

REPORT PROFILE

Swindon Community Safety Partnership approached Voluntary Action Swindon to gather feedback on how safe people generally feel out and about in Swindon. Two surveys were carried out: one to gather information from adults and one directed at younger people. This is the adult survey results; the youth results will be published separately.

CONTACT DETAILS

PHONE:
01793 538398

WEBSITE:
info@vas-swindon.org

EMAIL:
carol@vas-swindon.org

DATE OF REPORT

June 2022



Following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021. The Government published its new strategy [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls](#). In July 2021, Swindon Community Partnership successfully secured Safer Street Funding, and carried out a survey directed at females. For further feedback, the Partnership decided to carry out further surveys, one directed at adults in general and another aimed at gathering the views of young people. This report outlines the key findings from the Adult Survey.

The survey opened on 1st March 2022 and closed 25th March.

602 responses were returned.

DEMOGRAPHICS – full breakdown in Appendix A

Gender

Most responses 78% (466), were from females with 21% (127), from males and 1% (6) preferring not to say, 3 declined to answer.

Age

Most responses were from the 31 – 70 age group, with a few outside of this range:

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Under 18 | 0.17% | 1 |
| 18 - 30 | 13.38% | 80 |
| 31 - 50 | 46.15% | 276 |
| 51 - 70 | 34.78% | 208 |
| Over 71 | 5.52% | 33 |
| TOTAL | | 598 |

Ethnicity

89% (528) of responses were returned from those stating to be White British or other White Background, 9.6% (57) of responses were from other backgrounds and ethnicities with 2% (16) being Indian. 10 declined to answer this question.

Postcode

Most responses came from SN3, followed by SN1, SN2, SN5 and SN25.

KEY FINDINGS

The views included in this section are gathered exclusively from the people who completed the Safer Street Survey and contain no views or opinions from Voluntary Action Swindon. Any quotes are direct, although spellings have been corrected for ease of reading. Some questions provided more than one comment for each person, so the comments do not necessarily add up to the number of responses received.

OUT & ABOUT

29 people out of the 439 that provided an answer stated they are happy to go out and about in Swindon at any time, day or night, and feel safe.

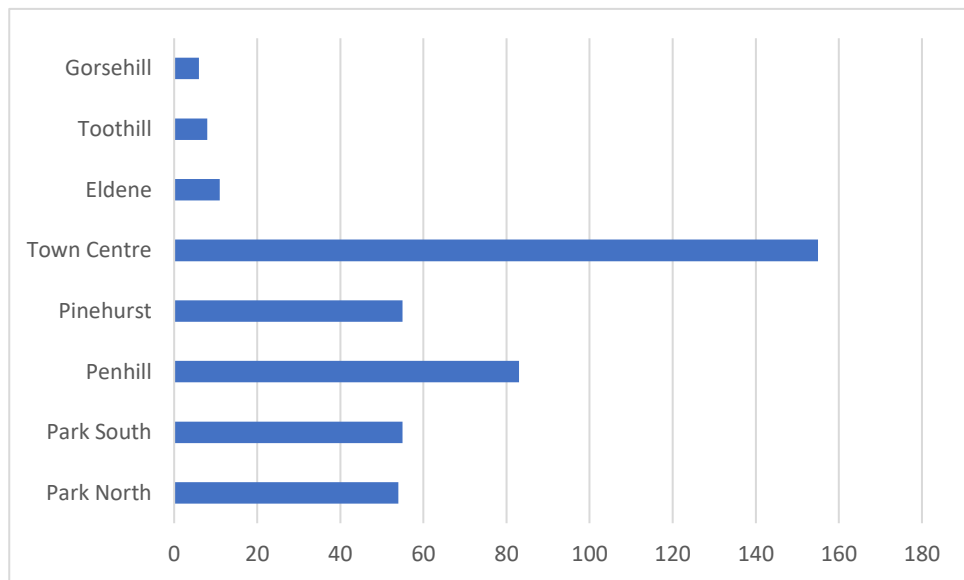
Daytime Generally

65% of the 524 people that answered this question felt safer out and about in Swindon during day light.

After Dark Generally

This drops to 30% of 509 people feeling safe after dark.

When asked if there were any areas of Swindon that people would feel unsafe to visit. The following areas were reported:



Numbers shown in percentage along the bottom of the graph. Hover on the bar line for exact numbers.

The town centre is the area most people completing the survey reported not feeling safe. Comments received that people 'only go if completely necessary', 'would only go during the day'.

After the town centre, people often quoted the 'P's' - representing Parks, Penhill, Pinehurst. Gorsehill, Toothill and Eldene came up less often, other areas were stated but received less than 5 mentions each.

Specific Areas Reported

As well as geographical areas, people also commented on specific areas in which they felt unsafe. The town centre after dark had the most mentions with 60 people commenting that they wouldn't go to the town centre after dark.

The bottom of town including Bridge Street, Fleet Street, Faringdon Road, streets within the old Railway Village and Cambria Bridge area received 43 comments, some concerned about drug dealing and homeless people 'hanging around' in this area.

Manchester Road and Broadgreen area received 18 comments. Specifically, people 'hanging around' outside William Hill.

Other problems areas in the town centre included the area outside Tesco, particularly after dark. Also Wharf Green outside of McDonalds where young people congregate and can seem intimidating.

Town centre parks were also areas for concern, specifically Faringdon Road Park (GWR) and Queen's Park, because of drinkers 'hanging around'.

Most people seemed to feel safe at the train station, with only 2 negative comments from this question. Whilst the bus station is of concern to 15 people.

8 people were concerned about Wood Street and Old Town after dark, particularly on a Friday and Saturday evening.

36 people stated that they avoid alleyways, unlit areas, underpasses, and cycle paths, particularly after dark. The cycle path from Cheney Manor to the town centre was causing the most concern with comments from 10 people.

Car parks are causing concern for 12 people; comments stating that people are begging under the pay meters, specifically in the car park by the magistrates' court and the walk through between the Bridge Street Car Parks.

Other areas mentioned, but not more than 5 times were: Coate Water Park, Asda West Swindon, Sevenfields, Lady Lane in Blunsdon, Shops in Upper Stratton, The Meads at Eldene, Badbury Park and Cavendish Square.

Explain Why You Feel Unsafe?

409 people responded to this question. Some people have reported more than one reason.

Two people mentioned not feeling safe because of poor mobility and fearing they may fall on the uneven pavements and loose pavement tiles in the town centre.

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

Poor lighting is causing issues for those with poor visibility and was raised by one person.

| Reason for Feeling Unsafe | No. of People Reporting this Reason |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Fear of crime. | 119 |
| Drug addicts in town centre / open dealing. | 79 |
| Drunks including street drinkers / outside of pubs. | 71 |
| Poor street lighting – feedback that any replacement lighting is not as bright. | 67 |
| Youth issues – hanging around in gangs, harassing and intimidating. | 57 |
| People hanging around in groups for no apparent reason, particularly in town centre. An additional 11 reporting men hanging around outside pubs. | 54 + 11 |
| Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) | 50 |
| Town centre badly maintained with uneven ground, loose pavement tiles, litter, looks dirty and messy, uncared for, generally poor atmosphere, constant smell of cannabis. | 36 |
| Bad reputations of different areas (not necessarily true). Influence of press coverage on these areas. | 31 |
| Rough sleepers begging, leaving rubbish behind. | 27 |
| Gangs, fear they are carrying knives, carrying out criminal activity. | 27 |
| Bike / scooter, particularly in town centre not being controlled and prevalently being used for drug dealing. | 25 |
| No Police presence (both town centre and residential areas). | 23 |
| Experience of harassment and abusive shouting. | 22 |
| Empty shops / wrong type of shops attracting the wrong type of people. The following shop types were named: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vape • Too many charity/community shops • Mobile unlocking shops • Gambling | 19 |
| No / limited footfall in town centre, especially at night – making the town less inviting. | 17 |
| Fear (having been a victim of or witnessed an attack). | 16 |
| No CCTV in town centre. | 9 |
| Ethnicity. | 7 |
| Trees / shrubs overgrown. | 6 |
| Poor social housing / Houses of Multiple Occupancies (HMO's) in amongst private housing causing issues. | 2 |

Direct quotes provided from this question:

“Empty shops with smashed windows and excessive numbers of dodgy shops like vape shops and mobile phone “unlocking” shops create an air of menace and attract a rough population. There are very few decent outlets anywhere in the town centre that attract nice people and families, which leaves only the drunks and drug dealers, or people who have no option but to use what few facilities there are left in the town centre, because they can’t go elsewhere. For example, I really like the Rios restaurant, but I find it too menacing to walk there in the evenings.”

“Poorly lit and poorly maintained. Lots of homeless and drunk people often unwelcoming and unpleasant.”

“Whatever the time of day, I always feel unsafe in these areas because of the drug and alcohol abuse that takes place there. The drunk men on the stairways of the car park at 8 am are just as terrifying particularly when there is no one around. There are so many “abandoned” areas of the town centre now, which makes it feel like an unsafe place to be alone.”

“As a woman I don’t feel that Swindon is safe for me generally.”

What Would Make You Feel Safer?

408 people answered this question, with some people suggesting more than one thing. The top suggestions were:

249 people would feel safer with a greater police presence or uniformed security, more so after dark, with 5 wanting uniformed attendants in town car parks. There was also a call for more community policing with named officers to contact, one wanted to see more community development. More police patrols on foot, with generally more visibility. An additional 12 people called for tougher punishments for ASB / other crime.

150 people would like to see improved street lighting, stating that it is essential to have all underpasses in the town well lit, replacement bulbs being replaced quickly. The new replacement lights were mentioned with people saying they are not as effective.

There was a call from 85 people to rid the streets of drunks, drug dealers and beggars, particularly in the town centre. Of these 85, 21 of these would like to see dispersal orders in the town centre to stop groups of youth, men and dealers gathering, an additional 4 would like to see more support for the homeless.

“The town centre is fast becoming a transient area with room lets etc and less and less family homes. There are unsavoury people hanging around even in daytime. A male friend of mine walked through the area in daylight and said it was the first time he “felt concerned” as there were gangs hanging around.”

66 people would like to see better and more visible use of CCTV, particularly in the town centre and in sheltered housing. Other suggestions were for use of patrolling drones, a safe place or emergency button.

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

A call for more things for youths to do was suggested by 25, with people believing that young people would be less inclined to hang around in gangs, cause less trouble and commit less crime if they had more positive activities to engage in.

“Better street lighting, more police presence to disperse groups of young people engaging in antisocial behaviour.”

A call for general improvements to the town centre was suggested by 38 people, including regeneration, more vibrancy to attract more footfall, better shops and improved pavements for better access. 19 wanted to see cleaner streets, less fly tipping and rubbish left in the streets.

“The whole area needs to be uplifted with better quality offerings, so that people, other than the beggars, drunks and druggies will be attracted there. No more cheap shops, vape shops, phone accessory shops or barbers. These do not improve the town centre environment at all.”

“Busier streets. If there were restaurants, bars, cafes that would mean that there are more people around, that would make me feel much more comfortable.”

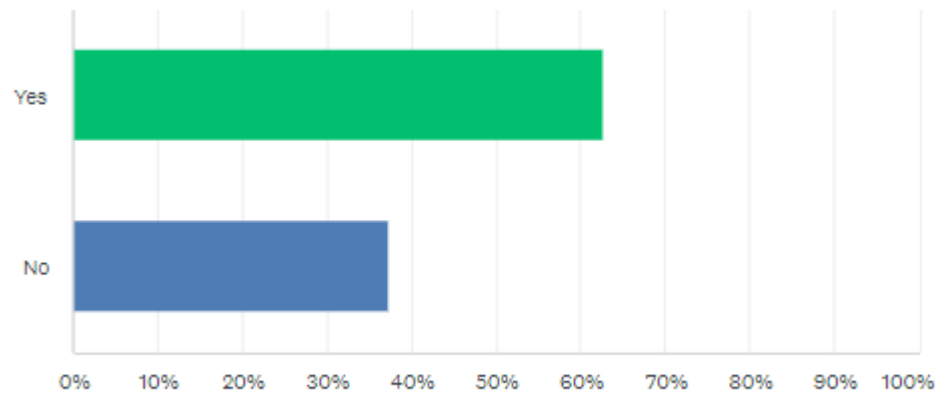
“The more we accept that the streets are unsafe, the less we use them, so they are more neglected. The streets need to look better so people can take pride in them and feel more like wanting to go out into them”

The rest of the suggestions came up less than 10 times and are listed here:

| What Would Make You Feel Safer? | No. of People Reporting this Reason |
|---|--|
| More police / security on the streets / car park attendants / tougher penalties | 261 |
| Improved street lighting | 150 |
| Removal drunks, dealers, homeless & beggars/dispersal orders | 89 |
| Surveillance | 62 |
| Town improvements – uplift / more choice / more vibrancy for increased footfall/ better shops / improve pavements /demolish | 38 |
| Youth activities | 25 |
| Cleaner streets | 19 |
| Trees, bushes and shrubs trimmed for better vision | 8 |
| Ban bikes / scooters | 6 |
| Improve infrastructure on new estates | 4 |
| Better housing / no social housing in private areas | 4 |
| Don't know | 20 |

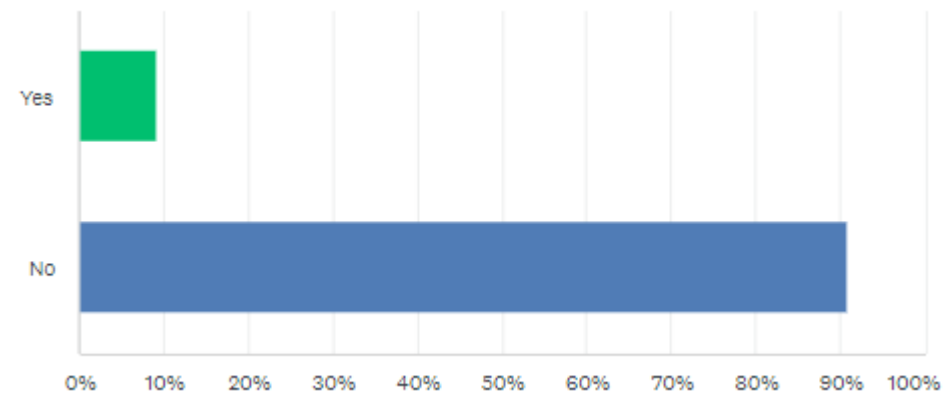
USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN SWINDON

Do you feel safe at the bus station during the day/after dark?



448 people answered this question, 63% of people felt safe at the bus station during the day.

This falls to less than 10% after dark.



Waiting at the bus stop?

During day light of the 447 that answered 78% felt safe. After dark this dropped to 15%.

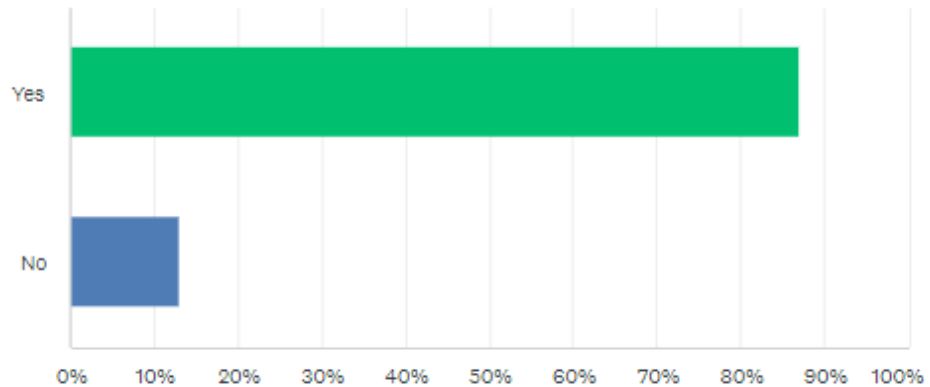
Whilst on the bus?

84% felt safe once on the bus during the day, after dark this drops to 44%.

Using the train service

Do you feel safe using the train station during the day/after dark?

This question was answered by 455 people, 87% felt safe doing so during the day.



After dark this drops to 41% feeling safe.

Whilst on the train during the day

89% felt safe.

After dark

This figure drops to 55% feeling safe.

Using a taxi service

359 of those responding regularly used a taxi, 75% of these felt safe during the day, dropping to 53% feeling safe after dark.

Do you feel safe using Swindon town centre car parks?

Of the 393 that answered this question, 73% felt safe during the day, dropping to 17% feeling safe after dark.

Why don't you feel safe using public transport?

303 people commented on this question (some raised comments on more than one issue).

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

| Why Don't You Feel Safe on Using Public Transport? | No. of People Reporting this Reason |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| People hanging around. Groups of beggars, drunks, drug users, homeless, rough sleepers, leering men, youths hanging around the bus station. Groups can kick off at each other too. | 129 |
| Too dark –47 saying not lit well enough in car parks, with an additional 17 saying there is no CCTV. | 64 |
| Crime – 16 had previous direct experience of crime with an additional 22 more fearing crime, referring to the bus station and car parks. | 38 |
| Flithy – dirty/unclean (particularly bus station and car parks) | 35 |
| No staff | 35 |
| Footfall too quiet /feel too isolated. | 23 |
| I'm a lone female . | 14 |

Bus Station

Most people that commented, were speaking about the bus station, and the number of groups of people that were hanging around there, with no staff to challenge or move them on. People also felt that this combined with the low footfall of people using the buses, made them feel unsafe generally. This increases significantly after dark.

“The bus station is horrendous. I got the coach back from London on 5th March, when I got off the coach at 5:15 in the evening, there was 15 street drinkers all on the bench drinking, drunk, smoking, shouting and harassing people as they were getting off the coach. It was not pleasant and didn't feel safe at all. Not a good impression for anyone visiting Swindon. There needs to be CCTV and police visiting frequently or manned kiosks there to deter these people away. Not to mention the state of it is also really run down so attracts these sorts of people.”

Car Parks

The same sort of concerns coming up, with people hanging around and feeling intimidated. Spring Garden's was mentioned 8 times in feedback. Complaints included not being well lit, no CCTV being used, bottles and drug paraphernalia being left around, people sleeping in the stairwells, begging at machines.

Some suggested alarms being fitted or some sort of access to help.

A lot commented that they only use 'open' parking spaces.

“Spring Gardens car park has a long history of anti-social behaviour due to proximity to Booth House and Job Centre. Improved lighting but still a hang out spot for street drinkers. Never see any monitoring by e.g. Security/ PCSOs etc.”

“They (car parks) are filthy run down nasty looking places. I’ve been approached by homeless people near the payment machines. There are items of bedding in Fleming Street multi-storey car park and the stairwell smells of urine. Commercial road car park looks like a warzone. The town centre is a disgrace and I refuse visit or take my children there.”

Taxis

Four people stated that taxis don’t feel safe, and they wouldn’t get in one on their own.

Other comments received:

“drive too fast and take strange routes”

“taxis are dirty and not welcoming”

“don’t like it if I don’t know the route”

“Feel nervous in a taxi if a driver changes direction or takes a long time to get to my route”

“I am terrified of getting into a taxi because I feel that the driver might abduct and murder me and I am particularly haunted by the Halliwell case. Also taxi drivers lock the car doors. Last week a taxi driver continually called me 'darling' and I was afraid to tell him to stop it. Some drivers never talk but that is unnerving too. I don't feel safe.”

“The railway station parking for pick up and drop off is often abused by the taxi drivers, they do not use the ranks provided, some of their driving abilities are very questionable. Standards need to be higher. set the bar low and it remains low, raise the bar maybe people will rise to the challenge.”

Trains

The train service didn’t receive as much negativity, although 2 people mentioned there were too many drunks on return trains on a Saturday night, 4 mentioned there were no staff on the train at night to supervise return journeys. Also comments that getting to the car parks from the station was an issue after dark.

BEHAVIOURS & ATTITUDES

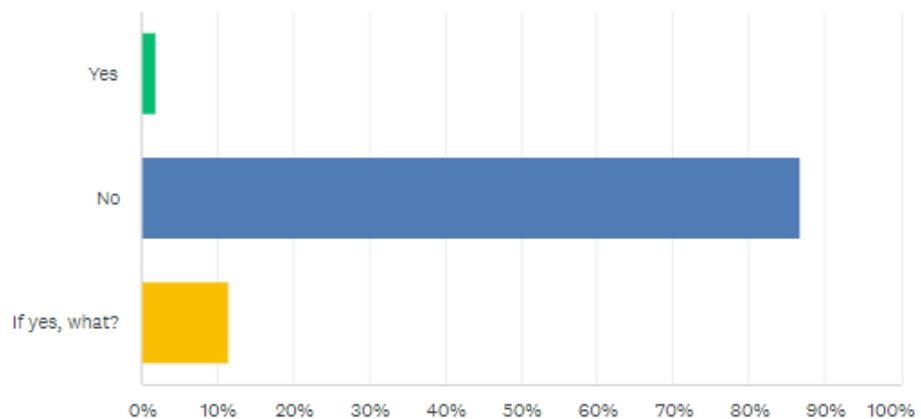
Have you ever done any of the following during the daytime to feel safe walking Swindon streets?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Stopped carrying a bag / handbag | 39.27% | 150 |
| Avoided using headphones | 63.09% | 241 |
| Carried a personal or rape alarm | 22.25% | 85 |
| Changed what you wear? For example, covered up more to feel safe. | 28.53% | 109 |
| Other | Responses | 30.10% 115 |
| Total Respondents: 382 | | |

And after dark?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Stopped carrying a bag / handbag | 51.42% | 217 |
| Avoided using headphones | 64.93% | 274 |
| Carried a rape or personal alarm | 30.33% | 128 |
| Changed what you wear? For example, covered up more to feel safe | 36.02% | 152 |
| Other | Responses | 36.97% 156 |
| Total Respondents: 422 | | |

Have you ever carried a weapon to protect yourself?



Reassuringly 87% of the 489 that answered this question have never carried a weapon to protect themselves.

Those that had carried weapons, usually adapted things they would be carrying anyway, house keys between fingers, perfume or hairspray, umbrella or walking stick.

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

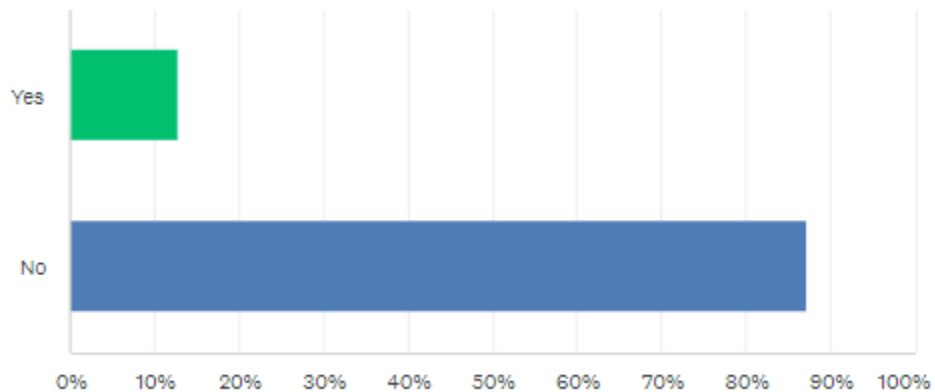
Others had more worryingly carried knives, scissors, screwdriver, knuckle duster, Swiss army knife, used their Mastiff dog or carried pepper spray.

Have you ever experienced harassment in any of the following ways?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|--|------------|
| Been insulted or shouted at by a stranger in public | 71.19% 294 |
| Experienced catcalls, wolf whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes from a stranger in public | 55.21% 228 |
| Felt that you were being followed | 60.29% 249 |
| Felt threatened by a stranger in a public space | 58.11% 240 |
| Experienced someone rubbing up against or touching you in public space or on public transport | 23.73% 98 |
| Experienced physical violence | 13.80% 57 |
| Felt coerced into certain behaviours | 7.99% 33 |
| Been a victim of indecent exposure | 19.37% 80 |
| Been a victim of up skirting | 1.45% 6 |
| Total Respondents: 413 | |

Have you ever been a victim of stalking?

492 answered this question, with 87% answering no, and 13% yes.



31% were stalked by someone they know/have known.
51% didn't report the incident.

Comments added include:

"I was told to choose partners better by 101."

"Didn't know how to."

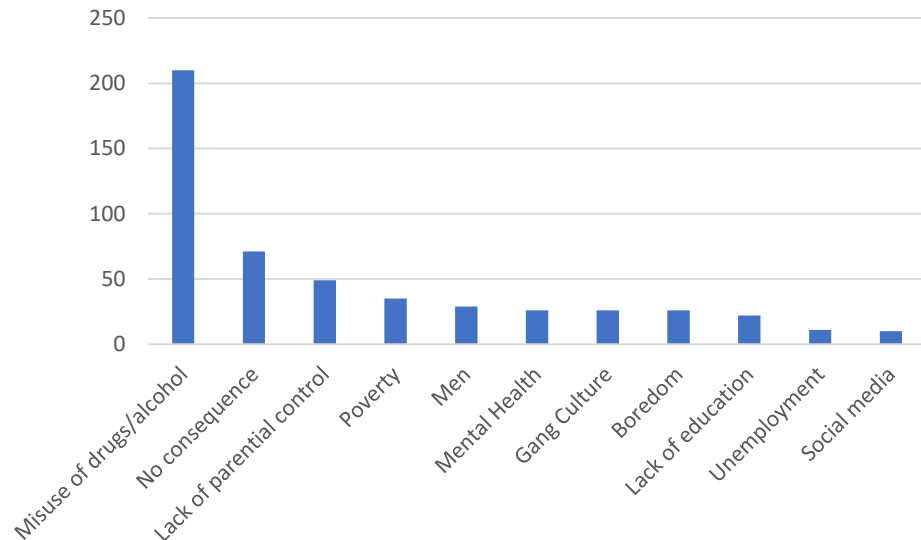
"Police didn't listen."

"101 said – ask them to stop, I ended up moving after not leaving my house for two years."

"Wasn't taken seriously."

What do you believe to be the main issues contributing to aggressive behaviour?

369 recipients responded to this question, providing the following information.



Misuse of drugs and alcohol came out top with 210 respondents seeing this as an issue. People stated that there seemed a general lack of support for addiction and a ‘normalised’ acceptance of people being out and about and drunk. Not only ‘street drinkers’ but also of groups of people out socialising and under the influence.

71 people said that there are no consequences for aggressive behaviour, with the general public not willing, or fearful of challenging inappropriate or aggressive behaviour, not enough police to move on or deal with issues and poor sentencing.

Lack of discipline within the family with little or no parental control, no respect, breakdown of the family unit and traumatic childhood experiences were named by 49 people.

Male attitudes, misogyny and the patriarchy came up 29 times.

“Boys and men not taught to respect or look out for women. Generally, there is little respect for others.”

“Attitudes to women, objectification and normalisation of aggressive behaviour, this and drug and alcohol abuse.”

“If you get away with small things like cat calling because it’s not a crime then you may believe you can get away with more abuse and violence and so it goes on.”

“That the person behaving like that can get away with it? I got flashed twice in the same 12 months on the cycleway behind Lidl, I've had my bike grabbed and belongings stolen in the underpass by the train station and been chased on that cycleway. I've been followed and shouted at around the railway village and experienced general antisocial behaviour whilst out, especially at night but also in daylight.”

How do you think aggressive behaviour should be challenged?

Feedback generally included a call for more police on the streets and patrolling on bike and foot.

“Better policing, education, support services and constructive youth activities.”

“More police; positive police presence; community support to encourage safer spaces”

Respondents would like to see ‘alcohol free zones’, dispersals order to stop people from congregating into aggressive groups and zero tolerance on open drug-dealing.

“The whole of Swindon stinks of weed. Stop allowing drugs to be normalised. Nobody is surprised to see dealers dealing in broad daylight anymore.”

“Zero tolerance/ dispersal orders.”

“Ban street drinking.”

“Clamp down on drug use, especially cocaine. We hear a lot about crack and heroin, but nothing is being done about cocaine. It is widely used in the pubs and picked up from the car parks. Clamp down on where people are getting it. Suspend the licenses of pubs that allow open drug use behaviours. Please start clamping down on pubs that serve drunks, just because they are regulars. It doesn't help them. “

A call for more community development, speaking to people, particularly youths to see what they would like to do.

“Be more proactive and not reactive. No trust in the community.”

Education – a call for behaviours to be tackled at school and by parents.

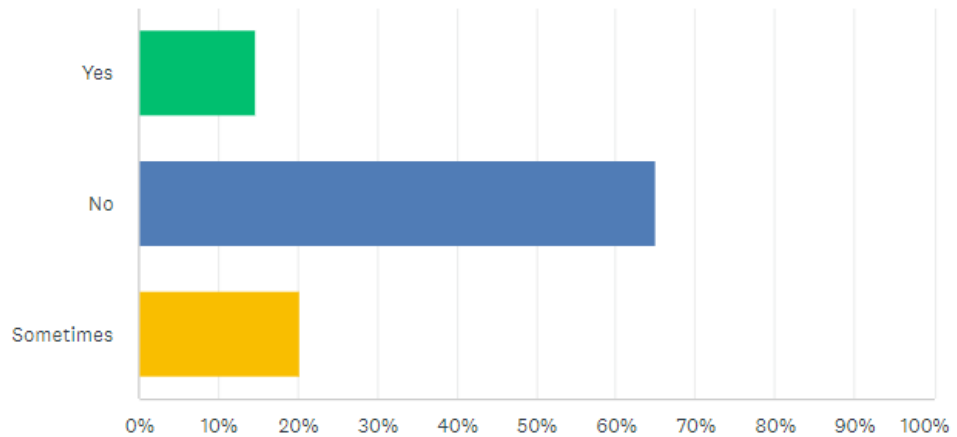
“Addressing attitudes of men and boys around consent and violence from a young age.”

“I think binge drinking is implicitly encouraged in popular culture. It is seen as 'the norm' and 'anti-fun' not to drink. I think challenging this would represent a start and believe that changing habits are already being advocated in the younger generations.”

“Improved parenting skills, spotting the problem early and getting help/intervention – re open children’s centres.”

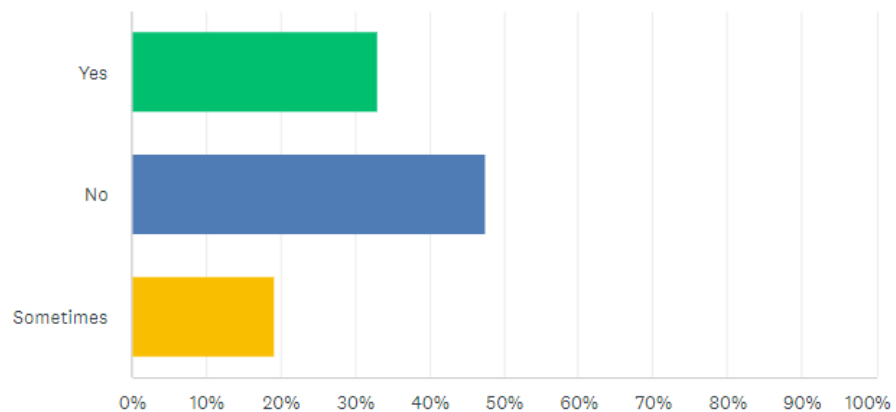
Do you ever feel restricted in what you wear? Covering up to feel safe? During the daytime?

This question was answered by 424 respondents, with 62 people feeling that they need to change what they would like to wear during the day, another 86 sometimes feel restricted in what they would choose to wear.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 14.62% | 62 |
| No | 65.09% | 276 |
| Sometimes | 20.28% | 86 |
| TOTAL | | 424 |

And after dark, this increases to 139 people having to change what they would like to wear, with a further 81 sometimes changing what they wear.



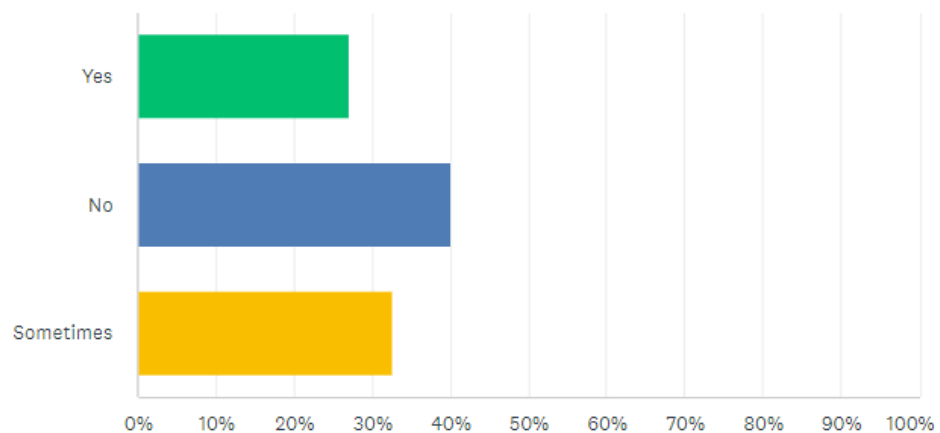
SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 33.10% | 139 |
| No | 47.62% | 200 |
| Sometimes | 19.29% | 81 |
| TOTAL | | 420 |

66% (284) thought that what you wear is a factor in how people view you, and that you would be judged because of this.

Do you feel you have to alter your behaviour around others?

428 respondents answered this question.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 27.10% | 116 |
| No | 40.19% | 172 |
| Sometimes | 32.71% | 140 |
| TOTAL | | 428 |

Why do you think it's necessary to alter your behaviour?

Comments from the 428 replies in response to altering behaviour tended to include words like 'avoid' and 'invisible':

- To **avoid** – disapproval, trouble, being picked on, becoming a target, misinterpretation, drawing attention to myself, men looking, being a flag for attention, confrontation, being judged, giving the wrong impression.
- Blending or trying to be **invisible** was also used – I don't want to be seen, don't want to be a target, to be less conspicuous, don't want to stand out.

Being safe/feeling safe was also another reason for altering behaviour:

- To protect myself, to ensure safety, for self-protection, to not become a victim.

Quotes include:

“Because until attitudes towards rape and assault and objectification of women change the responsibility to protect yourself is still there - which means sadly recognising the link between wearing some things and accepting that by choosing to do so you will receive unwanted attention.”

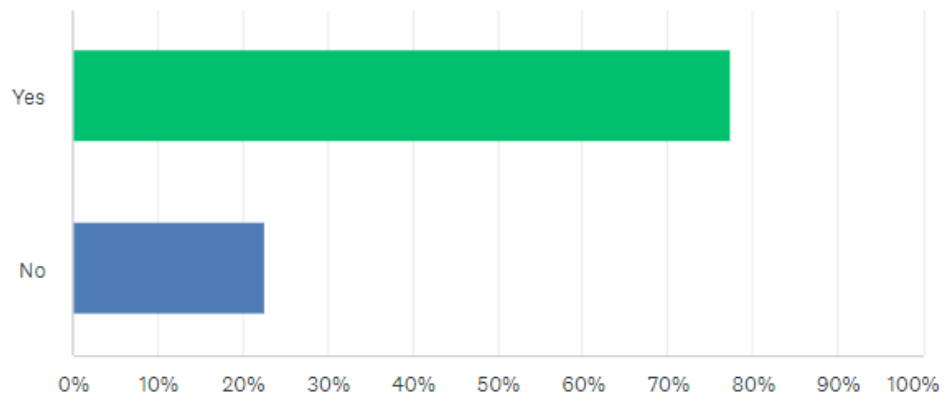
"You bring it on if you dress/act that way."

“Don’t want to give the wrong impression that might make someone think I’m down to do something I’m not.”

“Victim blaming and expecting women to adapt their behaviour is not the answer and is very sexist.”

Do you call friends out if they do something you feel is inappropriate whilst out in Swindon?

388 respondents answered this question.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 77.32% | 300 |
| No | 22.68% | 88 |
| TOTAL | | 388 |

What behaviours would you challenge?

374 people answered and said they would challenge the following:

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| Cat calling / whistling | 66.84% | 250 |
| Inappropriate names | 81.55% | 305 |
| Up skirting | 84.76% | 317 |
| Spiking | 85.83% | 321 |
| Sharing inappropriate photos / pictures | 87.97% | 329 |
| Making inappropriate jokes that other people may find offensive | 82.35% | 308 |
| Having conversations that are inappropriate | 79.95% | 299 |
| Total Respondents: 374 | | |

Other behaviours that people said they would challenge



Although people have reported that these behaviours need challenging, most have also said that they wouldn't usually do this to people they didn't know in the street because they wouldn't feel safe to do so.

Have you set boundaries for yourself that you don't let others cross?

Of the 416 people that answered this question, 279 said they had, with a further 107 stating they were not sure.

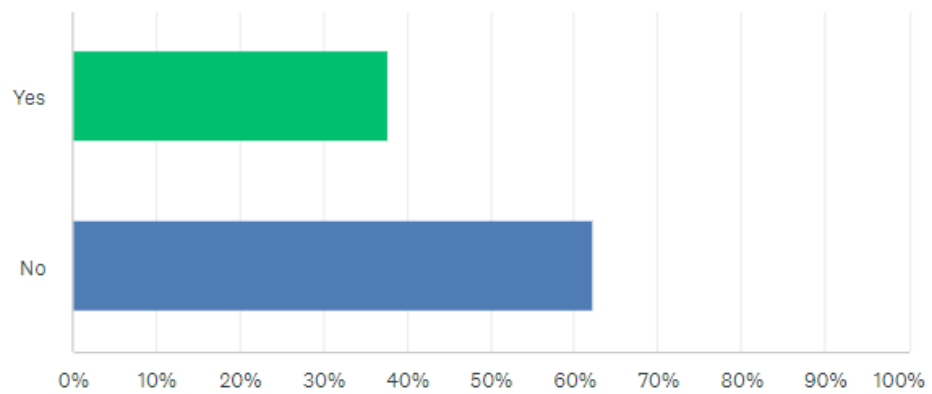
SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 67.07% | 279 |
| No | 7.21% | 30 |
| Not sure | 25.72% | 107 |
| TOTAL | | 416 |

NIGHTTIME ECONOMY

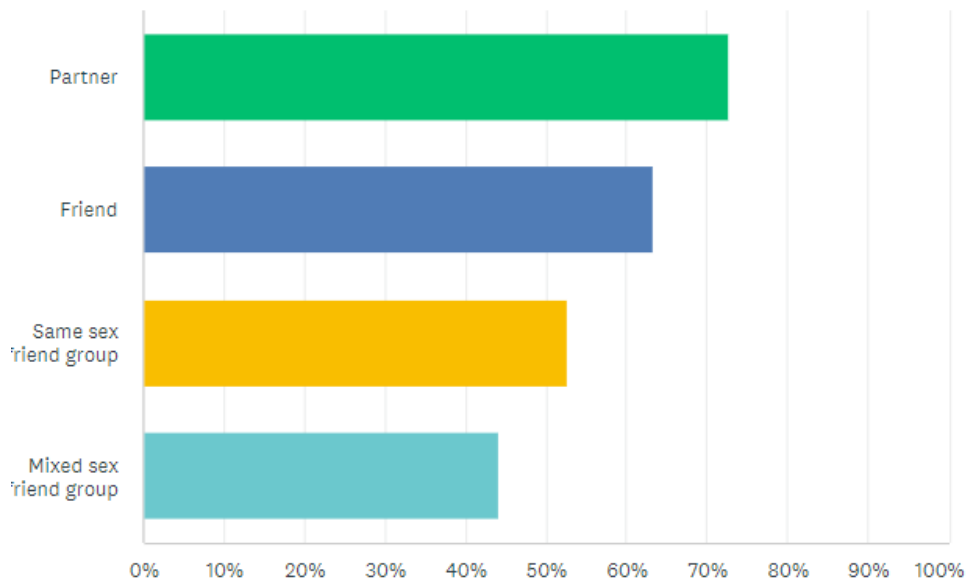
Do you feel safe going on a night out in Swindon?

409 people answered this question with 62% (255) reporting that they did not feel safe.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 37.65% | 154 |
| No | 62.35% | 255 |
| TOTAL | | 409 |

Who do you go out with?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|------------------------|------------|
| Partner | 72.73% 280 |
| Friend | 63.38% 244 |
| Same sex friend group | 52.73% 203 |
| Mixed sex friend group | 44.16% 170 |
| Total Respondents: 385 | |

Most people selected a mix of options with who they go out with. With ‘partner’ being the one most often selected. When asked who they felt safest with, again ‘partner’ was the most often selected.

“My partner because men who have the inclination for assault on a woman adhere to the messed-up view that I am ‘taken’ and someone else’s property therefore out of bounds. Like some stupid man code.”

“Usually feel safe, although I would alter where and the time I would go out. Friend early evening. Partner for an evening, although we usually go out of town to socialise.”

Some reported feeling safe with friends also felt safe in groups or out with friends:

“Female friend for company, I sometimes go out alone and meet friends when I am out.”

“Being with a group of friends because the more people the less likely you are to be harassed.”

Three people reported feeling safe to go out alone:

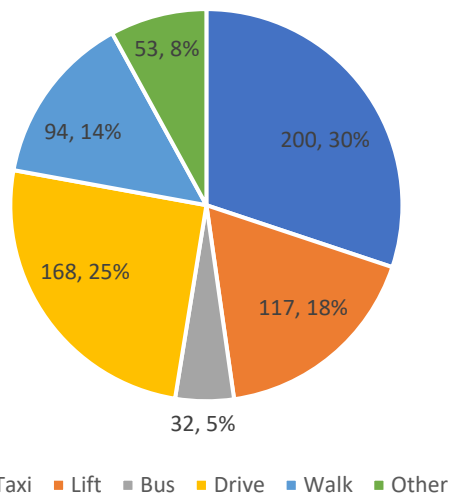
“I usually go out by myself, and I mostly feel relatively safe, except for certain areas that I avoid.”

18 people said they don’t go out socialising in Swindon at all.

“I don’t feel safe in Swindon, so I don’t go out.”

How do you usually get home from a night out?

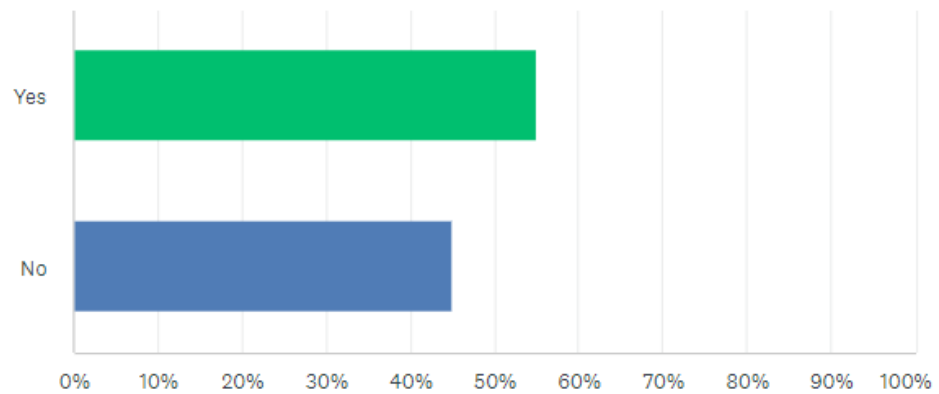
403 responded to this question, with the biggest proportion opting for a taxi (200).



Comments in ‘other’ including 24 people who chose to walk home alone.

Do you feel venue security in Swindon is adequate?

353 people answered this question. This was roughly evenly split, with 55% feeling that venue security was adequate.



SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 54.96% | 194 |
| No | 45.04% | 159 |
| TOTAL | | 353 |

When asked which venues, the 'bottom of town' was mentioned 5 times and 'Old Town' 4 times. 13 stated 'all' or 'most'.

Tree nightclub was mentioned 22 times, Kings 4 mentions, Sir Daniel and The Savoy receiving 3 each, with the following venues receiving one mention each:

Woodlands Edge
 Royal Oak
 Goddard
 Cheekies
 Wyvern Tavern
 The Bank
 Victoria
 The Globe

"Tree - exceptionally gropey and security don't see or don't care. The Vic is always full of very drunk leery old men, the Kings is just a horrible experience of old men staring over women."

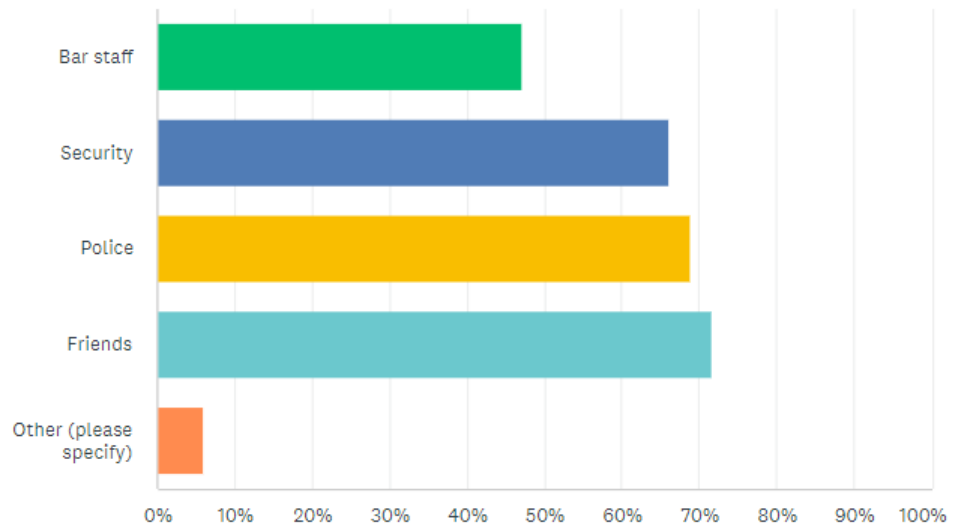
"The Bank, there are too many drugs taken openly in there."

"The Bank in Old Town feels unsafe, and the door staff can be threatening. Tree I wouldn't attend due to the recent reports of spiking."

"The Victoria, spiking and excessive serving of drunks, blatant drug use. The globe, blatant drug use (picked up in the alleyway opposite)."

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

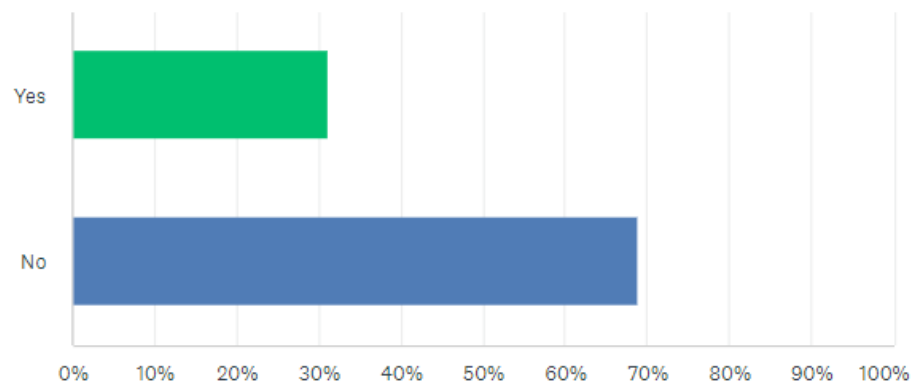
Who would you go to for help on a night out in Swindon?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Bar staff | 47.04% | 183 |
| Security | 66.07% | 257 |
| Police | 68.89% | 268 |
| Friends | 71.72% | 279 |
| Other (please specify) | Responses | 5.91% 23 |
| Total Respondents: 389 | | |

72% would turn to friends rather than venue staff or the police.

Are you aware of Swindon Street Pastors?



Of the 408 who responded to this question, 69% (281) said no, 31% (127) said yes. 7 people had been supported by them.

Have you ever been spiked in a Swindon venue?

60 people reported that they had been spiked whilst out on a night out in Swindon. The following methods had been used:

- 55 by drink
- 1 by injection
- 4 declined to say how

In which Swindon venue?

Although the survey asked which Swindon venue? 7 of those reporting stated, 'not in Swindon'. Tree was reported 7 times. The following venues were mentioned as places where people had experience recently being spiked:

The Brass Monkey
Byron's Wine Bar
The Old Bank
Woodlands Edge
Level 3
Rudi's
Sir Daniels
The Victoria
Kenzo

Only 9 people chose to report being spiked. Either to bar/venue staff or the police.

When asked why they chose not to report, people stated:

"I don't trust the police due to the lack of help they gave me when I was in a domestic violence relationship."

"I was unwell for a week, and it took me a while to realise what I believe occurred."

"Felt it was pointless and that I would be judged."

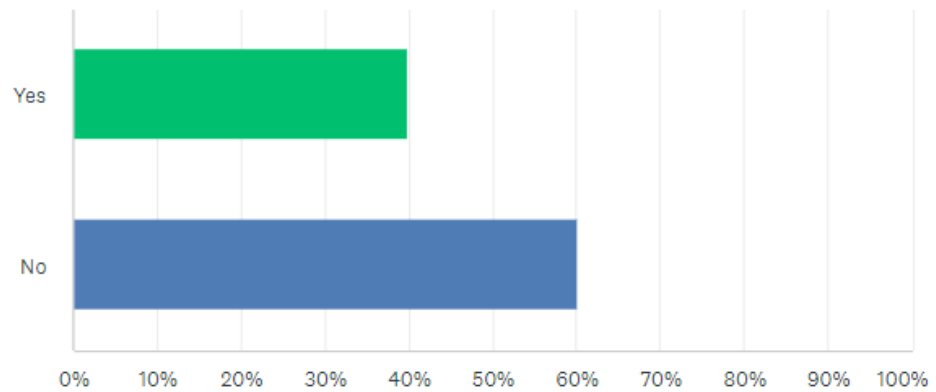
"Was not physically able to do anything until 48 hours later, couldn't get a blood test to prove at this point so assumed it wouldn't do anything to report."

"Because I felt the next day no one would believe me and I was embarrassed."

"Unsure if I would be believed."

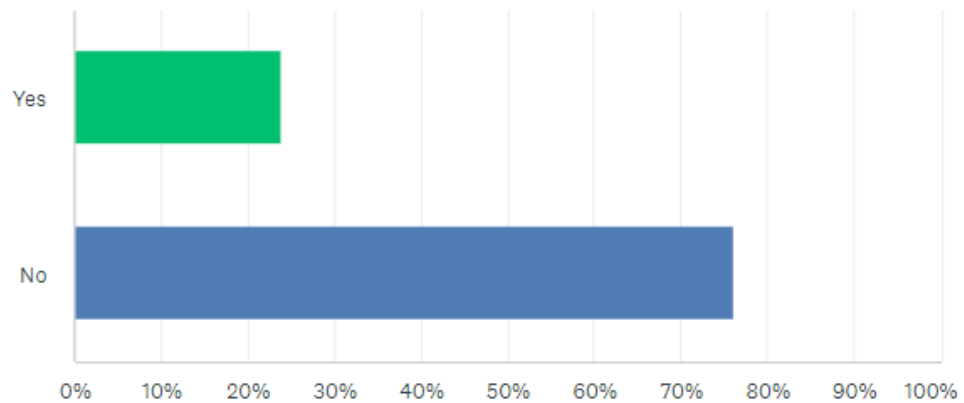
126 people said they wouldn't know what to do if a friend was spiked, or where or how to get help.

Have you seen the Ask Angela Campaign in Swindon?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 39.95% | 161 |
| No | 60.05% | 242 |
| TOTAL | | 403 |

Are you aware of StreetSafe?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 23.90% | 98 |
| No | 76.10% | 312 |
| TOTAL | | 410 |

What are your views on general recommendations that females should adopt these behaviours?

- Don't walk alone at night – stick to well-lit streets.
- Don't listen to headphones after dark.
- Don't look at your phone while walking at night.
- Don't dress 'provocatively'.
- Don't drink alcohol.

- Learn self-defence.

This question was answered by 342 respondents – and provoked a lot of emotive comment.

69 people agreed with the behaviours. A further 121 agreed, but with the following types of comments:

“It is a shame that women have to adopt these strategies, this agenda will need a whole generational shift to address how men may see some women.”

“I understand why it is suggested but it shouldn’t be the way.”

“I think they are sensible, due to the issues women face but I also resent them why should have to alter our behaviour.”

75 respondents disagreed with females having to adopt these behaviours. Using words such as:

Victim blaming
Ridiculous
Bullsh*t
Offensive
Restrictive
Sexist
Unfair
Rights taken away
Shouldn’t be necessary
Loss of freedom

“Insulting and patronising. Why should it be women who must alter their behaviour when it is male behaviour that is the problem.”

“It puts all the responsibility on the potential victim. How about targeting the potential perpetrators?”

“It’s devastating that all these recommendations have some value, they shouldn’t be needed and place the onus for prevention on the potential victim. It’s victim blaming - how many layers are enough before you are an unacceptable rape target. “

“Educating boys and men to behave differently was suggested by 114. General feeling was that there needs to be a societal change in attitude. 4 comments said that men feel the same way.”

“Females should not have to change their behaviour to protect themselves, it is up to men to change their behaviour. We need to better educate our men and have more severe punishments for those who cannot behave in a reasonable and respectable manner.”

What are your views on general recommendations that males should adopt these behaviours to make females feel safer?

- Keep distance
- Don't walk or run up behind women (cross the road to pass)
- Don't stare
- Keep comments to yourself (even compliments)
- Challenge friends if they are being inappropriate
- Be an active bystander – ask if it looks like someone needs support
- Place yourself between a female and an aggressor
- Provide support if you are asked to

This question was responded to by 329 people – 208 felt they were a good set of suggested behaviours, using word like:

Excellent
Good advice/start
Fair
Fine
Helpful
Bear minimum
Fabulous
Appropriate
Should be commonplace
Positive
Sensible

“Great messaging, more of it please.”

“Yes, these need to become part of everyday life and behaviours. Sexist behaviour has been left unchallenged for far too long.”

“About time men were expected to think more about their behaviour and attitudes and the effects they can have.”

“Excellent suggestions and a lot of my male relatives/friends/colleagues already do these things.”

“Good advice. Make it more widely known. Never seen it before.”

A further 59 agreed, but ...

“They shouldn't have to but if it helps women feel safer until the issues are sorted then it's a good idea.”

“Agree, except putting yourself between female and aggressors. Unless absolutely necessary.”

“As things stand, reasonable suggestions but it puts a lot of pressure for men to always act pro-actively perfectly. It's sad that compliments are considered threatening (there's a lot of context missing in that statement – this is how men

become confused and women can misinterpret a nice thing and become fearful).”

“Good, but men who are decent enough to heed it are rarely the problem.”

“Educating men and boys was seen as a priority to 30 people.”

“Boys that are educated to respect females would not need to be reminded, however it is sad we are only looking at this as a male /female issue and not just a decent way to behave.”

“I think this is the bare minimum of what a man can do to make women and girls feel safer - but more is needed, and they need to be educated from a young age.”

“Men need to be educated on how to make women feel safer.”

26 respondents disagreed with the suggested behaviours, and 18 said they should be behaviours for females too. One person said they wouldn't work.

“Do not assume that it's all men that are the problem plenty of girl gangs make me feel unsafe.”

“I am actually concerned about my male family relatives more as I believe they are at greater risk of being attacked by these thugs than I am.”

“I think it is a shame that they are being told to cross the road, keep compliments to self - these are creating further barriers and distance between the two genders, which I feel is the opposite to actually building a cohesive and safe environment for all.”

“Males shouldn't have to feel they are the ones in the wrong all the time, yes it's not right if they are making a woman feel uneasy.”

“Men are equally at risk! We shouldn't make men feel like they are instantly seen as aggressors. Nor should we expect them to put themselves in harm's way.”

“Oh come on. Are females the only ones that feel unsafe in this degenerate universe that we are living in?”

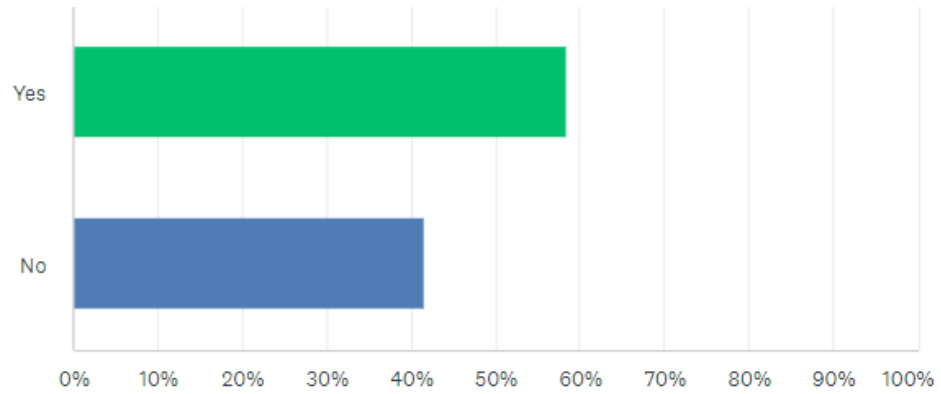
“These are all a bit odd, the message here is stay away from females but rescue them at risk to yourself if they get into trouble.”

“Utter b*ll*cks. Utterly offensive.”

SAFETY OF YOUNG ADULTS

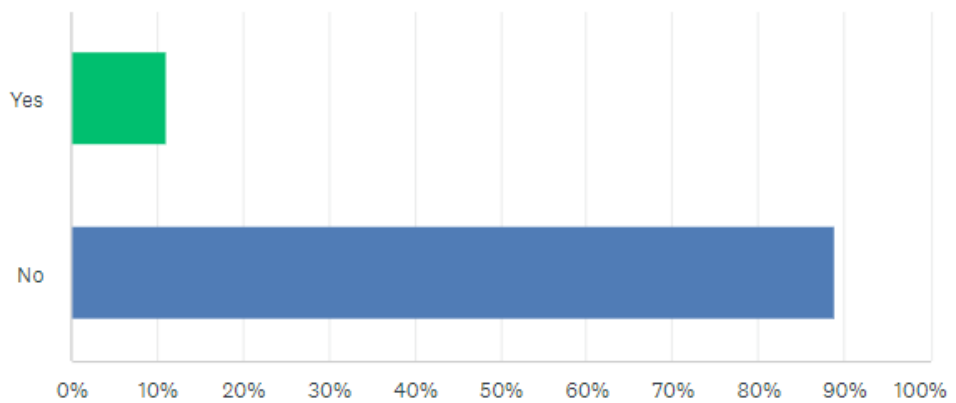
Do you think your children are safe out and about in Swindon during the daytime?

216 respondents answered this question.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 58.33% | 126 |
| No | 41.67% | 90 |
| TOTAL | | 216 |

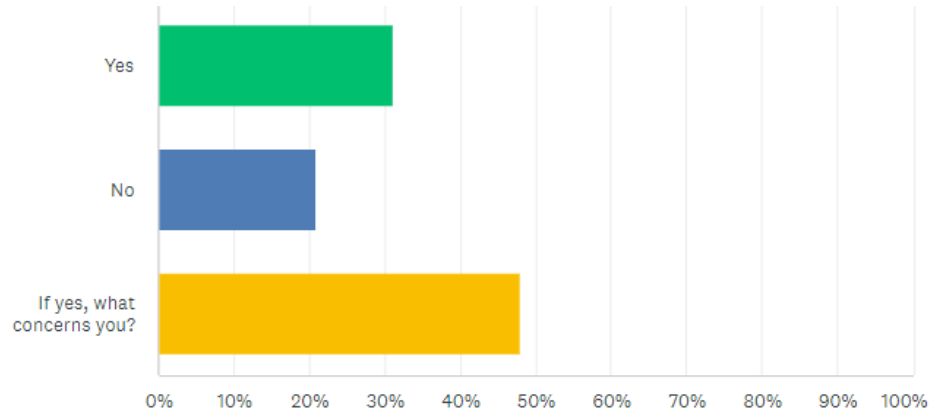
After dark?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 11.06% | 24 |
| No | 88.94% | 193 |
| TOTAL | | 217 |

Do you have concerns about your children’s safety while socialising in Swindon’s night time venues?

196 people answered this question.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 31.12% | 61 |
| No | 20.92% | 41 |
| If yes, what concerns you? | Responses | 47.96% |
| TOTAL | | 196 |

94 comments received, 23 expressed fears of aggression, attack or confrontation. A further 6 feared sexual attack. Other fears included bullying, sexual exploitation, gangs, county lines and grooming. Five were worried about the use of weapons and knives.

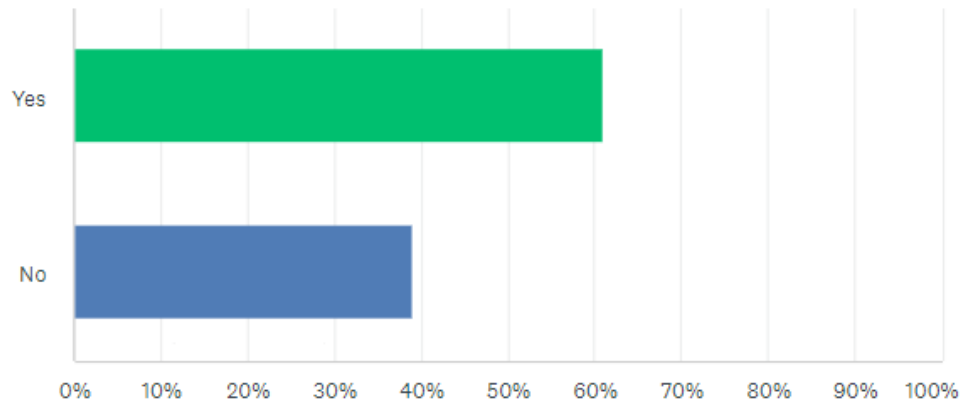
Exposure to drugs and alcohol concerned 23 people. Most comments were about 'other people' being drunk or using drugs, whilst others mentioned their children being inexperienced in life skills.

Fear of spiking was a concern of 28 people.

The influence of others, including peers, colleagues, friends and older adults was raised by 19 people.

Six people were concerned about their children being able to get home safely.

Do you set a curfew for your children when they go out and about in Swindon?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 61.05% | 105 |
| No | 38.95% | 67 |
| TOTAL | | 172 |

What are your main concerns when your children are out at night in Swindon?

134 respondents answered, but a fair few answered with N/A, or that they didn't have children.

Main concerns raised as before, fear of children getting into fights, being assaulted, robbed or hurt. 45 people mentioned this, with a further 10 worried about sexual violence or exploitation. 10 were worried about the use of knives.

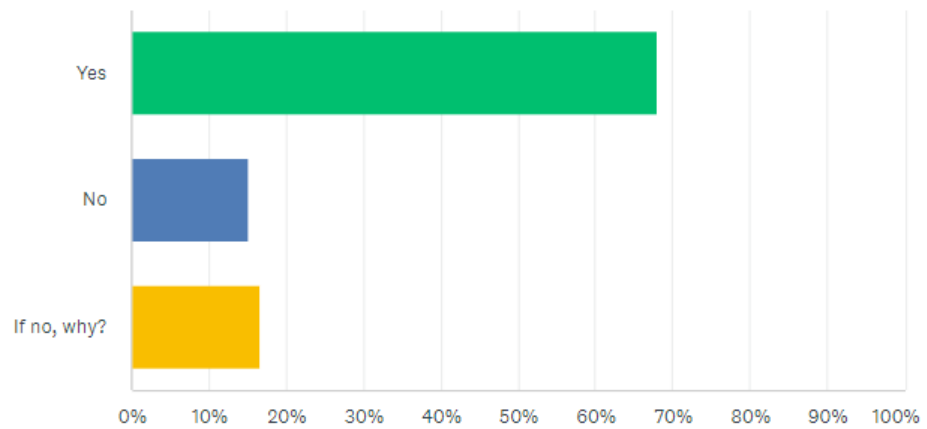
23 respondents worried about the influence of other people.

Whilst the use of drugs and alcohol also caused concern with 26 people raising this as an issue; either by receiving abuse and unwanted attention from people under the influence, or by being drunk themselves and not being aware of what is what is going on around them. A further 15 were worried about their children being spiked.

19 respondents were worried about how their children would get home safely.

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

If you have both male and female children, do you have the same concerns for males as females?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 68.12% | 94 |
| No | 15.22% | 21 |
| If no, why? | Responses | 23 |
| TOTAL | | 138 |

From the 23 comments received, most were more concerned with their sons being victims of violence from fighting, being physically attacked, robbed or stabbed and daughters being victims of unwanted attention from men, including sexual assaults and rape.

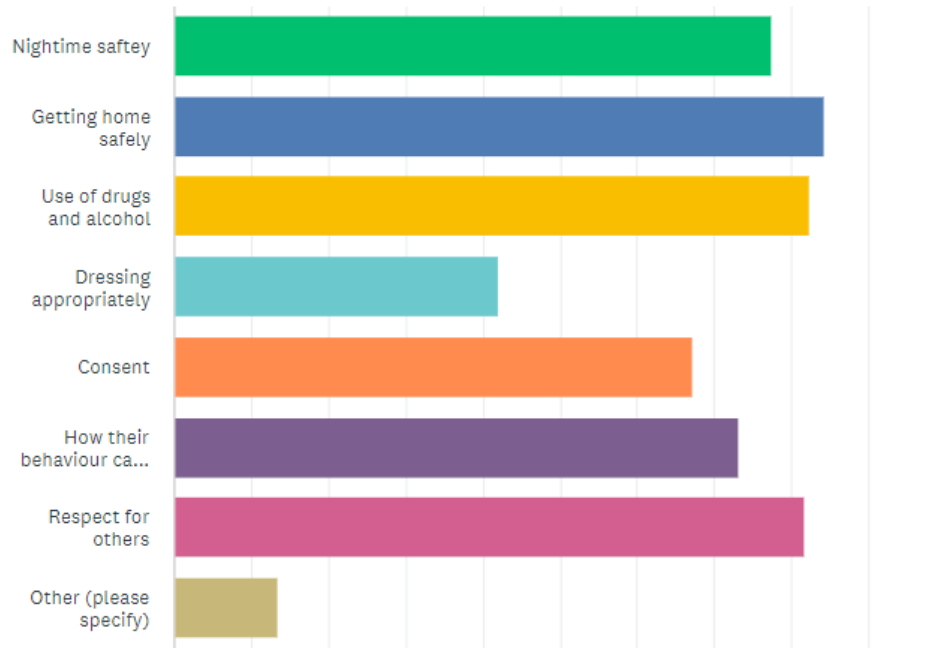
“Because the risks facing young boys and young girls are different. And there's nothing wrong with stating that predators (that are usually male) look for different things in male and female victims or have a specific 'type' of victim. It would be against common sense to suggest that the risks are the same.”

“More concerned about male children.”

“My sons are at greater risk of being attacked than my daughter.”

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

Do you speak to your young adult children about any of the following?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Nighttime safety | 77.44% | 127 |
| Getting home safely | 84.15% | 138 |
| Use of drugs and alcohol | 82.32% | 135 |
| Dressing appropriately | 42.07% | 69 |
| Consent | 67.07% | 110 |
| How their behaviour can impact others | 73.17% | 120 |
| Respect for others | 81.71% | 134 |
| Other (please specify) | Responses | 13.41% 22 |
| Total Respondents: 164 | | |

GENERAL FEEDBACK

What ideas would you like to see piloted to help everyone feel safer on the streets of Swindon?

213 people gave suggestions. The majority were repeats on calls for more police on the street, and better lighting.

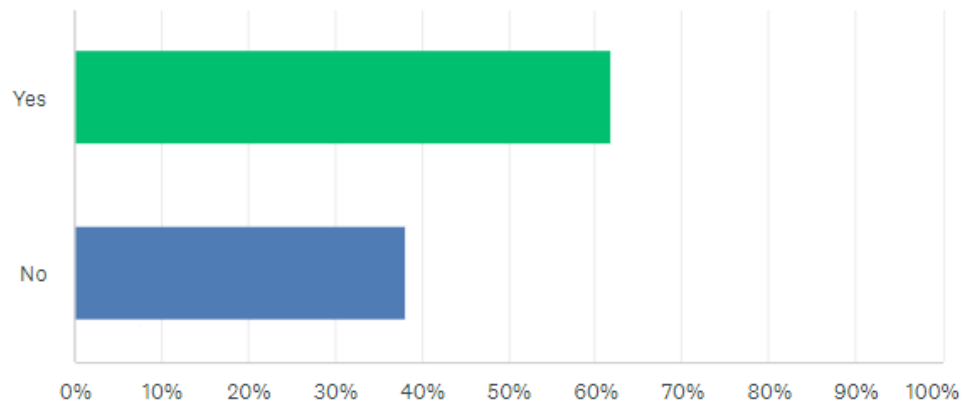
Zero tolerance on street drinking and drug dealing in public spaces to be clamped down on. Stop serving drunks in pubs. Perpetrators of crime banned from night time venues.

Youth activities regularly came up, as did education programmes for men.

Some of the more innovative suggestions include:

- Safety wardens around theatres/restaurants and car parks to encourage more footfall in the town centre.
- Run campaigns to raise awareness and encourage respect.
- Street pastors out more regularly and promoted.
- Spike detection kits available in night time venues.
- More information available in venue toilets on safety awareness and campaigns.
- Better checks on taxi drivers – check they are who they say they are.
- CCTV in taxis.
- Female only taxis.
- Walking taxis / street escorts.
- Safe travel campaigns.
- Late night ‘safe cafes’ run from coffee shops/safe places/support bus.
- Buddying and mentoring schemes.
- Publicise the suggested ‘male behaviours’ printed in this survey.

Do you think a charter for Swindon venues to sign pledging to keep females safe would help?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|------------|
| Yes | 61.86% 206 |
| No | 38.14% 127 |
| TOTAL | 333 |

“Only if they stick to it. When my niece was injected 3 months ago, she was removed from the venue by security and placed outside on her own, her friends were inside and didn't know where she was. Fortunately, she remembered one of her friend's telephone numbers which she called and he picked her up and got her home safe. We called Tree the next day and they didn't want to know. They need to be more accountable for the safety of their visitors.”

“A charter is a good idea, but you have to teach and implement tactics, not just words.”

“But it's about men too!! Charter to keep everyone safe.”

“Charter only works if accompanied by training and licensing.”

“Potentially a charter would help, but I think improving our streets would have a more positive impact on street safety.”

Any additional comments you would like to add?

“Swindon is not a bad place to live but there needs to be something done to keep girls & boys off the streets from a younger age. relationships, boredom, drink and low self worth is a really bad combination when it comes to keeping themselves safe.”

“Before this policy of mixing private and social housing, you would have safe areas in Swindon and dangerous areas in Swindon. Now however since the council have forced developers to mix social housing with private housing. the whole of Swindon is dangerous now, in fact, these new developments are the worst areas in Swindon.”

“Clean our town up. It's a scruffy hole in the centre. All this adds to a feeling of unease and a council that doesn't care.”

“Hoodies and masks are a great way for crime to be committed and hard to identify the perpetrators. Never hear of Neighbourhood Watch anymore.”

“I find Swindon town centre depressing, I know High Streets are in general decline, but Swindon seems particularly bad. The centre is faceless with no redeeming features. It needs a stretch of water like Reading with a cafe culture. Now that Debenhams has gone, is this not possible? Too many dealers, social housing and badly constructed flats. Fine make it residential, but let's add something to attract people in. Whether that be nice shops (rather than low end shops), green space, water or something more original.”

“I think this type of education begins at school to raise awareness.”

“I think that morals in society have generally dropped. But that's because there are no consequences. If we paid more attention to cannabis and cocaine issues, many of the harder drugs wouldn't be such a problem, but it seems that we let these things pass with no consequences. HMOs are not policed well enough, in the last year, 2 HMOs on my street have been taken over by drug dealers. I have no way to contact the homeowners to get them to evict antisocial residents. Please start policing car parks and the Lawns, especially the Planks entrance to the Lawns. Put some lighting along the paths in the Lawns to make it safer after dark. It's a regular route for many people but it is impossible to see anything in there once it gets dark.”

COMMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

These are recommendations only, coming from the views expressed within this anonymous survey. Voluntary Action Swindon appreciates that there is not limitless funding to support these recommendations. There are also suggestions throughout the report from the respondents that haven't been repeated here.

Demographics

- Hold targeted focus groups with underrepresented groups to gather a more balanced view. With the survey being predominately returned from females, does this suggest that males tend to feel safer? Surveys were also mainly completed by White British. Does more work need to be done to gather views from different community groups for a more balanced return on views?

Town Centre

- The town centre regeneration programme will go some way to dealing with the issues raised here, but the general public doesn't always seem to be aware that this is happening. [Town centre regeneration | Swindon Borough Council](#)
 - a. Increase positive messaging – a lot of people don't have access to the internet, so needs to be available in different formats.
 - b. Use empty shops to show what regeneration is planned.
 - c. Utilise a shop in the town centre to get information publicised on re-generation programmes already happening.
 - d. Have a stall at the new market to provide information and answer questions.
- Increase police / security within the town centre, specifically when people are leaving work and drug dealers are more active to address and deal with this issue.

“Anywhere in Swindon when it is dark does not feel safe. When I leave for work at 5 am, I am constantly looking around and over my shoulder to make sure no one is around”

“Swindon town centre, bottom of Regent Street, Fleet Street and John Street”

“Don't like walking through town centre in daytime let alone at night.”

- Introduce a zero-tolerance to town centre drinking or enforce effectively if this isn't already in place. Improve town centre during the evening to make it a place to visit that is busy and vibrant. Improving the night-time economy.

- Promote positive views of Penhill, Pinehurst and Parks areas to improve reputation of these areas. Comments like ‘all the P’s’ were reported as places to feel unsafe. People often listed these areas as places they ‘feel unsafe’ even though they didn’t live or visit the areas. Examples of comments:

“Parks at night, town centre at night, places that have a reputation such as Pinehurst, Penhill, Park South/North”

“Run down areas beginning with P, however, I’m afraid I don’t know the areas”

“Penhill, Pinehurst, Park South and Park North, and other areas that I am unfamiliar with”

A Wiltshire Police crime report in December 2021 reported that most crime happened in the town centre, followed by West Swindon outside of the town centre area. This is not reflected in the views from this survey. With Toothill the only place in West Swindon mentioned, and only then by 8 people.

Stalking

- Stalking still doesn’t seem to be taken seriously. Can something be done to address this? Training for 101 operatives? Especially as this survey was carried out during National Stalking Awareness Weeks 25th – 29th April. Information available [here](#).

Taxis

- With taxis being the safest way to get home after a night out, and 30% reporting this is the way they chose to get home, it’s worrying that 53% of taxi users feel unsafe after dark.
- Work with Taxi services to increase confidence. The new law for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles Safeguarding Legislation will help with this, but could some work be done to raise some of the points in this survey around changing routes, keeping the customer informed, and using appropriate language.

Night-time Economy

- Work with pubs mentioned in this report to improve their reputations and increase feeling of safety.
- Tree night club came up a lot in comment, but also appreciate that Tree is the only night club, so will have the most issues.
- Run campaigns around respect for women.
- Identify safe places to go for help.

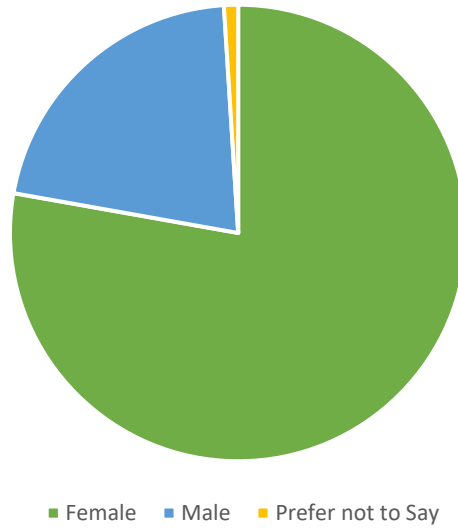
Feedback from the Survey

There are some innovative suggestions that came back from this survey. Listed on page 34. Would be good to see a 'you suggested, we did' type promotion.

**VOLUNTARY ACTION SWINDON WOULD LIKE TO THANK
YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN RESPONDING TO THIS SURVEY**

APPENDIX A - SAFER STREETS ADULT SURVEY RESULTS

Gender

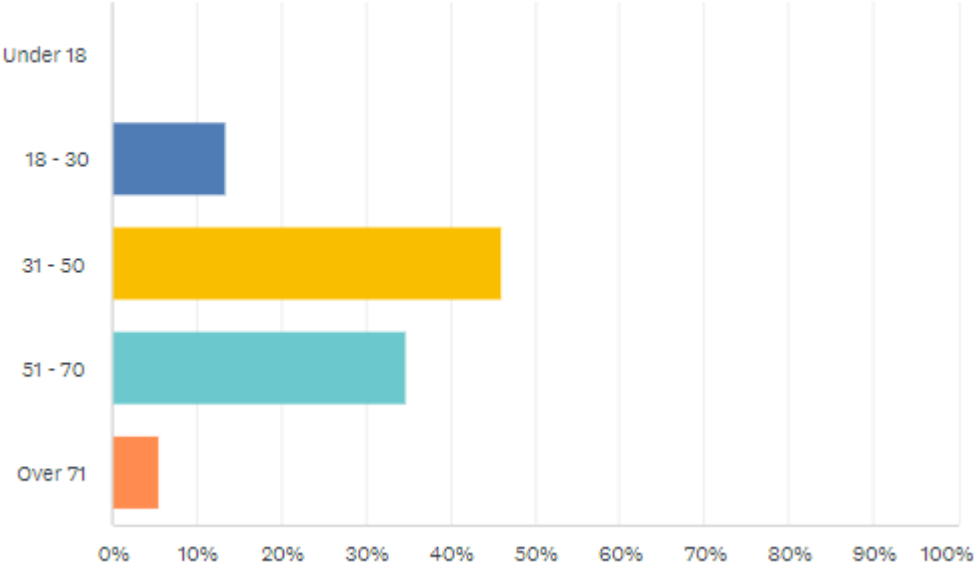


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|
| Female | 77.63% | 465 |
| Male | 21.20% | 127 |
| Gender nonconforming | 0.00% | 0 |
| Prefer not to say | 1.00% | 6 |
| Prefer to self-define | Responses | 0.17% |
| TOTAL | | 599 |

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

Age

Answered: 598 Skipped: 3



[Cont...](#)

SAFER STREETS SURVEY – ADULT RESULTS

Ethnicity

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| White British | 85.79% | 507 |
| White Irish | 1.02% | 6 |
| Traveller of Irish Heritage | 0.00% | 0 |
| Any other White Background | 3.55% | 21 |
| Gypsy/Roma | 0.00% | 0 |
| White and Black Caribbean | 1.02% | 6 |
| White and Black African | 0.17% | 1 |
| White and Asian | 1.35% | 8 |
| Any other mixed background | 1.18% | 7 |
| Indian | 2.71% | 16 |
| Pakistani | 0.00% | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0.34% | 2 |
| Any other Asian background | 0.51% | 3 |
| Caribbean | 0.17% | 1 |
| African | 0.68% | 4 |
| Any other black background | 0.17% | 1 |
| Chinese | 0.17% | 1 |
| Any other ethnic group | 1.18% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | 591 |

Postcode

