

# Sexual Harassment: resources page for Learn Sheffield

## Overview

Everybody has the right to feel safe as they go about their lives, whether at work, in school or in a public place.

A University of Kent study<sup>1</sup> concluded that sexually objectifying a woman can lead to aggression towards women, and that the link between catcalling and aggression by boys and men can begin to develop in early teen years and, as they age, can lead to the harmful perception that women are solely to be seen as sexual objects.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour early is important. If not challenged, casual misogyny and sexual harassment create a cultural environment that normalises inappropriate behaviours, and can lead to problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour towards women and girls.

Boys and men can also be subjected to sexual harassment and assault, by both males and females, which can be hard to report because of assumptions about masculinity, or stigma around same sex relationships.

## Definitions

**Misogyny** can be defined as: incidents and crimes, motivated by negative attitudes of men and boys, targeted at women and girls simply because they are female. [definition adapted from Nottinghamshire Police Hate Crime categories – work is underway in South Yorkshire to recognise and record misogyny as hate crime].

The Equality Act 2010 defines **sexual harassment** as: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

This can include:

- sexual comments, remarks, 'banter' or 'jokes'
- physical behaviour such as unwanted touching and groping
- indecent exposure
- dissemination of sexual images and videos
- requests or demands for sex
- stalking/trolling, online or by following

## Key Facts

- The UK's first national street harassment survey found that 64% of women of all ages said they had experienced sexual harassment in public places – in the 16-24 age group this rose to 85%; 45% of all ages had experienced unwanted sexual touching [YouGov UK poll 2016].
- TUC and Everyday Sexism Project<sup>2</sup>: 52% of women reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment at work; nearly a quarter (23%) had been touched without invitation at work, a fifth (20%) had experienced sexual advances at work.
- Drinkaware<sup>3</sup>: 63% of women and 26% of men have been on the receiving end of sexual harassment; 79% of women reported having been on the receiving

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<sup>1</sup> The sexual objectification of girls and aggression towards them in gang and non-gang affiliated youth (Vasquez, Osinnowo, Pina and Bell, 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Still just a bit of banter? (Trade Union Congress, 2016)

<sup>3</sup> Inappropriate behaviour in pubs, bars and clubs (Drinkaware, 2017)

end of inappropriate comments, unwanted touching or groping; 72% of respondents reported having seen sexual harassment in some form.

- The Children's Society<sup>4</sup>: 34% of teenage girls worry about being followed by a stranger
- Girlguiding<sup>5</sup>: 32% of girls aged 11-21 feel unsafe when they are out by themselves
- Sexual violence and harassment can affect different groups in education<sup>6</sup>
  - Disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers<sup>7</sup>
  - Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT<sup>8</sup>

## Best Practice

Schools and colleges should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”;
- challenging behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them; and
- understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school and college, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language. This is why a whole school/college approach (especially preventative education) is important.

## Resources

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)  
Department for Education, May 2018. Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads.

[Know the Line](#) is a local public awareness campaign in South Yorkshire trying different approaches to challenging sexual harassment in public spaces, and developing active bystanders – sets of postcards available via the website

[BBC's global 100 women campaign](#): a multi-series format established in 2013 which is currently focusing on experiences of sexual harassment in public spaces

[NSPCC: Harmful sexual behaviours](#): provides advice on signs, indicators and effects of harmful sexual behaviour

[Eliza Hatch](#) : ‘Cheer Up Luv’ photojournalism project which documents women who have experienced any form of sexual harassment in a public space

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<sup>4</sup> The Good Childhood Report (The Children's Society, 2017)

<sup>5</sup> Girls Attitude Survey (Girlguiding UK, 2016)

<sup>6</sup> Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (Dept for Education, 2017)

<sup>7</sup> Jones, L et al (2012) Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. The Lancet, July 2012

<sup>8</sup> Stonewall School Report 2017

[ihollaback.org](http://ihollaback.org) : international campaign against sexual harassment focusing on creating communities of resistance

### **Videos:**

[Sexual Harassment Experiences in Sheffield](#): video testimonies filmed for the Know the Line campaign

[Sheffield Girls Talk About Sexual Harassment](#) to the VIBE Project, Together Women  
[Women Talk About Sexual Harassment \[Iris\]](#): eight women share their stories about the damaging effects of sexual harassment

[Why We Need to Talk About Street Harassment](#): most women and girls have experienced some form of street harassment, and in many cases this behaviour goes unreported - but what exactly do we mean when we talk about harassment?

[10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman](#): short video showing one woman's experiences of catcalling as she walked through New York City

[Dear Daddy](#) video from a daughter about challenging 'rape culture'

[Tea & Consent](#) spells out the meaning of sexual consent in the simplest terms, by comparing it with offering a cup of tea.

### **Local Providers**

- [Know the Line](#) campaign group – resources and training for school staff, to support them in running workshops on sexual harassment
- [Sheffield Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre](#) (SRASAC) provide the sexual abuse helpline for Sheffield, counselling for women/men and girls/boys from age 13, and support with the criminal justice process where needed
- Eva Therapy Service (delivered by [Vida Sheffield](#)): trauma focused therapy and group work for women and girls affected by any form of abuse and trauma, from age 16
- [Sheffield Women's Counselling & Therapy Service](#): counselling, therapy and group work for women and girls affected by abuse, from age 16
- [Sheffield Domestic Abuse Helpline \[0808 808 2241\]](#) provides a pathway to a range of domestic abuse services in Sheffield