



Home Office

What do you think about sexual harassment in the street?

Easy read version of
'A consultation in Relation to Public Sexual Harassment'

August 2022



What the coloured words mean

The words in **green bold** are explained here

The words in **blue bold** are a link to another report

Public sexual harassment or street harassment

When someone is shouted at in the street, or followed, or is given a rude gesture or is touched by a stranger.

Violence against women and girls

Violence where women and girls are usually the victim. But it can include any victim. It is crimes such as rape and **sexual assault, domestic abuse** and 'honour'-based abuse.

Sexual harassment

Any unwanted sexual behaviour that makes someone feel upset or scared.

Domestic abuse

Controlling, bullying and violence, by a partner, ex-partner or family member. Women are usually the victims and men are usually the ones who do it. But men can also be victims, and women can also be the ones who do it.

Sexual assault

When someone touches, hurts or attacks another person in a sexual way without their agreement (consent).

Background information



People are experiencing a lot of **street harassment** now. They say this makes them feel unsafe outside in public, especially when it is dark.



The Government published the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy in July 2021 and the Tackling **Domestic Abuse** Plan in March 2022.



The aim of these plans is to change how society reacts to **violence against women and girls**. It will make sure abusers get justice, victims get support and will stop abuse happening in the first place.

What the Government has done so far



In September 2021 StreetSafe was launched. This lets the public send an anonymous report to the police and their local council about areas where they don't feel safe. Changes can then be made such as more street lighting or CCTV cameras.



In October 2021 the Government gave £23.5 million for things to make these areas safer.



In March 2022 the Government started the ‘Enough’ campaign. It is a large communications campaign on TV, billboards and the internet, to try to stop people doing street harassment. You can read the easy read version here:

enough.campaign.gov.uk



In July 2022 the Government gave £50 million more funding for the Safer Streets Fund. It was to help stop crime in local areas and **violence against women and girls** in public places.



There are more examples of what the Government is doing on the main website:

www.gov.uk

Should there be a new criminal offence?



The Government know that many people would like a new criminal offence against **public sexual harassment**.



The Government has been looking for any gaps in the laws we have at the moment.



If there was a new law it would have to be written so that it would be clear if it was broken.



There are already some laws which cover the crime of public **sexual harassment**.

Laws in:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Public Order Act 1986
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Criminal Justice Act 1988



What this consultation is about



The Government think that **public sexual harassment** is already covered in these laws so it doesn't need a new separate law.



But they could add **public sexual harassment** onto an existing law. So if someone harasses another person because of their sex, then they could get a bigger sentence.

The Government want to know what people think



1. Should there be a new law about **public sexual harassment**?
2. Would it be best to make a completely new law or change one of the existing laws?
3. Could the Government do something else instead of or as well as changing the law?

The consultation questions



1. Do you think there is a lot of public **sexual harassment** in this country?



2. Do you think there should be a criminal offence specifically for **public sexual harassment**?
If you do, why?
If you don't, why not?



3. If you want a criminal offence for **public sexual harassment**, what should it say?

4. If you want a criminal offence for **public sexual harassment**, what should it include?

- Following a person;
- Making a rude or aggressive comment towards a person;
- Making a rude gesture towards a person;
- Stopping a person making a journey;
- Driving or riding a vehicle slowly near to a person making a journey.
- Others (please describe)
- None
- Don't know



5. Do you think that a maximum sentence of 2 years in prison would be right for **public sexual harassment**?



6. Do you think a new **public sexual harassment** law would make more work for the police and the criminal justice system?



7. Do you think the other things the Government and other organisations have been doing to tackle **public sexual harassment** are enough? If not, what more should they do?





This consultation closes on 1st September 2022



You can take part by emailing your answers to these questions to:

public sexual harassment consultation

You can also use this e-mail address to ask any questions about the consultation.



The main consultation has 17 questions and you can find it here:

home office surveys