# You Said, We Did

### Women and Girls’ Safety Surveys

In 2021 Southwark Council’s Safer Communities Team conducted its first ever Women’s Safety Consultation. To learn about women’s experiences in the borough and understand how safe women feel living, working, going to school and travelling in Southwark.

Findings provided invaluable information about how to improve the safety of all women in Southwark. For this, we want to thank you.

### How Southwark Council responded

The 2021 survey – alongside Police crime data – identified five key locations disproportionately impacted by violence against women and girls (VAWG). These were:

1. Peckham (Rye Lane)

2. Surrey Quays

3. Walworth (Burgess Park)

4. Tooley Street

5. Elephant and Castle.

Police Designing-Out Crime Officers carried out Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) in each of the five areas to determine, and then deliver appropriate actions to reduce crime and improve women’s safety.

The results of the survey further served as an evidence-base, used by Southwark Council to support its applications to the Home Office Safer Street Three Fund and Home Office Safer Street Four Fund, both of which were successful.

In 2023, following a data review by police, the areas above were reconfirmed “hotspots” and a new version of the survey was launched, expanding upon initial inquiries to provide a current and up-to-date understanding of women’s safety issues in Southwark.

The survey obtained more than 700 responses and informed the strategy for the delivery of Environmental Visual Audits recommendations, a work which is currently underway to improve areas of the borough where women have said they feel unsafe.

The work so far has focused on:

• Deep clean of streetscapes to remove graffiti and detritus from the footpath and road.

• Review current street lighting to ensure it is operational.

• CTTV system review and enhanced observation.

• Engaged with local businesses and market traders to remove goods/packaging from the footpath to ensure pavements are clear with improved visibility and prevent areas of concealment.

• Relocation or cutting back of street planters and overgrown shrubbery to improve sight lines and reduce areas of concealment.

• Ongoing partnership work with police, businesses, statutory and third sector organisations focusing on crime prevention and violence against women’s initiatives

### Continuous Action

The 2024 Women’s Safety Survey is one part of Southwark Council’s wider commitment to tackle misogyny and violence against women and girls.

Women’s safety in public spaces initiatives are also in place by engaging with businesses in the borough, such as the Women’s Safety Charter, Save Havens and awareness sessions delivered to business in the nighttime economy.

Hence, there has been continuous action to improve women’s safety in the borough.

Since the 2023 consultation, we commissioned Refuge to deliver a new support service to tackle domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. Refuge provides confidential, non-judgemental, and independent support services for those experiencing gender-based violence. For anyone living in Southwark.

• A specialist independent gender-based violence advocacy (IGVA) team to support those at risk of serious harm

• A specialist housing independent domestic abuse advocate (IDVA)

• A specialist Identification and Referrals to Improve Safety (IRIS) advocate educator programme for those accessing support for domestic abuse through their GP

• Access to adult one-to-one counselling and children’s therapy with partners Bede House

• A sanctuary scheme to improve home safety

• Group support

To access the service: Telephone: 0118 214 7150; Email: sdas@refuge.org.uk

For more information visit: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

### Our Commitment

Reducing Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls is a key priority for the Council and the statutory Community Safety Partnership and a Council Delivery Plan commitment. The Council Delivery Plan 2022-26 includes a commitment to transform the way that support, and intervention are made available to victims, survivors and perpetrators.

As well as commissioning a new service, the transformation process aims to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement across the system of services and access points for people experiencing and engaging in domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. Our aim is to improve relationships and networks across local networks to support long-term change.