

# Southfield Women's Safety Survey Report

**Southfield Ward Councillors Gary Busuttil, Gary Malcolm and Andrew Steed**

We conducted an online survey and data was taken from the 227 completed surveys from residents of Southfield ward which were then analysed. We asked for the gender of respondents so we could see whether the views of men and women were different.

## Context:

The survey was conducted after the attempted murder of a woman on Acton Green Common as reported in the local press. Just before that event there was the nationally reported story of the murder of Sarah Everett.

Other local events giving some context in residents' views on crime and safety include:

- About 15 years ago Liberal Democrat Southfield Councillors successfully convinced Ealing Council to renew half of the streetlights in Southfield improving the lighting levels generally.
- About ten years ago Liberal Democrat Southfield Councillors successfully persuaded Ealing Council to install lighting across Acton Green.
- About eight years ago Liberal Democrat Southfield Councillors successfully after a public consultation arranged for Ealing Council to install lighting across three paths across Southfield Recreation Grounds allowing residents to walk between Chiswick and Acton early in the morning or later in the evening whilst still having the park lit.
- In 2016 Ealing Council dimmed 18,000 streetlights across the borough, where it dimmed lights to 75% after 10 pm and half power after midnight, without consulting residents.
- More recently lighting has been installed across some of Acton Green Common near the playground.
- The crime rate for many years in Southfield has been generally lower than wards in the surrounding area however two years ago there was an increase in crimes with knives and guns.

## Recommendations:

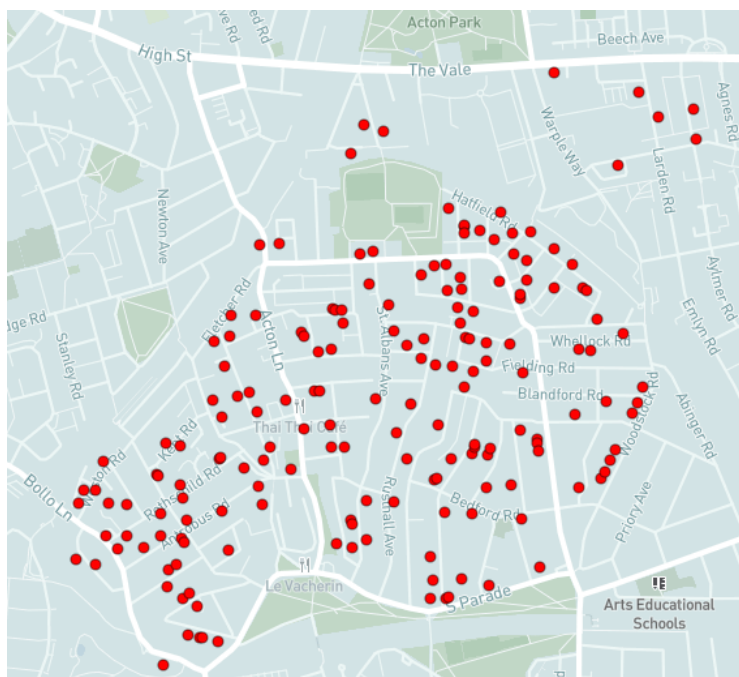
1. That **Ealing Council** is asked to reverse the changes it made in 2016 to the 18,000 streetlights, where it dimmed lights to 75% after 10 pm and half power after midnight, without consulting residents.
2. That **Ealing Council** is asked to ensure that the trees are pruned and trimmed so that lighting can be more effective.
3. The **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** be asked to indicate how they may alter their patrolling patterns so they can be more visible.
4. Linking to the afore-mentioned recommendation that the local police **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** look to patrol in the areas where women more

commonly suffered from threatening or intimidation - on the street or local parks and where men were more likely to be threatened or intimidated – at or outside transport interchanges.

5. The **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** be asked to provide advice to women about how they should react when they are followed locally.
6. The **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** be asked to provide clarity on how best for all residents to report crimes and to whom alongside what information they should provide to the police.
7. The **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** and the local borough police to be asked to publicise the outcome of the local police team in terms of their activity, arrests and prosecutions so that residents can have more confidence in the work that they do.
8. The **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** and **Ealing Council** provide more details on how they are dealing with the issue of drugs in the ward as this type of crime tends to raise people's fears of crime generally.

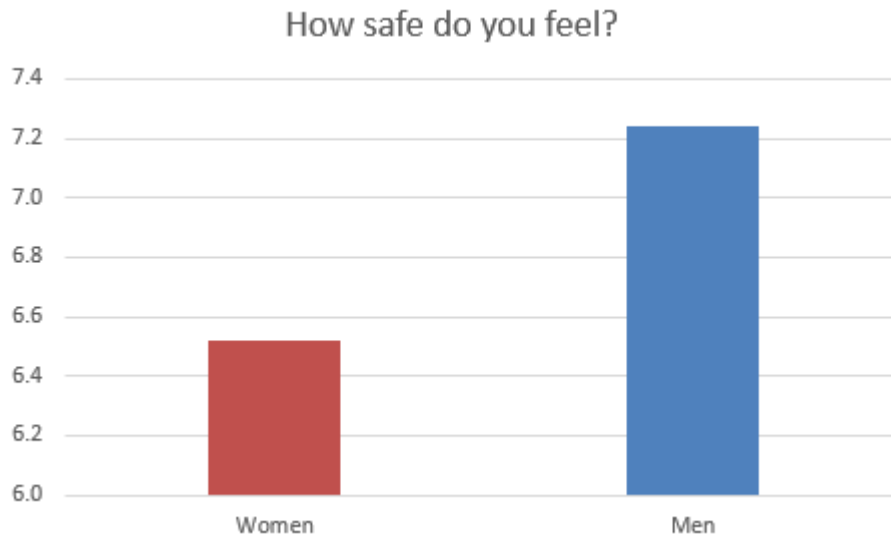
### **Analysis of the survey results:**

Please see the distribution of those who completed the survey which are below (in chart 1). They are spread out across all areas of Southfield.



**Chart 1:** location of survey respondents.

## Question 1 : Women feel 10% less safe than men.



We asked the question “On a scale of 0 to 10, how safe do you feel in Southfield? [0 = Very unsafe to 10 = Very safe]” and female respondents’ average was 6.5 compared to 7.2

We also asked respondents why they gave their respective score and 219 separate comments were made including these five comments from respondents:

“I’m a woman so I’m not safe anywhere, but this area isn’t too bad so I didn’t give a zero.”

“Feel Reasonably safe but concerned about street robberies; harassment of women and girls; drug dealing.”

“Acton Green is very often full of young people smoking drugs.”

“Dimmed street lighting on very quiet streets.”

“I feel safer in Southfield than many other areas of London.”

“LTN’s and restricted vehicle access under Fisher’s Lane bridge make me feel uneasy when walking in that area.”

“Lack of police presence. Kids on mopeds around here scouring the streets all day.”

“No woman is entirely safe anywhere, while Bedford Park lighting is a bit sparse and often obscured by trees in the Summer. However, I feel ok using main roads and the path across Acton Green since both have reasonable lighting and are well used. My personal view is that men should be told to stay at home so the streets are safe for women.”

“I feel that the area is safe for me as an older woman and one who doesn’t go out in the evening. However, I feel anxious for my daughter when she goes out and about locally.”

“Generally, I feel safe but the lighting could be better .Problem is the trees blocking out the light.”

**Question 2 : 40% of women report being threatened or intimidated whist 26% of men report threats or intimidation.**

We asked, “Have you ever felt threatened or intimidated (physical or otherwise) in Southfield?” and nearly a half of women said that they had been threatened or intimidated.

**Question 2b : Where were you when you felt threatened or intimidated?**

60	On the street
37	In a local park
19	At or outside a bus stop, rail or tube station
9	In or around a shop or building
1	At a cash machine
1	On the roads by speeding drivers.
1	Person knocking on my door

It appears that women were commonly or more likely to be threatened or intimidated at a range of locations mainly on the street or local parks. Men were only more likely to be threatened or intimidated at or outside transport interchanges.

**Question 2c : How did you feel threatened or intimidated?**

38	Verbally (including catcalling or wolfwhistling)
36	Being followed
27	Physically, without a weapon
7	Sexually
5	Physically, with a weapon
1	A couple of teenagers on bikes tried to run me over on a zebra
1	A man in a car stopped, opened my passenger door, took my bag and drove off.
1	At my front door when I couldn't help a homeless man he verbally abused me a year ago
1	Being jostled and having my credit card details 'stolen' whilst using a cash machine
1	Cyclists, usually hooded, passing by, looking into cars
1	I was assaulted by a group of teenagers and had beer thrown in my face
1	Nothing concrete, just felt uneasy around two people who were strange
1	Nothing happened. I was just concerned and avoided what I thought could be problematic.
1	On the crossing person almost ran me over
1	Physically by a driver driving dangerously.
1	Sense of danger, observing suspicious behavior

We can see that of those women who gave more details of their intimidation or threats that they received, many were verbally abused, were followed or physically (without a weapon).

**Question 2d : What time(s) have you felt threatened?**

7%	The morning (6 AM - 9 AM)
29%	In the day (9 AM - 5 PM)
28%	Early evening (5 PM - 8 PM)
32%	Late evening (8 PM - Midnight)
4%	Between midnight until early hours (12 AM - 6 AM)

It appears that most threatening or intimidation takes place between 9am and midnight but there is a significant share of threats made in the late evening (8pm to midnight).

**Question 2e : Did you report the intimidation or threats you experienced to the police or the Council?**

Female	Male
22%	18%

Reported intimidation or threats experienced

We can see that both men and women often choose not to report these incidents to the police or the Council which means the true level of crime will be much greater than many of the official crime statistics.

We also asked why respondents did not report the intimidation or threats they experienced to the police or the Council. Here are four of the sixty-five anonymous comments given by respondents:

“What's the point? At the time it feels like something "normal" or too small an incident to report. Plus, these things happen so quickly. But with hindsight, I do wish that I had. I also don't want to waste police time.”

“We were threatened by a group of teenagers who were throwing litter in the park. We asked them to put it in the bin and they started to ask what we were going to do about it. We were with my two young children, so we chose to ignore them and walk away. It didn't seem that there would be a crime to report, and it would have been difficult to identify the teenagers. Plus, we would worry because of the children that they would remember who we were, which might be more threatening in the future.”

“There are no police on the street to report to. The police station in Chiswick is closed. Acton police station is too far. If you call the police you can be on the phone for 40 minutes waiting for them to answer. I don't think they take seriously incidents on the street if there is not physical violence involved.”

“I didn't think it would be taken seriously.”

**Question 3 : Women who witness crimes in the area are much less likely to report the crime.**

Female	Male
34%	40%

Have you witnessed a crime in the area?

Female	Male
52%	67%

Reported crime(s) witnessed

We also asked why respondents did not report the crimes they witnessed. Although sometimes the victim reported the crime here are four of the thirty-five anonymous comments given by respondents (the first appearing to be a very serious crime):

“I saw a couple of girls being forcefully accosted by some boys and stopped my car to see if I could help. The girls were tearful but unhurt and asked me not to report the matter. The boys had left by then, so it seemed futile to pursue things.”

“Because I felt it would be ignored.”

“Drug dealing in Wilkinson way. had spoken to the local PCSOs many times, but continue to witness it. There's only so much they can do.”

“I didn't realise how serious the incident was until I heard about it on Next-door. I thought it was just people having an argument, I didn't realise there were weapons (hammers) involved.”

**Question 4 : Most women report a crime they have experienced.**

Female	Male
41%	38%

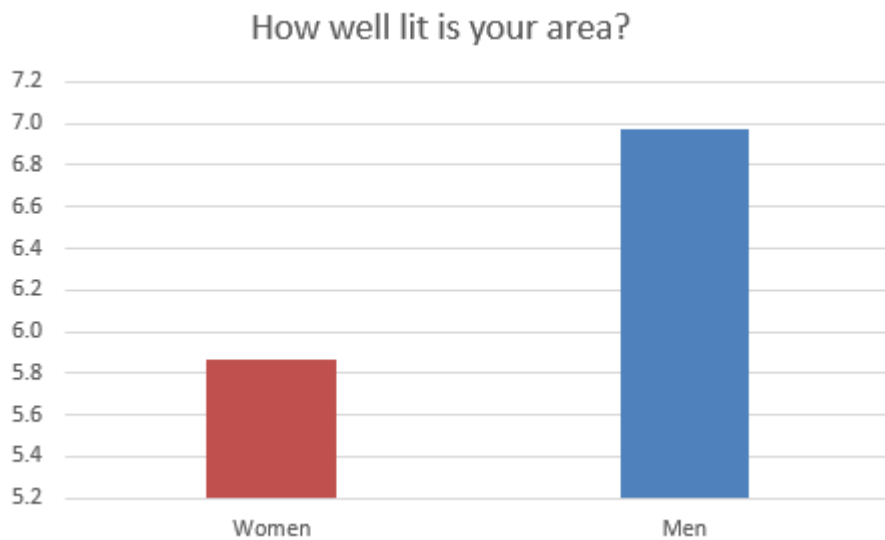
Been a victim of a crime

Female	Male
85%	76%

Reported crime(s) they experienced

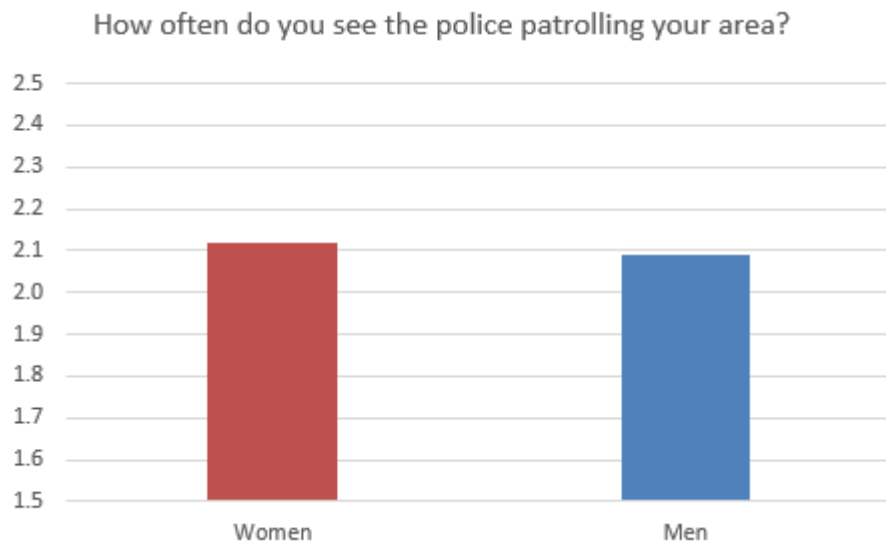
About 40% of respondents said they have been a victim of crime but women were more likely to report the crimes than men did.

**Question 5 : Women feel the area is 16% less well-lit than men.**



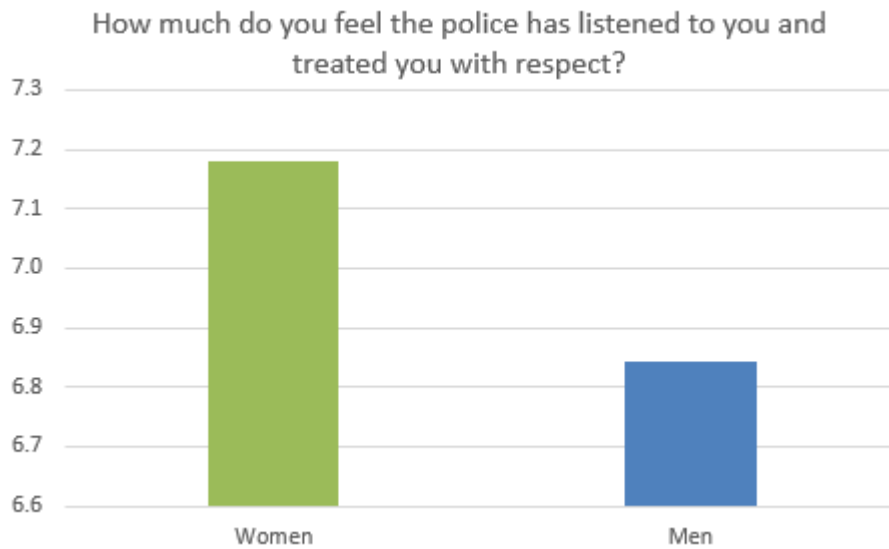
When asked on a scale of 0 to 10, how well-lit is your area? [0 = Very dark to 10 = Very well lit], female respondents gave a score average of 5.9 compared to men who gave a score average of 7.

**Question 6 : Both men and women feel rarely seem to see the police patrolling the area.**



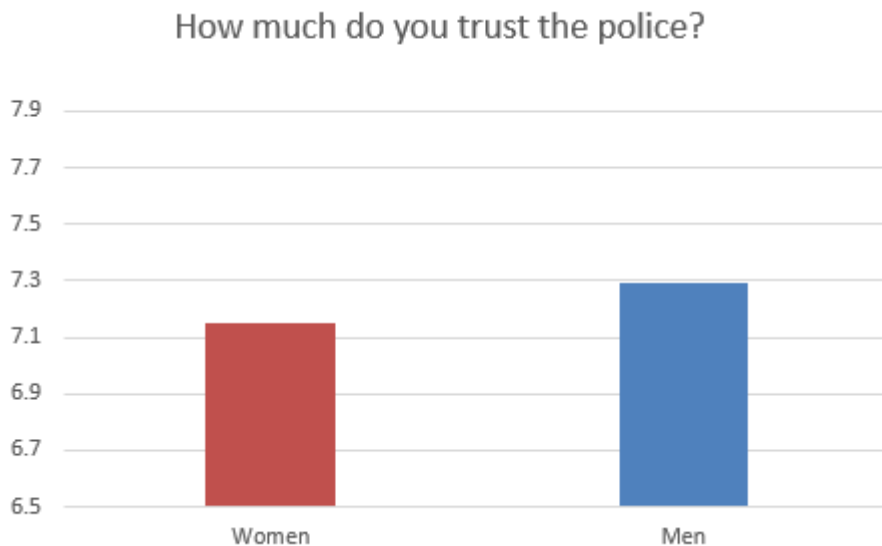
When asked on a scale of 0 to 10, how often do you see the police patrolling your area? [0 = Never to 10 = Very often], women and men gave score averages of 2.1.

**Question 7 : Most residents, but particularly women, tend to think the police listened to them and treated them with respect.**



When asked on a scale of 0 to 10, how much do you feel the police has listened to you and treated you with respect (0= Not at all to 10 = Always), female respondents gave a score average of 7.2 compared to men who gave a score average of 6.8

**Question 8 : Most residents tend to trust the police.**



When asked on a scale of 0 to 10, how much do you trust the police? [0 = Do not trust at all to 10 = Totally trust], men gave a score average of 7.3 compared to women who gave a score average of 7.1



**Question 9 : What actions need to take place, and by whom, to make you feel safer locally?**

There were 217 respondents who gave answers. The top categories of answer were as follows:

<b>Comment category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Better police presence / visible patrolling	101
Increase lighting levels	76
Open Chiswick Police station	14
Install more CCTV cameras	12
Remove LTNs or other road closures	8
Deal with drug issues	5
Improve youth facilities	5
Slow traffic down	4
More publicity of arrests and prosecutions	3
Improve road or pavement surfaces	2
Other	47

The vast majority of respondents wanted to see a better police presence, more visible patrolling, increased lighting.

Other significant issues also mentioned were reopening up Chiswick Police station to help enhance the local police presence.

In terms of types of crimes referred to it was mainly drug issues that was mentioned.