Women's Safety (in Green Spaces) Action Group: WSAG

Terms of Reference

Background and purpose

Parks for London was approached by Lewisham parks service for support to develop an open spaces personal safety audit process with attention to the risks presented to women and girls. This Action Group was established in February 2022 to take a pan-London multi-disciplinary approach to common issues around safety in and around green spaces. The Group aims to balance the narrative about women's safety and open spaces based on reliable data not perception alone; identify appropriate reporting mechanisms and improve the perception of public safety in and around green spaces.

Governance & follow up

1. Ensure the Action Group is led by a woman and has a good representation from women.
2. Identify contacts from a cross section of organisations with an interest in the safety of women and girls in public, such as Transport for London.
3. Invite representatives with appropriate expertise, contacts, and experience to join the group.

Research

1. Engage with MOPAC and GLA information service & analyse data on incidents against women in and around green spaces (if data is available).
2. Follow up Home Office commissioned research in West Yorkshire.
3. Collate research around women's safety in public realm and specifically green spaces, e.g., through a survey of Heads of Parks Services and park trusts to find out what actions if any they are taking.
4. Understand what makes women and girls feel unsafe in these spaces, learning from lived experience - community projects, walkabouts, and possible new qualitative research targeted at different communities and user groups.
5. Identify contributing factors to threatening behaviour such as groups of people, alcohol & drugs.

Developing solutions & case studies (linked to communications below)

1. Find ways to reduce risks in and around green spaces. Consider practical measures that can be put and may already be in place, such as risk assessments, Environmental Visual Audit design considerations, or cutting back planting; and take a strategic approach to tackle real and perceived issues of safety around green spaces.
2. Use/develop up to date methodology for assessing sites, given different needs/wants of users, for example hedges may have been introduced to improve biodiversity but could make some areas feel unsafe.
3. Review London borough's Violence Against Women (VAWG) action plans, and findings of women's safety and Public Realm Safety working groups to consider further opportunities to help make women feel safe to be in green spaces.
4. To identify, implement and subsequently analyse data obtained through standardised reporting mechanisms. These may include but are not limited to, Common Space

Community Engagement Platform, and or possible expansion of the Street Safe Pilot Tool.
5. Analyse data to effectively map, monitor, and review highest crime rate areas, utilising the multi-agency flag and tag model as appropriate.
6. Develop practical safety guidance for women attending events or activities in green spaces.
7. Identify effective practices and procedures that make women feel safe.
8. Understand different ways and relative effectiveness of enforcement measures.

Communications

1. Dispel myths that green spaces are inherently more unsafe for women than other spaces, following an incident the focus may become more about the place, rather than the crime or perpetrator, i.e., the Sarah Everard case has become associated with Clapham Common.
2. Personal safety and safety planning – in addition to investing to make green spaces safer we can also educate users to take personal responsibility, be aware of potential dangers/threats, and how to respond.
3. To run a positively focused, resident facing social media campaign to improving public perception around green spaces and increasing feelings of safety.
4. Promote ways to report incidents or suspicions, such through ASB hotlines or safe streets (in Waltham Forest), providing intelligence to prevent incidents i.e., 'See it, say it, sorted' campaign.

Parks for London facilitated this Action Group and includes representatives of the following organisations and others with relevant disciplines:

Organisation	Name	Role
Chiswick House and Gdns	Melanie Wilson (Mel)	Business Support Assistant
Crystal Palace Park Trust	Gemma Woodfall	Trustee
Crystal Palace Park Trust	Olivia Pearcey	Head of Events
GLA	Juliette Young	Senior Policy & Programmes Officer, Green Infrastructure & Climate Change Adaptation
Jubilee Gardens	Alex Valenzuela	General Manager
LB Barnet	Nicola Cross	Development Manager – Greenspaces and Waste
LB Camden	Gabi Howard **CHAIR**	Park Services Manager
LB Hammersmith and Fulham	Sukaina Ali Rashid	Commissioning and Projects Officer, Community Safety Unit
LB Hounslow	Gaye Galvin	Parks Projects Manager East Hounslow
LB Islington	Jonathan Gallagher	Community Safety Team Manager
LB Islington	Kate Tibbetts	Parks Projects Manager / Landscape Architect
LB Lewisham	Terri Gannon	
LB Lewisham	Vince Buchanan	Head of Parks, Sport and Leisure
LB Newham	Louise Wilcox	Heads of Parks and Green Assets
LB Waltham Forest	Kafayat Okanlwon	
London Councils	Diane Egan	VAWG theme lead for LHOCs
London Councils	Rachel Buttrick	Lead on violence against women and girls
National Trust, Osterley Park and House	Lyndsey Feeney	Visitor Operations & Experience Manager
Parkguard	Andy Issit	Head of Services
Parks for London	Ed Stannard	Development Officer
Parks for London	Meredith Whitten	Researcher in Residence
Parks for London	Tony Leach	CEO
RB Greenwich	Dawn Squires	Head of Parks
Transport for London	Bobbie Gibb	Engagement Officer, Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement
Transport for London	Kristel Tracey	Women's safety