

## Results of the PCC Violence Against Women and Girls Survey

In August, Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, launched a survey to find out the extent of violence and abuse being perpetrated against women and girls in Kent, including online. He also wanted to know how safe women and girls felt in different aspects of their lives.

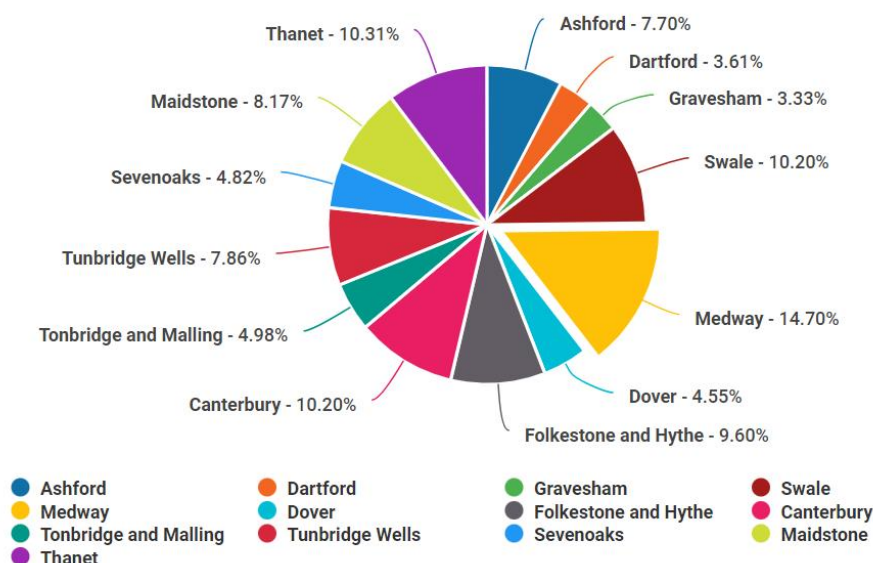
The questionnaire was open for 3 months, during which time 8,263 people filled it in. This is an unprecedented number of respondents for a questionnaire launched by the PCC and attracted answers from all age groups and ethnicities. Anyone over the age of 16 was invited to respond. Just over 93% of those who did were women, with just over 3.5% men and the rest either preferring not to disclose or identifying as non-binary or other.

The questionnaire was anonymous, but we did ask some general questions about the respondents, namely how old they were, in which district they lived and their ethnicity. The overwhelming majority of respondents (88.6%) were white British, with 5.6% identifying as BAME or mixed race, 4% as white but not British and 1% preferring not to disclose.

There was a wide spread of different age groups completing the survey:

17 or younger		15.99%	1,311
18-20		3.48%	285
21-29		13.95%	1,144
30-39		20.53%	1,683
40-49		19.10%	1,566
50-59		14.73%	1,208
60-69		8.03%	658
70 or older		4.20%	344

As there was for districts respondents lived in:



## We asked people how safe they felt at night and in the day.

We divided this down into categories, for example in your local street, or in public spaces, eg: railway stations, bus stations or in open spaces like parks.

Perhaps unsurprisingly all women and girls feel safer during the day. However, the survey suggests the older you are, the safer you feel in most places – ‘online’ being an exception.

According to our data, on average the ‘18-20’ cohort feel the least safe in 7 out of 12 places **at night**.

However, if you compare different age groups during **the day**, it is the ‘17 and under’ cohort who feel least safe in 6 out of 12 places.

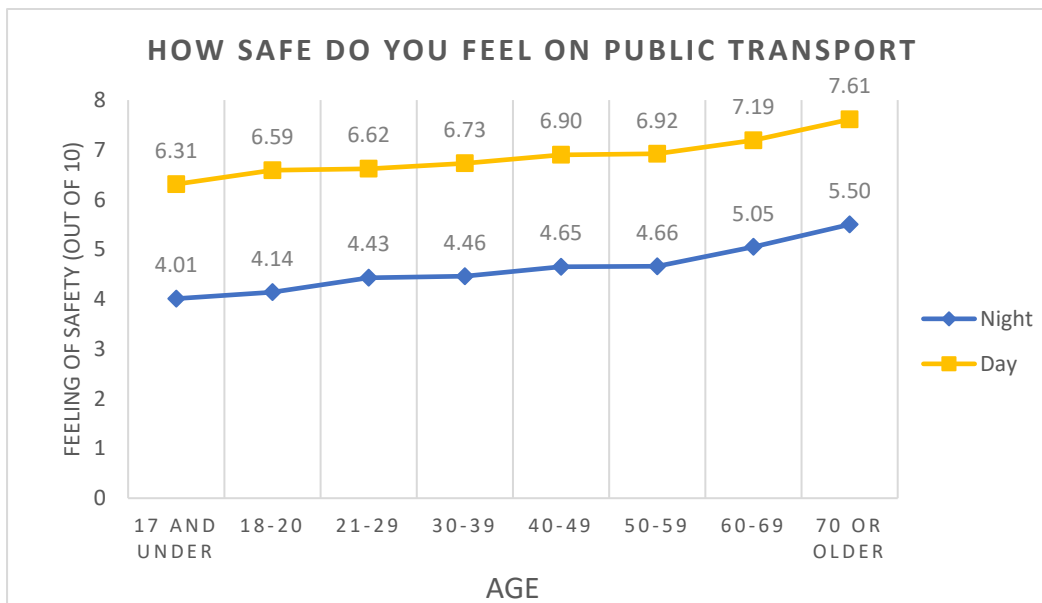
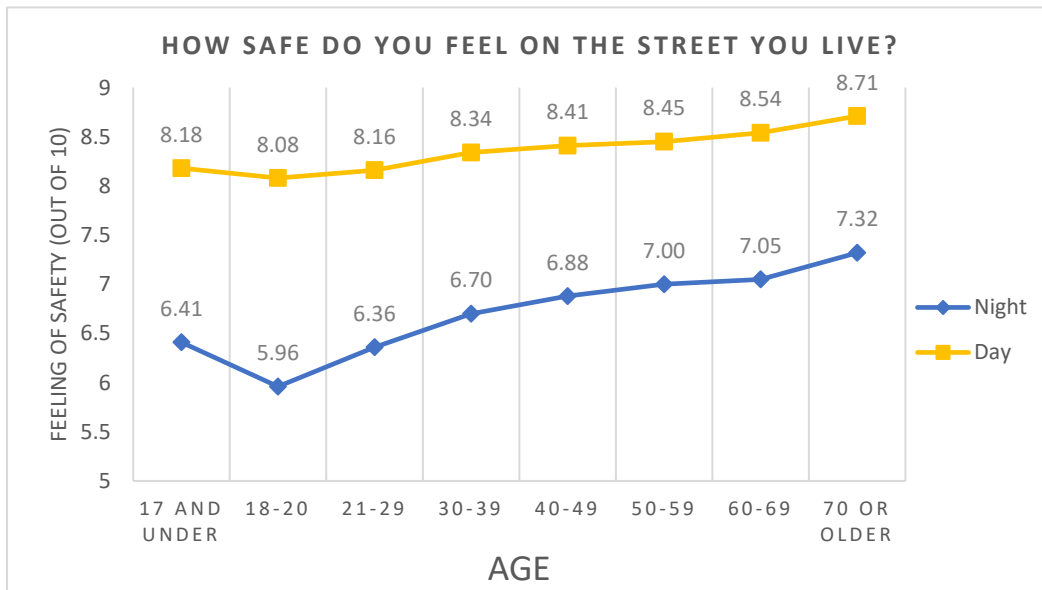
The ‘70 or older’ category felt the safest in 8 out of 12 areas, both during the **day** and at **night**.

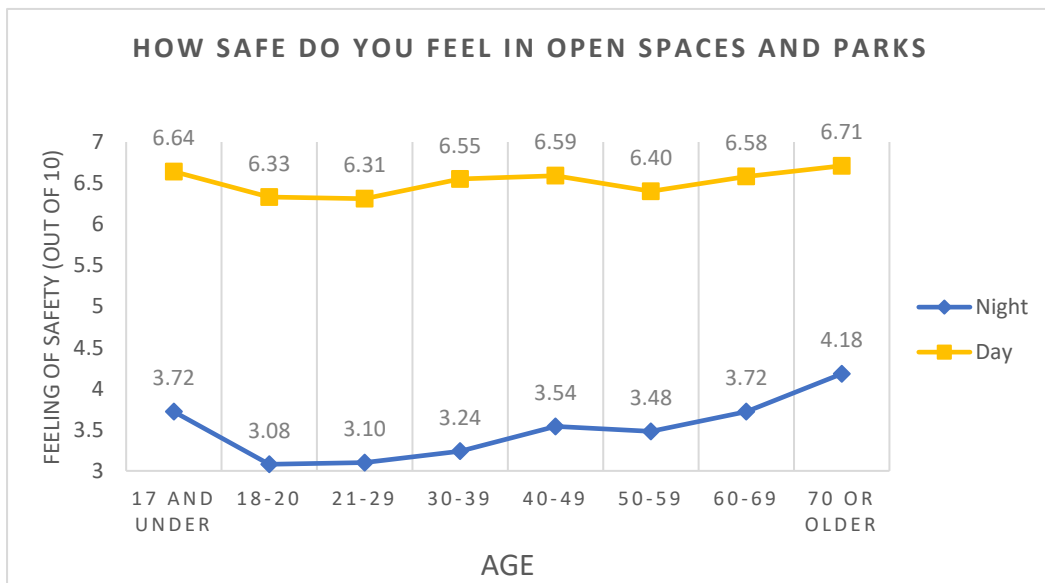
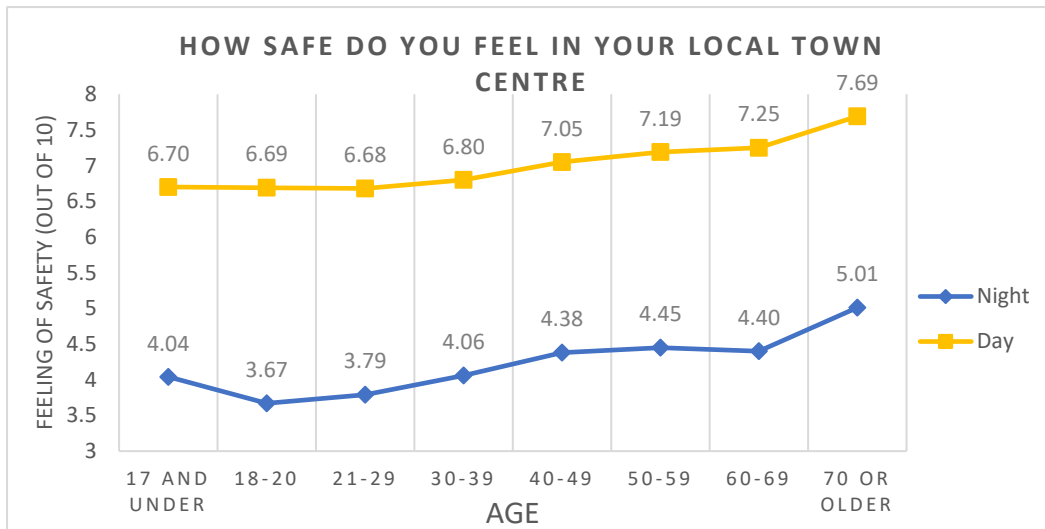
Below are tables showing feelings of safety at night and in the day. The lowest score in each area is highlighted in red and the highest score in green to give a clearer visual of the trends seen:

How safe do you feel <b>at night</b> (1 being very unsafe to 10 being very safe)	17 and under	18-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or older
In the street you live	6.41	5.96	6.36	6.70	6.88	7.00	7.05	7.32
Your local town centre	4.04	3.67	3.79	4.06	4.38	4.45	4.40	5.01
On public transport	4.01	4.14	4.43	4.46	4.65	4.66	5.05	5.50
At your local railway station	3.67	3.72	3.98	3.99	4.19	4.27	4.67	5.11
In Kent generally	4.53	4.29	4.71	5.05	5.21	5.21	5.52	5.96
At Taxi ranks	3.70	3.57	4.01	4.27	4.61	4.50	4.87	5.53
At Bus stations	3.79	3.42	3.70	3.84	4.05	4.06	4.36	4.95
In Parks and open spaces	3.72	3.08	3.10	3.24	3.54	3.48	3.72	4.18
In your own home	8.84	8.45	8.26	8.31	8.45	8.37	8.44	8.39
At your work place	7.47	7.62	7.87	7.97	8.13	8.04	8.01	7.82
At your place of education (School, college, University)	7.47	7.20	7.28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Online	7.12	7.12	7.24	7.49	7.42	7.23	7.14	6.75

How safe do you feel <b>in the day</b> (1 being very unsafe to 10 being very safe)	17 and under	18-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or older
In the street you live	8.18	8.08	8.16	8.34	8.41	8.45	8.54	8.71
Your local town centre	6.70	6.69	6.68	6.80	7.05	7.19	7.25	7.69
On public transport	6.31	6.59	6.62	6.73	6.90	6.92	7.19	7.61
At your local railway station	6.02	6.42	6.54	6.66	6.75	6.77	7.16	7.40
In Kent generally	6.55	6.59	6.75	6.97	7.08	7.07	7.31	7.54
At Taxi ranks	5.63	5.95	6.26	6.59	6.75	6.66	7.05	7.18
At Bus stations	6.17	6.25	6.26	6.47	6.61	6.54	6.86	7.12
In Parks and open spaces	6.64	6.33	6.31	6.55	6.59	6.40	6.58	6.71
In your own home	9.31	9.14	9.02	9.01	8.99	8.88	8.96	8.94
At your work place	8.22	8.33	8.61	8.69	8.73	8.63	8.56	8.40
At your place of education (School, college, University)	8.25	8.26	8.24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Online	7.61	7.61	7.68	7.79	7.68	7.50	7.48	7.14

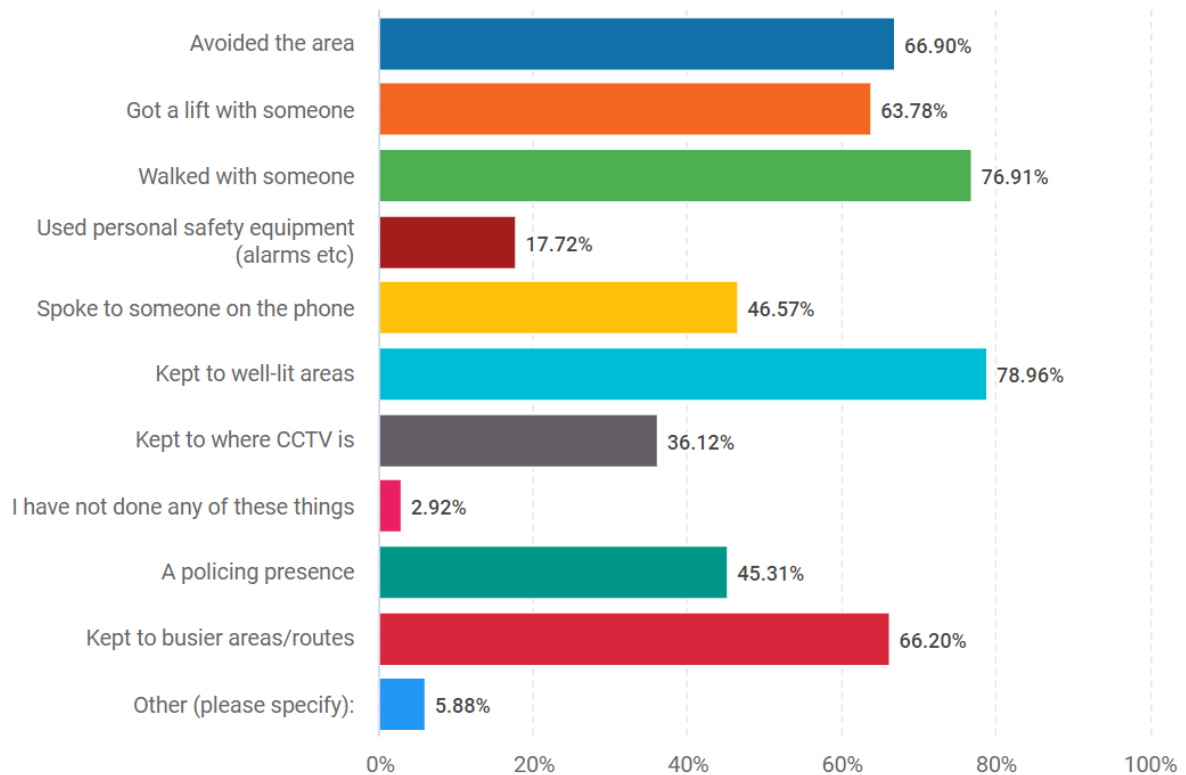
The charts below show feelings of safety at night and during the day in four selected categories: 'in the street you live', 'in your local town centre', 'on public transport', and 'in open spaces and parks'.





**We asked people what made them feel safer.**

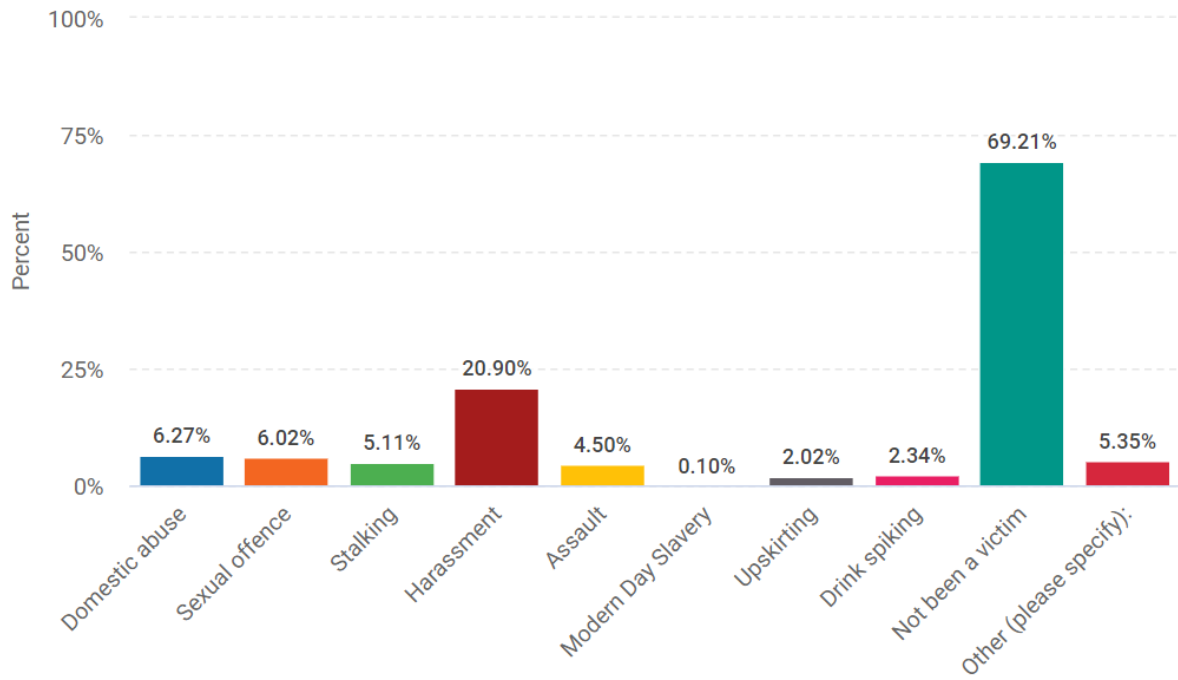
We asked whether people took precautions to increase their sense of security and the majority did. Many people employed several measures, but the vast majority either kept to well-lit areas or walked home with someone; many avoided areas or kept to busier streets. **Less than 3% of respondents (239 out of 8,184) took no action.**



**We asked if people had been a victim of crime in the last year.**

We accept that because of repeated lockdowns people have not been socialising as much as before, however we gave people crime types they could select from, for example: domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, up-skirting, drink spiking, and online abuse.

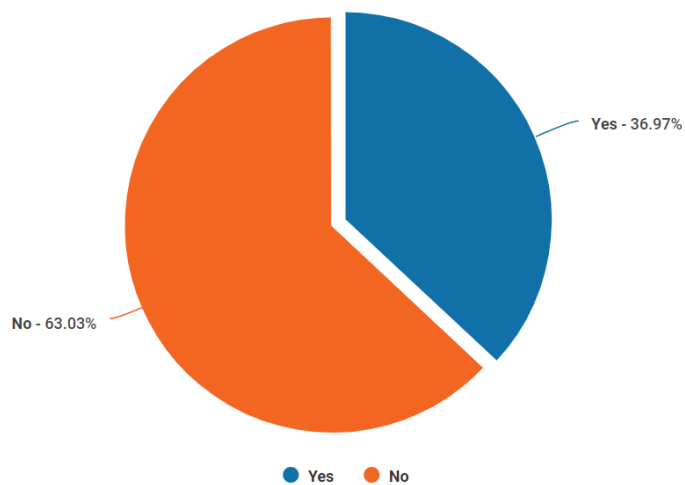
The good news is that the majority of respondents had not been a victim of crime (69%), but that does not detract from the high number of people who said they had. Some have been a victim of several crimes. Younger women in particular reported they'd been a victim of harassment.



**We asked those victims if they had reported crimes to any organisation.**

Only just under 37% had reported these crimes. When asked why the others did not, the narrative repeatedly suggested they didn't think they would be believed, or they didn't think it would be taken seriously, or they felt it would have been too hard to prove, or it would have been her word against another's.

Did you report the crime to any organisation?



## We asked those who did report if they were satisfied with the results.

We compared police response, the courts and crown prosecution service and services like Victim Support. Most respondents had not engaged with these processes, but of those who did, more were dissatisfied with the outcomes than satisfied.

Answer Choices	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Response Total
Kent Police	19.36% 399	24.41% 503	56.23% 1,159	2,061
Crown Prosecution Service	4.13% 81	11.72% 230	84.15% 1,651	1,962
HM Courts and Tribunal Service	2.98% 58	10.79% 210	86.23% 1,678	1,946
Victim Support	13.32% 263	13.47% 266	73.22% 1,446	1,975
Other service	9.74% 182	10.38% 194	79.88% 1,493	1,869

If you eliminate the N/A in each category, satisfaction rates were particularly low with the Crown Prosecution Service (74% unsatisfied) and HM Courts and Tribunal Service (78% unsatisfied). Just over 55% were unsatisfied with the Police and 50% with Victim Support.

## We also asked people to tell us about their experiences and provide us with any feedback.

We received overwhelming feedback in our narrative questions, and these have all been read by OPCC staff and will feed into Matthew Scott's wider inquiry. Here is a selection of some of the responses in this field.

*"I was grabbed by a man while walking down the road and he grabbed me in places he shouldn't. When I tried to report this no one helped."* **17 and under, Maidstone.**

*"I was touched inappropriately in a club without consent, when I reported to club staff they said to take it as a compliment. Was a horrible experience and happens far too often, police should make efforts to train event staff for this sort of occurrence."* **21-29, Tonbridge & Malling**

*"From the age of 10 I have been constantly harassed on the streets, being shouted at, whistled at, followed."* **18-20, Tunbridge Wells**

*"I have been stalked, harassed, intimidated and groped, all done by white men, none of them faced consequences. The only time I tried to report stalking and feared for my life I was told that unless he 'does' something, police hands are tied. Should girls and women be stabbed and raped for their concern to be taken seriously?"* **30-39, Maidstone**

*"Police were positive to proceed for a charge, but 7 years of stalking & threats and CPS said no."* **21-29, Folkestone & Hythe**

*"I am a survivor of historic rape. Even though I knew who raped me and I could give a detailed account of what happened, the CPS didn't take it to court because there was a lack of evidence. How is the percentage of rape cases going to court ever going to increase if the CPS don't give these kind of cases a chance for the jury to decide whether the perpetrator was guilty? I was 12 years old when I was raped - justice has not been served."* **50-59, Canterbury**

*"CPS need to be tougher on crimes."* **21-29, Thanet**

**We asked about our partner agencies, like local authorities, charities, and support groups. We wondered how these partners could improve services for women and girls in Kent.**

Again, we had a great deal of feedback on this matter. Here is a selection of comments which emerged:

*"My partner lives in Germany parts of the year and I go with him a lot. The streets there are all very well-lit and I feel this makes a tremendous difference and the streets have more going on, i.e. because people will go out in well-lit communities which in turn become safer communities."* **60-69, Thanet**

*"The courts I feel have not done enough to stick to their word. I have been in and out of court with my son over ten times and still not resolved due to the offender not turning up. They have not been dealt with appropriately and a year and a half later still not finished."* **30-39, Tonbridge & Malling**

*"...of all the stories shared with me, none of them have received justice through the system as the onus is on them to enter another traumatising environment, have a spotlight shone on their already fragile sense of self and lay themselves open for more attacks, on the basis of lack of clear cut evidence for crimes that are murky, multifaceted and don't stand up to a black and white approach. The system is not set up for victims of such crimes; so few people receive justice due to a lack of evidence."* **40-49, Tunbridge Wells**

*"Many eateries have the 'Ask Angela' scheme, something similar to this should be encouraged on public transport, not only between travellers and workers but commuter to commuter. We can all make one another feel more safe if we know what to look out for."* **21-29, Sevenoaks**

**We asked which public spaces should be improved to make women and girls feel safer.**

*The main themes that came up here were police presence, better lighting and CCTV in many areas across Kent.*

*Some examples were: Brenchley Gardens, Chatham High street, surrounding residential areas in many towns once people left the high street on nights out, Dane John Gardens, Albany Park, Cliftonville, Pencester Gardens, Ashford town centre, more staff at railway stations with open waiting rooms, Bus stations, Jubilee Square, Trinity Park, Whatman Park, Mote Park, Westgate Towers, Dartford Heath, alley ways and car parks."*



## We asked how we better educate, at an early age, that violence is not acceptable in our society.

Here is a selection of the responses:

*"...I believe that education at home and in school is key. This needs to be tackling basic prejudices and stereotypes around gender roles to breakdown toxic masculinity so that boys are encouraged from a young age to see girls as their equals. Microbehaviours need addressing early on - no more 'don't cry' to boys, no more 'you run like a girl', no more 'boys will be boys'"* **40-49, Tunbridge Wells.**

*"Role play in health lessons, to demonstrate to boys how it is appropriate to talk/approach girls and for girls to voice how they feel in certain situations."* **21-29, Dover**

*"I would like agencies such as police, victim support etc to give talks in schools to show students what happens when crimes, especially sexual crimes, are reported. I think a lot of victims are still worried about reporting things to the police as they are worried about what will happen. We need to break down these barriers and reassure people that they will be treated fairly and with respect."* **50-59, Ashford**

## Questions asked but not included in this report:

### We asked if victims had been referred to any specialist support organisation:

Yes		23.07%	397
No		76.93%	1,324

### We asked if when crimes against women and girls are reported nationally, more could be done to reassure people in Kent?

Yes		75.91%	3,980
No		24.18%	1,268
If so, what?	<b>3,111</b>		
Answered: 5,243 Skipped: 3,020		Response Total:	5,243