanding their social and travel parameters. One young woman from an ethnic minority who travelled frequently around Paisley mentioned that knowing the drivers on the routes that she used gave great comfort:

> "I would feel safe cos I know a lot of drivers cos it's the same drivers
> for the same routes, so I know a lot of them."

Another young woman under 18 also mentioned familiarity in the context of knowing the other passengers on other routes she was taking:

> "With the buses, I'm usually going to places where I know most
> people on the bus as well cos I get it at the school, I know them and
> on the way back it's empty just about. Where with trains, they're
> quite crowded cos they're going to places like Glasgow which can be
> a bit scary if there's no one else you know there."

Another respondent, in the context of using taxis late at night, noted that they felt they would be happy to use a taxi in the area they live as they would be familiar with the routes that should be taken, however, they would be less keen and feel less safe taking a taxi in an unfamiliar area as they would be unable to identify quickly if the driver was deviating from the desired route, i.e. "I don't think I have the same degree of anxiousness where I live but certainly, anywhere else, I would not prefer to take a taxi."

Overall, while many women did not explicitly report constraining their travel behaviours due to feeling unsafe, conversations around familiarity and the comfort that this offered gave insight into how women may be unwittingly limiting their travel as a means of avoiding feelings of discomfort brought about by being somewhere (or with someone) unknown.

Safety and Service Frequency

Several women noted that the frequency of services, and how reliable they were impacted on both their perceptions of safety and their travel behaviours. The more frequent a service was, the less time women would have to wait at stations and bus stops. Women tended to feel less safe if they were likely to have to wait a long time for a service, particularly at night. This was heightened by the fear that the service would be delayed or cancelled altogether, with women not knowing whether it would then be better/safer for them to start walking (either to another stop/station or for a taxi) or to stay where they were and continue to wait.

Several women (especially younger women) spoke specifically about Apps which allowed them to track the progress of buses as making them feel safer, i.e. knowing that the bus would arrive soon and that the wait at the bus stop would be short. However, several also mentioned the shortcomings of Apps, particularly those which displayed inaccurate bus arrival/departure/journey progress.

Despite some lack of reliability, Real Time Information (RTI) at stations and stops (and on-board services) were considered important to ensure travellers had accurate and up-to-date information in order to inform their decisions:

> "I did and do feel more at risk standing at a bus stop waiting for a bus than what I do being on the bus itself… It [RTI] stops the fear from maybe escalating a wee bit because you can see whether you have time to either take yourself somewhere where you feel more safe until closer to the time that the bus comes. Or you know you've not got long if somebody does strike up a conversation with you before you're going to be out of the situation and they're hopefully not getting on the same bus as you."

Several women spoke of 'lack of frequency' or 'unreliability' of public transport as something which may make them unwilling to rely on buses (in particular) as well as trains and taxis as a reliable or 'safe' way to travel, i.e. "I think if you go for a bus and it doesn't turn up and then that makes you feel unsafe about going in the first place." Overall, women expressed that if they had greater confidence that their journeys would progress as planned, it would put them more at ease.

Safety and Access to Technology

Several young women, in particular, spoke of feeling vulnerable if they did not have access to technology, and specifically to their smart phones when travelling. This included not having a phone signal (for example, on the subway) and feeling unable to communicate with someone remotely if needed.

Young women spoke of choosing seats on vehicles that were next to charging points to make sure that their devices were always fully charged. They also spoke of sharing their personal movement data with friends to allow them to monitor one another's movements and to help them keep safe.

While some respondents liked apps like the My Uber app which allowed a person's location to be shared and friends and family to track a journey (discussed more below) one transport worker was more sceptical of apps. They felt they did not make a tangible difference and would be too slow to provide any support or assistance:

> "If it's something that you're texting to Transport Police, if they pick it up quickly, they will phone you, if they think it's serious enough, they'll phone you. But in most cases, I would just dial 999 - I wouldn't trust Transport Police to come. So, I just don't feel apps and all that, I just don't think they work. I think it's something that they've put in

place for like a tick box for them to say, "We've tried this, we're doing this, we're running this", but it's not actually practical."

Overall, younger women and girls were perhaps more technology aware, and were more likely to make use of the various safety-based apps that were available. This was generally supported across the interviews, with younger women indeed indicating they used apps and their phones much more than older respondents to support travel and to provide a sense of pro-actively addressing their own safety:

Boarding, Alighting and Interchanging

While young people often had to make changes between buses, trains, trams and subways as part of their journeys, very few older women reported making journeys that required them to make single or multiple changes between modes - the most frequently mentioned interchange was from trains to taxis, for example, to complete the final part of a journey home at night, instead of walking from the alighting station.

Women's main concern when waiting at bus stops and at stations was that they must be well lit. Specifically at stations, women spoke of wanting to feel that there were staff around who could be contacted if anything worried them:

> "Train stations all are dark and very scary places to get out of, yeah. And I always check if there is any cameras. I walk and look to the cameras, if I see the cameras I feel [better], but I have always to run and get to the main road… It's not just myself. I think every other woman, they have the same fear, train station is a bit isolated."

At bus stops, one woman observed that they would always hang back and allow other 'suspicious' looking passengers to get on first, to help determine where she would then sit herself. The same woman explained that she had also extended her journeys on occasion by waiting for later buses if she and her companions were uncomfortable with who else was boarding at the same time.

Some women also suggested there were particular stops and stations that they would avoid, opting instead to walk further either to board or when alighting services:

> "I know that bus stations and certain bus stops seem to be a bit of a hotspot for like loiterers, I shall say. So, I tend to avoid, if possible, going as far as into a bus station."

While bus shelters that were enclosed (including glass shelters) were seen as good for comfort and weather protection, some women spoke of feeling "too enclosed" when sitting inside a shelter with a stranger, and so preferred to stand outside where they were less "trapped".

One woman described a bus stop which was outside a pub. They avoided using this stop, particularly in the evenings and at weekends due to the fear of encountering drunk and intoxicated people. The respondent preferred to walk to/from a stop further away in order to avoid this situation.

Smaller, rural stations were described as "scary" if they were unstaffed or had no other passengers around. Busy city centre stations (e.g. Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street) were described as being safe inside, the main concern being the areas immediately outside:

> "The town is a scary place at night time…I try and avoid being in the city centre at night outside of the station because it seems to be outside of the station is the hotspot for trouble. Whereas if I've got an Uber, I know that I can wait inside the door and then just run out and jump into that when it's outside."

A female transport worker explained that walking between Glasgow Central and Queen Street stations was a daunting experience, especially in the evenings and late at night:

> "I've seen people being dragged into fights on Union Street, I've seen myself being heckled by men out on Union Street, I've seen a lot of illegal things going on, which makes me really uncomfortable. I've heard of colleagues being assaulted outside of the station. It's a combination of all of it, to be honest. Like it's just very, very unsafe out there just now."

Indeed, the walk that women need to undertake to either reach a public transport link or to complete their journey also played a part in many people's decisions about which mode of transport to use:

> "I think it would really depend because my train station is a further away walk than my bus stop, which also does come into that, even though I feel safer on the train, walking back is about 5 minutes longer…so if I was getting the bus from town in a busy area maybe, it wouldn't be as bad, like from George Square or Buchanan Street because there's people around and it's well-lit. But then I think if I was getting it from a quieter place, I wouldn't like to wait at the bus stop by myself."

One also noted that they might take a taxi to get home from a public transport station/stop in order to avoid having to walk at night:

> "There's times where in order to avoid the walk home from getting off the train, I would spend more money in order to get home like for example a taxi or the bus if it means that I'm not having to walk

> through streets where pubs are, through a particular area that I
> maybe feel a wee bit uncomfortable in."

One ethnic minority respondent noted that, for those with no other choice than to use public transport, the walk to/from the stop/station did stop some women from going out and attending events at night:

> "So the ladies who live in [more deprived areas], they have the fear
> to come, they said, "We can't, we live far from the town and we can't
> go back late at night"…nothing's happened to me personally, but
> [women] have the fear to walk at night from the public transport to
> their home."

Female bus workers also expressed views that points of interchange could present them with safety concerns which could also impact on whether or not they would take a break during their shifts:

> "Bus terminal points can be quite dark, they can be out in the middle of
> nowhere. So, if you have one person just standing there or maybe someone
> that's missed the stop and is still on your bus…you've got five minutes to
> stretch your legs, just breathe, have a cigarette. And if there's someone on
> your bus, you can't. You don't feel safe doing it. It doesn't matter who it is
> …you're always looking over your shoulder. So, you'd rather just stay in your
> cab, keep the door locked and just wait."

Travelling Alone or With Others

Women often reported travelling with friends rather than alone, and of consciously making an effort to travel with friends if out late at night as being with others made them feel much less at risk - "nowhere near as on edge". Travelling in a group provided a distraction from any surrounding trouble and was also seen as possibly making people less of a target for unwanted attention. Travelling with others made women of all ages feel safer and was not something that was isolated to only the younger participants.

Women of various ages also specifically spoke of feeling safer travelling with males, including their male partners or, for young women, their fathers. Women commented that they would often not think twice about their safety if travelling with a man, as they assumed that this would act as a natural deterrent to other men approaching them:

> "I do definitely think that when I'm with my boyfriend, it is a bit like
> easier. I'm not sure but I feel like - I don't know - it's less likely

anything bad will happen if I'm with him rather than if I'm with my friends…I think it's what you know, or what you hear, you just assume that it would be safer if you're with a male."

One older woman, who always travelled with her husband due to her disability, indicated that travelling with a companion made her feel "protected".

One young woman (under 18) spoke about different 'levels' of feeling safe depending on who she was travelling with, with female friends offering some support, whereas male companions provided an even greater level of comfort. Other women used language to indicate that they perceived there was "safety in numbers" and that travelling in groups would make them appear less of a target, and also more resilient or robust in the face of any unwanted attention.

Where women did travel alone, they often mentioned using specific strategies to reduce their visibility to others, including sitting away from others and looking out of the window to avoid eye contact, and trying to stay quiet i.e. "I just stay quiet, blend in, try not to make any noises and not be seen." Others spoke of trying to reduce any instances of social contact with strangers:

> "I definitely take precautions, like I'm probably quite choosy about where I'll sit. I usually sit at a two-seater with my bag beside me instead of sitting at a four-seat area where somebody could come and sit in front of me and try and speak to me or something like that. And as I said before, I pretty much always have my headphones on and my head in my phone just trying not to make eye contact with people."

The main context in which women spoke of needing to travel alone either early in the morning or late at night was among transport workers employed on 'late shifts' for whom the journey to/from work was often necessarily made alone and made them feel unsafe. One such worker noted that they would use the train for backshifts on quiet days (typically Monday-Wednesday) but now refused to use it on busy nights.

'Being' alone and 'Feeling' alone

Importantly, there was a clear underlying message in discussions about the difference between 'being' alone and 'feeling' alone. Many women recognised that it was inevitable to have to travel alone sometimes, but that they could still feel not alone as long as they were surrounded by others (including strangers) who they felt would be prepared to look out for them or help if needed:

> "Glasgow's really, really busy but there's also a lot of staff in Glasgow [Central station]. So even though I'm hesitant because it's so busy, I tend to feel quite safe. I don't feel like anything's going to happen and, if it did, there would definitely be people there that would help me. Whereas Paisley [station], there's next to no staff in Paisley. It's almost always empty, at least the times I'm there. Even the people at the ticket booths, they're usually away…I think the busy-ness combined with the no staff doesn't help."

While women noted that being around a lot of strangers could be daunting, they similarly felt unsafe if they were in areas with no other members of the public around (especially travelling to and from points of interchange):

> "…as much as it can be kind of nerve wracking to be surrounded by a lot of people, it can also be nerve wracking to not be surrounded by anyone…if you are going to a destination...and there's not a lot of people around…that may also be a little nerve wracking as well."

Women spoke of wanting to feel that they weren't alone and that someone would help if needed, although (as discussed more below) this was not something that they currently had confidence in:

> "…just that people aren't alone, that they are all aware of these situations. They maybe are all watching as opposed to like sitting with their head in a book."

Again, for young women, access to a phone to be able to speak with friends or family while travelling, or to be able to access help by phone/text was something that provided comfort and gave a sense of not being alone (even if the contact was remote). If travelling in places where there was poor internet access, or no access to a charge point for their phone etc. this heightened the sense of feeling alone.

Women's and Girls' Main Concerns

Women described a range of concerns that might impact their personal safety when travelling on public transport. Most cited a combination of concerns rather than one specific problem, although any form of unwanted attention was the most common theme. Other issues included antisocial behaviour, harassment (sexual and otherwise), verbal abuse, physical assault, and being followed by strangers.

Overall Feelings of Safety

Almost all women reported that they 'very often' or 'always' felt unsafe when using public transport, although feeling unsafe was not limited only to being on transport, but was more something that was experienced by women more generally when out socially, especially if alone or out after dark. Some participants described feeling the need to maintain a constant state of 'vigilance', rather than feeling 'unsafe' per se and many women found it difficult to verbalise what they feared in specific detail:

> "…antisocial behaviour, harassment, assault. Even just someone talking to me and just being a bit like weird, if you know what I mean. I don't really like confrontation and I'm not one to shout at someone to go away or whatever. So, I do think that it [going out] is a bit like - it is a bit scary really, it is a bit daunting."

For transport workers, all said that they considered their personal safety constantly, and at least once on every journey made while at work/travelling to/from work and, again, their fears related to a wide array of possible confrontations.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour was the most frequently reported type of behaviour that made women feel unsafe, especially anti-social behaviour from groups of young people, including school children at the beginning and end of the school day, gangs of young people in the evenings and those who were intoxicated by alcohol or drugs (discussed more below). For the most part, women reported that anti-social behaviour was not directed at them but still made them uncomfortable as there was a chance that it could spill over into their personal space:

> "…there have been multiple times where there was a lot of shouting and a lot of kind of people having fights and things, even physical fights on the bus and…they weren't having that fight with me, but it was still affecting my safety cos I felt - I don't know, "What if they punch me in a second, you know, what's going to happen?""

Several transport workers reported that there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour from young people in and around stations since the start of the pandemic, and saw this as something that needed to be urgently addressed. Children and young people were frequently observed loitering on platforms, walking on railway lines, and being a nuisance to other passengers, as well as directing verbal abuse at staff:

> "…we get a lot of feral teenagers - well, kids from about 11, 12 upwards roaming around… up and down the lines and they're usually in gangs of 10 plus and they're terrorising the passengers, the station staff, the on train staff and, because they know we can't do anything, they just want attention… they did have the travel safe team and BTP [British Transport Police] done an initiative a while ago travelling round up and down the stations and the trains. So that stopped them for a while but now they know there's nobody there as their deterrent, they all come flooding back."

> "The lines are overrun with teenagers. They get on the train, they spend all night on them, jumping on and off but there's no police. So, the police just won't - we can phone them, we can text them, they either don't answer or they don't come out at all. They say they don't have staff in the area, so we're just left with it. Like I had it on Sunday night. I had to go into the back cab, that's the back cab of the train is the place of safety, because we had a group of teenagers outside kicking the door and trying to break in and spitting on it."

For workers, low level anti-social behaviour and confrontation from passengers was most often just "brushed off" as being part of the job.

The other most common issue reported by transport workers was dealing with "flash points" or confrontations around tickets, delayed trains, etc. and there was seen to be no pattern to the profiles of individuals who initiated such confrontations (people of all ages and genders could potentially "spark a row" it was said). Transport workers described relying on experience and intuition to detect when confrontation was likely to occur and either avoiding or removing themselves from the presence of such people, rather than tackling things "head on".

A final observation in relation to anti-social behaviour was made by the focus group for young women who shared the view that, as women, there were expectations around how they should or would behave compared to their male peers and that girls would be less likely to "get away with" anti-social behaviour:

> "…it just feels like there are some things that are acceptable for guys or men to do and people may be more strict to women if they do

that. So, I feel it's less likely for women to be as rowdy as guys in general but obviously it is a generalisation."

This perception contributed to their shared view that, if they were to be victims of anti-social behaviour from others, it was most likely to be from men or boys.

Harassment, Abuse and Assault

While many women spoke of sexual harassment, this was often perceived as 'low level' or as generally tolerated. Indeed, women tended to speak more of 'sexual inuendo' rather than perceiving it as harassment, and this was mentioned frequently among those interviewed. Most seemed to accept that this was 'typical' or not unexpected when travelling by public transport, especially if late at night.

Many women spoke of sexual comments or inuendo as being normalised among their peer groups, but recognised that this did not make it right:

"I think most of my female friends have had some sexual comments directed towards them on public transport…it's such a kind of terrible norm that sometimes it's even like a joke. You know, like sometimes someone - some of my friends will share a little story and be like, "OK, who got the worst comment out of everyone?" And it definitely shouldn't be like that."

Female transport workers also reported frequently being on the receiving end of inappropriate comments and explained that they had come to expect this from men of all ages:

"They [men] think it's banter and when you show them that you're not willing to accept it, they can sort of go, "Oh I'm really sorry"…but then, in other cases, some men can push that line a wee bit further and further. And I have experienced obviously some horrible verbal abuse from men and things like that and it's been from men who were old enough to be like my father!"

There was nothing to suggest that this was more or less likely depending on whether women were travelling or working alone or with other females, but was reported as being less likely if travelling or working with male friends/partners/older relatives/colleagues.

Non-sexual verbal abuse also featured in several discussions, and this had been received from both men and women. Young women were again more likely to report verbal abuse, as well as women from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled women. Verbal assault and harassment was something that some again had come to live with, and many described that even interventions from others were not enough to deter this kind of behaviour:

> "I was dropping my boyfriend off at the train station…and there was a man there…My boyfriend went into the building to go and pay for his ticket and, while my boyfriend was away, he started harassing me. He started saying really explicit things and when I ignored him, he was calling me names, calling me ugly and fat. So, then my boyfriend came back…he started harassing my boyfriend, saying that he was going to beat him in and stuff like that."

There were few explicit concerns about physical assault, except among transport workers. Indeed, transport workers reported a number of incidents which would and/or had caused concern in the past. This included:

- being physically threatened with a weapon;
- passengers/strangers indicating that they may be carrying a weapon, or weapons being seen on their person;
- having been chased between carriages by a man and his dog, where the man was clearly under the influence of drugs; and
- being threatened with being 'injected' by an intoxicated couple when working alone on a train late at night.

Sexual assault featured mainly as an underlying feature of discussions, rather than being something that women discussed explicitly as a concern. That is, many respondents spoke of feeling uneasy in and around the company of male strangers when traveling, or of feeling unsafe if alone in the company of male strangers, and taking measures to avoid being in such scenarios, yet they did not verbalise that this was explicitly because of a fear of sexual assault and linked it more to the threat of uneasy confrontations per se:

> "My mind automatically goes to thinking of a worst-case scenario situation… in relation to men and their not very nice tendencies sometimes. So, there is probably, on the sort of more serious end of the scale, when I'm alone and say there's a man who I'm looking at and thinking, "You look drunk and I don't like the idea of being anywhere near you right now". Maybe I'm worried about physical assaults. But more so, I'm just worried about getting into altercations with people."

Only one woman in the sample reported sexual assault that had been perceived as being bad enough that she felt compelled to report it to the police, and this same woman reported that it had had a long-lasting effect on her feelings of ease/comfort when left alone with male strangers in public settings.

Physical Contact and Invasion of Space

One of the most frequently reported types of unwanted behaviour was unknown men (and sometimes other women) sitting very close to women on public transport instead of choosing seats that were free and further away. Women spoke of feeling particularly uncomfortable if other passengers (especially men) came and sat either directly next to them on a two-person seat, or sat directly behind them, when there were alternative spaces available in front or several rows away:

> "I've definitely had experiences before of men coming and I've been in an empty carriage on the train and they would come and sit right next to me and it felt like there was no way out of that situation. They would kind of box you in and try and intimidate you."

Young women also gave examples of virtual invasion of space and privacy, with reports of male passengers taking photographs or videos of them or their friends when using public transport (and in situations where they were unable to get away):

> "…my friend put this [Tweet] up the other day, which is a video of a man on a train filming her. He sat one row directly in front of her filming her and then occasionally taking pictures cos the phone was flashing and whatever. And that made her really worried…I've seen so many photos like that from friends…like an everyday occurrence."

Female transport workers were more likely than passengers to report incidents of unwanted physical contact. Incidents reported by female transport workers included:

- men putting their arms around their shoulders/waist while doing their job;
- men physically manoeuvring women out of the way to get past them, i.e. grabbing their hips and moving them to one side or "squeezing past"; and
- being placed in a 'headlock' by a young man who was part of a group of young men travelling on a train, which made the worker feel incredibly vulnerable as she was unable to escape:

> "…there's a lot of subtle sexism in my job…I had a man on the train that was trying to get past me as I was selling someone a ticket…Instead of verbally saying, "Please move", he put his hands…on my waist… That in itself - nobody should physically touch me in the workplace. He wouldn't have done it if I was a man."

In two cases of unwanted physical contact from male passengers, the women reported that it had been the other male passengers travelling with the perpetrator who had stepped in to resolve the situation, i.e. by encouraging or forcing the perpetrator to stop and making them aware that their behaviour was not appropriate.

In the absence of this, both women felt there would have been no intervention, as they were working alone and other passengers seemed reluctant to get involved.

Again, it is important to note that all but one of the women interviewed as part of this research who worked in the transport sector felt that there were no problems linked to inappropriate behaviours from male colleagues, and all but one felt confident that any such issues would be dealt with appropriately by managers, if needed.

Being Followed

Although mentioned by fewer women, a fear of being followed from bus stops or stations to their home was something that caused real alarm, i.e. "someone kind of spots you on public transport and then follows you when you get off it."

One middle aged woman described her concerns about how to handle men who made an approach if she was alone, and her concerns about how she would remove herself from such a situation so that the fellow passenger did not 'latch on':

> "I think one of the big issues there is, if you're at a bus stop, you're not quite sure when the bus is going to come, you're in the dark, there's no nearby lamp post and there's a random guy who's smoking up on weed or whatever you want and he doesn't have anyone to tell him not to bother you and he starts to strike up a conversation. You want to get out of the conversation but you can't say, "Leave me alone" because he might attack you for that and there's no one in the vicinity and you can't leave because, well, if he follows you… it's just like a downward spiral."

Another young woman reported that she was asked outright by a male passenger where she would be getting off and feeling that she had to "think on her feet" to lie, or that she would have to change her alighting stop:

> "There were people asking me as I was kind of getting up to get off the bus - they were asking me like, "Oh is your boyfriend waiting for you at home?" Or, "Can I get off with you?" Things like that. It's just unsettling because you hear about the stories of, you know, women being followed and everything like that and then even being killed. So, then you're just like, "OK, should I be getting off at the stop where I live, or should I like go further and then walk?" But then walking is not safe either. So, it's like, it just causes this stress, I would say."

Two women in the sample reported being directly followed home by a man but one of these women explained how the man diverted his journey once she reached a busy social area (a pub) outside of her home and stopped to wait for him to pass

before finding her keys and entering her building. The other young woman had to phone her mother to come and pick her up.

Intoxication and the Influence of Alcohol and Drugs

Several respondents said that the incidents they had been involved in or had witnessed often involved people being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. While several said that this type of behaviour often did not spill over onto anything that impacted them directly, it still made them feel unsettled or unsafe in general:

> "…people who are drinking or doing drugs on the bus or on any sort of public transport, it's just a bit unsettling…people who pee on the floor in public transport, things like that…it's a very uncomfortable feeling to be around it."

The main concern in relation to alcohol was that it made people's behaviour unpredictable:

> "If you know someone's drunk…it kind of throws in a wild card cos you don't know what they're going to do. And if they're drunk and they attack you…how are you going to manage the situation...the option there is just to get as far away from them as possible."

The level of unpredictability was also seen to be worse with drugs, as their effects were often variable and unknown and less familiar to other passengers or workers:

> "Yeah, you can sort of know how to handle people when they've been drinking cos I've obviously got loads of experience in that. But I do remember having someone on the train that I could tell was just - was definitely - had taken I don't know what drugs but… he was really unpredictable… he was really unpredictable and he went into his pocket and we didn't know what he was going to pull out."

Late night and weekend travel and was seen as much more likely to be affected by alcohol/drug related problems:

> "…if you're bringing the last one [train] out of Edinburgh on a Saturday night, you're aware of the fact that alcohol is a very, very strong factor in the behaviour patterns that can present a problem, definitely…And 9 times out of 10, as I say, alcohol can be an exceptionally large factor in any event."

Several respondents (both members of the public and transport workers) commented on the fact that, although laws were in place to ban drinking on public

transport, these were rarely enforced and were therefore not taken seriously by the travelling public:

> "…the 'no drinking' rule on public transport needs to be enforced because I know 'no drinking' is a rule, for example, on buses, so for First Bus, it's not allowed. For Scot Rail now, it's not allowed either. But it's not enforced in any way and I think it would change a lot in terms of personal safety for people."

The only context in which alcohol was mentioned as being non-problematic was when consumed on ferries. One respondent observed that alcohol sales and consumption on ferries was permitted and not unusual, especially since many people using ferries were on holidays or recreational trips. They perceived that alcohol in this context was usually consumed responsibly and with good policing by ferry staff and did not lead to rowdy, drunken or threatening behaviour (although the same respondent noted that groups of male golfers drinking on board ferries could sometimes become quite rowdy and "annoying" rather than presenting a risk).

Overall, alcohol and drugs featured in a lot of the descriptions of incidents that had or would make women feel unsafe, although one young woman was also keen to point out that: "It's not always men that are drunk that do it, I would like to say as well. Sometimes it's men that appear to be sober."

More General Concerns

Some women found it difficult to name anything specific that they 'feared' or that made them feel unsafe and instead just described needing and wanting to feel in control and to not be vulnerable, isolated or alone such that they could not handle or manage any unwanted attention that came their way:

> "I think it's more maybe to do with just trying to ensure that you're not in a situation rather than it being anything specific. I wouldn't say I'm conscious of anything specifically…that I would need to find a deterrent for. I think it's more just the fact of not putting yourself in any positions whereby it could become something."

One woman, who always used taxis or a private car when travelling at night explained that this was largely driven by the negative personal stories she had heard from other females who had used public transport at night, and her feeling that she herself would be unable to control or manage similar incidents.

Most women who gave examples of things that would or had made them feel unsafe referenced men as being those who they felt were more likely to present a risk, albeit they were less explicit about what they feared men may do:

> "…if I see some taller, older guy, man and either - if you're on kind of like empty bus and they sit really close to you, it's really weird. So, I already feel on edge and you don't know, like there's loads of times when you have a guy that's drunk that's on the bus and everyone's really wary around them and no one wants to sit close to them in case there's something that they will do."

In the same way that women spoke of feeling safer if they themselves were in a group/with others, there were indications that men travelling together, especially in large groups, was equally as concerning as lone men who might approach women on their journeys. Large groups were described by some as again being harder to predict and therefore harder to respond to or manage.

Most women also confirmed that the majority (but not all) of the anti-social behaviour, unwanted attention or confrontation that they had experienced had been from men:

> "It has always been men. People who were like behaving badly, so you know, drinking, peeing or fighting, they could have been women but this kind of unwanted attention, it was always men."

While unknown men or boys were mainly seen as those likely to make women feel unsafe, one young woman was keen to point out that other female passengers could also pose threats in terms of anti-social behaviour, but that these threats were different from those posed by men:

> "There have been a couple of times where women have been drunk and they've gotten a wee bit too close and they try and be friendly with you and you're just not 100% comfortable with it. But I don't think that's out of malice. Whereas I know this sounds like a wee bit of a generalisation but when I've been greeted from drunk men in the past, it has been quite aggressive and cat calling. It's not like, "Do you want to be my friend?" It's more like, you know?"

Only one female transport worker mentioned that the only time she had previously been assaulted was by another woman:

> "I have been physically assaulted before. It was by another female though. It went to court and stuff and they said that she punched me because she didn't like the look of me."

Overall, women seemed to describe feelings of general anticipatory angst and, although they perceived that serious incidents were unlikely to occur, the threat was still an ever-present risk that they needed to be mindful of. Encountering anti-social behaviour and inappropriate comments was seen as much more likely to occur, however, women felt that they could generally cope with this, although many also expressed that it would be preferable to not have to.

Diversity of Experience and the Influence of Personal Characteristics

Despite most women sharing fundamental concerns about their safety, the diverse range of women who took part in the research meant that there was some inevitable difference in the specific challenges that they either feared or faced when using public transport. While all were united in their shared concerns linked to being female, age, ethnicity and disability were the other main characteristics that women explained could make them feel unsafe.

Safety and Age

Younger women (aged 14-25) invariably felt more vulnerable as a result of their age, not least if travelling alone, and were more likely to encounter comments and unwanted attention from others. Young women and girls often expressed that their age and gender combined to make them feel they may be more at risk:

> "I think because I'm a 19-year-old girl, I do feel a bit more vulnerable. Obviously, I'm very lucky to be healthy and all that but I do think that being a young girl by yourself travelling is a bit daunting. I think again it's just from everything that you hear on the media and everything that people say to you, it does make you feel a bit more like on edge."

There were also comments made across the sample that younger women usually attracted more unwanted attention from men than older women, with suggestions that women in their teens, 20s and 30s were perhaps perceived to be easy targets. Some of the older women who took part (aged over 50) suggested that they perhaps felt more experienced to deal with incidents that might occur compared to when they were younger, or compared to younger family members, friends, colleagues, etc.

One transport worker who reported a man to the police for physical assault explained that her age and experience had played a key role in that decision, including her desire to protect others who may have been less confident:

> "I have to be honest - I sort of took a breath and thought, "Right, no, but you're not getting away with this cos I'm a female who will be able to deal with you to a certain point. However, it could be one of my colleagues who would absolutely - you know, wouldn't know how to deal with you."

Comments were also made that older women (including family members or acquaintances of the women who took part in interviews) would often make

deliberate decisions to travel at quiet times (e.g. one woman described how her elderly female neighbour always went to the supermarket first thing in the morning by bus to avoid feeling unsafe in crowds). For younger people, however, the convenience and low cost of public transport trumped fear in most situations.

Sexist and ageist comments from passengers (and less so colleagues) were again commented on as being part of the job of a transport worker (e.g. male passengers being more inclined to approach male staff for advice, rather than a female staff member), but most women who were transport workers dismissed this as non-problematic. Transport workers also expressed frustration at what they saw as general societal attitudes that working on the trains or buses was not appropriate for women and that it should be only men in the role.

On the whole, female transport workers did not report any concerns about the actions or behaviour of male colleagues, and while some potentially sexist or ageist "banter" was mentioned, all said that this was infrequent, low level and was never perceived by them to be threatening or unduly inappropriate:

> "…it's quite a male orientated industry anyway, so you're working around men, so you don't let things get to you…I mean, there's banter but there's nothing wrong. There's not any sexual overtures or anything. It's just you have a laugh, you're just pals. So, I don't feel unsafe with any of the colleagues."

Indeed, female bus and train workers both spoke of feeling well supported by male colleagues and viewed them as offering an important source of help, if needed.

Safety and Ethnicity

Respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds spoke of numerous issues they had experienced, generally on-board buses, with both drivers and other passengers (including both males and female passengers) which had made them feel unsafe.

In relation to drivers, three respondents indicated personal experience of difficulties when boarding buses and in buying tickets and, indeed, drivers of buses were cited by women from ethnic minorities has having caused more distress than fellow passengers among three of the women in this cohort that were interviewed. One had been forced to get off the bus as the ticket machine had not accepted their card payment, and two experienced drivers trying to force them to buy tickets for their children, (one aged under 5 and so entitled to free travel, and the other who had a young person's free bus travel pass). Both felt that they were treated differently to other non-ethnic minority passengers on occasions:

"And also some of these drivers have, [although] I have the bus pass on my phone, they still want to ask me, where am I going to stop, despite the pass I have is unlimited. And you see other people who are white, they actually get the bus and they don't ask them such questions."

One woman, who had had an altercation with a male bus driver over a ticket explained how his behaviour towards her had encouraged another male passenger to also direct abuse her way and felt that the driver's behaviour seemed to endorse or reinforce to the passenger that his discriminatory conduct was okay.

Women from ethnic minorities also spoke of having been subjected to racist verbal abuse and comments from other passengers. They noted that these passengers were often under the influence of alcohol or drugs:

"I don't really like travelling maybe at night…maybe Friday, Saturday, because when you enter the bus and maybe there are people who are already drunk or something, they will be saying things to you, about being black or whatever. So, I've experienced that more than five times, so I don't really like to go on the bus when it comes to night time."

Two women also discussed the 'looks' they would get from other passengers, or that people would refuse to sit in the available seat beside them:

"…if you are sitting down and there [are] other people coming in, I don't know, maybe it's because of the colour, whatever, some people just like to avoid not sitting beside you, not for any reason, maybe it's because of the colour."

One teenager from a minority ethnic group said that she was regularly the victim of racial abuse on board buses in her local area and said that this was from both male and female passengers.

While there was a sense among the whole sample that women often tried to justify, forgive, or at least cope with poor behaviour, for women from ethnic minority backgrounds, this was particularly pronounced. Among all those in this cohort, there was a sense of resignation that they would experience racist comments/abuse, that it was to be expected and the best way to deal with it was to ignore it:

"My message would be just for people to try to ignore and not start an argument…like the other day when I had that argument with the passenger, we both get off at the same stop because he was saying he was going to punch me…I was not scared because he was tiny and he was drunk, so I know he was just talking while he was drunk. And then when we got off the bus, when he was crossing the road, then he screamed 'go home!'…and then a lady was driving past, she

came near me and then she stopped [to help] …And I appreciated that so much…That's why I would say, just ignore, because you meet different kinds of people."

Overall, several respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds (although not exclusively), indicated a need for transport staff, and particularly bus drivers to be more understanding of ethnic minorities and language barriers, and be pro-active when there are incidents on board. This support was required in general to help get control of situations and to provide support to women, but also for reporting where language barriers may present a barrier to reporting for some women:

> "Some bus drivers are good at taking full control on the bus they drive. But others, they don't care… their job is just to drop people at stops and that's it, which is wrong. If anything happens inside the bus, they should be responsible, they should report or call the police, especially… with women [from] ethnic minorities who have language barrier and… maybe they don't know how to contact [the police]."

Safety and Disability

Most of the women who took part in the research who were living with physical or mental health disabilities were over 40 years old, and only one young woman (under 18) reported having a temporary disability (as she was reliant on crutches).

Two of the older disabled participants explained that they chose not to go out at night - this was mainly because frequency of services at night was reduced and they also had more general fears about being out after dark, although did not specify what those precise fears would be. These older women also spoke of being reluctant to use taxis or Ubers alone, especially at night, as they felt they would be unable to "get out quickly" of a vehicle, if they felt that they needed to. Similarly, the young women who was using crutches felt that she would appear to be an easy target because she was unable to easily flee a dangerous situation:

> "I'm on crutches, so if I'm on the train on crutches as well, I feel like I appear to be quite an easy target, if that makes sense, because I know that people view me and be like, "She can't get away!""

The other main concerns of disabled people related to access more generally, e.g. the need for better wheelchair access on public transport vehicles and better embarking/disembarking procedures. More accessible/easy to read timetables and information in different formats was also discussed as a general barrier to greater use of public transport and these general accessibility concerns were as likely to influence this cohort's travel decisions as concerns around personal safety.

Two disabled women also mentioned that drivers could have more respect for the care and concerns of passengers, not least those with mobility issues.

> "Give us time to sit down, for a start and not drive off before we're sitting… If I drive a bus… I would say to the driver, you try my zimmer when somebody moves and see how you like it!"

Similarly, the young woman on crutches explained that fellow passengers could not be relied upon to be considerate and, indeed, she had experienced verbal abuse and intimidation since being temporarily disabled, which had led to her being fearful more generally and to changing her travel patterns.

Other Characteristics

Few other respondents felt their personal circumstances or characteristics made them more or less vulnerable, and indeed, one respondent summed up well what appeared to be a general perception that it was not people's demographic status which meant they were more or less at risk, but rather their attitude to risk and corresponding level of personal awareness:

> "I think the worst thing you can do is not be aware of your situation. You absolutely have to be aware of your circumstances now, which is quite sad. But I would say absolutely everywhere, if you're by yourself, be you male or female, you have to be aware of what's going on round about you."

Similarly, a small number of women interviewed referred to their own personal backgrounds and experience making them perhaps "tougher" compared to others and so feeling that his helped them to feel safe, e.g. one participant had previously worked in a bar for a number of years which she felt had equipped her to deal with any unwanted male attention in different environments, such as on public transport.

Mitigating Measures: The Strategies Women and Girls Employ to Feel Safe

In the face of potential threats to their personal safety, women and girls described a wide range of adapted behaviours that they would use to try and stay safe.

Extending or Reducing Journeys

Several women reported either 'staying on' or 'getting off early' when making trips via bus and train - this could be either to remove themselves from others who were causing trouble on board, or specifically not wanting to alight at the place as someone else. One woman described this in the context of having concerns that a male passenger may follow them if they alighted at their required destination:

> "…my actual train wasn't due in until I think it was much later, so I just went two stops down… and waited there where I knew there was other people."

One teenage participant explained that she and her friends would change their travel plans if they encountered rowdiness, especially if they felt the situation was likely to escalate and there was no one available to help de-escalate things:

> "…there are times when me and my friends have perhaps gotten off the subway or the bus or not gotten on to the bus or the train because it's been quite rowdy and they're making a commotion and it doesn't feel safe, it doesn't feel like someone can step in and make sure that the situation remains calm."

Another teenager described changing her entire journey as a result of other passengers appearing to present risks:

> "There have been times where I've been supposed to get on a train and I've seen how many people are on it or how rowdy people are on it, and I've not gotten on. And I've ended up going to the bus station instead across the road. Or I've gotten off a train at the wrong stop because I don't feel particularly safe on it."

Another woman mentioned an incident where she had been waiting at a bus stop with a teenager with additional support needs, who was using a wheelchair. A couple, who appeared to be heavily under the influence of drugs also joined them at the bus stop and boarded the bus with them and she was concerned throughout the journey that the couple would alight at the same time as her and she would be

isolated with her client in a quieter location. She made the decision to remain on the bus, beyond her stop, to a busier and less isolated area.

Using Private Transport

Another frequently mentioned strategy for reducing risk or safety concerns was for women to use private transport instead of public transport (either their own or others' cars and/or taxis/Ubers). Several women spoke of calling a taxi or Uber if they needed to travel home alone, as they perceived that his would be safer than using public transport. This was not unanimous, however, and some women reported perceptions that Uber cars, in particular, might be unsafe for lone women (i.e. being along with a male driver and needing to trust them once alone in the vehicle).

Women also spoke of using their own or others' cars to make journeys if it meant they could avoid specific routes/areas that they viewed as unsafe. One older lady spoke of avoiding one specific route to a medical provider because of 'hearsay' in her local community regarding buses that served the facility:

> "There's this bus… and the stories I have heard apparently it would curl your hair!.. I really do hope I never have to get it because I think I'll have anxiety even just waiting on the thing coming…It's been notorious for drunk people, shouting people that just have an absolute riot, folk on the bus not behaving themselves like adults. And knowing that…I've always taken my car."

Finding Safe Seats and Safe Spaces

Many women spoke of making very careful seat choices when using public transport, as they saw this as a way of reducing their risk. On buses, women spoke of feeling safer sitting at the front of vehicles, instead of at the back or upstairs on double-deckers. On trains, women spoke of feeling safer sitting close to the drivers cab or in busy carriages. A few respondents also indicated that, when they experienced incidents, they tended to alight from the service as soon as possible. One female rail worker expressed that she witnessed this seat choice behaviour among female passengers while she was at work, and adopted a similar approach herself when using buses to travel to and from work:

> "…train passengers are more inclined to sit where they know a staff member's going to be…they'll maybe sit right at the front of the train because they know the driver's there or they'll maybe sit right at the back of the train because they know a conductor's at the back. I'm finding that kind of behaviour especially with female passengers and I find myself doing that when any time

I've been on buses going to and from work, I always sit right down at the bottom near the front… just because I know the driver can see me."

One passenger reported that a helpful ticket examiner had once accompanied her to an unoccupied seat to take her away from a male who was giving her unwanted attention and one transport worker described a scenario in which she had physically removed a female passenger from an uncomfortable situation:

"I did actually have a female not that long ago and someone had decided to sit with her and I could tell she was uncomfortable…what I did was I asked her to come with me to pay for the ticket with her card cos I had no [Wi-Fi] signal. I just made something up to take her away from that person without getting into a confrontation with that person myself."

When describing places of safety many women often referred to places that were 'busy' or where there were other people around:

"I know a lot of women, especially if they're travelling at night, they'll go and sit in the first cab just behind the driver. So, if there is anything going off, once the driver comes to a stop, they can bang on the door and the driver can help them. So, a lot of women, not only just train staff and station staff, know about this but a lot of female travellers will do that too. Or you just go where there's going to be an actual ticket examiner. As long as there's plenty of people that you can actually feel safe amongst. You don't go into an empty carriage… There's safety in numbers."

Despite feeling more comfortable around others, this was a fine balance described my many - areas that were too busy were daunting and areas that were too quiet were the same. A moderate footfall was seen as the ideal scenarios both on-board and at points of interchange.

'Locking In'

The notion of 'locking in' was raised in several contexts. Firstly, among passengers, one woman spoke about the fear of being 'locked in' on a bus when this strategy was used by bus drivers awaiting a response from the police:

"There's been people fighting on the bus while I was - not just me but members of the public, really vulnerable people sitting on the bus and having to witness fights on the bus and that's really unnerving, like really scary because you don't want to get up and walk off. The driver has probably stopped the bus, which makes your fear more because you're then stationary and the doors are locked."

Another woman spoke of being locked on a bus alone with just the driver. She suggested that if she was the only passenger on a bus at night she would prefer to get off and walk rather than remain on the bus alone with the driver - this was a lone view, with most others preferring to use the bus rather than walking alone at night:

> "Not if there's not any other passenger and especially if I'm the only female passenger on the bus, I'll get off it... because then it's contained and you can't get off and if the bus driver decides to keep the doors locked, you can't escape basically."

Similarly, bus drivers spoke of being advised to lock themselves into their driver's cab when faced with potential dangers, but it was felt that this was not always possible, and women felt compelled to leave the 'safe place' especially if others were in need (discussed more below). One driver, who had intervened to assist a young girl who she perceived was being harassed explained:

> "You're supposed to stay in your cab, look after yourself, stop in a safe place, tell the passengers there's a problem with the vehicle, hoping that the person gets off the bus and then you're supposed to phone control or phone the police and wait for them to arrive. But we all know - and it's no disregard to the police at all - but how busy they are and how fast they can actually respond. So, you kind of sometimes take it upon yourself to do what you deem the safest and that was what I deemed the safest at the time."

A second bus worker also described how the 'locked cab' only eased her safety concerns to a certain extent:

> "…you've got a double lock on it [drivers cab], it's very thick Perspex all the way round, there is no way for them to get in unless they really did a lot of force and break it down… So, it kind of makes you feel that little bit safer but you're just not sure if they're going to take out a gun or something so silly that you just - it can happen. Never say never."

Similarly, at stations, staff were advised to lock themselves into the office (and call headquarters, the BTP or Police Scotland). One transport worker described how they used this physical measure when working alone in stations at night:

> "…in the smaller stations, you mostly work yourself…I mean, we can lock ourselves in, in the booking office. But obviously if you've come to the end of your shift and either you want to go to your car or you want to go and get a train and get home, then sometimes it can be a bit daunting…If you feel unsafe…you just lock yourself in and, if need be, call the police as well or the BTP. But they don't always - they're under-resourced now as well, so you don't always get anybody out."

Another described how this strategy had limited impact on her feeling of safety:

> "If anything happens, I can retreat to my booking office and they're not going to get in the door because it is a solid door. But still, that is also my only way in and out, there's not another escape for me. So, if there's somebody battering in that door, I can't actually go anywhere else, I'm kind of trapped essentially."

Several of transport workers described the same 'locking in' approach on board the train (i.e. being able to use the drivers cab at the rear of the train which had a lockable door and was the designated 'safe space'). Several said that they had, in the past, been forced to physically lock themselves in and, indeed, explained that this was the advised protocol - ticket examiners or guards were advised to lock themselves away in the 'back cab' of the train if they didn't feel safe and again contact either the driver, the BTP or Police Scotland. While welcomed, the limitations of this approach were not overlooked by women:

> "We can sit in the back cab but we still have to operate the doors, so I suppose if I did feel unsafe, I would probably contact the driver and then we can contact the BTP police and such like as well. But again, you are kind of on your own in that situation until you would be able to contact them."

Another transport worker described how, while the 'safe space' approach did offer some comfort, there was an expectation that it would only ever be used in extreme circumstances, alongside asking the driver to stop the train, as the disruption caused to passengers and the network as a whole would be significant. As a result, women perhaps felt reluctant to use the 'back cab' safety measure, i.e. "You do need a very, very good reason for feeling that unsafe to be in there."

Indeed, a different transport worker suggested that briefings to reassure both male and female workers that it was okay to use this measure would be welcomed:

> "[Briefings could be used to say] it's okay to go to the cab or it's okay to stop the train or refuse to take the train…cos if you stop a train in order to phone the police, it does hold up all the other trains in the network [and] control will want us to move that train. So, just to reinforce that it's perfectly reasonable for you to wait for the police and stuff."

While transport workers spoke of a range of mitigating measures available to them to help, e.g. contacting the driver, locking in, calling the police, etc. there was also evidence across most interviews with transport workers that women felt reluctant to use these options at times in case their colleagues did not perceive they were merited (and stopping the train was, they commented, ultimately at the driver's discretion). Women spoke of worrying that drivers or the police may not feel that the

incident was serious enough, and as a result women often made judgements based not only on how safe or unsafe they felt, but also based on how they would be judged by others.

Managing Escalation

A fear of escalation existed for several of the public transport users and female bus and rail workers who took part.

Rail workers spoke of feeling a need to carefully manage confrontational situations and did so by trying to minimise or downplay argumentative or aggressive comments/acts made towards them:

> "I've never come across a situation that hasn't been sort of - you know, you've been able to sort of jovial your way out of."

Similarly, bus workers spoke of having to change and adapt their behaviour in response to potentially threatening or hostile passengers:

> "I think sometimes when a crowd of guys come on and they're maybe just thinking, "Oh, here's just a female driver, we can say anything", sometimes you think, "Oh no!" My stomach will rumble and then I'll be right…be nice to them. Cos I always feel if you're nice to somebody, their thought or their tune can change and they can be nice back to you. That type of thing."

One woman explained that her personal characteristics perhaps both helped and hindered her in this regard, describing herself as "quite bubbly and friendly" which sometimes attracted unwanted attention, but was also sometimes useful as her personality helped her to calm down potential aggravations. Similarly, another transport worker explained that she felt women's approach to passengers also helped to make them less vulnerable to confrontation:

> "I think females in this industry [bus drivers] don't get as much grief because we're female…We kind of, we smile, we would be polite. If they've got something to say, we normally answer them or give them the best explanation that we can and it kind of just calms them down a bit…smile, be polite and try and calm the situation down as much as you can."

In contrast, however, another transport worker explained how sometimes 'not' saying anything could actually result in escalation, and so careful judgement was required on how to handle each situation:

> "Men will say things of a sexual nature or just making me feel uncomfortable, maybe comments like, "Are you single? "You're so gorgeous", blah, blah,

blah. Then when you either walk away and ignore them or just say to them, "That's out of order", then that kicks off because men do not like being rejected, men hate rejection. That in itself - sometimes I just think, "Is it even worth saying anything?" So, a lot of the time, I just walk away and I don't say anything at all but they still kick off because they don't like that they didn't get the reaction that they wanted."

Several transport users also indicated that they tried to ignore or play down comments made to them in order to avoid escalation, including responding to unwanted attention with smiles or laughter to "play along" or alighting buses and trains early to simply get away and avoid continued engagement with strangers.

Physical Appearance and Self-Presentation

A common feature of interviews with women (especially women taking advantage of the night-time economy) was that they felt conscious of what they were wearing when travelling, and that efforts to adapt or change their physical appearance or self-presentation were often made as a result:

> "[I'm always aware] how we carry ourselves as women. I'm always more aware if I am maybe in more the going out clubbing outfits than if I'm dressed in jeans and a t-shirt…I don't want to change how I feel about what I'm wearing because I'm worried about some asshole [sic] that could be potentially on the transport or on the bus or something like that…I don't think a man should dictate what I'm wearing or anything like that…but it's still in the back of your head, you look at yourself in the mirror and you're like, this dress is very short and I know I'm going to sit down on the bus and my legs are going to be exposed and things like that. So, I do think about those things but maybe I'd bring a jacket with me if I'm wearing a low-cut top or something while I'm on the bus."

Likewise, other interviewees, notably young women, described taking a jacket or coat with them on a night out, to 'hide' or 'soften' the fact that they were wearing short skirts, sleeveless tops or make up:

> "… if I'm walking home somewhere on my own or I know I'm going to be coming home from somewhere on my own in the bus, then I'd want to have a jacket or something with me. But it wouldn't stop me from wearing whatever I wanted, I'd wear whatever underneath."

> "I would be less likely to get a bus into town on a night out if I was
> wearing a short dress…it is uncomfortable being in a public setting…
> and guys will shout stuff at you."

One woman described making a deliberate decision to wear "sensible shoes" if going on a night out and using public transport and described this as a 'sacrifice' that she felt was worthwhile, i.e. "I sacrifice good looks for making sure that if I need to stand my ground and protect myself, I can do that."

Several transport workers described feeling like "visible targets" when wearing their work uniforms, both at work and out of work. They explained that wearing their uniforms, even when not working, made them a target for unwanted attention and made them feel vulnerable. When travelling out with working hours, staff reported strategies such as wearing a jacket zipped up to the top, avoiding eye contact with anyone, and wearing headphones as a deterrent to unwanted approaches. One respondent explained that making themselves 'anonymous' in this way made meant that they would not get drawn into challenging situations with confrontational passengers/other members of the public.

One female bus worker described receiving negative comments from male passengers about her decision to wear a skirt to work, and feeling that comments about her clothing possibly reflected gendered stereotypes that men held towards women working in the industry, as well as reflecting attitudes that it was acceptable to comment on women's clothing in general:

> "I wear a skirt to work because it's more comfortable cos you're sitting in the
> bus for maybe 5 hours at a time. And I feel more dressy cos I feel, I'm a bus
> driver and I feel good about myself. And a couple of times that a guy's like,
> "Oh you've got a skirt on!" and they'll say something…I think they forget that -
> wait a minute, you shouldn't be speaking to women like that."

Transport workers also described that there were not always suitable places to get fully changed, or said that this was not practical, and so disguising or hiding uniforms was the best strategy available.

Precautions and Normalised Day-to-Day Behaviour

Several women spoke of their precautionary behaviour on public transport simply being an extension to their wider behaviours when out and about, and felt that there were many strategies employed day-to-day and as an accepted part of their daily routines to keep themselves safe, for example:

- always keeping their keys in their hands as they approached home, especially at night, to be able to open the door quickly (or use as a weapon if needed);
- never cutting across parks or walking through wooded areas away from streets/roads late at night, so that they were always visible to others;
- not using headphones or only using one earphone when walking alone, so as to be able to hear people approaching/be more aware of surroundings;
- sitting downstairs, and/or at the front of the bus near the driver;
- sitting close to other women on board public transport or sitting next to families who might be considered 'safer';
- choosing to sit in busier train carriages rather than quiet/empty ones;
- completely avoiding public transport at night and opting for a taxi instead;
- avoiding getting off at unlit or poorly lit bus stops and diverting accordingly;
- making telephone calls to friends/family while making journeys so that someone could independently track their journey's progress;
- asking male relatives or friends to meet them from alighting bus stops/stations to accompany them on the last part of the journey home;
- wearing flat shoes or trainers to be able to 'run away' or escape if necessary;
- using tracking apps, such as that available for Uber and sharing these with friends/family to track journeys; and
- travelling in twos when using taxis or staying with friends overnight so as never to leave a female alone in the taxi as the last one to be dropped off.

Women spoke of such habits as 'normalised behaviour' or something that they had grown up with and had been taught to do. Interestingly, participants also spoke to interviewers (who were all female) using such terms as "You know what it's like", or "We've all been there" or "I'm sure you're the same", demonstrating the shared nature of the views being given with an assumed understanding that all women would grasp the sentiments being expressed or would have similar experiences to share.

It is also important to note that a small handful of women said that they did not usually feel unsafe on public transport, however, on closer examination, such women's justifications for feeling safe were because they had put in place strategies to mitigate against risks (suggesting that personal safety concerns had instigated them to do so).

Practical Measures to Support Feelings of Safety

While women and girls reported taking many measures themselves to mitigate risks and make themselves feel safer, there was clear evidence that much more could be done at the systemic level to bolster this further.

Increased Police Presence and Repercussions

One of the measures that was cited most frequently as potentially making women and girls feel safer was an increased police presence, or increased visibility of individuals who were in a position to assist and respond to inappropriate behaviour:

> "It would be nice if I have more visibility of the British Transport Police (BTP) but I can't see that happening…that would reassure passengers and the staff on the train as well."

While many women recognised that increased staff presence was possibly the best deterrent to inappropriate behaviours, as well as the best way to make people (both women and men) feel safe, several also commented that they perceived there was a current lack of any visible presence/authority figures on the public transport system, i.e. "Both sets of police have been decimated in recent years, so it's hard getting any kind of official help."

Transport workers, in particular, suggested that the presence of transport police who would actively manage situations and ensure perpetrators faced consequences for their behaviour would be beneficial. This was particularly needed on known problematic routes, particularly when there were events on, or late at night travel at the weekend. One respondent explained how a police response to her call for assistance had made a difference in handling the situation and also that the police involvement may have been sufficient to deter future similar behaviour:

> "I'm aware of one colleague where it did tip over into, you know, something else and it was a horrendous experience for her and I would dread to think that one of these [men] who thinks he's a little bit of a - for want of a better word - a 'smart arse' - could actually have been a little bit braver at that point and it would have tipped over the edge. And I think… a little scare from the police will do you no harm whatsoever little man."

Several women spoke of there being no repercussions or negative consequences for those who did behave inappropriately towards women and girls, as well as insufficient deterrents against anti-social behaviour and against drinking on board public transport:

"…there should be consequences…But the police aren't there, so nothing's going to get done anyway, so what does it matter? And the people that travel on the train do see that there's never police about, so they know the chances of them getting caught doing what they're doing isn't going to happen. The only way to solve that would be to have more police about."

Real consequences combined with increased and proactive police presence was the favoured means of improving feelings of safety overall.

Improved Reporting Systems and Police Responses

Women who had experienced negative incidents described mixed views towards reporting. Several women who had experienced verbal abuse indicated that they had not reported this to either the transport operator or the police as they either considered it to be 'normal' or not 'serious enough' to bother the authorities with, they excused the behaviour as an isolated incident as the person had been drunk or under the influence and so they felt they would not act that way any other time, or because they felt that nothing could/would be done.

Many women also said that they would be unsure who to report incidents to, except the most serious incidents such as physical or sexual assault which they would usually report to the police. For what they perceived as anti-social or 'lower level' incidents, such as verbal abuse or sexual harassment, many women felt there was no clear understanding of what the appropriate means for reporting would be:

"I don't know how I would go about it. So, like, would I speak to the driver? But like the driver will say, "OK fine", and leave it there. Or like would it be some formal thing? I think there's just no awareness of it [how to report]."

Public campaigns (discussed more below) were encouraged to raise awareness of who was available to help people (both men and women) if they felt unsafe on public transport, and who to contact for help:

"Some sort of message kind of showing that you're not alone, that there is someone who can help with it. So that it's not just like a campaign saying, "Please don't touch women", cos like that's not going to do anything. It's a campaign that actually kind of shows where to get that help."

Some women who had reported incidents to the British Transport Police also reported poor responses, and this was something that may deter them from reporting in the future, they explained:

> "[BTP] texted me back saying, "We'll look into this incident but we
> don't think anything's going to happen about it". And they never got
> back to me. So even though I told them exactly what train he'd got
> on, exactly what he looked like, everything that happened, it was -
> they texted me back as if to say, "We hear you but there's nothing
> we can do about it" ...I ended up calling my friend and she said that
> she'd had the same experience. Someone was harassing her at a
> train station down the road, a different train station, and she texted
> the transport police about it and transport police basically got back to
> her saying, "We can't do anything" …I just don't see that there's
> much of a point if that's the way they're going to respond, to be
> honest, because it was quite a lot of effort. I was really upset and
> emotional and it's quite a lot of emotional labour to sit there and type
> out everything that happened and them to get back to you and be
> like, "There's nothing we can do". So, I don't think I would do it again
> [text the BTP], to be honest.

Similarly, transport workers provided mixed responses around how reliable BTP and
Police Scotland were in responding to calls for help - most of those interviewed
reported having negative experiences whereby BTP or Police Scotland did not
respond quickly or in sufficient time to help deter problematic passengers. Again,
one female transport worker described how a previous negative reporting experience
now made her reluctant to report anything else:

> "I know that, in my head, I should report all of these incidents but is there any
> point when the police won't do anything? I had a man maybe 4 years ago, a
> man had said something really disgusting to me and I had got to the point
> where I was that disgusted and upset by it, I did phone the police. This one
> time, they actually did show up, which I could not believe. When they did
> show up, they turned round to me and they said, "What do you want? Do you
> want an apology from him?" So that's the reaction that I'm met with when
> somebody says something really disgusting to me, like, do I want an apology
> from him? It then reinforces the idea that I shouldn't have even wasted their
> time by phoning them… I've had that on multiple occasions, I've had the
> police use that exact same phrase, "Do you want an apology?" Because they
> think, instead of doing the paperwork, doing their job, that if they make
> somebody say sorry, that you'll be happy with that and you'll just leave it."

One rail worker reported the police always being reliable and coming quickly to her
aid but explained that she used text messages instead of phone calls and these
always received a prompt response, and an in-person attendance, where merited.
This was reinforced by another worker who felt that text messages usually received
a faster or more efficient response. Yet another worker suggested that they often

received quicker responses from Police Scotland than the British Transport Police but said that they received very little follow-up support or information from the police after reports and investigations. Again, they indicated that they were reluctant to continue reporting future incidents:

> "I tend not to report things now or, if I text things in, they don't get responded to either. So, it kind of makes me feel like, why should I? So, I'll maybe write it in my log book but that's not actually helping because it's not keeping – it's keeping a record for me but it's not logging anything with the Transport Police, so I just feel like, what's the actual point? So even the assault I was talking about, the signaller phoned Police Scotland because they would respond quicker than Transport Police and they were the first ones to respond."

They also noted that, even where incidents were more serious and were fully investigated by the police, the staff rarely heard any more about it. This may, therefore, leave staff with a sense that nothing really happens, and so more ongoing communication or follow-up is perhaps required:

> "…there was an assault and obviously the station then was essentially a crime scene, his blood had dripped everywhere, he'd broke a window on this train, like a full window and attempted to assault the driver. He was trying to get in at the driver as well. But again, I won't hear about that, about if they're charged, convicted or anything, we don't hear anything about those things."

Again, among workers, there was a mixed response with regards to how effective the current system of reporting incidents at work may be. While all of those interviewed said that they routinely completed the necessary paperwork to report incidents that had occurred at work, some felt these reports simply "vanished" and resulted in no action, whereas others felt they were always taken seriously and always followed up.

One female transport worker also raised caution around too readily reporting incidents involving female passengers as complainers or victims, as she felt that some women and girls did not want to interact with authorities. She explained that she would always be led by what the victim wanted and if they did not want to report an incident, she would uphold their wishes. Similarly, one female passenger explained that she herself would not necessarily want to involve police but that an alternative means of reporting would be welcomed:

> "I mean, people might not be comfortable going to the police station but if there was somewhere else that they could go - even if it was just somewhere in the bus station and they had a room for people to make complaints or to talk about things like that."

Overall, both transport workers and female public transport users commonly felt there was little point in reporting, what were considered to be minor incidents, either because they themselves had grown to expect such altercations and therefore did not consider them to be serious or require any intervention, or because they felt that such incidents would either not be treated seriously by the authorities (either the transport company or the police), or that very little would/could be done about it:

> "I think the police consider it as minor. If someone shouted at you, it's not something to report. It has to be something bigger, like attacking or stabbing so you can report that. Even the hate crime, people are not reporting it. I think the police are not taking it seriously."

Increased Staffing at Stations and On Board

There was consensus from women and girls of all ages that being in spaces that were staffed or had a staff presence made women feel safer, and this included staffing at interchanges as well as on board public transport, i.e. "I think for female passengers definitely having people, staff visible on the trains and in the stations helps them."

At stations, women spoke about feeling more comfortable if ticket offices were open and staffed (especially later at night), and also if there were staff close to or in waiting room areas:

> "I definitely think that the stations do feel safer when they're staffed. We do have a lot of unstaffed stations in this country and we also have a lot of like booking offices…that shut pretty early…probably at the time where people are starting to feel a little unsafer would be when these booking offices are shut."

On board, many women also spoke of feeling 'safer' in the presence of transport staff, e.g. ticket examiners, and again spoke of sitting close to or in the proximity of conductors, to make them feel.

While there was consensus that more staff per se would make people feel at ease, some respondents stressed that having at least one member of female staff available on train routes/journeys may make female passengers feel doubly safe:

> "I probably would feel more safer with a woman in some ways… just from the fact that they tend to be a bit more compassionate and empathetic and maybe understand that, as a woman, the kind of things that might be going through my head while I'm on the train or if I'm witnessing something or being harassed in a certain way."

Another young woman explained how she has been accompanied by a female member of staff on a journey after the staff member identified that she was feeling vulnerable, and this view that female staff often offered one of the biggest reassurances to women was echoed by several, i.e. "the transport police who are supposed to be doing stuff, aren't but these [female] workers obviously are and that makes me feel a lot safer."

For train workers, having co-workers present on board especially late at night was also be seen as something which could offer reassurance to them whilst working, but was not usually afforded (due to time, and no need for two staff to work the same shift/service due to low passenger numbers):

> "…it would be really beneficial to have two members of staff, two ticket examiners, because you're out there on your own. If something happens to you, the driver wouldn't know. The driver's too busy driving the train. So, if something did happen to you and there was nobody about to go and get the driver for help, what happens? There's nobody else there. And I think that - that definitely plays on my mind."

One respondent did explain that hospitality staff (who had largely stopped working on trains during the pandemic) were starting to return to some services and even their presence could increase feelings of safety and of not being alone. Importantly, the reassurance offered by on board co-workers was not something mentioned by female bus drivers, but they instead viewed that having other buses and drivers pass by offered reassurance in itself, i.e. "If you get really stuck, all you have to do is get off your bus and get another driver to help you… just flag down another driver and say, "I need help.""

One transport worker raised a specific concern about stations not being staffed at night when they were finishing their shift and were carrying cash and their portable ticket machines. She explained that, while her employers sometimes arranged taxi transportation from stations, even then she did not always feel safe. She described one experience where the male taxi driver who collected her with her ticket money from the shift made her feel uncomfortable and remembered thinking at the time that none of her managers would have noticed if anything untoward had occurred as neither she or the money were due back in the office/due to be counted until the next day (and managers did not work after 8pm at night).

Improved Communications

Both passengers and workers expressed concerns about feeling unable to communicate with the drivers of public transport, suggesting that improved opportunities to communicate were needed. The two main concerns were that there

was no clear way of easily and discretely communicating with drivers to make them stop the vehicle or make them aware of what was happening, and secondly, that some drivers would be (and had been in the past) ambivalent to women's concerns:

> "It's kind of hard and on the bus, if people are being loud and rowdy, bus drivers don't tend to do much anyway. So, it doesn't feel like if I were in a position where I needed to get help, I wouldn't have someone to go to straight away."

Female bus drivers echoed this perception, and noted that more could be done to encourage open communications between bus drivers and passengers:

> "A lot of people don't like speaking to the driver and I think…we should be telling drivers to be more approachable, you know, when young children and women come on buses, you should be smiling, making them feel welcome so that if something does happen, they feel that they can actually approach us…I can stop the bus at any point…listen to what they're saying and…you can say, "Right, well just stay there and we'll contact the police"…anything that's going to help them."

Disabled women in particular were often dependent on the goodwill and respect of the driver of a bus. There were, however, instances where disabled women felt that drivers were disrespectful or unhelpful, not least when those passengers felt threatened by others on the bus. One older woman who was accompanying a disabled adult in her care explained how a group of anti-social teenagers were making negative remarks to her companion and how she felt unable to communicate how unsafe they felt or attract attention from the driver:

> "I couldn't get up to go to the driver to tell him what was happening…And even going off the bus, I couldn't even tell the driver because, you know, he's driving, he's not aware of what's going on up the back of the bus."

One transport worker also explained that, while the cab-to-cab communication systems on trains allowed them to communicate with the driver, this was not always working:

> "…we have something called a cab-to-cab phone. If anything was happening, we're only allowed to phone the driver when the train's stopped…if there was an issue, you could phone the driver when he next stopped the train at the next station. But in a lot of these trains, the cab-to-cab doesn't work…Even if you were in the place of safety [locked back cab], we don't have a way of contacting the driver. And there was an incident with a female member of staff a couple of months ago where her cab-to-cab wasn't working and there were people breaking into the back cab to attack her…because the cab-to-cab

phone wasn't working, the driver wasn't even aware that she was being attacked."

Another female colleague again spoke of being concerned that if they contacted the driver, their action may be seen as an over-reaction to a trivial situation, and this made them cautious to communicate freely.

On the whole, it was accepted that it was easier to discretely communicate with ticket examiners walking around vehicles, and so this was one of the main reasons respondents felt their presence was important and should be increased, if possible:

> "I was sitting on a train and I had like a specific seat that I was assigned but I didn't feel safe staying in that seat. So, I told the conductor as they were checking tickets. I said…I'm not going to sit here anymore because this person is making me feel uncomfortable. But I didn't do it in front of the person, I kind of did it…a little bit further away from them, so that they wouldn't hear I'm kind of talking about them…and the conductor said I can choose whichever seat I want and he said he will monitor the situation."

Improved Surveillance

There were mixed responses regarding the effectiveness of CCTV as something that made women feel safe. Some spoke of feeling reassured that if anything happened it would be captured that CCTV may deter some perpetrators in the first instance:

> "I think the fact that I know there are cameras as well, I know there's definitely cameras on buses… and that makes me feel safer cos I feel like even if there was anything to happen, then there would be proof and that would be good."

While CCTV was welcomed, its limitations were also recognised, in that it did not provide any immediate help and was more something which would be for evidential purposes 'after' the fact, rather than acting as a deterrent or preventative measure:

> "Even though the lighting is there, and you've got the cameras, they're only as good as the operator who's watching them. If something happens, you've not got instant help."

Interestingly, female bus users commented that while there was CCTV on buses, they perceived that this often did not cover the whole vehicle and left blind spots, and that CCTV in and around stations or on-board vehicles was often out of order. In contrast, female bus drivers indicated that they found the CCTV on buses to be a great comfort, and to be robust, as the following driver explained:

> "The buses are covered in cameras. There's cameras in the cab, there's cameras everywhere and it's audio as well. So, if anything happens, they can switch on the audio to find out what was said and things like that. So, I feel quite safe with that cos, as you say, there's cameras all-round the bus."

One female bus driver suggested that the issue was not an absence of CCTV on buses, but rather lack of awareness among passengers that it was there, i.e. increased awareness may act as a deterrent and make passengers feel safer:

> "I think there's some people that maybe have no idea or don't even acknowledge or maybe even think about CCTV on buses…we do have signs on the bus that say there's CCTV but, again, how many people actually acknowledge that?"

That being said, some of the female transport workers described how CCTV did not always accurately reflect encounters and that even watching an incident back it was hard for independent observers to gauge what had occurred. Some suggested that anyone watching an event after the fact would also struggle to empathise with the way that it made participants feel in the moment.

There was also mixed feedback from staff in relation to body cameras. Some saw these as offering very little by way of reassurance or protection and others felt body cameras could work to deter perpetrators, on some occasions:

> "I think it can be a little bit of a buffer because someone who may present an issue might think twice about it if they think they're going to be filmed. So, I wouldn't say it necessarily stops [the perpetrator] - the ones that are going to do it anyway, it won't stop. But the ones that might just be on that tipping point, they see that camera and I think…it does pull them back a little bit."

Better Training

Across the board, female transport workers described little to no formal training either in relation to their own personal safety or that of others. Where training was mentioned, this was limited to single training events mainly focussed on conflict management (and one respondent mentioned a course they had attended a long time ago on self-defence). The training and advice offered was also deemed quite 'generic' in nature and women instead reported relying on common sense:

> "It's basic safety training - 'keep your wits about you'...what I've learnt myself and it is just until you feel safe 100% with the members of public coming on your bus, keep your door locked at all times. Always be aware of who's coming on and who goes off…Always go by your gut instinct. If you think

there's something strange with them [passengers], keep an eye on them. Wait till they get off the bus and never get out of your vehicle unless there's another driver or someone there with you."

Similarly, none of those interviewed had received training in relation to how to assist other women and girls who felt unsafe or were in need and instead relied on intuition:

"I know that intuitively I would know…I think if I had a woman or a girl that came to me and said, somebody's assaulted me…I would comfort the passenger, I would ask them what steps they want to take, if they want to call anybody and just reassure them that someone's there. Cos it is scary for women and girls when they travel on public - being on public transport…I think we just need to play it by ear but I feel like I know what I would do for each situation."

"I think that's [intuition] always the best thing in a situation because you [can] do all this training and it'll never actually fall into place…I think your gut and your mind will tell you what's wrong with somebody when you see somebody in a state."

One woman mentioned Samaritan training around how to identify the signs that someone may be at risk of suicide or self-harm. Another mentioned training on how to identify 'vulnerable' people, but felt that this had been vague:

"I mean, we've been told we need to look after vulnerable people but the classification - who do you class as vulnerable? I mean, somebody that's drunk? Somebody that's under the influence of drugs? Or somebody that's being abused or attacked?"

In general, training on a regular basis around self-protection was seen as something that would be welcomed. One respondent explained that their employers had repeatedly advised her and colleagues that they must never 'raise their hands' even if hit by another person and while she recognised that this was appropriate, she would welcome training on alternatives means of self-protection and how to safely remove herself from danger. While the guidance and training received was to always put themselves and their own safety first, women felt that this was perhaps easier said than done, and that more guidance could be offered around how to keep themselves safe while also looking out for vulnerable others.

An issue raised by one respondent was that those who work on 'accommodated contracts' (including several of her female colleagues) would not qualify for routine training or safety briefings due to the nature of their contract, i.e. "they don't allow me to do it [training] because they would need to pay me…They're not willing to do that."

There was also some evidence that women working in the industry perhaps felt reluctant to ask for additional support or measures to be put in place to make them feel safe, for fear that this would be viewed negatively by employers:

> "They [employers] expect you to be able to get on with it. If you can't work on your own in a certain station, then they don't deem you fit for the job."

Only one transport worker expressed doubts that training would offer additional support, as she felt that the situations presented to women were so variable that experience and intuition were inevitably going to dictate how they responded:

> "I think training can be very good on paper but it doesn't really cover all the situations that you would be in. I think you would definitely need to make some judgement calls for yourself that you wouldn't have had any training for."

Strategic and Managerial Solutions

While several respondents were resigned to some of the above issues being embedded in society, one respondent raised the idea of a more strategic solution in the form of increased presence of women in senior transport roles as something which may help women and girls to feel safer:

> "I think more women within the transport industry, be it from the top to the bottom. I think because we see things completely differently…I don't even think it's deliberate, but men don't see it from that angle, so they don't think of the things, the silly little tweaks, I think that could make public transport right across the board a friendlier and safer environment for women."

When prompted on what such "little tweaks" may entail, this included making uniforms more suitable for women. Indeed, one female transport worker reported that the latest blouses that female staff had been asked to wear were slightly see through and this made her feel 'exposed' to some degree. Another spoke of heavy-duty footwear which, although made them feel safe from the point of view of manual work on board trains (e.g. attaching ramps, assisting passengers in wheelchairs, etc,) could also attract negative attention or comments from passengers.

Finally, many women felt that simply making men more aware of how unsafe things made them feel was important. One female transport worker, who had been discussing the research with male colleagues before taking part explained:

> "And that was the discussion we had with men in work and all the women that I work with were saying, "Yeah, that happens quite a lot [unwanted physical contact], that happens regularly to me". And the men were horrified. They were like, "Really?" And we're like, "Yeah", that is a very frequent occurrence

is men putting their hands on you maybe with no malice behind it but sometimes there is. Sometimes it feels creepy. A lot of the time, it's just very subtle sexism which in itself makes you feel really unsettled."

Influences on Behaviour

Most women spoke of a combination of personal experience, the experiences of friends/family and media (including social media) as influencing their attitudes around the safety of public transport.

While personal experience was the biggest influence, several women mentioned high profile cases from the media which had also made them change (usually temporarily) their travel patterns:

> "…there was the killing of the lady in London [Sarah Everard] who was killed walking back home. So, I think everyone re-evaluated kind of their use of transport and walking at night and everything afterwards…I do keep an eye on news just to be on top of it but I wouldn't say it's hugely influenced."

The majority view was that the media coverage of safety on public transport was largely negative overall, and perhaps therefore not reassuring:

> "I think there was a lady who the bus driver assaulted her or something or…that other case where a policeman kidnapped this lady or something. When you hear that in the media and it's also on social media, it doesn't make you feel that safe because you're like, "Who can you trust if you can't even trust the police, if you can't trust the drivers?" There aren't typically a lot of safe articles talking about how safe public transport is."

Media was also cited by several women as a source of their perceptions of risk of crime in general - women spoke about high profile cases of young people being attacked or physically assaulted at or around train stations and bus stations and mentioned that this created a general sense of such areas as being unsafe, even if the perceived threats were not gendered in nature.

Word of mouth and the general reputation of an area was also something that women used to inform or reinforce their perceptions of safety. When reports (either via word of mouth, media or social media) related to incidents that had happened locally, this had a greater impact on respondents, with even those who felt relatively safe on public transport and in their local area noting that it made them wary of using the service or area (for example a route to a public transport link) in question:

> "I think it's a bit of everything [that informs thinking and behaviour] because whenever you wake up, you look at the news or you turn on your mobile and there is always news about the local area and what's happening and there are accidents and there are sometimes stabbings and things like that and purse snatching, and general bullying, lots of things. Of course, it makes you nervous when you're going outside…once I was so like nervous at a certain point in time that I also took self-defence class…"

Social media was also cited as a source of people sharing "horror stories" or reporting/sharing videos of incidents that occurred on public transport. One young woman indicated that any social media posts which discussed incidents nearby would make them far more anxious and alert while using public transport, at least for a while. Another woman said that social media reporting of one incident on a nearby train route had influenced her decision not to use that train at certain times.

Younger women noted that they were less likely to read more traditional media formats but were much more likely to get information from social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram):

> "I think definitely it is a massive factor. Like you do read stuff when you're scrolling through your Facebook or Instagram…like if I didn't see half the stuff I saw on Instagram and Facebook, I would be clueless as to what could happen and what's going on."

The continual negative media messaging directed at women about their safety fed the fears of some and created a learned fear for others from a young age:

> "I think typically the media always - in whatever movie it is, there's always that scene with the girl who's on the train and then the murderer sneaks up behind her and kills her and the moral of the story is, "Don't take the train at p.m.!" …So there is always kind of this narrative which perpetuates the media."

> "There's also some element of what we're taught as children. We're always taught as children to be mindful and be aware that we're going to be targeted as women, especially in all male environments. That's always something that's perpetuated as a child listening to my mother growing up but also going into society and in media and then just from word of mouth and that kind of thing. And then that's kind of reinforced when you actually experience it for yourself and there's always a stance of us and them and that women are always going to be targeted and men always have it easy on public transport. But as time goes by, we know that that's not the case and men are more

likely to be targeted by male groups in terms of being attacked or getting into fights. Whereas women are going to be targeted more likely for sexual reasons."

Only a few respondents indicated that media stories had little impact on them, as they rationalised such incidents as 'unique'.

Exploring the Effectiveness of Campaigns

There were mixed responses with regards to the perceived need for or effectiveness of public campaigns to assist in addressing women's concerns.

Some women said that they would like to see information about what they can do and who they should contact in order to report incidents of antisocial or other inappropriate behaviour. One respondent noted this would be especially useful for younger women who were perhaps inexperienced at traveling without a parent, etc. However, others suggested that while it was important to ensure this information was available to women it should not necessarily be done via a public campaign. It was felt this may result in normalising the problem, and that there may appear to be an element of victim blaming and placing the responsibility for safety onto women rather than targeting the causes of the problem:

> "I always feel… everything's put on us, you know, it's always us having to report it, it happens to us. You're technically a victim. So, it should be the person that's doing it to you that's getting the message, not particularly you because it's them that's made this happen."

Others wanted more educational campaigns to ensure people understood what would make women uncomfortable and why, as well as information about consequences for perpetrators (backed up with stronger actions and penalties):

> "I do think a massive thing is to inform other people of what does make girls and women feel unsafe. Like for example, if someone is drunk and makes some comment at you or says something to you as they're walking past, that is going to make you feel uncomfortable. They won't think anything of it, they might think it's a joke or whatever. I think it's like drawing a line of what's acceptable and what's not acceptable and some people don't understand that what might be funny to them might really upset someone."

Other respondents (both transport users and transport workers), who felt that travel by public transport was generally safe, wanted a campaign to highlight this (albeit with caveats that more staff and better infrastructure were needed too):

> "I think we have to let women know that it is safe to go out at night themselves, the buses are safe, most of the drivers will not tolerate individuals behaving badly…We shouldn't be stuck in the house, we should be out and about and I think…if we had better lights at bus stops and things like that…a campaign to say it is safe for a single female to be on the bus would be good."

Some women felt that campaigns could be used effectively to communicate how safe public transport is and advertise the help and support available to women, as well as educating others about the types of behaviours that may make women and girls feel vulnerable. Several others, however, expressed scepticism that perpetrators were unaware that their behaviour was inappropriate. On this basis, there was also cynicism that any type of campaign designed to educate and deter perpetrators would be effective:

> "…do you really think the people who do it don't know it's inappropriate...I think most people know, they just don't care."

> "…if a man is going to go out there and make somebody feel uncomfortable, they're not going to stop and look at a poster and think, "Maybe I shouldn't verbally abuse that woman or sexually assault that woman.""

One female transport worker also suggested that any campaign would need to be carefully managed to ensure that it did not inadvertently make women feel even more isolated. For example, she suggested that encouraging men (and women) not to sit close to or talk to women if they were alone, in case it made them feel vulnerable, may result in situations where people no longer offered some of the basic reassurance that came from being 'in company':

> "…people just ordinarily on a train speaking to each other, sometimes that can make you feel safer if you're talking to someone else. Would that [a campaign] stop people from talking to each other in case they said something they weren't supposed to say and it was taken inappropriately? I don't know."

The main thing that women and girls wanted to see, and which linked to their feedback in relation to policing and security, was better public messaging of what to do if they felt unsafe, both in the immediacy of the moment, but also once in a place of safety after experiencing negative events.

Widening and Strengthening Other Initiatives

Some women suggested improving the infrastructure around safety - for example, bus screens at all stops and within buses to forewarn of the name of the next stop; giving drivers information which will help them advise passengers of their rights/safety; support apps online; messaging within buses and trains, etc. on what to do, and how to convey it, if one feels threatened or unsafe.

Other initiatives mentioned by just one or two women each include the railway 'Travel Safe Team' (which was perceived by some as being not very effective as it had no authority to act but was seen by others as providing additional resource when police and BTP were unavailable), and 'Help Buttons' at stations that allowed women to speak to a control room (although the usefulness of this was questioned by one rail worker who had used it and received very little support or help). One other transport worker also indicated that Help Buttons were not always accessible and only one respondent suggested that it may be helpful if the 'Help Buttons' that were available at railway stations were also present at bus stops.

One female respondent also mentioned the 'Safe Home' scheme as something she was aware of that would be beneficial if rolled out to different workplaces (i.e. a taxi scheme that allows women working in the hospitality, fast food and retail sector to get home safely after a late shift). Aligned to this, for female workers who owned their own private cars, comments were made that a lack of suitable parking at their workplace meant that they were often not able to use their cars to travel safely to/from work (including at night):

> "We don't have many car parking spaces, so I am not allowed to park at work. So, I have to get the train into work. I don't really have options, which is alright but it can feel quite daunting at night time. So, a lot of the time, if I finish maybe after 11, if it's at the weekend, then I get an Uber home…I wouldn't want to get on a late-night service at the weekend."

One train worker described how the lack of car parking spaces had made her change her shift patterns so as to avoid using public transport for night commutes. One bus worker who did have access to staff car parking described this as making things "much easier", especially when working early morning or late-night shifts.

Another bus worker explained that, while staff buses were offered by their employer to assist with safe travel to and from work, the timings and irregularity of these meant that they were often underused, e.g. "It's more convenient because if you take the staff bus to work, you could end up going in an hour or more before your actual shift starts." For this woman, having a car parking space within the bus depot where she could leave her car whilst working was seen as the more convenient option.

It should be noted that some rail operators were described as being better than others at providing things such as designated parking for those working anti-social hours, but that this was not a routine policy across the industry and there were views that 'Safe Home' schemes could usefully be broadened to encompass those working in the transport industry.

Other Comments/Observations

Non-gendered safety concerns

Several respondents were keen to stress that fears linked to safety were not exclusive to women. In particular, boys and young men travelling alone were also described by some respondents as being vulnerable (including those from minority groups):

> "...sometimes I see things and you're like, you know, that's a shame for that young man there because he's on his own and there's a group of people and they're all talking over, like round about him and making him feel really uneasy. So male as well as female get this horrible attention."

Views were expressed that the introduction of better safety features (such as those cited above) would also benefit men and would certainly make things "no worse" for men as fellow public transport users, if introduced.

Female transport workers also explained that many of their male colleagues also feared for their personal safety while at work. Respondents explained that many of the issues presented above affected not only women, but could affect anyone travelling or working alone who may feel vulnerable:

> "…there's also a lot of men affected too and younger boys that aren't in these gangs…I mean, even if some of the [male] staff retaliate, it's their job on the line, so they've got to be so careful. So, it's not easy."

Similarly, one respondent commented that they felt there would be no value in having training which isolated women's and girls' experiences from those of male colleagues as the two often overlapped:

> "I don't know whether there would be anything to be gained from making it [training] gender specific…I think my male colleagues…probably have the same issues from a different angle…I think the fact that they do actually make it non-gender specific is actually quite positive cos you see it from both sides."

Likewise, some disabled women were more concerned about the attitudes of drivers to disability than about the attitudes of men per se to women. Indeed, many of the fears voiced about public transport transcended gender (for example, mobility issues, racism, uncertainty of route or the timing of buses).

Lack of Shared Understanding

A feature of several conversations was that the men in women's lives perhaps did not always understand the fears that they had, or indeed, perceived other things as being higher risk than they were in the minds of women themselves. One young woman explained this in the context of her father's fears:

> "My dad…he used to speak to me about [things that] are not the things that I'm particularly scared of…he used to talk to me a lot about robbery…he would say like, "Don't wear a backpack if you're going to Glasgow, don't leave your phone in your back pocket"…things that I'm not really that concerned of…Cos he'd never really experienced any of the stuff that I'm worried about."

Women often spoke of their male friends not always understanding their concerns and this included male transport workers for whom stories shared by women often came as a surprise. In other words, men possibly did not fully appreciate the nature and scale of incidents that women were exposed to, nor appreciate the measures being taken by women daily to reduce or manage their fears.

Fear of Getting Involved

Women spoke of an absence of bystander intervention in most cases, and feeling that if an incident occurred (especially something not directly targeting them), they would be reluctant to get involved in case they themselves became the target:

> "So, if someone's fighting on the bus next to the bus driver…I think the bus driver is very aware of what's happening. He has mirrors, he can hear it all and kind of doesn't care. So, I didn't feel like I wanted to get in the middle of it and I know that's terrible cos then, if you don't report it, then nothing gets done about it. But like if I got up and went to the driver and said something and the driver would be like, "Yeah I know, I can see" - then, you know, I have no protection. They could start fighting me…Like, I always felt it was better to just stay quiet and try to ignore it."

One respondent noted that her reluctance to help others on public transport (specifically trains) was due to the enclosed nature of the space in which incidents occurred and the feeling, therefore, that she would become trapped in a negative and potentially dangerous environment. Her behaviour may be different, she explained, if she encountered a similar incident on the street:

> "I would be less inclined to speak up in a situation like that [on a train] where I feel a bit trapped in comparison to being out on a

> street or somewhere where I could try and make a bit of a run for it if they turned on me instead…I definitely have in the past chosen not to look up, not to say anything, to protect my own personal safety."

Transport workers also observed that most passengers also ignored anti-social behaviour or any confrontations that occurred on trains and tried not to get involved:

> "I would say predominantly, yes, there is that 'stick your head in your book' or 'stick your head in your paper or your phone' and just pretend cos then I don't have to get involved."

As above, women using public transport as passengers spoke of averting their gaze, looking out of windows, putting on headphones, making telephone calls, or physically distancing themselves from incidents occurring on board or when waiting for buses and trains in particular:

> "I'd just sit there in my wee insular bubble and hope that life is drifting on past me…Fingers crossed and hope for the best."

Women expressed mixed views on this response - some felt that this this was sensible thing to do and was indeed something that they had been taught or trained to do (i.e. "don't put yourself in dangerous situations") whilst others said that not helping made them feel somehow complicit in any wrongdoing especially if the victim/target was vulnerable.

Comments from some women also that indicated that other people (both men and women) would be more likely to intervene to help older travellers (especially older women) than they would to intervene with young women, although no explanations were given as to why this may be the case. There was less mention of people stepping in to help women from ethnic minorities. Respondents were also more likely to step in to assist disabled passengers (again especially women) and the willingness to help older and mobility impaired women may be because of perceptions that they are more vulnerable than younger non-disabled women. The assessment of vulnerability in these cases is something which may be interesting to explore in more detail, as a lack of perceived willingness of others to help was born out in what the women themselves reported doing.

In contrast to female passengers feeling wary about stepping in to help others, female transport workers, including on board train staff and bus drivers, often spoke of feeling a need to prioritise the safety concerns of others over themselves:

> "I'm too busy thinking about my passengers…You've got to be really aware of your surroundings and people on the bus. So sometimes I really - I don't think I actually think about myself."

In two cases where female workers had stepped in to intervene, this had resulted in extreme responses from the perpetrator - in one case, an on-board train worker had been physically threatened by a man with a weapon and in the other, a female bus driver had been threatened with serious sexual assault:

> "I think the worst [incident] was a gentleman who was sexually harassing a young lady at the back of the vehicle. I finally stopped the bus and told him that he needed to get off. He came down, started banging on my screen saying that he was going to wait for me to come back [along the same route] because he was going to rape me when I came back…It's a kind of strange one because if I didn't step in, how far would he have went with her? Would he have got off the same stop as her and then maybe sexually assaulted her or something later on? I wouldn't have liked to live with the idea knowing that that person I could have helped. So, you kind of take the limelight off of her and I obviously got the brunt of that but nothing came of it, thankfully."

Again, female transport workers spoke of training and routine policies regarding protecting themselves versus others were only helpful to a certain extent, and felt compelled to assist others (especially young women) where appropriate:

> "…the company policy, 'Stay in your cab, you keep safe'… you can only do that for so long. I mean, it's OK if there's a fight breaks out, you stay in your cab. But if there's something happening with a child or something like that, then I'm afraid I'm not staying in my cab."

For these, and other women, their role in keeping others safe was something they viewed as a key part of their role, possibly to the detriment of their own safety, and was illustrative of a perceived need by them to make difficult choices regarding safety on a day-to-day basis.

Presence of Victim Blaming Behaviour

While very few respondents spoke about the notion of 'victim blaming', for the small number who did, there was agreement that women and girls were never at fault for incidents perpetrated against them. Nonetheless, there was still an undertone that self-awareness and proactive adoption of risk avoidance strategies was something that women should equip themselves with as a matter of course:

> "I would say that the personal responsibility thing absolutely lands with anybody who is the perpetrator rather than those that anything happens to. But I would absolutely say that it benefits you no end to be aware of what's going on round about you, be it walking home or even in the town on a Saturday afternoon, just to know what's going round about you."

One respondent also reflected that the training and advice given to transport workers to "not put themselves in a position of harm" perhaps also placed the onus incorrectly on them and could in some cases make them feel responsible or at blame if anything happened. Another observation from female workers was that they sometimes felt that they had decisions to make as to whether to prioritise their own or others' safety (and that if they prioritised their own safety, they may feel at blame for anything that happened to passengers):

> "I mean, you've kind of got a line where you've to go out and move them on [people causing trouble] and, if they're annoying anybody or upsetting anyone, then you've got to think, "Well, is it my safety or their safety?" So, if there was any real safety issues for somebody else…I'd just probably phone the police and get the help for them."

Female public transport users were keen to stress that any public campaign developed to try and improve safety should also not have any hint of victim blaming:

> "As long as it's not kind of victim blaming…Because that's dangerous territory, I think, you know, kind of suddenly saying, "Well you're a girl, you shouldn't be doing that to keep safe." As long as it's an actual message of like how to deal with it but not in a way that's, you know, you're a girl, you should be careful and not speak to men."

Overall, women accepted that they should shoulder some responsibility for their safety, but felt that the balance of self-protection versus wider systemic protection was not correct:

> "…you always have stories on how to make yourself not be seen as vulnerable and ways to look out for yourself and it always feels like women especially have to put extra precautions into making sure that you keep yourself safe when perhaps it shouldn't be that way?"

Safety and Independence

Importantly, women generally felt that they were not missing out entirely on any opportunities, particularly in relation to work or study and day-time leisure or social activities as a result of personal safety fears. All women showed a resilience and determination not to let their fears constrain their social movements to the extent that they would entirely miss out. That being said, there was some evidence that the need to use public transport alone at night was limiting some women's social and leisure activities. Some noted that they would be reluctant to travel at night, some would opt for a taxi/Uber rather than mass transit options (thereby having to spend more money for their travel), young women would get a lift from family to avoid using

public transport to get home after a night out, and others would opt to stay with friends rather than travelling home alone.

While they were not missing out, there was considerable evidence that women were paying more to enjoy the 'safe' freedoms that they wanted:

> "…we get free bus travel, which is great. But then if I'm getting the train or an Uber or a taxi, that's - like the train's a couple of quid and the Uber or the taxi can be like £30, £40 rather than getting the bus for free. So, definitely, you do end up spending a lot more money."

> "I don't get out very often anyway but if I was out, I would get a taxi rather than get a bus or a train home myself. I feel like that would be safer, a safer option… I feel that's probably a good price to pay [i.e. the higher fares]. It costs a bit more but you're safe."

Contrary to seeing public transport as an ecologically sound means of travel for the future, safety concerns regarding public transport were also reported to encourage women to drive, or to want to learn to drive/get a car. One woman noted that she drove more often herself due to safety concerns and reported that others had expressed similar desires to her. Another respondent (from an ethnic minority) also indicated that they wanted to learn to drive in order to avoid having to have contact with bus drivers and other passengers.

In contrast, one disabled respondent also described 'independence' as being able to use public transport, as opposed to being 'dependent' on a car and driver to give them mobility. This was an interesting take on what is traditionally seen as public transport negatively equals dependence and private car ownership positively equals independence. This is not necessarily the case, not just for disabled people but also, arguably, people without recourse to a car, driving licence or driver. Such attitudes should be capitalised on in attempting to increase the use and safety of public transport.

Discussion and Recommendations

This research provides Scottish-specific evidence on women's and girls' views and experiences of personal safety when using public transport - research which, until now, has been sparse. Such research is especially important given Scotland's unique geography (i.e. many women and girls live in rural and remote areas, including island communities) and the wide diversity in socio-economic status that exists across the country. Indeed, the research has shown how these unique geographical and demographic features often interact with gender to impact feelings of safety and travel decisions among women and girls.

Main Findings

Accessing and Using Public Transport

Alongside private vehicles, women and girls used mainly bus and train to travel, and public transport was seen as an essential and affordable way for many to achieve independent social mobility. Unanimously, women felt safer travelling in the day rather than at night or in the dark. Travel during the week was also seen as being less hazardous than travel at the weekend, largely due to perceptions that public transport attracted large crowds of often intoxicated passengers at weekends.

There were mixed views around how safe different modes may be, with some feeling safer on buses (mainly due to the accessibility of the driver and the potential to alight at regular intervals) and others feeling safer on trains (because of their direct route and the presence of staff other than the driver on board). The subway, although used by fewer in the sample, was seen as unsafe mainly at night. While there were fewer in the sample who regularly used trams, ferries or domestic flights, among those who did, these modes were seen as safe and non-problematic for the most part.

The risk of delays and cancellations, specifically to buses and trains, explicitly put some women off using public transport at night as the risk of waiting alone in the dark was considered too great. Many women and girls reported travelling by taxi, Uber or private car to avoid being in such positions and there was feedback that improved reliability of services would help women feel more confident in using public.

The main concerns at points of interchange were poor lighting (especially at bus stops) and lack of staff, with views that well-lit and staffed stations provided the greatest comfort (although effective lighting and staffing was often not experienced to be the case, especially in more suburban or rural locations).

Familiarity with routes, with drivers and fellow passengers, was a key feature in providing confidence when travelling alone. Unfamiliar routes and being surrounded by strangers caused angst and was often a reason why women chose ideally to travel with others rather than alone. Where women did have to travel alone, use of technology (especially for younger and professional women) such as tracking apps, was something that provided reassurance (and a sense of not being alone).

> **Recommendation: To raise awareness of the technology that is currently available to assist women and girls and explore means of making this more accessible to all, including raising awareness of the immediate and intermediate support that is available to those who feel vulnerable at any point before, during or after public transport journeys.**

Specifically in relation to female transport workers, examples of good practice were mentioned throughout the research of things that made them feel safer travelling to and from work at night, not least being access to parking facilities for private vehicles and provision of designated transport in the form of taxis and staff buses to ensure safe travel. That being said, there was expressed desire to see such practices extended, to reduce the negative impacts that lack of travel choice may be having on some female workers' employment decisions.

> **Recommendation: To gather and share best practice in relation to options for ensuring the safe return home of those working in the transport industry at night, with a review of measures and resources in place to support and promote safe travel home options for transport workers.**

Main Concerns

Although women often found it difficult to pin-point their exact fears, most participants described feeling the need to maintain a constant state of 'vigilance', rather than feeling 'unsafe' per se. This generalised anticipatory anxiety was usually (but not exclusively) related to concerns about men as potential perpetrators of harassment, assault or anti-social behaviour rather than about other women.

Anti-social behaviour was perhaps the most frequently cited concern that women had (although was not necessarily what they feared most), with potential for both individuals and groups of strangers to act in hostile, aggressive or otherwise unacceptable ways towards others. Women tended to worry that some of the anti-social behaviour could end up being directed at them specifically.

Alcohol and drugs were seen to fuel much of the inappropriate behaviour that women and girls were exposed to and caused anxiety due to how unpredictable others became as a result. Almost all respondents noted a perception of heightened risk to themselves where other passengers were intoxicated because they were seen as being more likely to say or do inappropriate things.

> **Recommendation: To strengthen existing rules around non-consumption of alcohol on public transport and at points of interchange. Increased penalties for non-compliance and better enforcement of legislation in this regard may also be required.**

Women and girls also expressed explicit concerns and previous experiences of being the targets of inappropriate comments that were sexual in nature and unwanted attention from male passengers, including feeling that their personal space was being violated (which made them uneasy). Being followed by strangers and/or not being able to get away from strangers was something that women feared, again because of underlying concerns about how seemingly innocent interactions might escalate or become unmanageable. Female transport workers were those most likely to report previous incidents of unwanted physical contact or assault from men.

Previous personal experience, the experiences of others, word of mouth, stories in the media (including social media) and warnings from other people about the dangers of travelling alone/at night all influenced perceptions of safety and associated behaviours. Traditional media and social media were seen to perpetuate and reinforce negative messages about women's safety on public transport.

Overall, women and girls feeling unsafe when using public transport was described by many as 'the norm' with all respondents speaking of making at least some modifications to their travel behaviours as a result of feeling unsafe. For transport workers, all said that they considered their personal safety constantly, and at least once on every journey made while at work/travelling to/from work.

Influence of Personal Characteristics

Age, ethnicity and disability were the three features of participants' personal characteristics that intersected with gender to make them feel most vulnerable. Young women were most likely to report being victims of sexual harassment, disabled women were most likely to report general anti-social or intolerant behaviour from fellow passengers and women from ethnic minorities were most likely to report extreme examples of verbal abuse (including both sexist and racist abuse).

Adapting/Changing Behaviour

Numerous self-protection strategies were reported by women to help them feel safer (e.g. not travelling alone, not travelling at night, avoiding certain routes, using tracking apps, managing their self-presentation and using taxis or private transport, especially late at night.) While women seemed to accept that this was typical behaviour among their peers, most expressed that there was also significant scope for others (including transport providers and policing authorities) to take practical measures which would enhance their feelings of safety further. Knowing who to report incidents to and knowing what support was available was seen as an important first step.

> **Recommendation: To develop more credible and accessible information and guidance for women and girls regarding what to do and who to contact if they feel threatened or unsafe or if they are victim to incidents when using public transport. Any information and guidance must be developed in collaboration with women and girls directly (including those from ethnic minority communities) to ensure solutions can address existing low levels of trust in authorities that appear to exist.**

The main social impacts of women's and girls' personal safety concerns was extending or reducing their journeys, being selective in the type of public transport chosen based on the time of day/situation, using private instead of public transport to complete all or part of their journeys or restricting their travel to only familiar routes or travel at certain times of the day.

Some of the guidance and protocols in place to help women feel safe were seen as lacking in robustness. This included strategies of 'locking in', for example, female train workers being advised to lock themselves into station offices or into the 'back cabs' on trains, and female bus drivers being advised to lock themselves into the driver's cab on buses. Such strategies provided only temporary respite but could also make some women feel even more vulnerable especially if they were unable to communicate their plight to others, leaving them feeling 'trapped'.

Mixed views were also expressed about the usefulness of CCTV in relation to perceptions and experiences of safety for women. Some felt this was helpful, acted as a deterrent against bad behaviour and provided evidence should something happen. Others however, noted that CCTV had limitations, including: whether it was connected/working; doubts around whether anyone was watching in real time and therefore able to react; that it did not stop incidents from happening, merely recorded them; and that recording quality was questionable. Similarly, facilities such as help

lines/buttons did not provide the level of comfort or immediacy of safety that was desired by the women and girls who were interviewed.

> **Recommendation: To introduce systems for the regular monitoring, reporting and upgrading of lighting and communications systems for all transport services (including on board and at stops/stations) with strategies in place for the immediate repair and redress of any reported failings or absence of communications and surveillance equipment at interchanges and on-board services.**

Interventions from Organisations/Other Individuals

Increased staffing at points of boarding and interchange, as well as on board vehicles was seen as something that would add significantly to women's sense of safety and may also lead to an uptake of public transport use at night. Many women spoke of feeling safe in well-staffed areas/stations, and of feeling less safe in unstaffed areas (such as unstaffed stations, at bus stops, etc). They also commonly agreed that having a visible staff presence would help to reduce the likelihood of situations escalating, and that there would be someone there to step-in and help if and when situations did arise.

> **Recommendation: To explore the feasibility of increasing staff presence at both points of boarding, alighting and interchange, as well as the possibility of increasing on board staff presence at the times that women and girls feel most vulnerable (including evenings and weekends, in particular).**

Increased police presence and improved incident reporting systems in particular was something that women and girls would welcome. Women spoke of being unsure who incidents should be reported to and when it would be appropriate to do so. Scope exists for normalising reporting of even minor incidents to mitigate the unease that women reported in deciding whether or not their own experience constituted a significant enough infringement to proactively take things forward. This was seen as necessary, alongside more visible and stringent enforcement of penalties for inappropriate behaviour, to act as a deterrent to perpetrators. At present, many viewed that there were no repercussions, especially for anti-social behaviour and low-level harassment, especially that committed by younger perpetrators.

> **Recommendation: Joint working between stakeholders to map and improve existing reporting protocols and develop more**

> **consistent and transparent systems for reporting and recording incidents that affect women on public transport. Improved evidence gathering will help to crystalise the nature and scale of negative personal safety experiences that passengers endure, and help to target resources and refine responses.**

Where women had reported incidents (or thought about doing so) there were perceptions across the sample that improved follow-up communications from policing authorities and others was necessary to give women confidence in reporting again in the future. Under-reporting may result not only from lack of confidence in the reporting platforms themselves, but also from lack of confidence that any meaningful action would be taken in response. Although all women in the sample described at least one (and often several) experiences of unwanted attention or other more serious incidents, none described any short- or long-term satisfactory outcomes, and instead just lived with their experiences as part of their personal histories. Having more robust follow-up procedures would also help address women's perceptions that 'feeling unsafe' was a socially tolerated and accepted norm, i.e. tackling wider systemic issues around gender inequality that permeate beyond public transport.

> **Recommendation: For stakeholders to implement more robust procedures and standard practice for following-up with transport staff and public transport users who do report negative incidents to the authorities. Women and girls need to know that their complaints are taken seriously, and that they are being heard, to give them, and others, the confidence to share their experiences in the future.**

Training around personal safety for transport workers appears to be irregular and inadequate, including guidance and training on how to respond to the needs of vulnerable colleagues and passengers. There was also cynicism about the potential effectiveness of public campaigns to help make women feel safer, with some indications that such campaigns can often do more harm than good. It was also stressed that campaigns needed to give the right balance of information without victim blaming and resting all responsibility on women and girls.

> **Recommendation: To carry out a comprehensive review of the training that is currently offered to those working in the transport industry on the topic of personal safety (both their own safety and the safety of others) to identify any gaps in content, frequency of provision and reach as well as to explore how these can best be filled.**

A lack of bystander intervention was also noted by many women, who themselves also reported not wanting to get involved in situations that didn't involve them, despite feeling 'guilty' about not doing so. Overall, a lack of people to offer immediate help to women was also noted and this lack of certainty over such support made the women feel more vulnerable and more anxious about travelling on public transport.

> **Recommendation: Further targeted research, consultation and training specifically with drivers of public transport, to explore their own fears in relation to protecting those on-board services and to better understand what could be done to assist them in communicating more effectively with passengers and responding to incidents, while not jeopardising their own or others safety.**

Cross-Cutting Themes

A number of issues emerged as cross-cutting themes in the feedback given, rather than being limited to discussions about any specific aspect of public transport use. Firstly, many women and girls appeared to express feelings of 'responsibility' - this was in the context of both feeling that they were responsible for keeping themselves safe (rather than the threat of danger being removed by others) and also keeping other females safe (by not leaving them to travel alone). This feeling of responsibility was often expressed as a sense of duty and women expressed guilt and unease if they did not step in to help others due to fears around their own safety. There was a sense from interviews that women often juggled decisions around how best to look after themselves whilst not compromising the safety of others, and that responsibility for their own safety ultimately rested with them. Nevertheless, there was consensus that women and girls should never be blamed for finding themselves in an unsafe situation and that cultural change was needed to bring about better understanding of this stance.

A second observation was that women often spoke of feeling guided or restricted by others' thresholds of what was perceived as 'safe' and 'unsafe', or as 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' behaviour and, therefore, not always using their own judgement about how or when it would or would not be appropriate to act. For example, female transport workers felt unsure about the reactions of male colleagues and bosses if they initiated emergency safety procedures in response to incidents in case others felt it did not warrant such a response. Other women spoke of feeling unsafe and yet travelling anyway, partly because of strongly held views that they should not be constrained by fear, but also because they worried that restricting their movements too much may appear to be 'paranoid'. Women clearly took some degree of measured risk but the input to their risk assessments were often from sources that might not be considered as reliable (including sensationalist media accounts).

Familiarity with both people and places also emerged as something that made women and girls feel safer in various contexts, and this overlapped with discussions of unpredictability (often linked to those under the influence of alcohol and drugs). Discussions revealed that being able to predict who they may encounter and how they may behave was something that made women feel safer and that the notion of the 'unknown' was what caused underlying fear (both unknown strangers and unknown situations). Familiarity breeds confidence for women, it seems, and also gives a greater sense of being in control - where the likely risks can be predicted, planned for and managed, feelings of vulnerability are reduced.

Another underlying theme was one of unconscious or rote action on behalf of women in modifying their travel behaviours and making their travel choices. From the youngest (aged 14) to the oldest participant in the research (aged 86) there were reports of behaviour modifications that were discussed as being an accepted part of daily social life, not only in relation to travel, but more generally. Women often described detailed strategies for keeping themselves safe and complex pre-planning of journeys (including what they would wear and where they would sit or stand to make themselves less conspicuous). The considerable energy that women expend in such planning was evidenced across the sample, in various contexts.

Women and girls also spoke of needing to constantly make difficult choices as part of their travel planning, and often feeling forced to choose between two unappealing options. For example, even though they may feel unsafe, the convenience and low cost of public transport meant that they chose to travel that way and accept any associated risks. Choosing to travel by taxi with an unknown male driver was also seen as preferable to walking home where the chances of encountering strangers might be even higher. Such cognitive dissonance, and the need to choose between two negative options, rather than feeling that a safe alternative was in place was something that women seemed to reluctantly accept albeit they still experienced discomfort, tension and anxiety as a result.

Finally, a subtle but important theme to emerge from interviews was that women and girls acted to try and make themselves 'feel' safer but recognised that often there was little they could do to actually 'be' safer as the risks could never be fully controlled. This was consistent with observations that women often found it difficult to verbalise very specific fears or concerns, with most seeming to reference invisible (yet still tangibly felt) threats to their safety. This perhaps indicates a need for wider action beyond that in the transport arena to further understand women and girls' fear of crime and to understand what, if anything, can be done to tackle such fears.

Limitations and Scope of the Research

While the research provides evidence of the issues that exist and that need to be addressed in meeting women's and girls' personal safety concerns and has filled a gap in the existing evidence base, it is recognised that it is not without its limitations.

Crucially, the research was relatively broad in scope with no restrictions on the women and girls who were eligible to take part. While this led to a diverse sample of participants being recruited, the time constraints for the work meant that it was not possible to adopt a more theoretical sampling approach to fill any gaps in perspectives that emerged from particular demographic groups. In many cases, the views of women from some minority groups are represented by just a single voice and it is recognised that that this cannot be considered as representative of their communities as a whole. The research invitation was not exclusive of non-binary or transgender individuals or others who identified as being a woman or a girl, however, no volunteers came forward who were able to speak from these personal vantage points. Similarly, no one in the sample reported being from the LGBT+ community. These are recognised gaps in the work and separate onward research is encouraged to ensure that an even broader range of voices are heard.

Similarly, the research attempted to seek feedback from both women and girls as public transport users, as well as from women working in frontline roles in the transport industry. While almost a third of the sample were transport workers, there is arguably grounds for carrying out more focussed research with this population to allow more nuanced views and experiences of women working in different roles to be captured. There was no input from female ferry, aviation, subway or tram workers, for example and their views and experiences will likely be very different from those of the female bus and rail workers who did take part.

Finally, it is recognised that some of the negative experiences reported may not be exclusive to women and girls and that more could be done to make all those travelling or working alone on public transport (particularly at night) feel safer. This wider exploration was, however, beyond the scope of the current research.

Conclusion

Consistent with existing literature and evidence from other jurisdictions, the research shows that much needs to be done to improve the experience of women's and girls' personal safety when using public transport in Scotland. It shows that women and girls are already shouldering significant responsibility for adapting their behaviours to try to 'be' and to 'feel' safe when travelling on public transport, but that wider systemic change, supported by more practical interventions is required to enhance safety further and give women and girls a greater sense of freedom to maximise the

opportunities afforded by public transport travel. The transport specific recommendations presented above must be accompanied by broader partnership action among those working in policing, education, equalities and aligned fields to help challenge wider stereotypes and systemic issues which lead to and compound women's normalisation of the need for self-protection. A joined-up approach is required that involves operators, community safety stakeholders and the travelling public to increase their awareness of the challenges faced by women and girls, so that concerns can be proactively addressed, and gender inequalities removed.

Further Information and Advice

If you have been affected by any of the issues discussed in this report, or need to report an incident, further information and advice can be found online via Victim Support Scotland, the British Transport Police or via the free Railway Guardian app.

Appendix A Sample Profile

Demographic variables	Number of Respondents
18 and under	6
Under 25	4
26-64	22
Over 65	3
Ethnic Minority	7
Disabled	3
Lone Parent	2
Carer	8
Urban/Suburban	10
Rural/Remote/Island	9
SIMD High	7
SIMD Low	7
Transport worker	10

Demographic data were not specifically sought as part of the sampling process as the research was equally open to all women and girls. Where respondents disclosed demographic information during interviews, this was recorded and is reflected above.

Appendix B Workshop Delegate Affiliations

Age Scotland
ASSIST
British Transport Police
COSLA
Engender
First Bus
Girlguiding Scotland
Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)
Lothian Buses
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS)
Scotrail
Scottish Government
South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran)
Stagecoach Bus
Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran)
Transport Scotland
Victim Support Scotland
Women in Transport Scotland
ZetTrans (Shetland's Transport Partnership)

Follow us:

f transcotland

🐦 @transcotland

transport.gov.scot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot