



Girls have the right to be safe!

Girls have the right to be safe from violence under Article 19 of the UNCRC and General Recommendations 19 and 35 of CEDAW.

We want Scotland to be one of the best places to grow up – a country of happy and healthy children.

But evidence shows that girls in Scotland face significant threats to their safety. Safety is a top concern for young girls, especially girls of colour (Girlguiding UK, 2022). Our [Girls' Rights Are Human Rights!](#) report, highlights girls' anxieties and experience of men's violence. Girls can't access their rights to education, play, health and participation because they are not safe.

Effective human rights practice that considers girls' experiences and needs can help end men's violence against girls and make this Scotland a reality.

New research shows that only 7% of girls feel completely safe in public spaces (Plan International UK, 2024).

Harassment

- Girls feel increasingly unsafe as they get older: 20% of 7-10-year-olds, 31% of 11-16-year-olds, and 43% of 16-21-year-olds feel unsafe outside (Girlguiding Scotland, 2020).
- Women of colour face harassment involving both racial and gender slurs (Zero Tolerance, 2022).

Online Violence

- Half of girls aged 7-10, nearly 75% of 11-16-year-olds, and 90% of 17-21-year-olds face online violence (Girlguiding UK, 2021).
- Disabled girls, LGBT girls, and girls of colour are more likely to experience online harm (Girlguiding UK, 2022).

Sexual Violence

- Under-12s are most likely to experience sexual abuse, while 12-18-year-olds are most likely to experience rape (Police Scotland, 2023).
- 73% of girls do not report incidents due to fears of not being taken seriously or other concerns (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2020).

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girls aged 14-21 experienced public sexual harassment during the lockdown (Plan International UK, 2020).

71%

of girls aged 7-21 experienced online harm in 2020 (Girlguiding UK, 2021).

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girls aged 13-17 have experienced sexual violence (Scottish Government, 2018).

Recommendations

Evidence shows that girls in Scotland are not safe from harassment, online harm, sexual violence, or domestic abuse. To strengthen our Equally Safe Strategy to end men's violence against women, we need policies that specifically address the unique challenges girls face to realise their right to safety fully.

Alongside these policies we must:

- **Consult with girls**, especially marginalized groups, in policy development.
- Involve **gender experts** in policymaking.
- Ensure that the **UNCRC** and **CEDAW** are implemented together, focusing on girls' rights.
- Use **gender-specific language** to highlight girls' issues.
- Collect and analyse **disaggregated data** on girls' experiences.
- **Fund and support** organisations working with vulnerable girls.
- Educate policymakers and practitioners on **gender-sensitive approaches to children's rights**.

We can create a Scotland free from men's violence against women and girls!





References

[Girls' Rights are Human Rights \(2024\) Zero Tolerance](#)

[Girlguiding Scotland \(2020\) Girls in Scotland 2020](#)

[Girlguiding UK \(2021\) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2021](#)

[Girlguiding UK \(2022\) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2022](#)

[LGBT Youth Scotland \(2020\) LGBT Young Women & Girls in Scotland 2020 Consultation – Briefing](#)

[Plan International UK \(2020\) The State of Girls' Rights in the UK: Early Insights into the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Girls](#)

[Police Scotland \(2023\) Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#)

[Scottish Government \(2018\) Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls](#)

[Zero Tolerance \(2022\) Future Tales Report](#)

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