

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 6th July 2026

Update on the Community Safety Partnerships ‘Her Voice Her Cheltenham’ consultation

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1** In the 2024 the Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) secured money from Safer Gloucestershire’s Serious Violence Duty Fund to research the issue of exploitation of children and young people in the town. The CSP commissioned St. Giles Trust to undertake this work which led to the partnership identifying a gap in its knowledge around the particular experiences of girls and young women in Cheltenham related to safety and exploitation. This information paper sets out the progress of that work and current next steps.

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1** The CSP asked the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Strategic Board to work with St. Giles Trust lead consultant, Dr Junior Smart to undertake a series of focus groups with girls and young women at risk of exploitation to understand their experiences

and what could be done to better support them.

2.2 Girls and young women from Pittville School, the Youth Support Team, the Children's Society and All Saints Academy ranging from 13-16 years old took part in the focus groups. They then presented their experiences to a range of leaders including representatives from Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gloucestershire County Council, local business and Cheltenham Borough Council. The presentation was held in the Council Chamber on 6 December 2024 during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence and chaired by the lead cabinet member at the time.

2.3 The presentation highlighted concerns regarding harassment including catcalling, being followed and inappropriate touching. Young women also reported feeling unsafe after-dark, in parks, during race week and in the town centre generally. They also felt that there were multiple barriers to seeking help. They also discussed challenges they face such as exposure to violence, social pressures and pressure to try drugs and alcohol.

2.4 Since the event partners have been working together to resolve some of the concerns highlighted. This has included enhanced safety measures around Pittville School during race week and the establishment of the youth café at Smokey Joes in Cheltenham town centre.

3. Summary of evidence/information

3.1 In 2025, following the initial work with girls and young women, NCLB agreed to expand the consultation so a wider range of girls and young women could contribute their views.

3.2 Dr Smart worked with local schools and youth providers to design a survey. The draft survey was tested by girls at All Saints Academy to ensure that it was relatable

to the target demographic and was launched in the Autumn of 2025. In total 177 girls and young women between 11 -18 years old responded.

3.3 Dr Smart collated and analysed the results of the consultation producing a report for the NCLB Board and Cheltenham CSP. This report was considered by the NCLB Board on 5th June 2026 and will be considered by the CSP on 21st July 2026.

3.4 The report highlights many of the same issues raised in the focus groups. Some headlines from the report include that around 50% of young women have experienced harassment in public, only 16% feel heard and around 30% had been sent unwanted explicit images.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The report will be shared with the CSP on 21 July for review and consideration will be given to how best to respond.

4.2 The relevant cabinet member, Cllr Jamie Jamieson will meet with the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Champions to share the findings of the report..

Background Papers

N/A

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