Safety and Belonging for Women and Girls in Public Spaces

Community Research in East London

PREPARED FOR
LONDON LEGACY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
OCTOBER 2023

Kaizen
Partnership

Contents

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

2

The context for this research

> **'The experiences, needs and realities of women, girls and gender diverse people have long been excluded from urban development processes. This has resulted in an under-provision of basic facilities that make public spaces truly accessible (for example adequate lighting, play spaces, sheltered rest spots, accessible, clear sight lines etc.) as well as an erasure of their experiences and needs in infrastructure investment decisions. As a result, many women, girls and gender diverse people feel inconvenienced, ill-at-ease and endangered in the urban environment.'**
>
> **– GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY[1]**

The issue of safety for women and girls in public space came to the forefront in 2021 with high profile murders including of Sarah Everard, Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman and Sabina Nessa. These tragic murders are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the experience of lack of safety for women and girls in public spaces in the UK.

Research has shown that 71% of all women in the UK and 86% of women aged 18-24 have experienced sexual harassment in a public space.[2] For many, feeling unsafe in public space is a daily experience.

> **'Safety is experienced on a spectrum from mild inconvenience to extreme danger. The daily inconvenience of having to consistently take a longer route home to avoid certain areas, having to carry a buggy up steps, or being underserved by public transport systems are microaggressions that create daily low-level exposure to physical and psychological harm. This sends the message that public space is not 'for' you. These everyday experiences of inconvenience are safety issues that must be taken as seriously as more overt gender-based violence.'**
>
> **– GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY[3]**

London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) and other organisations like the GLA have been actively looking at what can be done from a design and management of public space to make them safer for women and girls. This work fits into a wider, global re-thinking of how design can become Gender Inclusive, recognising that historically most architects have been male and white, and that the experiences, needs and realities of women, girls and people from diverse backgrounds have been excluded from urban development processes. The context of gender inclusive design goes beyond safety and includes thinking about how public spaces can create a sense of belonging and empowerment for women and girls.

1 Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People, Greater London Authority, 2022. Available via: https://www.london.gov.uk/media/98683/download?attachment

2 Prevalence and reporting of sexual harassment in UK public spaces: A report by the APPG for UN Women, 2021. Accessible via: https://www.unwomenuk.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/APPG-UN-Women-Sexual-Harassment-Report_Updated.pdf

3 Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People, Greater London Authority, 2022. Available via: https://www.london.gov.uk/media/98683/download?attachment

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

3

In the last quarter of 2021 LLDC did an online consultation on Women and Girls Safety, using a leading online consultation platform. The findings from the consultation were written up by Arup and can be found on the LLDC website.[4]

Unfortunately, despite significant local promotion and marketing of the online survey, the consultation was not successful in terms of reaching a diverse range of the local community. Out of 262 people who completed the online survey, none identified as Black, none were under age 16, and the percentage of women from Asian background was far below their representation in the local population. Over 75% of the people who responded to the online survey were white, and the vast majority were in relatively high value professional or managerial employment. The lack of diversity of respondents does not mean that the views shared weren't of value, or that the themes identified in the report were incorrect, but they were clearly not representative of the local East London community.

LLDC as the local planning authority, covering the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP) and surrounding areas, is currently developing a Gender Inclusive Design Guidance. LLDC recognised that the online consultation in 2021 needed to be supplemented by data and findings from an inclusive and broadly representative piece of community research. Kaizen was approached by LLDC in the summer of 2023 and were provided a small grant to conduct a piece of community research using outreach based engagement methods. Kaizen match-funded the grant from LLDC in order to be able to deliver a piece of community research of sufficient scale to provide data and findings that are robust, which would not have been possible with the grant alone.

It is universally accepted that inclusive engagement is an essential foundation for gender inclusive design. The experience of the failure (in respect of being inclusive and representative) of the online consultation in 2021 highlights the need to use diverse engagement methods. It also shows the importance of acknowledging where a consultation has failed to be inclusive, and the necessity of then repeating the consultation using different methods. Genuinely inclusive engagement processes ensure that the views of all community members, and in particular people from traditionally under-represented and excluded groups, are known and given due weight in decision making and in the development of strategies and plans.

---

4 Full text of link: https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/node/1187

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

4

Who delivered the research

The research was delivered by The Kaizen Partnership (Kaizen).

Kaizen, founded in 2000, is an award-winning social business that specialises in designing, delivering and facilitating cutting edge projects. Kaizen delivers work across the community sector including the areas of regeneration, education, employment, housing and the social care field. Kaizen has wide-ranging community engagement, research and consultation expertise.

The community research was delivered by highly experienced members of the Kaizen engagement team. All are expert at quickly getting into relationship with people, enabling them to engage with people who do not normally get involved and give their views. They come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds and have diverse lived and professional experience including substantial experience of engaging young people. Members of the team are fluent in a range of languages including, Amharic, Arabic, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Tigrinya.

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

5

Terminology

This glossary of terms is copied from 'Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People' produced by the Mayor of London.[5] While not all terms are used in this report, we believe they are helpful in terms of understanding the context for the report. Throughout the report, "woman" / "female" and "man" / "male" are used interchangeably, and include people of all ages.

Care work

Work that includes both direct care activities such as feeding a baby or nursing a family member as well as indirect care such as cooking and cleaning. This work is often an unpaid but essential dimension of the world of work (Addati et al., 2018).

Cisgender

People whose gender identity is in alignment with the gender assigned to them at birth.

Co-design

A design methodology that uses creative and participatory approaches with the aim of sharing knowledge and power in the design process (Beyond Sticky Notes, 2022).

Endangered

Being at risk or in danger.

Gender Diverse/Transgender

Interchangeable umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression exists on a spectrum outside of their sex assigned at birth.

Gender equality

A human rights issue that refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all genders.

Gender equity

Refers to equal outcomes across genders, which may require specific interventions (such as benefits, opportunities and resources) for those who have historically been excluded.

5 Safety in Public Space – Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People, Greater London Authority, 2022. Available via: https://www.london.gov.uk/media/98683/download?attachment

Gender inclusivity

Ensuring that a particular action (project, policy, behaviour etc.) proactively involves, listens to, and gives power to people on an equal basis, and avoids bias towards or against a particular gender.

Gender-informed

An approach to decision making that includes an explicit understanding of how gender dynamics shape both the problem and appropriate responses.

Gender mainstreaming

The process of integrating a gender perspective across all policies, plans and programmes in a given institution.

Gender norms

The generally held social beliefs about how different genders should and/or do behave.

Intersectionality

A concept that describes how systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination 'intersect' to create unique dynamics and effects (Center for Intersectional Justice, 2022; Crenshaw, 1989).

Inconvenienced

The experience of an added layer of trouble or difficulty.

Ill-at-ease

The feeling of not feeling unsafe, yet being wary and not relaxed.

LGBTQIA+

An abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual. The plus at the end refers to the many other communities and gender/sexual identities that exist.

Marginalise

The act of treating a group as unimportant, insignificant or peripheral.

Microaggressions

A subtle or indirect type of discrimination towards a marginalised group that are often experienced on an everyday basis. When experienced multiple times over the course of a lifetime, they have significant impacts on the lives and opportunities of marginalised people.

Misogyny

The hatred or dislike of, and prejudice against women. This results in structural, institutionalised discrimination against women, as well as physical intimidation, abuse, and sexual violence.

Patriarchy

A social system that promotes binary notions of gender and privileges masculinity by giving men (and concepts, behaviours, world views associated with masculinity) the greatest power, leadership roles, moral authority and access to resources.

Public space

The space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible. Some internal or elevated spaces can also be considered as part of the public realm, such as markets, shopping malls, sky gardens, viewing platforms, museums or station concourses.

Racialised

Those groups and individuals who have been defined by their 'race'. Processes of racialization begin by attributing racial meaning to people's identity. In societies in which "white" people have economic, political, and social power, processes of racialization have emerged from the creation of a hierarchy in social structures and systems based on "race"... The effects of racialization are the racial inequalities embedded within social structures and systems.' (University of Winnipeg, 2022).

Rape Culture

A society where sexual violence and abuse is normalised, played down and laughed off (Rape Crisis, 2021).

VAWG

Violence Against Women and Girls, which is defined by the United Nations as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (United Nations, 1993).

Woman

An adult female. This includes both cisgender and transgender women.

What we did

Developing the research scope

The research scope was developed in discussion with LLDC. A workshop was also held with the Elevate Youth Board, so that they could feed into the research questions.

The aims, targets and research questions were defined as follows:

Aims

- Hear from a broadly representative sample of East London residents with a priority on hearing from women and girls, and including traditionally under-represented groups

- Complement and feed into other strands of research on women and girls' safety previously conducted by LLDC

- Feed into the development of the design guidance and gather feedback on proposed solutions

Targets - who to engage

- Representative selection of the population from the East London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest (adjusted to allow for a higher proportion of women)

- Minimum target of 600 people (400 women and 200 men) engaged through outreach. Additional people engaged online

- 100 women/girls who are regularly on the QEOP

- Engagement on the Park (20% of time) and in the surrounding Boroughs within a 20-30 minute walk of the Park

Research questions

Primary research questions

- What are perceptions and experiences around safety and belonging on the QEOP and more generally in public spaces?

- What are the features and elements that have some public places feel safe, welcoming and empowering and other places unsafe and unwelcoming?

- What can be done in design and management of public spaces to improve safety for women and girls?

- What are the "safety work" practices that women deploy, and do men do any of these things also?

- What things support and encourage women to participate in activities and projects in the community?

Secondary research questions

- Is there interest in being a part of future engagement with LLDC on this topic?

- What can be done to change behaviours and attitudes of men?
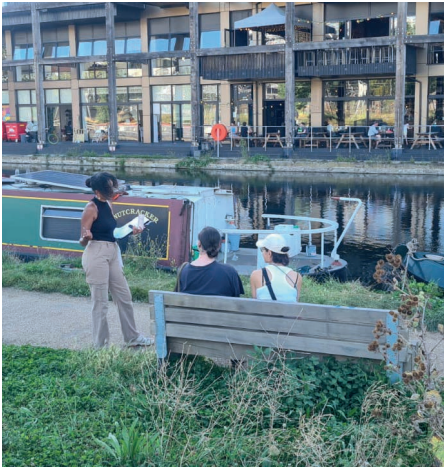
Research methods

Our approach used outreach as the primary engagement and research method. The engagement process involved members of the Kaizen engagement team going out into the community in East London and speaking to people on their terms, in their spaces, in the community.

By using outreach not only were we able to engage people from traditionally under-represented groups and quieter voices who are typically not heard from in consultations, but we were also able to ensure that the people we spoke with broadly reflected the demographics of East London.

The following methods were used to hear people's views:

- One-on-one conversations in the community

- Small group conversations in the community

- Online survey

- Workshop with the Elevate Youth Voice group

Engagement took place on all days of the week, and between the hours of 9am and 7pm.

One-on-one conversations

- A semi-structured questionnaire was used to guide the conversations, which lasted from 15-25 minutes

- 393 people were engaged in one-on-one conversations in a range of locations across East London

- All questionnaires were completed in paper form and then transcribed for analysis

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

11

Small group conversations

- 250 people shared their views in 90 small group conversations

- The outreach-based street focus group approach is a Kaizen developed engagement method enabling us to replicate the type of group conversation in a traditional focus group, but out in the community

- This method meant we could speak to people who would not be engageable in one-on-one conversations, for example a group of young people, or a couple out in the community together

- Group size ranged from 2 to 8 people, and conversations lasted from 15-30 minutes

- Conversations were recorded on paper and then transcribed for analysis

Online survey

- The online survey was a secondary methodology to the outreach and it was not promoted widely

- The purpose of the online survey was to enable people who were encountered in the outreach but who did not have the time to stop for a conversation to have a route to share their views

- Members of the Kaizen engagement team had business cards that had a QR code link to the online survey

- The online survey was also shared with members of the Elevate Youth Voice group

Workshop with Elevate Youth Voice

- 20 members of Elevate took part in a 2-hour workshop to discuss and share their views on the key research questions

- The group ranged in age from 15 to 26 and were a diverse group. Most of the group were young women but there were a few young men also

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

12

Involving local young people in the research

The project represented an opportunity to include local young people at all stages of the research, and members of the Elevate Youth Voice programme were involved in defining the research scope, delivering the outreach and helped with data analysis, hand coding some of the open comments. This not only enabled the project to benefit from the insight and ideas of the young people but to contribute to them in terms of skills development and paid employment.

Elevate Youth Voice is the flagship youth leadership programme for the QEOP, and Kaizen have been facilitating the programme since 2014. Elevate has been running since 2009 (formerly known as the Legacy Youth Voice) and over 400 young East Londoners have been part of the programme. Women and girls' safety has been a significant theme of their work in the past 2 years including making a video in 2022 for the London Festival of Architecture,[6] and the group are currently working on a high profile project to design a space for girls on the QEOP.

---

6   Full text of link: https://2022.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/event/18-legacy-youth-voice-womens-safety/

About the outreach

40 days of outreach-based engagement was delivered in a 4-week period in August 2023. Engagement took place in different locations in Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, as well as on the QEOP itself.

People were engaged in a wide range of locations. We spoke with people on busy high streets and on quiet residential roads as well as speaking to people in everyday spaces that they frequent, such as libraries, shopping areas, cafes, leisure centres, corner-shops, markets and parks.

The broad areas for the outreach are shown in the map below:

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

14
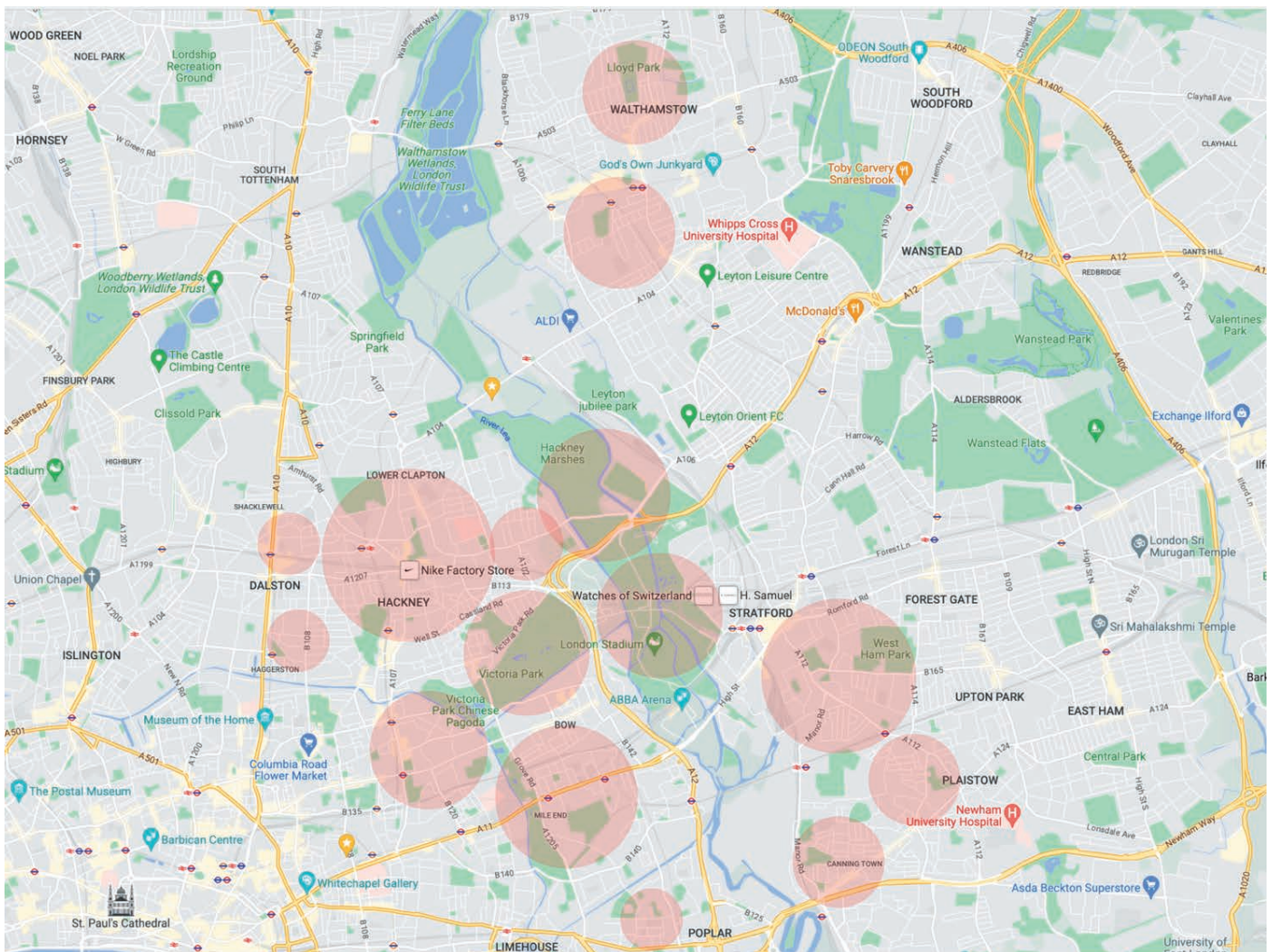
Areas where we engaged people included:

- In Hackney, places included – Hackney Wick, Hackney Central, Fish Island, Hackney Downs, Haggerston

- In Newham, places included – Stratford High Street/Broadway, West Ham Park, Canning Town, Plaistow

- In Tower Hamlets, places included – Roman Road, Mile End, Victoria Park, Bethnal Green, Chrisp Street market

- In Waltham Forest, places included – Walthamstow Central, High Street, Lloyd Park

About the data

We analysed both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data and findings in this report (unless otherwise stated) are drawn from individual conversations only. For charts, and in text, figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number so on occasion the total is other than 100%. Statistics relate to the total percentage of people who answered a particular question, rather than to the total number engaged, as not all questions were answered by everyone. "Prefer not to say" responses are excluded from the totals unless indicated otherwise. The term 'base', which we list below each table or chart, refers to the number of people who responded to that specific question.

For the open questions we performed thematic analysis, hand coding for themes that emerged using the principles and approach of Grounded Theory. The term 'Grounded Theory' refers to theory that is developed inductively from a body of data, rather than from the preconceptions of the researchers. Statistics and proportions that are included as part of the thematic analysis also relate to the total percentage of people who answered a particular question, rather than the total number engaged.

The people who were engaged were broadly reflective of the combined demographics of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, based on the 2021 census. Because of the relatively large number of people engaged (over 650) and the fact that those engaged are broadly reflective of the local demographics (both within women and within men, when these are separated), the overall views shared can be taken as being broadly representative of the views of residents of East London.

The table below shows the key demographic data of those engaged and the combined demographics of the four Boroughs, taken from the 2021 census.

	All engaged	**Female only**	**Census**
Age			
≤24	33%	31%	20%
25-44	43%	42%	47%
45-64	18%	19%	24%
65+	6%	8%	9%
Base	*649*	*416*	*n/a*
Ethnicity			
Asian	31%	32%	31%
Black	21%	20%	15%
Mixed/other	13%	12%	11%
White	35%	36%	43%
Base	*645*	*418*	*n/a*
Sexual orientation*			
Heterosexual/straight	92%	92%	94%
Gay/Lesbian	4%	3%	3%
Bi-sexual	4%	5%	2%
Base	*382*	*258*	*n/a*
Disability*			
Yes	7%	8%	13%
No	93%	92%	87%
Base	*371*	*250*	*n/a*
Housing tenure*			
Own outright/mortgage	28%	31%	31%
Social housing	31%	31%	31%
Private rental	30%	27%	34%
Other	11%	11%	4%
Base	*398*	*270*	*n/a*

* Denotes data gathered only in one-on-one individual conversations and not asked in group conversations

It should be noted that some sub-groups that are referenced in the covariate analysis in this report are quite small (fewer than 100 individuals). Based on this group size, it is important not to assume that the views represent the sub-group as a whole.

Quotes are drawn from both individual and small group conversations.

We realise that the topic of women's safety in public spaces and gender inclusive design is being actively researched both within the UK and globally. We have prepared an anonymised and de-personalised raw dataset from this community research, and are happy to share this with other institutions that wish to use it to inform their research, or to conduct secondary analysis. Please contact Kaizen with any requests for the data, at data@kaizen.org.uk.

Who was engaged

The Census figures in the charts below were drawn from the combined demographics of the 4 boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest, from the 2021 census. Some of these questions were only asked in one-on-one conversations, while others were asked in both individual and small group conversations.

Connection to the area

The vast majority of people we spoke with live in East London, while a smaller percentage work or study in the area. (Multiple responses to this question were possible.)

What is your connection to East London? (individual conversations only)

Live	Work	Study	Have another interest
88%	14%	8%	7%

Base = 387

What is your connection to East London? only female (individual conversations only)
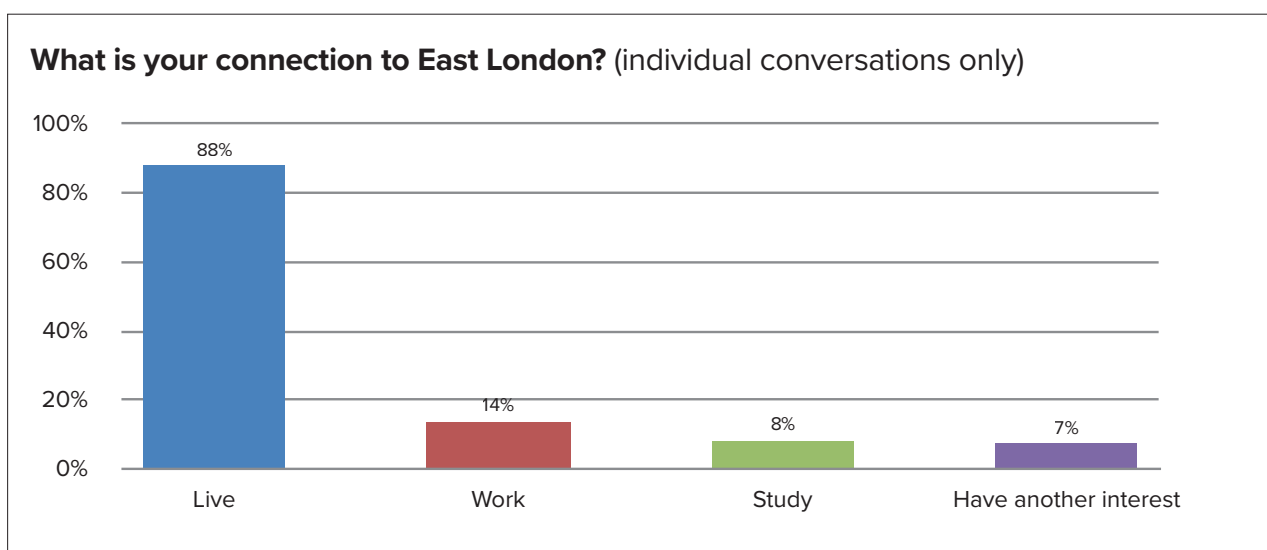
Live	Work	Study	Have another interest
89%	13%	9%	7%
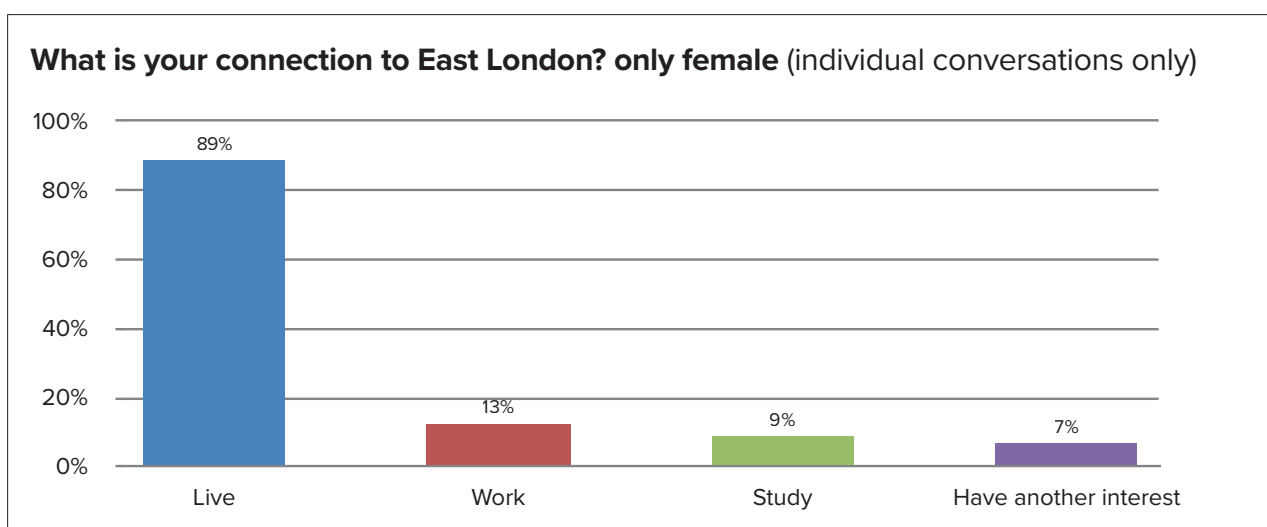
Base = 268

Most people engaged had a longstanding connection to East London, but around one in four people, and around one in five women, had been in the area for less than 3 years.

How many years have you had a connection to East London?
(individual conversations only)

Base = 396

How many years have you had a connection to East London? only female
(individual conversations only)
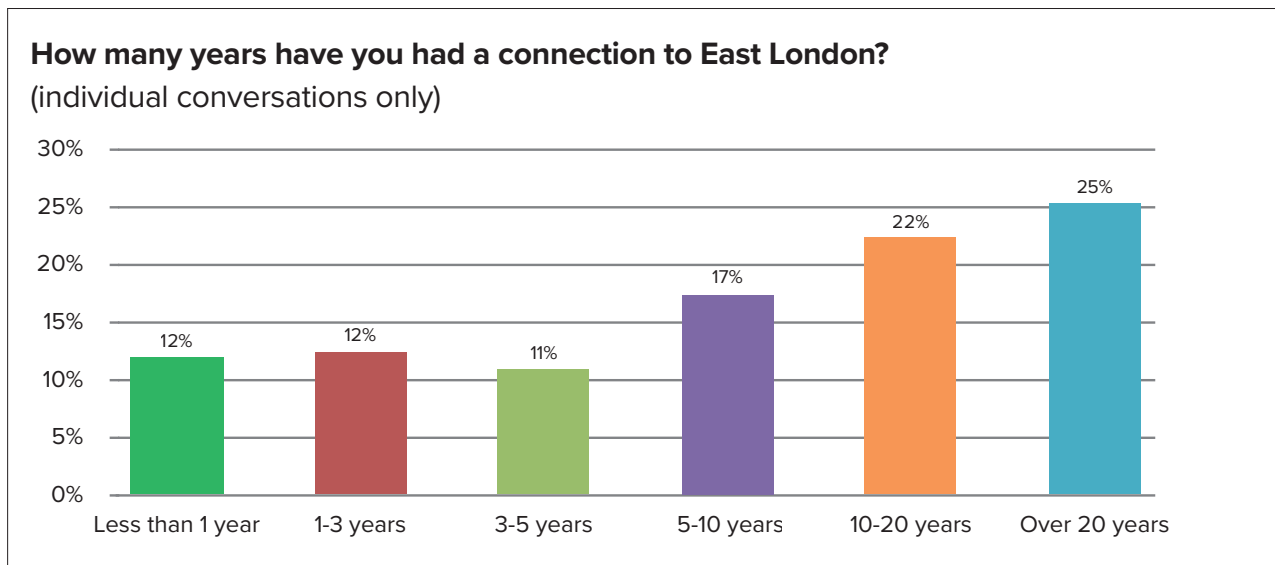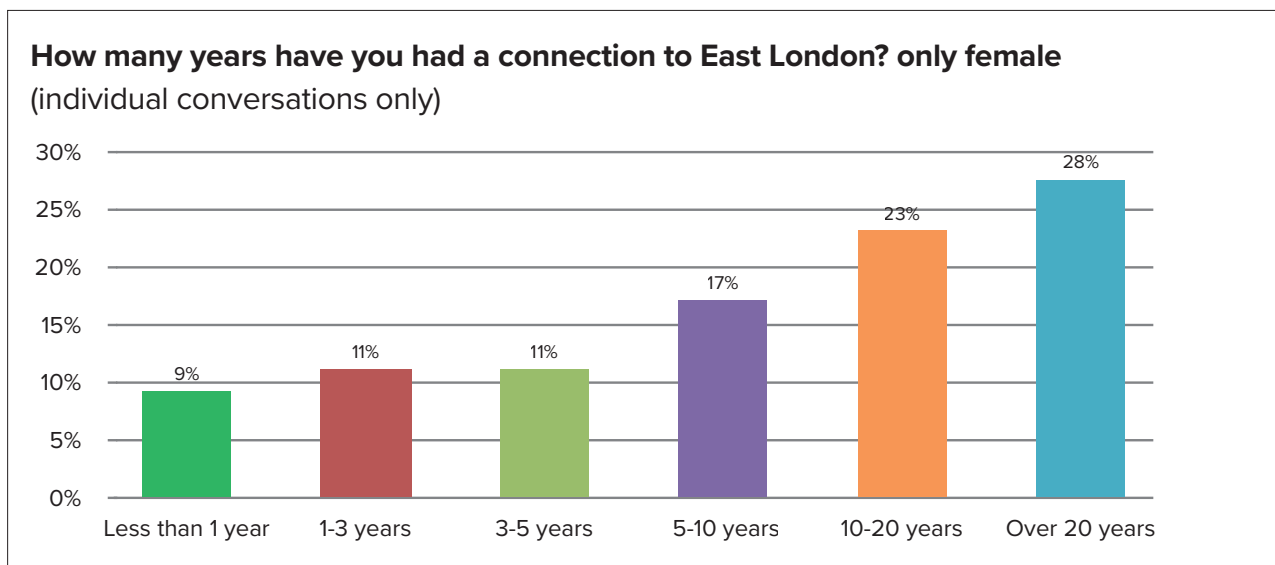
Base = 267

Age

People from a range of ages were engaged. Hearing from young people was a particular priority and so more young people were engaged than their representation in the community.

Age - all outreach (individual and small group conversations combined)

Age	Engagement	Census
≤24	33%	20%
25-44	43%	47%
45-64	18%	24%
65+	6%	9%

Base = 649

Age - female only (individual and small group conversations combined)
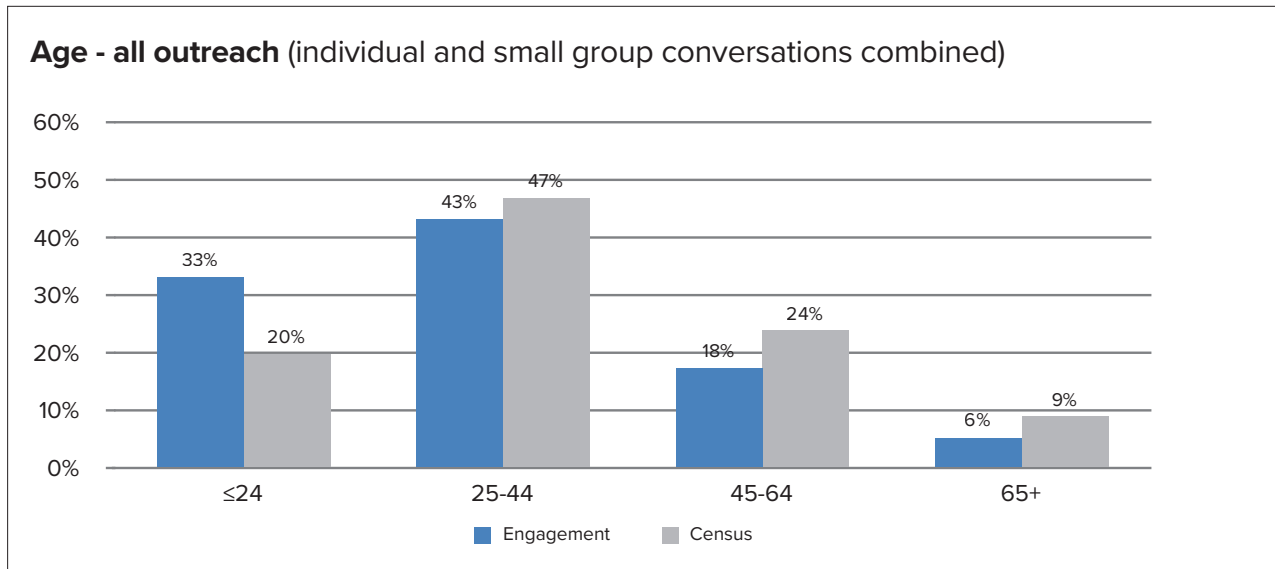
Age	Engagement	Census
≤24	31%	20%
25-44	42%	47%
45-64	19%	24%
65+	8%	9%
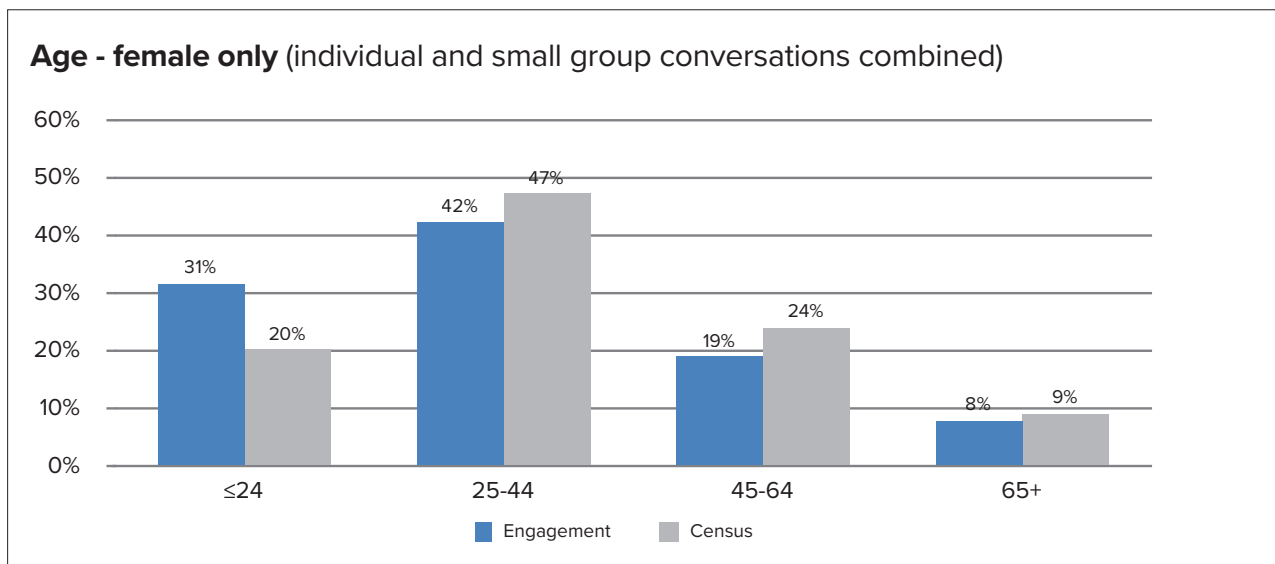
Base = 416

Gender identity

We deliberately sought to speak with about twice as many women as men.

Gender	Individual and small group conversations combined	Census
Male	33%	49%
Female	67%	51%
Base	*651*	*n/a*

Ethnicity

People from a wide range of backgrounds were engaged, broadly reflecting the diversity of East London.

Ethnicity - all outreach (individual and small group conversations combined)

	Asian	Black	Mixed / Other ethnicity	White
Engagement	31%	21%	13%	35%
Census	31%	15%	11%	43%

Base = 645

Ethnicity - female only (individual and small group conversations combined)

	Asian	Black	Mixed / Other ethnicity	White
Engagement	32%	20%	12%	36%
Census	31%	15%	11%	43%
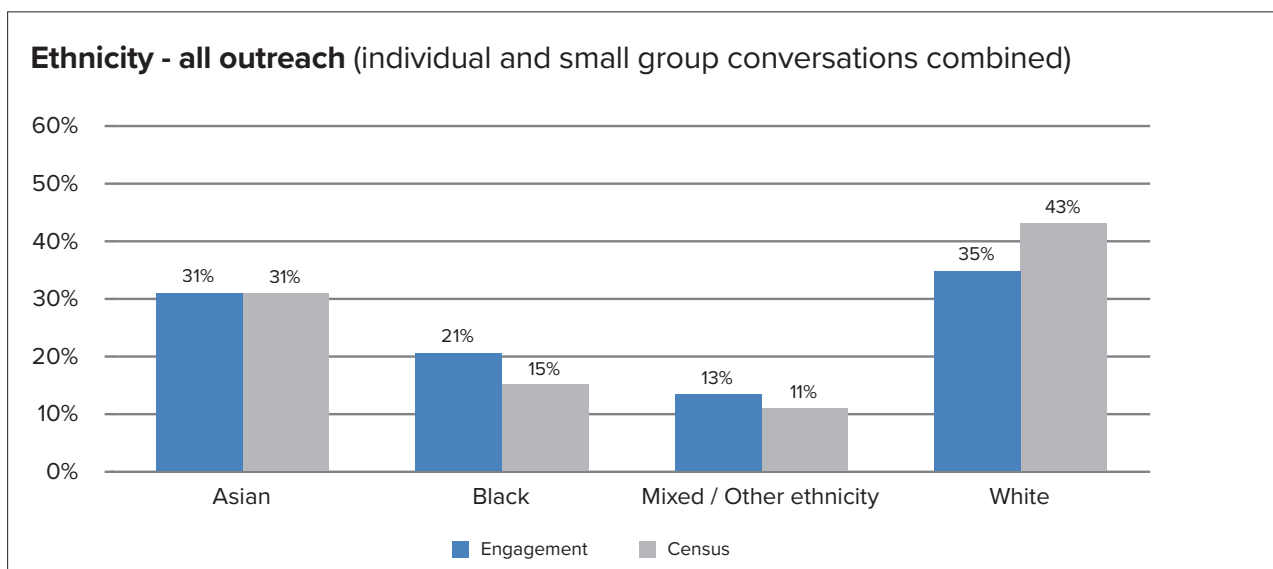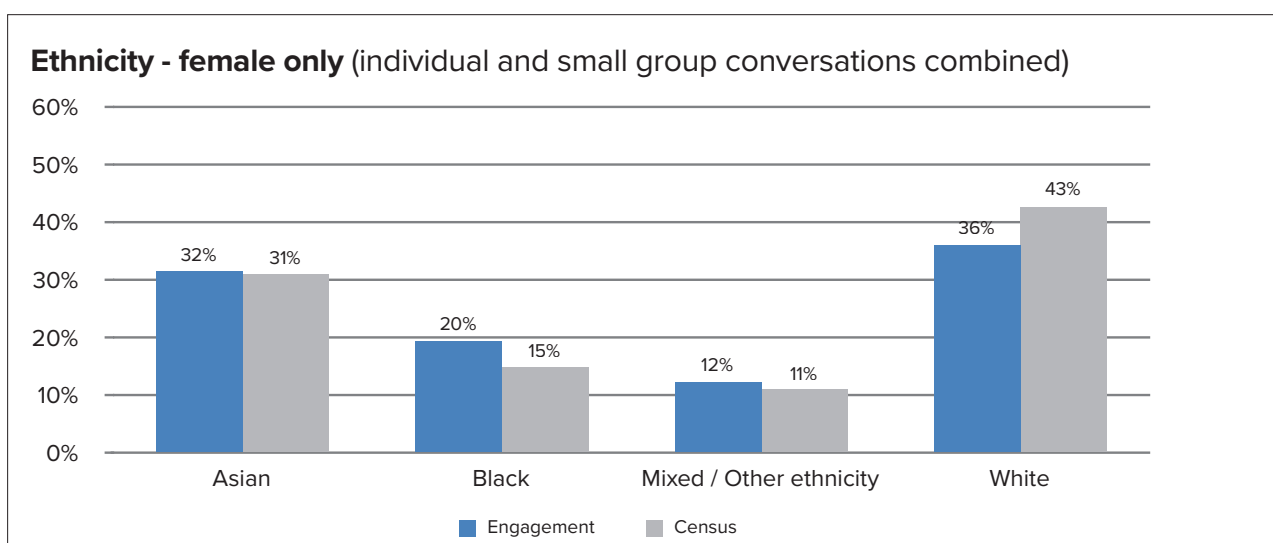
Base = 418

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	All engaged (Individual conversations only)	Female only	Census
Heterosexual/straight	92%	92%	94%
Gay/Lesbian	4%	3%	3%
Bi-sexual	4%	5%	2%
Other terms	0%	0%	1%
Base	*382*	*258*	*n/a*

Disability

Disability	All engaged (Individual conversations only)	Female only	Census
Yes	7%	8%	13%
No	93%	92%	87%
Base	*371*	*250*	*n/a*

Employment

Those engaged reflected a range of employment status with about half in employment.

Which of these best describes what you're doing at present?
(individual conversations only)

Base = 397

Which of these best describes what you're doing at present? only female

(individual conversations only)
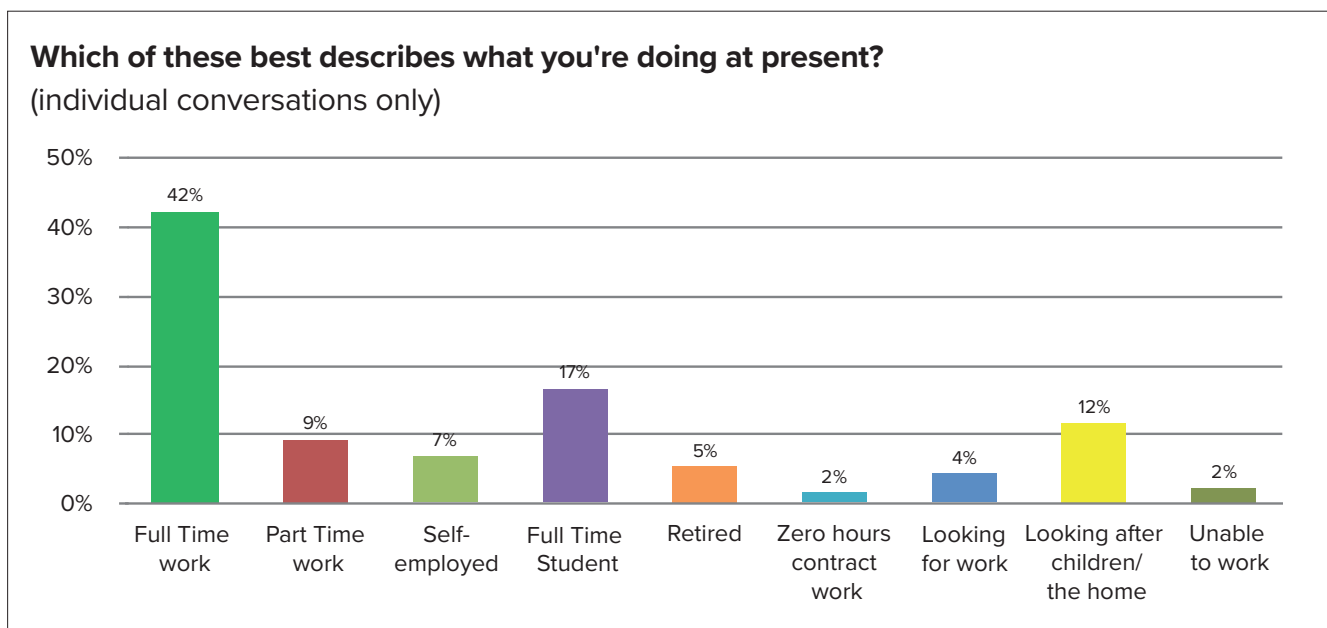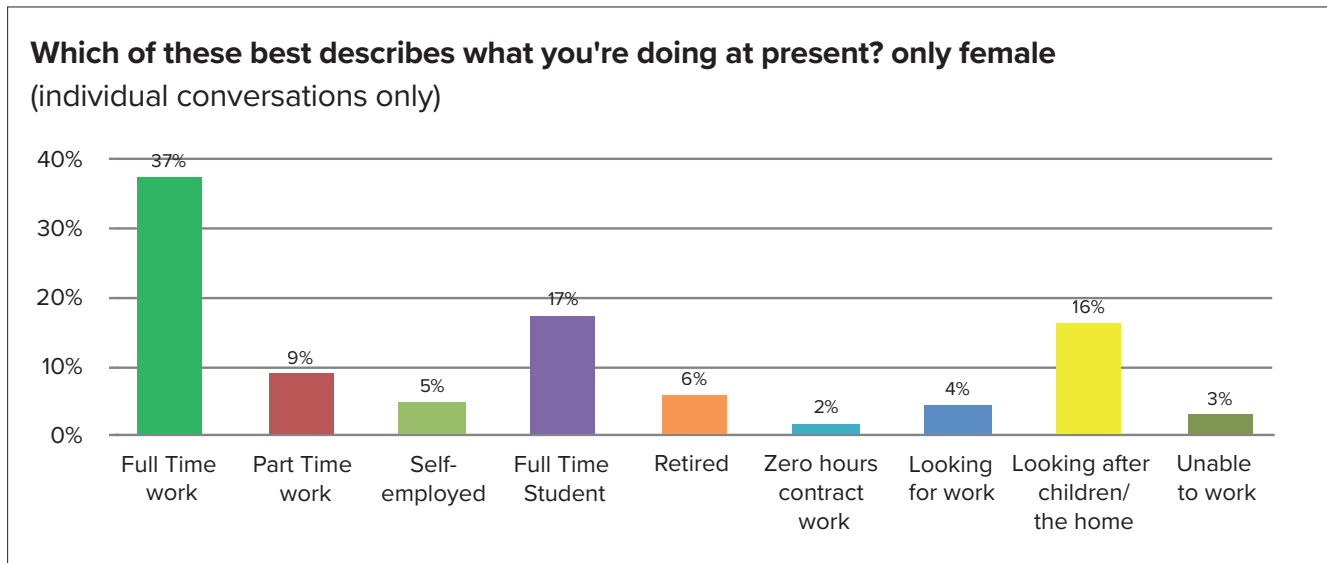
Base = 270

Housing Tenure

The housing tenure of people engaged closely matched the combined Borough data.

Which of these best describe the home you live in?	All engaged (Individual conversations only)	Female only	Census
Own it outright/buying with a mortgage	28%	31%	31%
Rent - council	23%	24%	15%
Rent - housing association	8%	7%	16%
Rent - private landlord	30%	27%	34%
Shared ownership	0%	0%	2%
Staying with family (write-in option)	8%	7%	0%
Staying with friends	2%	1%	0%
Student accommodation	0%	0%	0%
Homeless, including hostel/ sheltered/temp accommodation	0%	0%	unknown
Other	1%	0%	
Base	*398*	*270*	

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

24

Reaching less heard voices and under-represented groups

The vast majority of people engaged had never been consulted before, or not much before, showing the effectiveness of the outreach-based approach in reaching less heard from individuals and groups.

How much have your views been consulted before? (individual conversations only)

Not at all	Not much	Quite a bit	A little	A lot
70%	18%	3%	8%	2%

Base = 385

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk
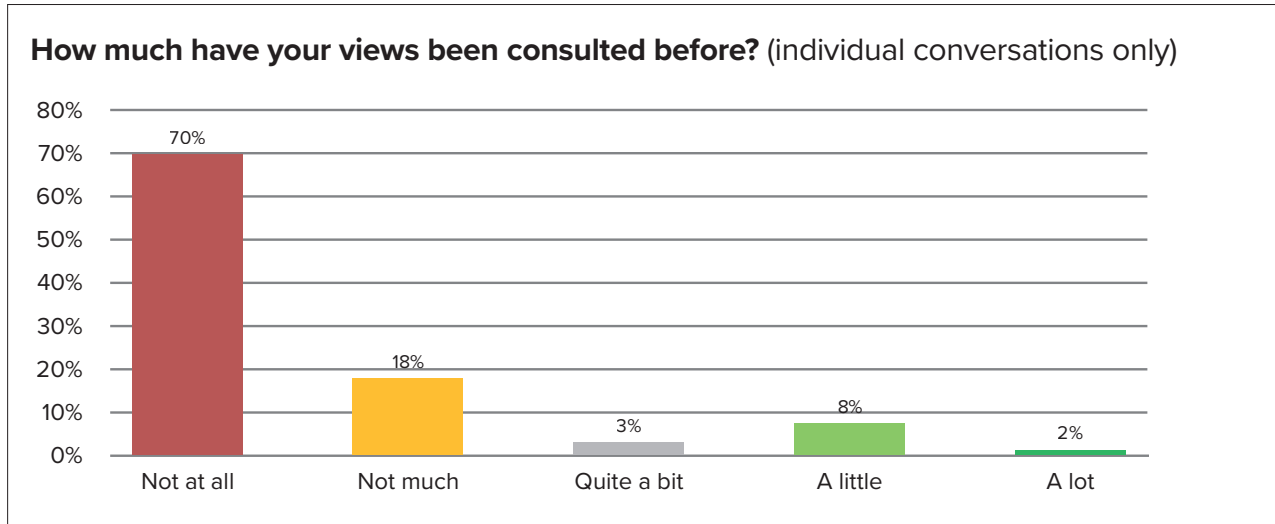
25

Headline findings

Who was engaged

- Over 650 people shared their views

  - 393 one-on-one outreach based conversations in the community

  - 250 people in 90 outreach based small group conversations in the community

  - 11 people shared views online

  - Additionally, 20 members of Elevate Youth Voice in an in-person workshop at LLDC

- 436 female and 212 male

- 33% were under 25

- Those engaged broadly reflected the combined demographics of East London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest

- 70% of people engaged (in one-on-one conversations) said their views had never been consulted with before

Feelings of safety in public spaces

- 41% of women (and 17% of men) feel unsafe on their own on the street after dark

- 67% of women (and 26% of men) feel unsafe on their own in a park after dark

- Most people felt safe in public spaces during the daytime, though men reported much higher levels of safety than women across all categories

Are public spaces designed with consideration for needs of women?

- 50% of women feel that public spaces are not designed with consideration for the needs of women (27% felt that they were designed with needs of women in mind; 23% weren't sure)

- 44% of men feel that public spaces are not designed with consideration for the needs of women

What features and elements have places feel safe and welcoming

- The most common theme (said in nearly half of comments) was around having a family friendly and community-based atmosphere

- Around one in three comments mentioned infrastructure and design elements such as good lighting, clear signage, clear sight lines and open spaces with clear entry and exit points

- Around one in four comments highlighted the importance of security measures and security staff. This included both things like CCTV as well as police/security presence and things like panic buttons and public phones

- About one in five comments mentioned the impact of having adequate and well-maintained facilities and the upkeep of public spaces. This included mention of toilets, seating, and play spaces as well as planting and greenery

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

26

What things have places feel unsafe / less safe

- Most commonly listed factors for all people were: bad lighting (68%), groups of men (61%), no phone signal/battery dead (55%) and being alone (48%)

- 61% of women (compared to 38% of men) said that having no phone signal / dead battery had them feel unsafe/less safe

- 39% of women (and 16% of men) said that the presence of men had them feel less safe / unsafe

- 54% of women (and 33% of men) said being alone had them feel less safe / unsafe

What can be done in the design and management of public spaces

- Key suggestions to improve the <u>design</u> of public spaces included:

  - Importance of visibility, good lighting and having clear sight lines

  - Provision of well-maintained facilities such as toilets, baby changing facilities, bins, water points, and comfortable seating

  - Ensuring signal connectivity for phones and providing phone charging infrastructure

  - Having well designed layout of spaces with multiple entrances/exits, clear signage and wide paths

  - Inclusion of overt safety measures such as CCTV, panic buttons and supervised safe spaces

  - Provision of information points and help points

- Key suggestions to improve the <u>management</u> of public spaces included:

  - The top suggestion was around security and police presence, with many people stressing the importance that the staff came from diverse backgrounds

  - Maintaining places well so that public areas are clean, tidy, with working lights and well cared for facilities

  - Having clear rules and guidelines to promote positive behaviours and making clear what is expected

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

27

What was said

Experience of community

We asked people how much they felt a part of the community where they live. There were a range of responses but a majority of both women and men said that they did feel part of the community.

To what extent do you feel a part of the community where you live? by gender
(individual and small group conversations combined)
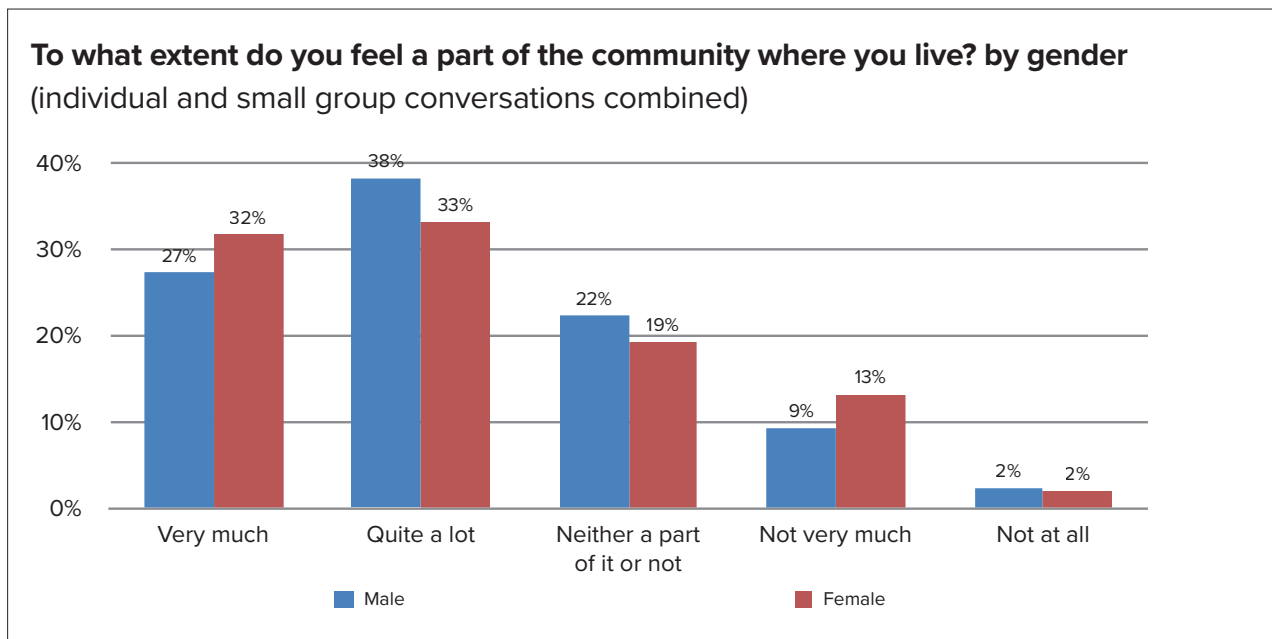
Base = 613 (Male = 201; Female = 412)

In the 314 additional comments on this question, several common themes emerged.

- Many comments expressed a **strong sense of belonging**, highlighting long-standing community ties. People attributed this to various factors, including having lived in the area a long time, having close bonds with family and friends in the area, and familiarity from growing up locally.

- Some comments highlighted the importance of **shared identity and culture.**

- Some comments mentioned **engagement with local groups and activities** as a way of feeling part of the community. Examples included volunteering for local causes and participating in community events and organisations.

- Some comments reflected a lower level of community connection due to numerous reasons, including being new to the area; lack of participation in community events; a shift in demographics and high resident turnover.

"As a South Asian even being Gujarati, there are lots of similar people here and cultural shops (food, clothes, etc)" (Female)

"Definitely. We know a lot of people around here, everyone is really friendly" (Female)

"I haven't lived here long and didn't see many events in my area for me" (Female)

"100% - I've been here all my life" (Female)

"Did [feel a sense of community] years ago - now, there is a lot of mobility and people moving to the area who don't want to be friendly" (Female)

"Home. Neighbours, family & friends" (Female)

"Recently very much - I ran a summer school in E2" (Male)

"Feel a part of the community, we meet for football every week" (Male)

Feeling and experience of safety in public spaces

We asked a series of questions to understand how safe people feel in public spaces, both in daytime and in the night-time/after dark. People were asked to rate their feeling of safety on a scale of 1-10, where 1=not at all safe and 10=very safe, with separate ratings for being alone on the street, in a park and on the QEOP.

In the analysis, ratings were grouped into low, medium and high levels of safety. ("Low" was a combination of ratings 1-3, "Medium" combined ratings of 4-7, and "High" combined ratings of 8-10.) Further analysis separated responses for women and men, and then there was additional analysis to explore any differences based on age and ethnicity within women and men separately.

As would be expected there was a significant difference between groups regarding feelings of safety in the daytime and after dark, and also marked differences between male and female responses.

"I never really go on my own – I rely on my parents and if I go with friends or my brother, we stay in groups" (Female)

"At night QEOP can be intimidating" (Female)

"There's antisocial behaviour like urinating, taking drugs, rowdy groups and there can be street sexual harassment and violence between groups on the streets, all in day and night" (Female)

"Do not feel safe unless there is lots of lighting" (Female)

"Depends - I live by Broadway market and it has become way too crowded" (Female)

"There are lots of alcoholics at night. I would prefer more lights on the street at night – there are less buses now so you have to wait around more" (Female)

"Everything changes after dark" (Male)

"I grew up here, I always feel safe" (Male)

"During the day, depends on the park - As long as there's people. NO WAY park at night unless festivals" (Female)

"Feel more on edge on the streets, as there's more drama happening" (Female)

"It all hinges on what the day's factors are. A match day, i.e. football that's going to change your approach to how you carry yourself about the area" (Male)

Feeling of safety on the street

The following chart show responses to feeling of safety on the street, and shows how much less safe women feel than men, both in the daytime and after dark.

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area? On the street: by gender
(individual and small group conversations combined)

At night/after dark	Male	18%	45%	38%
	Female	38%	47%	15%
In the daytime	Male	1% 14%	85%	
	Female	3% 31%	66%	

Legend: ■ Low level of safety (1-3)   ■ Medium level of safety (4-7)   ■ High level of safety (8-10)
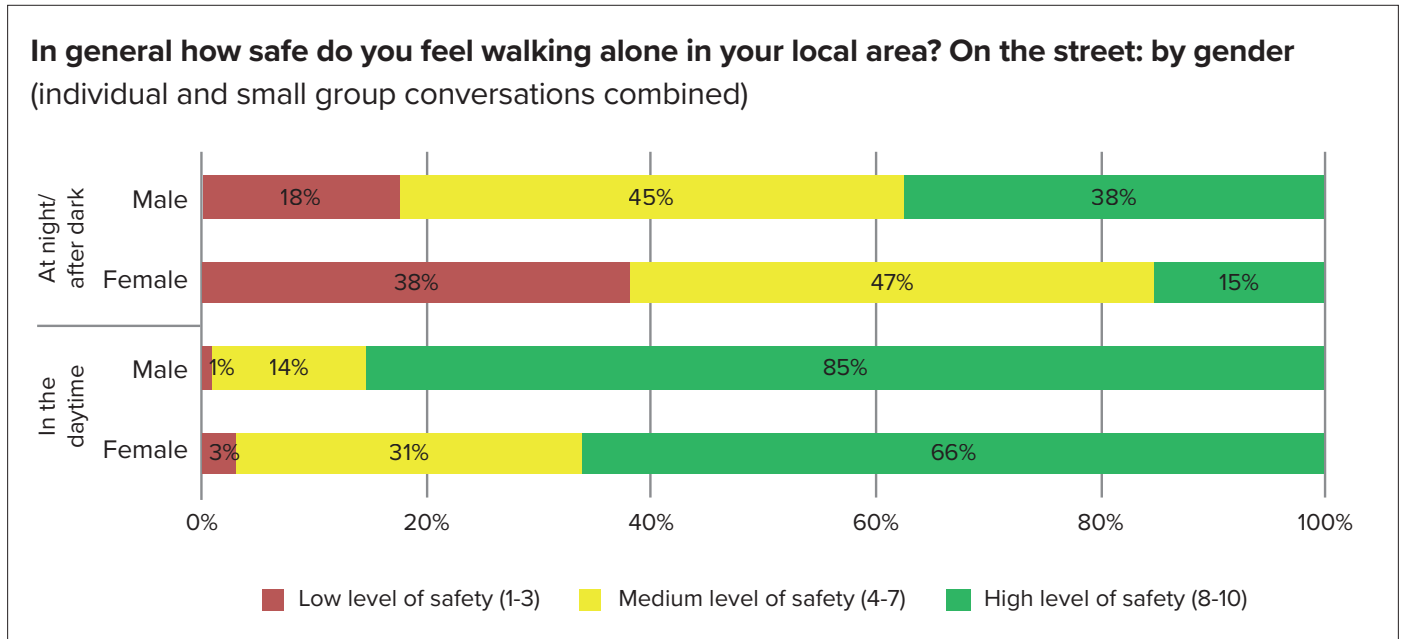
Base/after dark = 620 (Male = 200, Female = 420)
Base/daytime = 624 (Male = 199; Female = 425)

Further analysis of the responses from females showed that this experience of safety in public streets was broadly consistent for women of all ages and ethnicities. There were some differences in experience within sub-groups, but it is possible that in some groups the small number of respondents may be a contributing factor in explaining the variations. Having said that, it was noticeable that:

- Females under age 24 were more likely than older ages to feel unsafe in the daytime

- Females from Asian communities were even more likely than other ethnicities to feel unsafe after dark

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area?

On the street: only female, by age (individual conversations only)

At night/after dark
- ≤24: 48% Low, 44% Medium, 8% High
- 25-44: 33% Low, 49% Medium, 18% High
- 45-64: 49% Low, 44% Medium, 7% High
- 65+: 50% Low, 30% Medium, 20% High

In the daytime
- ≤24: 6% Low, 42% Medium, 52% High
- 25-44: 2% Low, 24% Medium, 74% High
- 45-64: 2% Low, 41% Medium, 57% High
- +65: 24% Medium, 76% High

Legend: Low level of safety (1-3) | Medium level of safety (4-7) | High level of safety (8-10)

Base/after dark = 263 (≤24 = 63; 25-44 = 125; 45-64 = 55; 65+ = 20)
Base/daytime = 267 (≤24 = 65; 25-44 = 125; 45-64 = 56; 65+ = 21)

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area?

On the street: only female, by ethnicity (individual conversations only)

At night/after dark
- Asian: 55% Low, 38% Medium, 7% High
- Black: 32% Low, 52% Medium, 16% High
- Mixed/Other Ethnicity: 36% Low, 36% Medium, 27% High
- White: 33% Low, 51% Medium, 16% High

In the daytime
- Asian: 4% Low, 38% Medium, 58% High
- Black: 2% Low, 35% Medium, 63% High
- Mixed/Other Ethnicity: 36% Medium, 64% High
- White: 3% Low, 21% Medium, 76% High

Legend: Low level of safety (1-3) | Medium level of safety (4-7) | High level of safety (8-10)

Base/after dark = 264 (Asian = 95; Black = 50; Mixed/other = 22; White = 97)
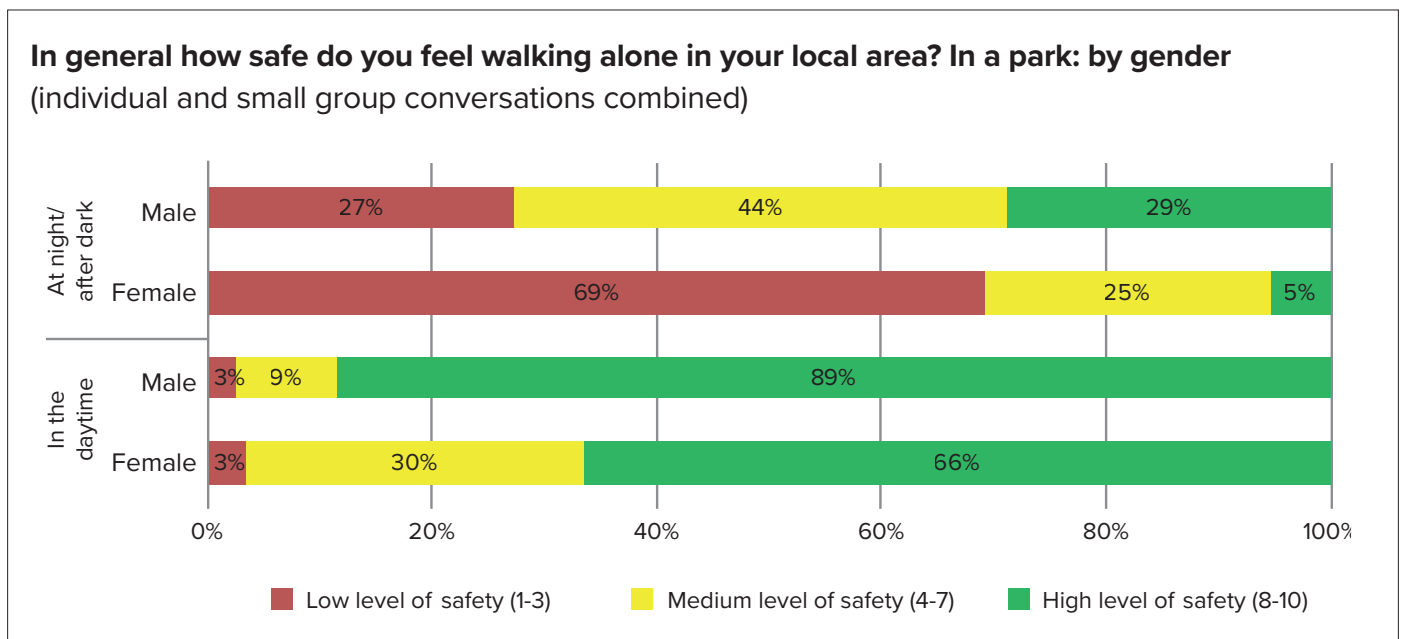*Base/daytime = 268 (Asian = 95; Black = 52; Mixed/other = 22; White = 99)*

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

32

Feeling of safety in a park

There was also a clear difference between feelings of safety for females and males if they were in a park on their own, while both as would be expected reported higher levels of safety in the daytime than after dark.
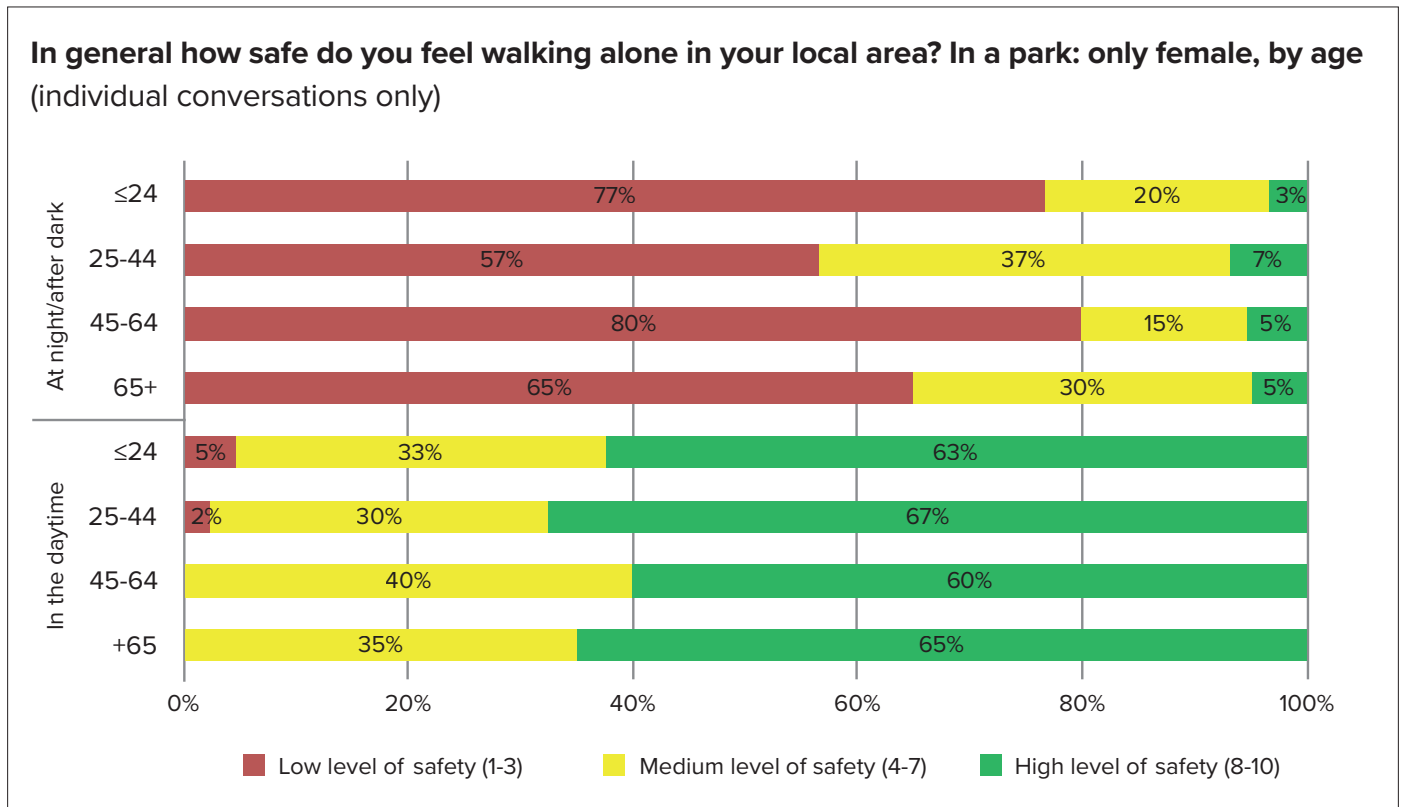
There was a very marked difference in women's experience in daytime and after dark, with a majority of females saying they felt safe in the daytime, while after dark the majority said they would feel very unsafe in a park on their own.

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area? In a park: by gender
(individual and small group conversations combined)

At night/after dark	Male	Low 27%	Medium 44%	High 29%
	Female	Low 69%	Medium 25%	High 5%
In the daytime	Male	3%	9%	89%
	Female	3%	30%	66%

Legend: Low level of safety (1-3) · Medium level of safety (4-7) · High level of safety (8-10)

Base/after dark = 603 (Male = 198; Female = 405)
Base/daytime = 614 (Male = 200; Female = 414)

Further analysis of the responses from females showed that this experience of safety in public parks was broadly consistent for women of all ages and ethnicities. There were some differences in experience within sub-groups but it is possible that in some groups the smaller number of respondents may be a contributing factor in explaining the variations.

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

33

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area? In a park: only female, by age (individual conversations only)

At night/after dark

Age	Low level of safety (1-3)	Medium level of safety (4-7)	High level of safety (8-10)
≤24	77%	20%	3%
25-44	57%	37%	7%
45-64	80%	15%	5%
65+	65%	30%	5%

In the daytime

Age	Low level of safety (1-3)	Medium level of safety (4-7)	High level of safety (8-10)
≤24	5%	33%	63%
25-44	2%	30%	67%
45-64		40%	60%
+65		35%	65%

■ Low level of safety (1-3)   ■ Medium level of safety (4-7)   ■ High level of safety (8-10)

Base/after dark = 250 (≤24 = 60; 25-44 = 115; 45-64 = 55; 65+ = 20)
Base/daytime = 262 (≤24 = 64; 25-44 = 123; 45-64 = 55; 65+ = 20)

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area? In a park: only female, by ethnicity (individual conversations only)

At night/after dark

Ethnicity	Low level of safety (1-3)	Medium level of safety (4-7)	High level of safety (8-10)
Asian	73%	23%	3%
Black	62%	33%	4%
Mixed/Other Ethnicity	65%	20%	15%
White	62%	31%	6%

In the daytime

Ethnicity	Low level of safety (1-3)	Medium level of safety (4-7)	High level of safety (8-10)
Asian	2%	44%	54%
Black		35%	65%
Mixed/Other Ethnicity	5%	27%	68%
White	3%	22%	75%

■ Low level of safety (1-3)   ■ Medium level of safety (4-7)   ■ High level of safety (8-10)
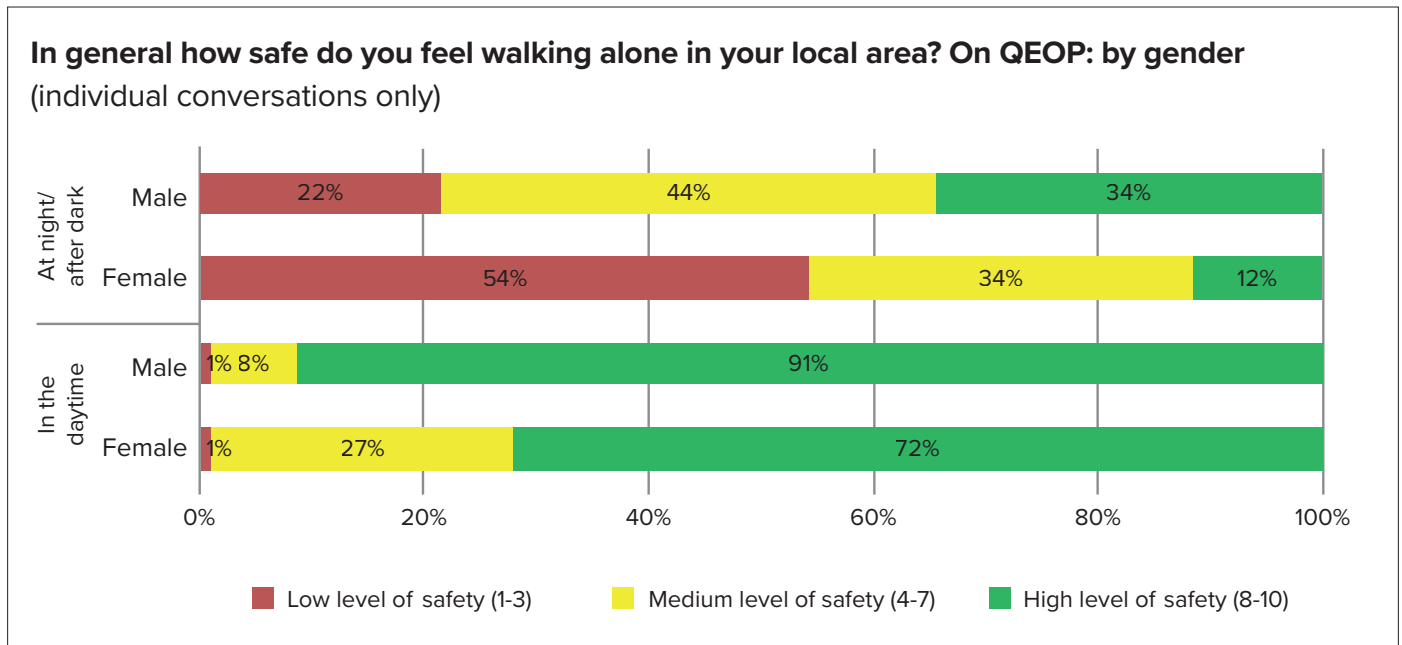
Base/after dark = 252 (Asian = 94; Black = 45; Mixed/other = 20; White = 93)
Base/daytime = 263 (Asian = 94; Black = 51; Mixed/other = 22; White = 96)

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

34

Feelings of safety on the QEOP

In general, there were slightly higher feelings of safety on the QEOP than for public parks as a whole, though a similar dynamic came through in terms of differences in experience of safety for women and men, and between daytime and after dark experience. People who did not have experience of the QEOP did not respond on this question and so the number of respondents is lower than for parks in general and safety while on the street.

In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area? On QEOP: by gender
(individual conversations only)

At night/after dark			
Male	Low 22%	Medium 44%	High 34%
Female	Low 54%	Medium 34%	High 12%

In the daytime			
Male	1% / 8%		High 91%
Female	1%	Medium 27%	High 72%

Legend:
- ■ Low level of safety (1-3)
- ■ Medium level of safety (4-7)
- ■ High level of safety (8-10)

Base/after dark = 257 (Male = 93; Female = 164)

Base/daytime = 275 (Male = 93; Female = 182)

Things people do to help stay/feel safer in public spaces

Given that for many people, and most women, feelings of lack of safety are a regular experience when out in public space, it is not surprising that there are different actions and routines that people do, to help them to feel and be safer. These types of actions have been termed "safety work" (Kelly 2012).[7]

It was noticeable from the conversations that while both women and men take a range of precautions, women were able to very quickly list the different things they did on a routine basis whereas men needed to think about it more, and for some men it was clearly the first time they had thought about this question.

As would be expected, the range of things that women said they did on a routine basis were broader than responses from men, though many of the themes came up in conversations with both women and men.

There were 530 total comments in response to this question, 403 of which were from individual conversations and 126 of which were expressed in group discussions.

- Approximately half of the comments made by women mentioned relying on **communication and technology**. Examples mentioned included sharing live location and journey times with others; staying on the phone; carrying a charged phone with safety apps; keeping a GPS on; and not using headphones or keeping music at a moderate volume. Women were more than twice as likely as men to mention using communication or technology as part of routine safety practice.

- About two in five comments for both women and men mentioned having a focus on **situational awareness and vigilance** for their safety. Comments also included having a general awareness of one's surroundings, including possible exit points and transport options.

- Another common theme raised by one third of comments, from both women and men, related to **group safety measures** with people talking about not walking alone especially at night, frequenting well-populated areas and avoiding certain groups of people or age demographics.

- Around one in five comments, from both women and men, mentioned having consideration for the **community and environment** to help stay safe. This theme included comments about staying in familiar places, being aware of local news and events, and avoiding specific areas associated with safety concerns. A small number of people emphasised the importance of sticking to well-lit areas or travelling during the day as much as possible.

- Some comments – around one in six – mentioned taking precautions to **avoid drawing attention** to themselves, notably by keeping valuables out of sight and refraining from running or walking fast. More specifically, women mentioned modifying their appearance by covering up and tying up their hair as a means to deflect male attention.

- Around a sixth of women highlighted the importance of sporting an assertive, confident, perhaps even masculine, **body language** and not displaying any signs of vulnerability.

---

7 Kelly, L. (2012). Standing the test of time? Reflections on the concept of the continuum of sexual violence. In J. Brown & S. Walklate (Eds.), Handbook on sexual violence (pp. xvii– xxvi). London: Routledge

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

36

- Nearly one in five women (and one in ten men) mentioned taking **personal physical precautions** which include carrying a safety alarm and self-defence items like keys, heavy water bottles, and pepper spray, as well as having knowledge of self-defence techniques or being accompanied by a dog.

- Some other safety methods, including relying on religious faith and maintaining a particular mindset, emerged during these conversations whilst a very small minority simply indicated that they do nothing specific or that they always feel safe. Whilst some people felt safer in the presence of police, a few people directly expressed the contrary.

"Hypervigilant. Run through what to do, who to call in head" (Female)

"Carry a fully charged power bank, make sure my phone is fully charged, carry a bank card and cash with me in case of emergency, even in a case where I'd have to run from someone following me. I keep my phone close" (Female)

"I do self-defence classes at college, always keep my phone on me" (Female)

"Being out with family & friends! Sometimes it's just a case of safety in numbers" (Male)

"Hide my valuables/phone. Nothing of any worth on display. Tell family & friends where I am. GPS on, just in case" (Female)

"Nice atmosphere & ambient sounds. Music" (Male)

"I carry a knife! It's me or them" (Female)

"Send location, tell people where I am going, no music, keep phone away, stay close to where people are" (Female)

"Walk like a man. Phone in hand, possibly keys. Dress differently" (Female)

"Security, more people. Being observant. Walk fast / have 999 ready" (Male)

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

37

"I don't go to places with a bad reputation, certain places you know to avoid, stick to main roads and streets" (Male)

"Headphones in to call people with hands free. Key in hand. Get my acrylic nails sharpened - so I can leave DNA" (Female)

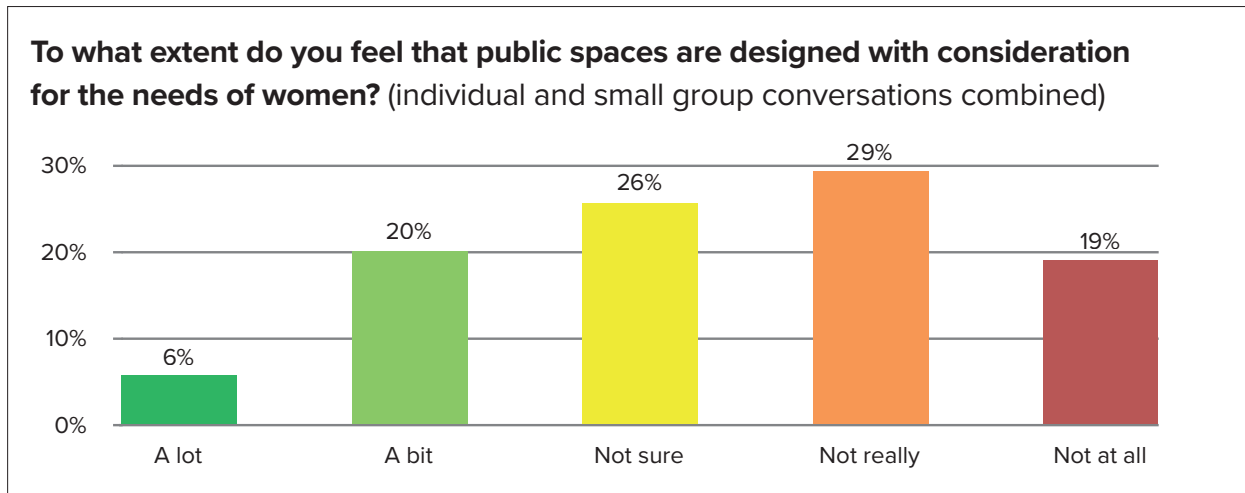*"Walking confidently. Covering up my body" (Female)*

"I'm okay, you know once you start thinking oh, am I safe? You're in trouble! It's a mind over matter thing. You know what I mean!" (Male)

"Smile" (Female)

"Have my phone. Stay vigilant. Cross the road. Trust my intuition" (Female)

Are public spaces designed with consideration for the needs of women?

Far more people felt that public spaces are <u>not</u> designed with consideration for the needs of women, than felt that their needs were considered at design stage (48% vs 26%).

To what extent do you feel that public spaces are designed with consideration for the needs of women? (individual and small group conversations combined)

Base = 604

There was some variation between female and male perspectives on this question but responses were relatively similar. It is notable that a third of men and nearly a quarter of women were not sure, and for many people this was not a question they had considered before.

To what extent do you feel that public spaces are designed with consideration for the needs of women? by gender (individual and small group conversations combined)
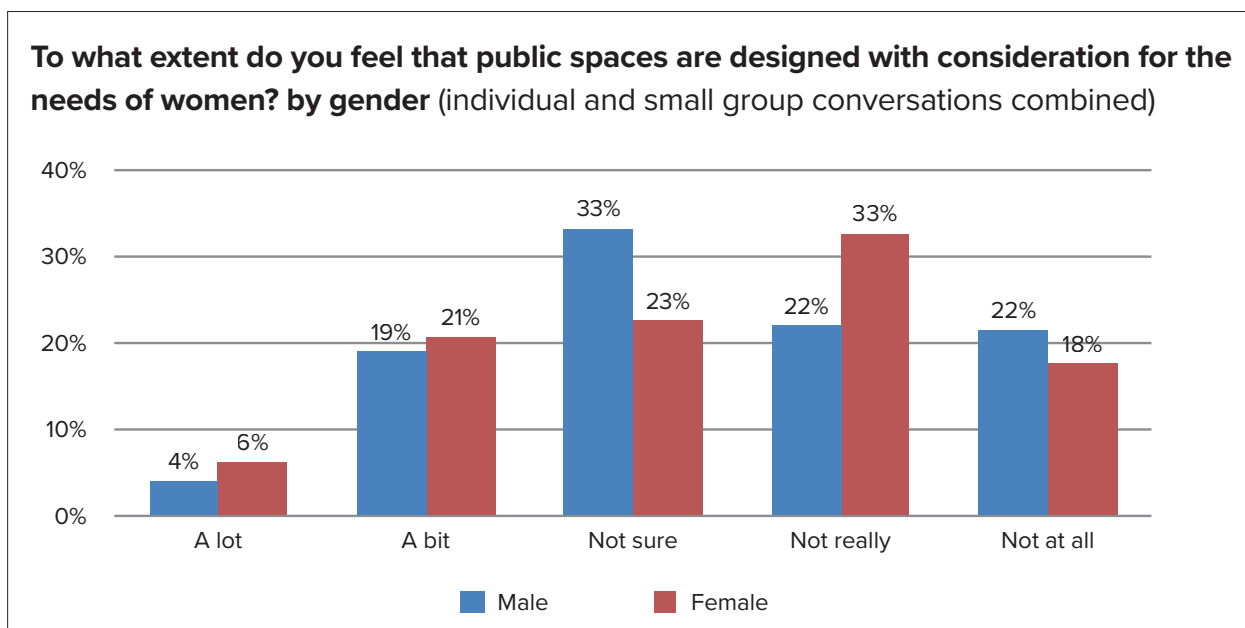
Base = 580 (Male = 195; Female = 385)

For those that felt the needs of women were not considered, a follow up question asked them to explain more about what types of needs were unmet.

There were 416 comments in response to this question that highlighted a variety of unmet needs, including:

- Nearly a third of comments made by women, and one in five made by men, expressed concerns about the need for better access to **toilets** (said by both men and women) **and sanitary products** (said by women). Comments specifically mentioned problems with the availability, functionality, cleanliness and safety of public toilets as well as the need for freely available sanitary products across a range of different facilities.

- Although not directly related to unmet needs, almost one in five comments highlighted issues regarding **general feelings of safety**, mentioning previous attacks on women, crime rates and drug abuse as contributing factors. This theme was mentioned in around ten percent of the comments made by men – less frequently than those made by women.

- Just over one in ten comments emphasised the need for better **lighting** both during the day and at night, particularly in typically dark areas like alleyways and parks. Several comments under this theme specifically mentioned parks feeling unsafe and not designed for the needs of women.

- Just over one in ten comments made by women discussed the need for **family-friendly amenities** such as breastfeeding, baby-changing facilities, playgrounds and pram parking.

- Another common theme that emerged, with nearly ten percent of comments made by women mentioning it, was the need for more **staff and security**. A small number of comments also observed the need for more female staff members.

- A small number of comments made by women mentioned a need for **women-specific areas or activities**. Some of these comments highlighted a need to accommodate for religious needs within such spaces, for example enabling Muslim women to wear a hijab during sports activities.

- A few comments mentioned the need for **amenities** such as seating, charging points, public WiFi, emergency phones and water fountains.

- A handful of comments made by both men and women mentioned **accessibility** for women with disabilities as an unmet need.

- Other examples of unmet needs mentioned included women-friendly gym equipment, proximity to transportation, crowd management, signage and unisex toilets.

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

40

"To attract more women, toilets should be well kept, clean and safe. They should have an attendant. More baby changing rooms & breast-feeding rooms" (Female)

"Seating isn't usually very comfortable in some places, not always places to park the pram" (Female)

"No toilets (with locks on doors), little staff of the public spaces (like in parks), no free phones, little CCTV, not enough bright streetlights, location (far away from populated areas like high streets)" (Female)

"No gym equipment. Not in the park! I'm sure more women would frequent the space, green space if a multisex gym was made available!" (Female)

"Not only women but disabled too, I struggle a lot to find a toilet to take my wife to (in a wheelchair)" (Male)

"Anything can happen to a woman in public, even if she's with people, and at large spaces at night particularly there should be more telephone boxes and those modern digital adverts where people can make a call for free and use wifi" (Female)

"I think toilets should be separate and not so close together. Buildings should have security if they close late. We needed security there while working & had to go in the back to call male colleagues. Also non-binary toilets should be a 3rd option" (Female)

"Women's only activities/women only swimming" (Female)

Features and elements that help make places feel safe, welcoming and empowering

Many different types of factors, both tangible and intangible, contribute to our experience of places. We explored, in an open discussion question, what the things are that make some places feel welcoming and safe; places where we feel we belong. This produced rich and broad discussions and for many people (both men and women) this was a topic that they had not actively thought about or discussed before.

The key themes that came from the conversations are reflected In the following bullets and quotes.

There were 530 comments on this question, 404 in individual conversations and 126 in small group discussions. In almost all themes there was little difference in the frequency that they were mentioned by women and men.

- The most common theme – with nearly half of comments making reference to it – was around the importance of a **family friendly and community-based atmosphere**. Comments included frequent references to familiarity, positive and friendly interactions for children, adults and staff and a constant presence of people. Some comments also mentioned appropriate attire, shared values (e.g. inclusivity) and representative demographic groups as important factors in feeling safe and welcomed.

- Around a third of comments highlighted the importance of **infrastructure and design**, mentioning things such as good lighting, clear signage and maps and multiple clear entry and exit points. Women were much more likely than men to mention the impact of good lighting which was one of the only major differences between women and men in the discussion on this topic. The positive impact of having parks with wide open space and visible wide paths were mentioned several times. Some comments also mentioned having nearby public roads, good transport links and secure parking and bike storage as contributing to feelings of safety.

- Around a quarter of comments expressed the importance of **security and staff**. While a very small number of comments were completely against a police presence and visible security cameras, the majority of the comments on this theme were in favour of CCTV, police presence and park warden patrols. Other frequently raised points included the importance of specific visible and accessible emergency measures such as panic buttons, public telephones, QR codes or helplines.

- Around one in five comments mentioned the importance of having **adequate and well-maintained facilities and spaces**. Clean toilets and waste removal, a variety of seating options, play areas and designated safe-spaces for women were all important contributors to people feeling safe. Cafes, restaurants, galleries and pubs that stay open late were viewed favourably. Around one in eight comments mentioned the positive impact of having well-maintained natural environments and greenery.

- Although a small number of people stated that quiet, secluded park spaces felt more welcoming to them, the preference for a **lively environment** where people were actively engaged in activities (rather than loitering) was much more commonly expressed. Examples included fun fairs, classes for sports such as yoga or tennis, workshops and music events.

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

42

"Clean, well-lit, good facilities like toilets and cafes (also staff), it's fairly busy with seemingly ordinary people, some cases: they hold fun/celebratory events, good amount of green space/ trees" (Female)

"Lots of positive families being there, playground equipment, no dodgy people or groups of drunk men, especially, or rowdy people, lots of strong lighting for the night. Gates in a park for when it shuts" (Female)

"Creating a community makes it feel better, it is the biggest foundation. Knowing others" (Female)

"Lots of greenery looks welcoming. Better lighting, if it is cleaner" (Female)

"Having women only areas. The education and values of people in them. Well maintained open spaces. When there is business or i''s lively. If there is an activity going on nearby. Having a say in things" (Female)

"Community, inclusivity, benches, places for teenagers to have more active things to do" (Female)

"CCTV, lighting, more police" (Female)

"Wardens to keep drunk people away from kids' area" (Mixed group)

"Safety, good people. Staff safeguarding, good toilets. Feeling welcome" (Mixed group)

"Having security at public places. Parks are always unsafe because of the people who come in there (druggies, alcoholics, etc). Good lighting/street lights especially at night & in winter" (Male)

"Games, safety, welcoming people. Clean streets, good meals" (Male)
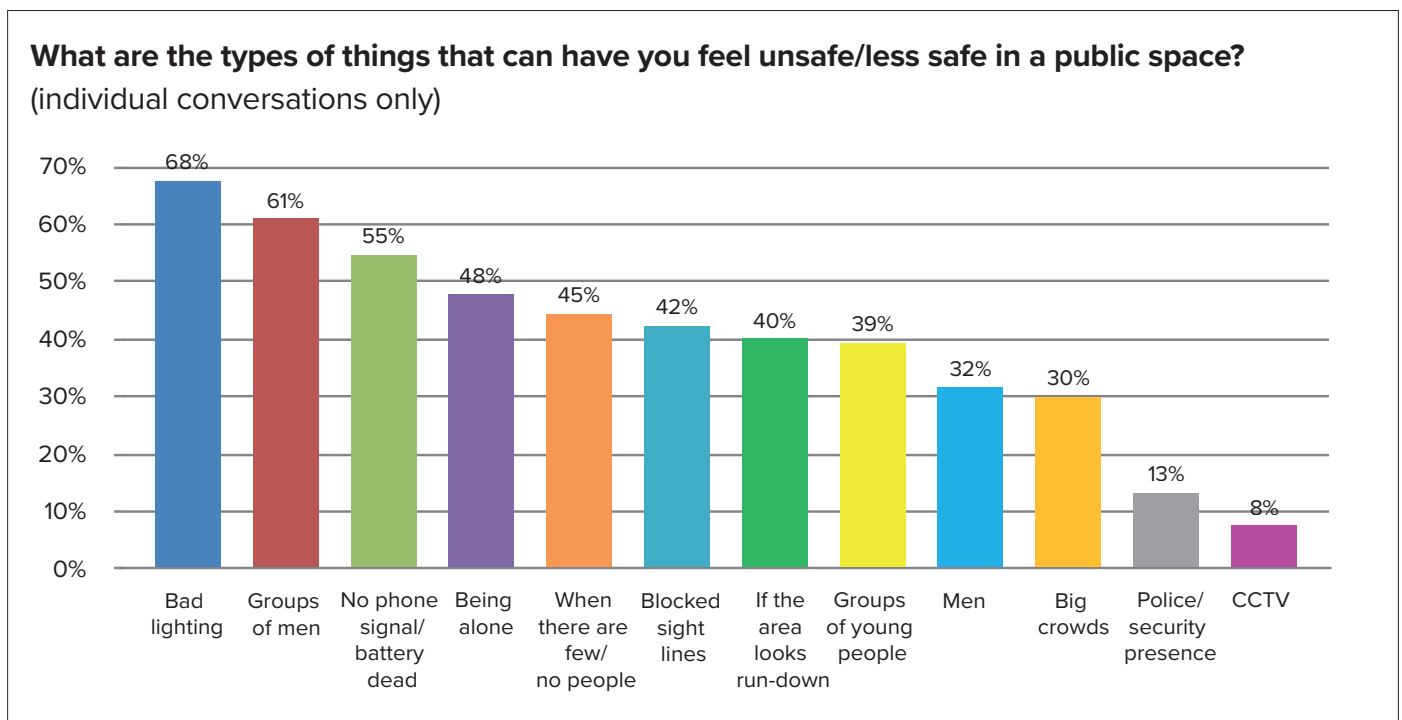
"Well-kept & tended to. Good signage. Good lighting. Security - point of contact" (Male)

Features and elements that have places feel unsafe and un-welcoming

The discussion around things that make places feel unsafe and un-welcoming was semi-structured; the first part of the question listed different factors and people were asked to tick any that applied to them. The second part of the question was an open discussion of other factors that were not on the provided list.

The list of factors included well known and researched design aspects (such as bad lighting and blocked sight lines), as well as social factors (e.g., presence of men or groups of young people), and management factors (such as presence of police/security).

The following chart shows responses from women and men:

What are the types of things that can have you feel unsafe/less safe in a public space?
(individual conversations only)

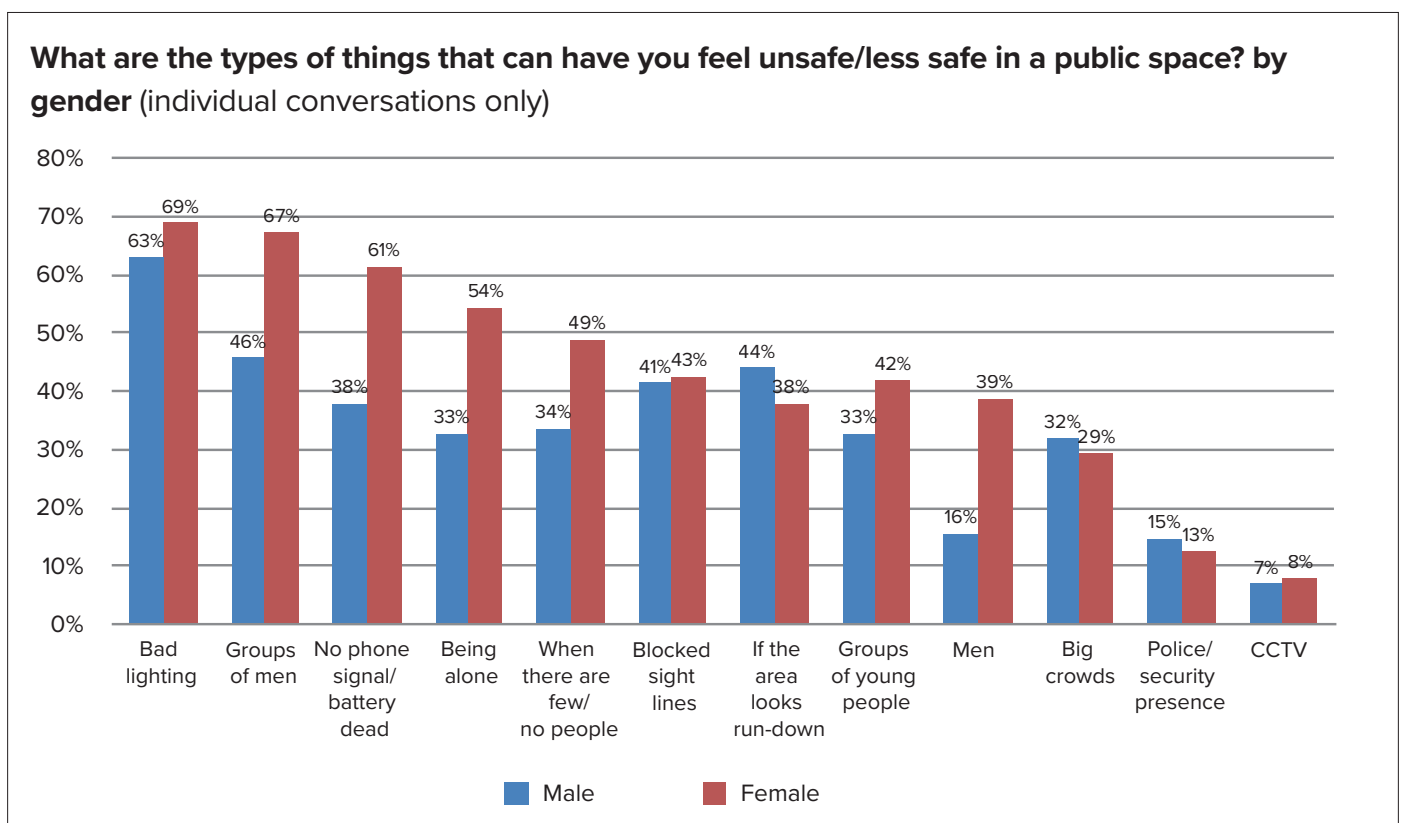| Factor	%
Bad lighting	68%
Groups of men	61%
No phone signal/battery dead	55%
Being alone	48%
When there are few/no people	45%
Blocked sight lines	42%
If the area looks run-down	40%
Groups of young people	39%
Men	32%
Big crowds	30%
Police/security presence	13%
CCTV	8%

Base = 373

There were some significant differences between responses from men and women:

- Women were far more likely than men to say that men (both on their own and groups of men) could make them feel unsafe/less safe

- Women were much more likely than men to say that being alone or in places with few people would have them feel unsafe/less safe

- Women were much more likely than men to say that having no phone signal or a dead phone battery would have them feel less safe/unsafe

This last point about the impact of no phone signal/dead battery was said by over 60% of women and it represents an important finding from this community research. In our preparation for this engagement we looked at reports and other research on the issue of women and girls' safety in the built environment and identified many common themes, such as lighting, sight lines, impact of planting etc. The issue of phone signal / phone battery was not something that came out of previous research or guidance that we had read, and yet it was one of the top factors said by women in this research.

This feels significant, both because of how many women say it is an important safety factor, and because it is an issue that could be mitigated by good design and management of public spaces.
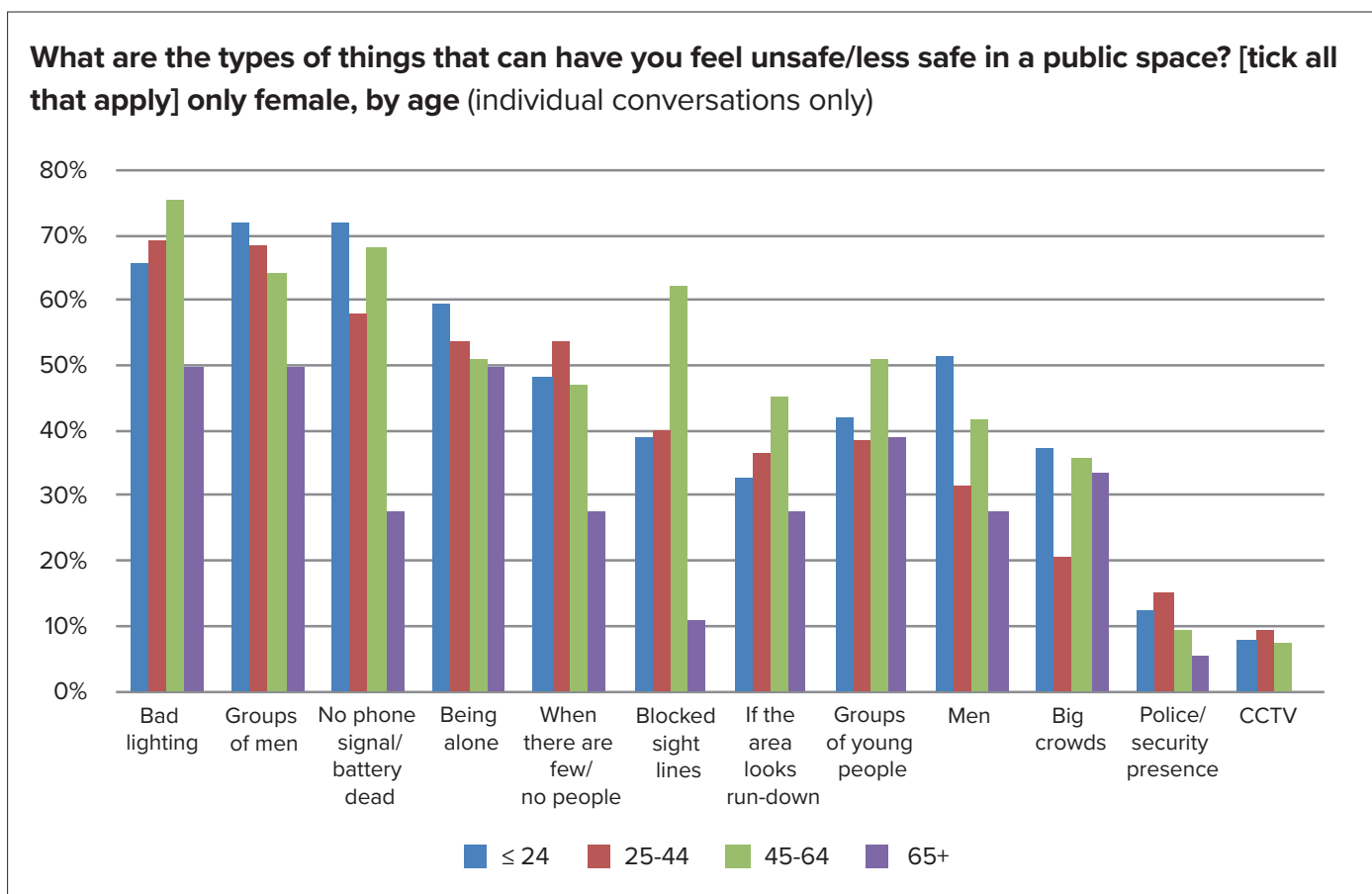
Ensuring there is decent phone signal and/or free Wi-Fi in public spaces, as well as provision of free charging infrastructure, ought to be a priority in the design and management of public spaces.

What are the types of things that can have you feel unsafe/less safe in a public space? by gender (individual conversations only)

	Male	Female
Bad lighting	63%	69%
Groups of men	46%	67%
No phone signal/battery dead	38%	61%
Being alone	33%	54%
When there are few/no people	34%	49%
Blocked sight lines	41%	43%
If the area looks run-down	44%	38%
Groups of young people	33%	42%
Men	16%	39%
Big crowds	32%	29%
Police/security presence	15%	13%
CCTV	7%	8%

Base = 372 (Male = 116; Female = 256)

There were some interesting and notable differences in the types of factors and how they impacted on women of different ages as can be seen by the chart below. Some caution needs to be taken reading too much into the views of women age 65+ as the number of people engaged in this age cohort was very small (only 18), but some of the visible trends from the chart are interesting.

- For most of the factors, there is a lot of uniformity in how they impact on women of all ages, with things either rated high or low across the board

- For young people, phone signal / battery is even more important than for women as whole, with over 70% saying this was a safety factor. This also links to what was said in terms of the types of "safety work" and precautions women routinely take, where younger women were more likely than older women to make use of location tracking and other similar phone based strategies

- Men, both individually and in groups, had the greatest impact on feeling unsafe for young women under age 25. This correlates with other research which shows that young women are more likely than older women to experience sexual harassment in a public space.

What are the types of things that can have you feel unsafe/less safe in a public space? [tick all that apply] only female, by age (individual conversations only)

Base = 252 (≤24 = 64; 25-44 = 117; 45-64 = 53; 65+ = 18)

There were 299 additional comments, some reflecting *other* types of issues, but also more general comments on things that had them feel unsafe.

- Many comments noted feeling unsafe around **people who appeared drunk**, high, or otherwise intoxicated and unpredictable. A few comments specified feeling particularly unsafe when such people were men or in groups.

- Many comments highlighted **poorly lit and unmonitored areas** as increasing feelings of unsafety. A few comments also mentioned the lack of CCTV.

- Some comments from women mentioned **verbal harassment**, such as cat-calling, as unwanted and sometimes threatening behaviour that makes public spaces unsafe. In a few street focus group conversations, the issue of **people acting aggressively or loudly** was mentioned.

- A small number of comments mentioned **being isolated or unable to escape** as a top safety concern, for instance a lack of bus stops nearby, locked gates or not knowing where exits are.

- Other examples of things mentioned included the presence of homeless people or people with mental health issues, closed shops, enclosed spaces and alleyways, a lack of police, people with their face covered and a reputation of crime in the area.

"Drunk people about. A lot of depression and people with mental health problems. Since covid people don't know how to get help" (Female)

"Dark. No people around, cat calling, lone men approaching me, drugs, hiding spots, people watching/staring, cars pulling up to you, lack of lighting. Dead phone" (Female)

"Sketchy people, men talking to me, stories about kidnappings in parks early morning. Bad lighting, homeless men following us, older people talking to me, or staring at me. Men screaming or making noises, men, groups of men because they gang up. When my phone is dead/dead battery" (Female)

"Something just kicking off. Strong police presence. Never too sure how it's going to pan out [...] Sometimes best not to be out!" (Male)

"Aggressive drunk men, depends on the crowds, people sleeping rough" (Female)

"Lack of lighting, lack of CCTV " (Female)

"Dark, being alone, big crowds, bad lighting, groups of men/young people, no signal/battery dead" (Female)

"Darkness. Not enough people around. Being lonely. Knowing there isn't police around. Groups of people with faces covered" (Mixed group)

"People wearing balaclavas" (Male)

"A big group of older men, all hoods up & there's like 5 of them and everyone staring at you when you walk past. If there's no one, except one person just there. Not enough security/police" (Female)

"Alcoholics/drugs feel unsafe to walk with kids. Dark. Don't use the phone on the street, keep my bag very close" (Female)

"Groups/people. Anti-social behaviour" (Male)

What can be done to have public spaces be more welcoming and feel safer

The question of what could be done to make public spaces more welcoming and feel safer was explored from the perspective of both design interventions and management strategies and interventions.

The conversations were wide ranging and the key themes are highlighted in the following bullets and quotes. There were 474 comments in response to this question.

Design interventions

A wide range of suggestions on the design of public spaces were mentioned by community members. There was very little difference in responses from women and men on this topic. The main themes expressed were:

- Over half of conversations and comments referenced the importance of good **visibility** in making people feel welcomed and safe. Examples of suggestions included the presence of lots of good lighting and open spaces with clear sight lines, wide paths and no hidden corners or dense shrubbery.

- Nearly a quarter of comments mentioned **public facilities**, emphasising the importance of there being an appropriate amount of women's toilets with baby changing facilities in a separate building to the men's. Other comments stressed the value of bins, water refill points, spaced out comfortable seating areas, charging points and public telephones.

- Around twenty percent of comments addressed the **accessibility and layout of public spaces**. Comments suggested the importance of having many exits, controlled entrances and disabled access or clear signage. A few comments reflected people feeling safer when public spaces are not secluded, and when they are close to public transport or parking.

- Nearly a quarter of comments mentioned the importance of **specific safety measures**, including monitored CCTV, panic buttons, help lines, and supervised safe spaces.

- Approximately one in five comments mentioned welcoming and safe public spaces having **amenities** such as playgrounds, outdoor gyms, community centres, libraries, shops, and cafes. In a few conversations, comments highlighted feelings of safety and inclusion in busy spaces with lots of activities, such as markets, food stalls, or water activities.

- Around one in 7 comments mentioned the **appearance of public spaces**, preferring those that were clean, colourful or looked new and well cared for. For instance, certain comments mentioned flowers, trees, nature, murals and public art installations, water features and pictures of the community as examples of aesthetic features that would increase perceptions of safety.

- Another suggestion raised by around ten percent of comments was around having clear **information and signage** or help points in a public space. Some suggested an information board or interactive screen, while others preferred a manned customer service desk with information, emergency guidelines, and staff that could help with first aid and security.

- Other design elements mentioned included having separate bike lanes, women only spaces and events, prayer rooms and bike points if people want to cycle through the park.

- A small number of comments said they did not think that design had an effect on how safe or welcoming a space felt.

"Large pathways. More of a broad view of your surroundings, so there's less of a chance there's people hiding behind walls and corners" (Female)

"Having the information readily available, like on a QR code, including emergency numbers, direct line to someone on shift/ security. Need some safety guidelines, where is the nearest hospital/first aid/help point" (Female)

"Open children's play area for family separated with exit near the road" (Female)

"More open places, less small lanes, CCTV, more lampposts; motion sensitive lights, good call network; SOS phone booths. No dark/blind spots" (Female)

"Design it so young people can't cause trouble, no place for them to loiter" (Male)

"Lighting. Sports pitches & skate parks" (Male)

"Dedicated spaces for baby changing and breast feeding. More open spaces for more visibility - round design rather than square" (Non-binary)

"Clean toilets lots of exits" (Female)

"I don't know if anything can be changed that would make spaces feel more welcoming. I think having conversations with men and especially young boys is the way forward" (Female)

"Disabled access. Sport facilities. Family friendly, inclusive, night lighting, safety/ security, clear entry/exit point" (Male)

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

50

"Help buttons (managed/manned), areas for families, CCTV, well lit" (Female)

"Water feature, Art, pictures, music, lights/ natural plants, flora & fauna (Male)

Management strategies

The main themes expressed in response to the question "What things could be done in the management of public spaces to have them be more welcoming, and feel safer?" are outlined below. Again there was strong alignment between the views expressed by women and by men.

- In nearly half of the comments, **security and police presence** was highlighted as a key management need. Many expressed the need for a visible security presence and regular patrols, particularly during the night and during winter. However, a few comments disagreed and preferred other types of staff to police and security staff.

- About a quarter of comments mentioned the value of **other types of staff**, including caretakers, park rangers, toilet attendants and community officers. Around ten percent of overall comments stressed the need for gender and race **inclusivity and diversity** with regards to the staff, so that its demographic is representative of the community. A few comments highlighted the need for staff to be welcoming and friendly while still being effective, and the importance of staff being first aid trained.

- **Upkeep** was emphasised in around one in four conversations, with comments saying spaces ought to be clean, tidy, with working lights and well cared-for facilities.

- Some comments – just under ten percent – suggested having **rules and guidelines** displayed on entry to public spaces with hope that this would reduce antisocial behaviour or excessive alcohol consumption, for instance. A few comments suggested displaying a zero tolerance policy on harassment.

- Some comments suggested the promotion of **activities and community events** as an important management policy. Examples of such activities or events include self-defence classes, youth clubs, workshops for behaviour change.

- Other comments on the management of public spaces included raising awareness of harassment; closing of certain spaces at night; encouraging people to report incidents or giving anonymous tips and feedback; and using loudspeakers to communicate.

"More security presence, raise awareness, share real stories of situations" (Female)

"Security presence, clear rules of conduct, management reserves the right, etc.." (Female)

"Fund safety, crowd control, offer activities by and for community" (Female)

"No police or security - not necessary - gardeners not park rangers - someone present you can talk to - Ununiformed people" (Female)

"Security guards that treat people fairly. Trained staff with knowledge of de-escalation techniques - if it's Black security with Black person they will support" (Male)

"Stop racism. Friendly welcoming staff" (Female)

"Security: community lead. Friendly face, maybe women security. Kinder faces. Customer service desk" (Female)

"More staff, rangers around release advice & guidelines on how to stay safe. Share safety concerns/incidents. Share rangers' number" (Mixed group)

"Keep the space well-maintained. People will vandalise if it's already rundown" (Female)

"Announcements on loudspeakers. Encouraging men to change their behaviour. Running workshops for behaviour change for men and women" (Mixed group)

"Management activities happening for young people to get them off the streets. Greater awareness & things happening in the local area" (Female)

"More female park rangers" (Female)

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

52

What can be done to change the attitudes and behaviours of men so women would be safer in public spaces

At a fundamental level it is important to recognise that the key factor that has public spaces be unsafe for women and girls is the attitude and behaviour of men. Lighting, lines of sight, phone signal etc are all only important because they reduce, or increase, the impact of men on women.

It was striking, but not surprising, that in conversation with over 600 people, not one person said that a factor that had them feel unsafe was women. The problem is with men, and this has deep roots in human history.

In this context, while it is vital that the built environment does what it can to make spaces that are welcoming and safe for all, it's unrealistic to expect that good design and management of public spaces can on their own achieve this. What is needed is a fundamental change in the attitudes and behaviour of men, which will require social change and intervention on a much deeper and more profound level. Patriarchy and misogyny are so deeply embedded in our culture and history that it will take multi-stranded, ongoing and long-term work to address and overcome.

Many people spoke of this in the conversations and the following bullets and quotes reflect the main themes of the types of things that they said could be done to change the attitudes and behaviours of men.

A wide range of ideas for changing the attitudes and behaviours of men so that women would be safer in public spaces were suggested. There was little difference between the ideas suggested by women and the ideas suggested by men.

The main themes expressed included:

- Over a third of comments and conversations stressed **education** as the best way to change the attitudes and behaviours of men. Many comments referred specifically to schools, where it was suggested that teaching around respect, consent, gender equality, sexual harassment and definitions of threatening behaviour should start from a young age. Some comments also mentioned other institutions that could play a role in the education of boys and men, including religious communities and local councils.

- About a third of comments raised specific ideas about **actionable behaviour and attitudes changes men could put in place themselves**. These comments included both what men should start and stop doing. Examples of these ideas included acting politely and with respect; minding one's business; speaking up and supporting women in reporting an incident; and calling out friends. Suggestions for things men should stop doing included whistling, shouting, cat-calling, staring, pursuing women who aren't showing interest, and acting in intimidating ways.

- One in five comments suggested ideas related to **awareness campaigns**. Examples of ideas included public signs, advertising campaigns and the promotion of women's stories. Some comments stressed the importance of having positive images and role models on both social media and traditional media. Several of these comments highlighted how awareness campaigns

can help men **understand women's perspectives**; men need to hear about women's experiences directly in order to empathise with the impact of their actions on women.

- Some comments – around one in seven – highlighted the role of **parenting and home environment** in changing men's attitude and behaviours. A few comments specifically mentioned the importance of fathers setting a positive example. Other comments suggested workshops for parents on this topic.

- Just under ten percent of comments saw **law enforcement and deterrence** as an important way to make changes. A small number of comments suggested limiting alcohol and drug use, expressing the idea that sober men may be less likely to harass.

- A few comments stated that there was nothing to be done, or expressed powerlessness against a deeply embedded culture of misogyny. A small number of comments said that men's behaviour and attitudes are not an issue or less of an issue than it used to be. Other isolated comments expressed the opinion that women need to be aware of how they dress, where they go, and learn to deal with men themselves.

"All these issues are embedded cultural issues. A seismic cultural shift needs to happen & men need to call out each other" (Female)

"Guides with practical tips on how to react. Manage expectations. Parents are crucial in this, having positive female role models for men. Leading by example. Equipping people with tools to challenge behaviours" (Female)

"Teach men to be respectful, consider the effect they have, be aware of power they have to frighten and intimidate and take steps to make women feel comfortable" (Male)

"Education is key – the problem in London is that there are so many cultures, so maybe campaigns and leaflets etc. in different languages" (Female)

"Strict laws, more officers around, fines, name and shame" (Female)

"School's an obvious place - consent, domestic, healthy relationships to model" (Female)

"Showing experiences from women's perspectives - Make boys understand how they make girls feel" (Female)

"Guides with practical tips on how to react. Manage expectations. Parents are crucial in this, having positive female role model for men. Leading by example. Equipping people with tools to challenge behaviours" (Female)

"More videos/education. Also men need to be safe from men too!" (Male)

"Shouldn't have to change attitudes. It ought to be a part of your DNA, 'Respect', and if it ain't, something is fundamentally wrong!" (Male)

"Higher conviction rates for rape. Change the culture of men's opinions being more valued / teach men to stand up for women" (Non-binary)

"This will never change. Doesn't matter what people do. It's only a certain type of men" (Female)

"Education: Men to men. Breakdown barriers make it more trendy/fun! Footballer/someone of influence" (Female)

Conclusions and Reflections

> **"No amount of lighting is going to abolish the patriarchy"**
> **– LESLIE KERN, FEMINIST CITY – CLAIMING SPACE IN A MAN-MADE WORLD, 2022**

There are rarely simple solutions to complex problems, and the issue of how to make public spaces safe and welcoming for women and girls is multi-stranded and multi-dimensional. It is both shocking and also not surprising that so many women and girls experience public spaces in their community as places that are not safe, and not designed with their needs in mind.

The move to prioritise, and (hopefully) require, gender inclusive design is to be welcomed. This will result in new and better approaches being used the built environment profession; to ensure that the voices of women and girls are heard during the design process, so that they can influence the design of public spaces. Genuinely inclusive engagement ought to be mandatory for all large developments – what this means in practice is that the people who are engaged should broadly reflect the local community, in terms of age, gender identity, and ethnicity, and actively include traditionally marginalised groups. Ineffective engagement that just ticks the box will not bring diverse voices into the design process at the times where influence is possible.

The findings from this community research echoed things that have been heard in other places, with themes including the importance of lighting, clear lines of sight, and visible security measures highlighted as being important at a design level. The issue of phone connectivity and the importance of provision of charging infrastructure came through very strongly as a running theme in this research, and was something that had not come through in our desk research on the topic. 61% of women told us that lack of signal or a dead phone battery had them feel unsafe or less safe. This is an excellent example of the type of issue that could be addressed by the built environment sector, and which would help make communities safer for all.

Better design and management of public spaces will not alone achieve the goal of having public spaces feel safe and welcoming for all people. The roots of the problems are human-caused much more than design-caused, and the central issue is the behaviour and beliefs of men. But this does not mean that the design sector has no role to play – an important difference could be made through better, more inclusive design and management of public space, and the responsibility is with the design community to do what it can, and to play its part.

"We all need to act so that women feeling unsafe in public spaces becomes a thing of the past rather than a daily reality.

Think about what you can do, and spread awareness where you have power.

One drop can create a ripple"

– YOUNG EAST LONDONERS, FROM ELEVATE YOUTH VOICE[8]

8 Elevate Youth Voice is the flagship youth leadership programme for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Appendix 1 – Community Survey Forms

Safety and Belonging in Public Spaces – Community Engagement

1. **Connection to East London** *[tick all that apply]:* live☐   work☐   study☐   or   have another interest☐

2. **How many years have you had a connection to E London?** <1☐   1-3☐   3-5☐   5-10☐   10-20☐   20+☐

3. **Have you ever been to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP)?**
   Yes - many times☐   Yes – a few times☐   Yes - once or twice☐   No☐   Yes – Live on the QEOP☐

4. **What 3 words would you use to describe the experience (feel) of being at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park?**
   _____   _____   _____   NA☐

SENSE OF BELONGING

5. **To what extent do you feel a part of the community where you live?**
   Very much☐   Quite a lot☐   Neither a part of it or not☐   Not very much☐   Not at all☐
   Why do you say that?

6. **To what extent do you feel that public spaces are designed with consideration for the needs of women?**
   A lot☐   A bit☐   Not sure☐   Not really☐   Not at all☐
   Comment/ explain more (if you don't feel places are designed with consideration for the needs of women, what needs are unmet? Needs could be practical eg toilets; safety related; accessibility related; facilities related eg types of play equipment in a playground; or other types of needs)

7. **In general how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area?** *[rank 1-10 where 1=not at all safe & 10=v safe]*
   On the street: In the daytime___   At night/after dark____
   In a park: In the daytime___   At night/after dark____
   On QEOP: In the daytime___   At night/after dark____   NA☐
   Comments

8. **What are the types of things that can have you feel *unsafe/less safe* in a public space?** *[tick all that apply]*
   Big crowds☐   When there are few/no people☐   Bad lighting☐   CCTV☐   Men☐
   Police/security presence☐   No phone signal/battery dead☐   Being alone☐
   Blocked sight lines☐   Groups of men☐   Groups of young people☐   If the area looks run-down☐
   Other things:

9. **What types of things do you do to help you feel more safe when you are out in public spaces?**

10. **What kinds of things make a public place, like a park, feel welcoming and safe? What elements help you to feel that you belong there?** [what is it that makes a *good* place feel *good*? Can you think of examples?]

11. What things could be done in the design and management of public spaces to have them be more welcoming, and feel safer?

Design of public spaces	Management of public spaces

12. What ideas do you have around how to change the attitudes and behaviours of men so that women would be safer in public spaces?

BEING INVOLVED

13. How important are the following in terms of supporting/enabling you to take part in activities and projects in your community? *[rank high/med/low/not important]*

Convenient timing___   If free/or affordable___   Childcare on site___   Close to home/work___
If can do as whole family___   Drop-in rather than having to make a commitment___
Women only classes or activities___   If other people I know are doing it___
Other things:

14. Would you like to be further involved in discussions about safety of women public spaces and how to create welcoming and empowering places? *[if yes, complete contact sheet]*   Yes ☐   No ☐

ABOUT YOU

15. How much have your views been consulted before?
A lot ☐   Quite a bit ☐   A little ☐   Not much ☐   Not at all ☐

16. Age   <16☐   16-24☐   25-34☐   35-44☐   45-54☐   55-64☐   65-74☐   75+☐   Rather not say☐

17. Which ethnicity do you feel best describes you? _____   Rather not say☐

18. Are your day to day activities limited due to a physical or learning disability or health problem? Yes☐   No☐

19. Gender Identity: Male☐   Female☐   Non-binary☐   Prefer to Self Describe☐ _____

20. What is your sexual orientation?
Heterosexual/ Straight☐   Gay/Lesbian☐   Bi-sexual☐   I use another term☐   Prefer not to say ☐

21. Which of these best describes what you're doing at present?   Full Time work☐   Part Time work☐
Retired☐   Self Employed☐   Zero hours contract work☐   Full Time Student☐
Looking after children/the home☐   Looking for work☐   Unable to work☐   Prefer not to say☐

22. Which of these best describes the home you live in?
Own it outright/buying with a mortgage☐   Rent - council☐   Rent – Housing Association☐
Rent – private landlord☐   Shared Ownership☐   Student Accommodation☐   Staying with friends☐
Homeless☐   Other☐ _____

23. Is there anything else you would like to say?

QEOP☐   Hackney☐   Newham☐   Tower Hamlets☐   Waltham Forest☐

Location of Interview_____   Date _____   Interviewer_____
The Kaizen Partnership Ltd, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089   Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786   VAT no. 756 6412 14

Safety and Belonging in Public Spaces – Street Focus Group

1. To what extent do you feel a part of the community where you live?
Very much__   Quite a lot__   Neither a part of it or not__   Not very much__   Not at all__
Comment/Explain more

2. To what extent do you feel that public spaces are designed with consideration for the needs of women?
A lot___   A bit___   Not sure___   Not really___   Not at all___
Comment/ explain more (if you don't feel places are designed with consideration for the needs of women, what needs are unmet? Needs could be practical eg toilets; safety related; accessibility related; facilities related eg types of play equipment in a playground; or other types of needs)

3. In general, how safe do you feel walking alone in your local area? *[rank 1-10 where 1=not at all safe & 10=v safe]*
On the street:
    In the daytime: 1__   2__   3__   4__   5__   6__   7__   8__   9__   10__
    At night/after dark   1__   2__   3__   4__   5__   6__   7__   8__   9__   10__
In a park:
    In the daytime   1__   2__   3__   4__   5__   6__   7__   8__   9__   10__
    At night/after dark   1__   2__   3__   4__   5__   6__   7__   8__   9__   10__
Comments

4. What are the types of things that can have you feel *unsafe/less safe* in a public space?

The Kaizen Partnership Ltd, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089   Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786   VAT no. 756 6412 14

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

59

5. What types of things do you do to help you feel more safe when you are out in public spaces?

6. What kinds of things make a public place, like a park, feel welcoming and safe? What elements help you to feel that you belong there? [what is it that makes a *good* place feel *good*?]

7. What things could be done in the design and management of public spaces to have them be more welcoming, and feel safer?

Design of public spaces	Management of public spaces

8. Would you like to be further involved in discussions about safety of women public spaces and how to create welcoming and empowering places? *[if yes, complete contact sheet]*   Yes___   No___

9. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Area: QEOP☐   Hackney☐   Newham☐   Tower Hamlets☐   Waltham Forest☐

LOCATION of Interview: _____   Date _____   Interviewer_____

Total No: _____   Age: <24 _____   25-44_____   45-64_____   65+_____   M_____   F_____

Ethnicities   Asian: _____   Black_____   Mixed/other_____   White: _____

Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT, Tel 020 8133 1089
Registered in England & Wales no. 4007786 | VAT no. 756 6412 14 | www.kaizen.org.uk

60