



Our Streets Now



Tackling Sexual Harassment & Exclusion in Sports

An Our Streets Now
Toolkit

www.ourstreetsnow.org



TACKLING SEXUAL HARASSMENT & EXCLUSION IN SPORTS

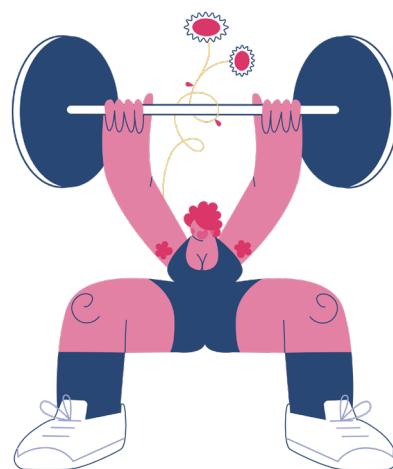
An Our Streets Now Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed for sports clubs as an introduction to understanding sexual harassment and its impacts in sport. Our aim is to support you to make a difference in your club, to work towards an inclusive culture, free from harassment and prejudice.

Contents

Our toolkit includes:

1. UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SPORTS
2. HOW TO CALL OUT HARMFUL LANGUAGE AND PREJUDICE
3. CODE OF CONDUCT EXAMPLE FOR CLUBS
4. UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS TO REPORTING
5. BEST PRACTICE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS CLUBS



About Us

We are Our Streets Now, the national movement against public sexual harassment. We campaign for a world in which women, girls and marginalised groups are free to go about their daily lives and have equal access to public space. A world which empowers, listens to and believes survivors, and which challenges this culture of gender-based violence and intersecting forms of oppression, rather than upholding it. We specialise in experiences of sexual harassment and discrimination in sports and exercise. From working out in gyms, to running on the streets and from the grassroots to the elite, we deserve to feel safe and be safe in public space.



1. UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SPORTS

What is Public Sexual Harassment (PSH)?

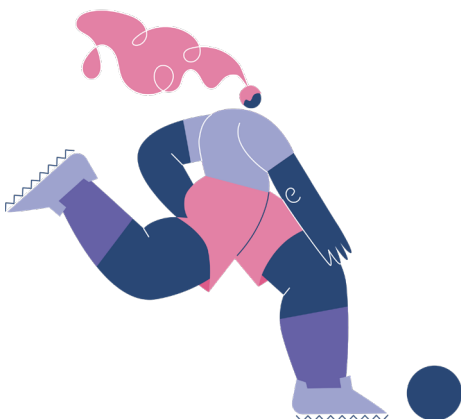
Public Sexual Harassment (PSH) involves unwanted attention, sexual advances and intimidation in public spaces, such as bars, clubs, gyms, parks, or online. It primarily happens to women and marginalised groups, but can be experienced by all.

Prevalence

In sport, women, girls, and marginalised genders face shocking levels of public sexual harassment - as athletes, coaches, referees, reporters, and fans across all levels of the industry. This partly stems from long standing stereotypes and beliefs about their participation in historically male-dominated spaces.



- ~ According to **UN Women**, 21% of professional women athletes reported suffering sexual abuse as a child in sport.
- ~ **Kick It Out** found that 80% of women football coaches experienced sexism in a coaching environment, with 35% feeling unwelcome.
- ~ An **Adidas survey** of 9,000 women revealed that 92% feared for their safety while running, compared to 28% of men. 38% of women had experienced unwanted physical or verbal harassment during their run.
- ~ **FitRated** discovered that 70% of women have experienced a negative interaction at the gym in which they felt uncomfortable. This caused 18% to quit their gym membership.
- ~ **FIFA revealed** that one in five players at the 2023 Women's World Cup were victims of online abuse.



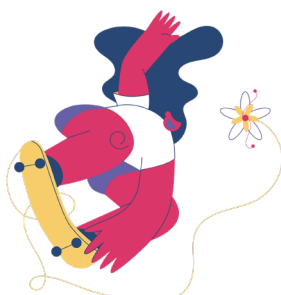
Understanding Sexual Harassment in Sports cont'd...

Exclusion in sport isn't just about sexism. It's often entwined with racism, homophobia, ableism, and other kinds of discrimination.



- ~ In a survey of 9,500 LGBTQIA+ athletes, **UN Women and UNESCO** discovered that 80% had witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport, with 16% receiving verbal threats.
- ~ In a 2020 **UN Women survey** of elite female athletes, one in five reported witnessing or experiencing racism in sports.
- ~ In the 2022 World Athletes Championships, **World Athletics** discovered that 19% of all abuse was based on race, 3% was due to ableism, and 29% involved sexualising an individual.

This might show up as microaggressions or “smaller” insults like “jokes”, nicknames, stereotypes, or even kits that make it harder for people from certain racial or religious groups to join in. It can also escalate into more direct insults or even physical harm.



Why does it matter?

Sexual harassment, prejudice and stereotyping in sport ultimately excludes women and marginalised groups from fully accessing and participating in sporting environments.



- ~ According to a 2023 survey by the **Youth Sport Trust**, fewer girls say they like physical education or sports compared to previous years.
- ~ **Plan International UK** also found that two out of three girls feel they can't be leaders in sports.
- ~ **Women in Sport UK** found that 35% of girls believe they're not supposed to be good at sports, while only 4% of boys feel that way.

2. CALL IT OUT!

It's normal to find challenging harmful behaviour difficult, especially when it's justified as 'just a joke'. We use humour to connect with one another and there should absolutely be a place for this, but 'everyday' sexism, racism, homophobia or other forms of prejudice do play a harmful role in making more severe forms of gender based violence seem more normal. Taking a stand against harmful language and seemingly smaller incidents can have a big impact - and doing so is often easier than you might think.

Challenging someone if they make a harmful comment or joke doesn't have to mean picking a fight with them in front of all their teammates. It could look like...

- ~ Rolling your eyes or walking away instead of laughing at a joke that you found uncomfortable
- ~ Talking to the others who witnessed the situation to see if they recognised the harm, even when everyone seemed to be laughing along
- ~ Checking in with the person that a joke or comment was directed towards
- ~ Waiting until you're one on one with the person who used harmful language and suggest that what they said might have crossed a line



3. CODE OF CONDUCT/POLICY EXAMPLE

These examples have been designed to be used alongside your existing Code of Conduct or to be added in to an existing Harassment policy, specifically relating to Public Sexual Harassment.



- ~ All staff, volunteers and management are committed to creating and upholding a culture PSH (public sexual harassment) or other abusive behaviours or harassment will never be tolerated - this includes 'jokes' and online PSH.
- ~ All staff, volunteers and management will uphold values of respect, safety and empathy at all times.
- ~ The process of reporting PSH will be as accessible as possible for all - considering accessibility needs and barriers to reporting.
- ~ When PSH is reported, the reporter will be believed, taken seriously and treated with respect and empathy. Incidents will be logged and monitored specifically as PSH, and appropriate action taken in line with relevant policies and procedures pertaining to harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- ~ All relevant members of staff (including volunteers) are aware of Safeguarding policies and procedures, facilitating clear, transparent, and accountable reporting processes for all.
- ~ Regular opportunities for open, anonymous feedback from all who use the club are provided. Feedback is logged and actioned. Where areas for concern or improvement are identified we will seek further guidance and advice, where appropriate.



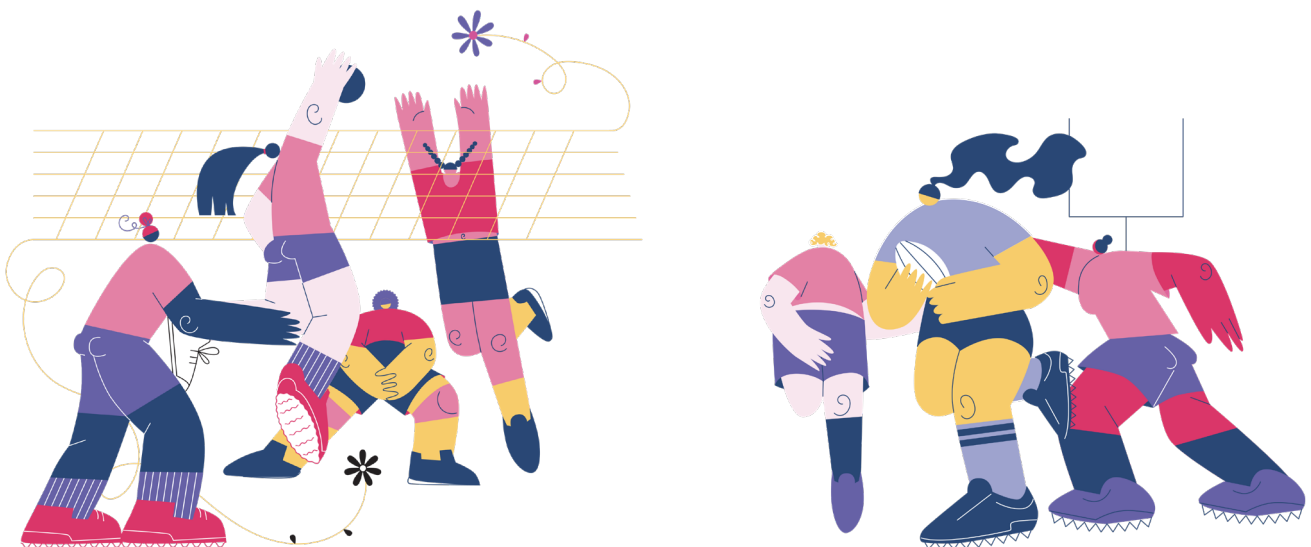
4. UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS TO REPORTING

There's no way we can tackle an issue that exists in silence and shame, currently the case with sexual harassment. 75% of girls who experience PSH in a sporting context do not report it. This is due to self-blame, embarrassment, normalisation of the issue or a belief that it will not be taken seriously. The good news is that YOU have the potential to change some of these factors. You can:

- ~ Initiate conversations about sexual harassment in your club, and ensure everyone knows it is something you take seriously, before they have to report
- ~ Have a clear and accessible reporting process and named person to go to
- ~ Discuss it openly to lift some of the stigma around it - consider using our posters!

If someone shares an experience of harassment with you...

- ~ Respond with kindness and empathy, show you take it seriously and they did the right thing to share it with you
- ~ Emphasise that it was not their fault and be careful not to offer any 'safety' advice of how to avoid being harassed in the future
- ~ Ask them what they would like to happen next, giving them power and control over the process as much as possible
- ~ Signpost to support services, a comprehensive list can be found on our website: <https://www.ourstreetsnow.org/support>
- ~ Follow your safeguarding policy where relevant



5. BEST PRACTICE FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS CLUBS

Top Tips

Top tips for a gender equal club:

- ~ No gendered drills and try to avoid segregating by gender in training
- ~ Gender neutral kit (ideally try to avoid white shorts- this has been proven to make girls feel conscious when training or playing whilst on their period)
- ~ Consider offering free period products in your toilets
- ~ Assign a go-to- person responsible for gender equality in your club and make sure everyone know who they are
- ~ Have a visual presence across your club or facility. Consider downloading and displaying our posters
- ~ Encourage the recruitment and retention of female and gender diverse volunteers and staff

Keep Learning!

Have a look at these brilliant organisations for further resources and training:



At Our Streets Now we also offer consultancy, posters and CPD accredited training for coaches and staff. Have a look at our Sports web page on www.ourstreetsnow.org

Or contact us at advocacy@ourstreetsnow.org



CHECKLIST

Have you...



Checklist



Started conversations about harassment with players, athletes and colleagues



Shared the information in this toolkit with all staff and volunteers



Added information on public sexual harassment to your code of conduct and safeguarding policy



Downloaded and displayed our posters



Identified the club's designated person for handling disclosures



Reviewed and updated reporting and recording policies and procedures



Enacted some 'top tips for a gender equal club'



Attended training from Our Streets Now or other organisations on understanding and tackling harassment



Saved the advocacy@ourstreetsnow.org email to stay in contact and ask any future questions

