



Why single-sex services matter: privacy, dignity, safety and choice

FULL REPORT

30-minute read and key findings

at sex-matters.org/single-sex-services-voices

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Sex Matters is a human rights organisation campaigning
for clarity about sex in law, policy and language

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Foreword

Over the past few years there has been a shift in institutional attitudes to single-sex services and spaces. Do they matter? Are they legal? Should people who identify as transgender be able to access spaces for the opposite sex, or should clear sex-based rules be applied? Many schools, universities, employers and service providers have decided, without consultation, that single-sex facilities are old-fashioned or too difficult, and are replacing them with “gender-neutral” (mixed-sex) facilities, or facilities that are “inclusive” based on gender self-ID. They often find, to their surprise, that these are extremely unpopular.

What have been absent are the voices of ordinary service users, particularly women. From 12th to 21st February 2022, Sex Matters ran an online survey. It received 7,062 responses, and 97% of the people who responded stated that single-sex services were important to them. This is not a representative sample of the population but rather a collection of perspectives from people who value single-sex services. However, the extraordinary level of responses in just over a week shows the importance of this issue to many people.

Ninety percent of respondents were women. They set out in detail the practical, emotional and safety reasons why single-sex services matter to them, from ordinary public facilities, such as toilets and changing rooms, to specialist services, such as hospital wards and refuges. Nearly half of the women who responded shared personal experiences of sexual assault, exposure, voyeurism and harassment, and the lingering effects of those experiences. Their stories were both shocking and commonplace. There were far too many to include them all.

The survey reveals a crisis in inclusion for women and girls as single-sex facilities and clear policies governing their use are removed, without consultation or consideration, from public toilets; facilities in pubs, clubs, theatres, cafes, restaurants and gyms; changing rooms in shops and sports centres; facilities in schools and in hospital wards. Our respondents describe how the removal of female-only services and spaces creates a hostile environment for girls and women, damaging their privacy, dignity and safety, and excluding them from public life.

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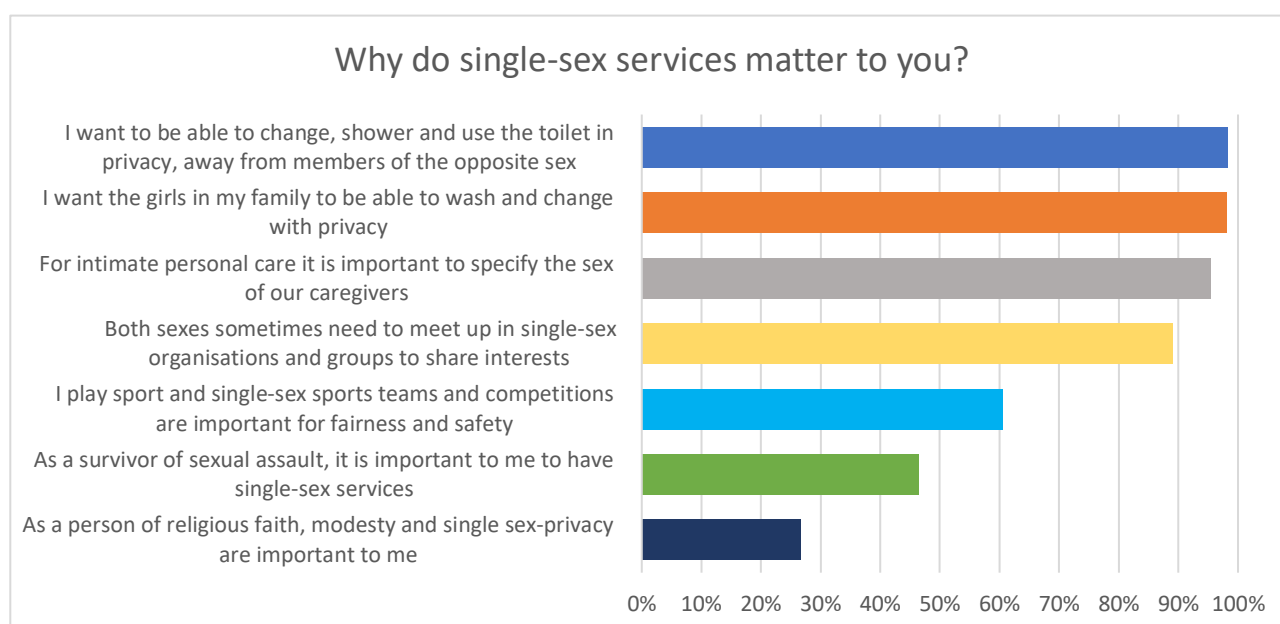
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Single-sex services matter to women

Around 10 times as many UK women (5,559) as men (554) responded to say that single-sex services are important to them. (This analysis excludes the few respondents who were outside the UK or said single-sex services were not important to them.)

The most common reasons for valuing single-sex services were everyday privacy and dignity were:

- I want to be able to change, shower and use the toilet in privacy, away from members of the opposite sex (98%)
- I want the girls in my family to be able to wash and change with privacy (98%)
- If I or a member of my family needed intimate personal care it would be important that we could specify the sex of our caregivers (95%).

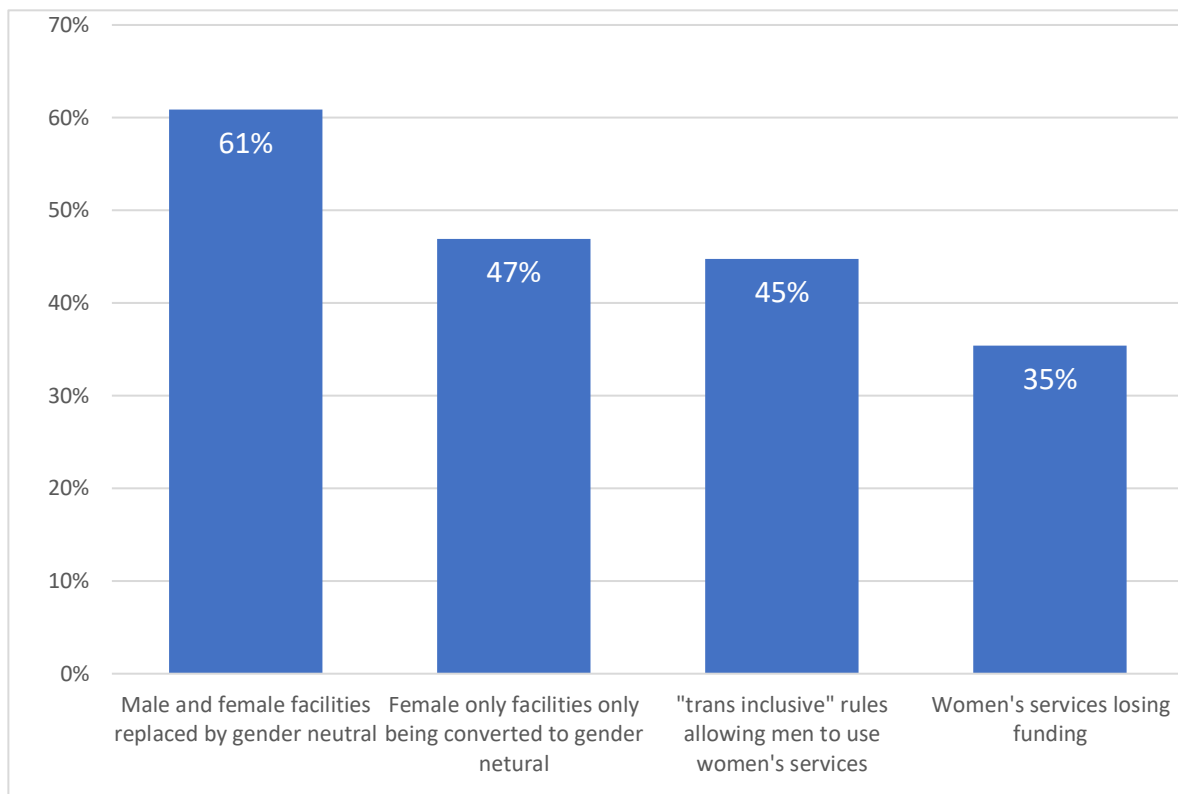


Many respondents also had other personal reasons why they valued specific single-sex services:

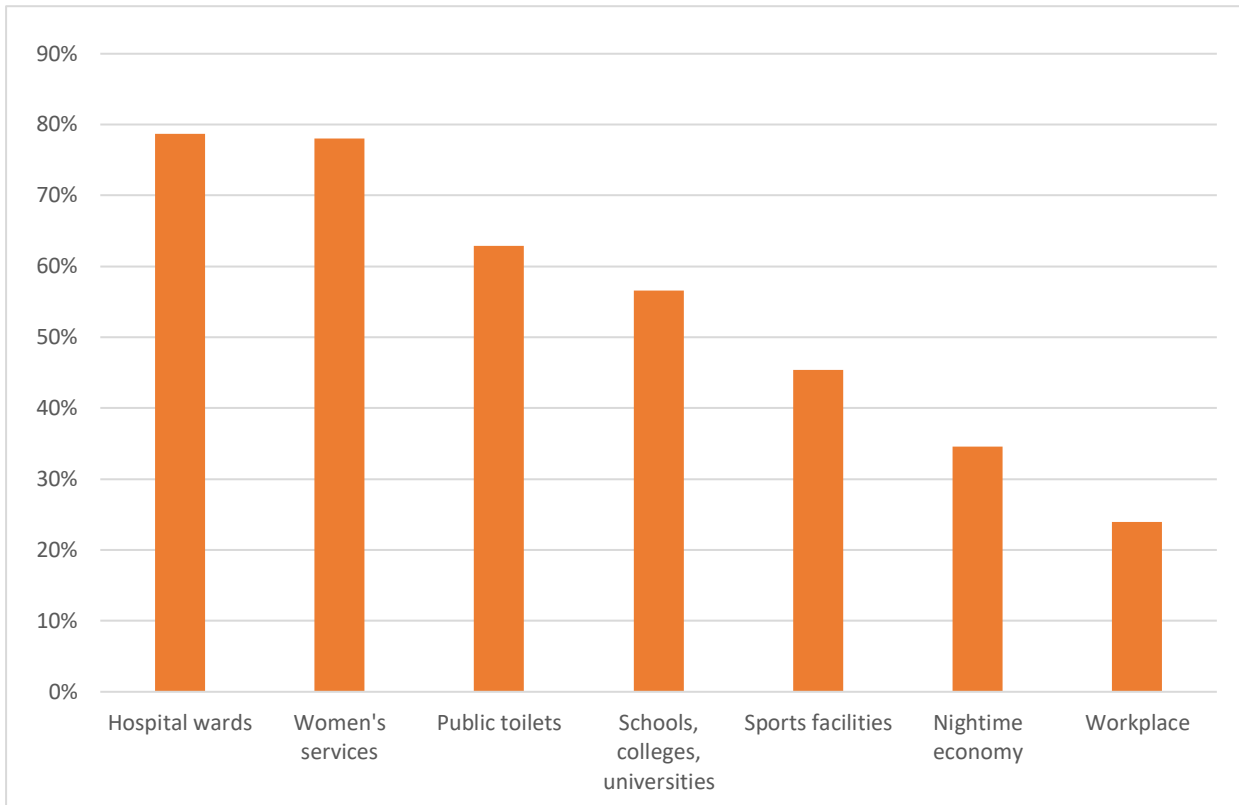
- Women and girls, and men and boys, sometimes need to meet up in single-sex organisations and groups to share interests (89%)
- I play sport and single-sex sports teams and competitions are important for fairness and safety (61%)
- As a survivor of sexual assault, it is important to me to have single-sex services (46%)
- As a person of religious faith, modesty and single-sex-privacy are important to me (27%).

The majority of respondents were concerned about losing single-sex services.

- 61% said they had already experienced male and female facilities being replaced by “gender neutral” unisex or mixed facilities.
- 57% had experienced only the female facilities being converted to “gender neutral”.
- 45% had experienced “trans inclusive” rules that allow males to use women’s services
- 35% had experienced an overall loss of support and funding for women’s services.



When we asked where people were most concerned about losing single-sex services, the top two answers were hospital wards and women's services, followed by public toilets and schools, colleges and universities. Sports facilities, the night-time economy (pubs, clubs and entertainment venues) and workplaces were also mentioned.



95% of respondents agreed with the statement: "The EHRC, the UK's official equality watchdog, should provide guidance for service providers to help them follow the law."

What is a woman?

In the course of their answers many respondents clarified that by sex – male and female, man and woman – they meant biological sex, not gender identity.



Women are female

Sex is a biological reality & is a protected characteristic which seems to be more & more eroded.

Female, England, 45–54

Women are 50% of the population. Our wishes for single sex facilities are not unreasonable.

Female, England, 65 and over

I am a biologist. I know that it is impossible for human beings to change sex. This needs to be established in Law. **Female, England, 55–64**

Sex is one of the protected categories, why is it now that sex is becoming negligible – we cannot change our sex, and women/girls are abused BECAUSE of our sex. We do not feel female we ARE female, and being female sadly puts us at risk of males – I can't say I feel male and have that risk be removed. Sadly, sex doesn't work like that and my gender feelings won't make being a female any safer. **Female, England, 35–44**

In the single sex exceptions, the law intended 'sex' to refer to immutable biological sex. It also uses the word 'woman' to refer explicitly to biological sex, and not gender identity. This is illustrated transparently with the example from the legislation explanatory notes "a cervical cancer screening service to be provided to *women* only, as *only women* need the service". This sentence ONLY makes sense if it is understood that ONLY one sex has a cervix, and that ONLY

WOMEN – the biologically female class – are the class this exception applies to.... We exist as a sex class, distinguishable in life and in biology from men. From all men. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am very worried about the rights of women and girls going forward as the notion of ‘female’ is under attack by those who wish to strip it of meaning. How can females be protected as a vulnerable group without meaningful definition? **Female, England, 45–54**

Single-sex should mean single-sex. No exceptions. **Female, England, 45–54**

Women exist. We should be considered valuable members of society. We have real issues that only we deal with. There is still so much to be done to reach equality with men – in work, finances, sport, our lifestyles. Not all of it can be legislated for or needs to have guidance on. But denying that we are real, erasing what woman means is illogical and insulting. **Female, England, 45–54**

Women are still oppressed in this country due to their biology. Any woman who has had medical issues with their reproductive system or mental health is well aware of this. Women need [to be] protected in law, just as other marginalised people do. Trans people should be protected in law, but not at the expense of another oppressed group – women and girls. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

There are no spaces left for women born as women. It’s like our female language is being erased and replaced with gender neutral terminology. I have a vagina, a womb and breasts. My health care requirements are different to trans women. I’m not trying to undermine trans women but stand up for my rights as a woman born as a woman. That doesn’t make me transphobic. It makes me a woman who needs safe spaces to remain safe and health care appropriate to my biology as a woman born as a woman. **Female, England, 45–54**

Men do not seem able to understand women’s experiences of sexual violence. They don’t understand vulnerability to pregnancy. They don’t understand women’s bodies. They don’t understand how differently we behave around them. They don’t understand us. **Female, England, 35–44**

“Trans women” are male

Those who mentioned “trans women” were not necessarily unsympathetic to their feelings or unsupportive of their rights, but simply and straightforwardly recognised that they are male.

I am of the strongest scientific conviction that trans identifying men remain male. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Men cannot simply declare themselves women and become the most marginalised and victimised group in existence. Sex matters. Females pay the price of inclusion. **Female, England, 25–34**

Sex based issues are based on sex. While I understand trans people have needs they should never override the needs for services based on sex. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I feel we are losing the whole meaning of being a woman. Transwomen deserve respect, safety and equality but not at the expense of the same respect, safety and equality for women.

Female, Wales, 65 and over

I am a Women's Institute official. The national policy is that anyone who "identifies" as a woman is allowed to join. I have written to complain but so far their replies simply say "trans women are women" which is clearly untrue. **Female, England, 65 and over**

As the trustee of a provider of services for women and girls who have been sexually abused/raped I question the assumption that our services, based on the experiences of women/girls needing the services, would suit men's experiences? **Female, England, 65 and over**

I would not want a trans woman – more accurately, a man – providing intimate care for me or any female I know. I would actually refuse this sort of intimate care if a male care-giver was the only option. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Men and trans women can be victims of sexual assault, however they deserve tailored services too as their experiences will be different. **Female, England, 35–44**

Most trans identified males don't pass. Women can tell they are male from their faces, but failing that their voices, their walk and their body shape gives them away. Many women need spaces away from any male, and pretending that one in a dress is any less of a threat to vulnerable women is disingenuous, especially when all data proves the contrary is true. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

Many religious faiths say humans can't change sex

Some expressed their belief that men are male and women are female as being founded in their religion.

I believe God created man and woman separately. **Christian, Female, Wales, 65 and over**

I believe everyone human was wonderfully and purposefully created with purpose. This includes our sex and I don't believe it was accidental or a mistake. I acknowledge there are males who may feel more comfortable presenting as a female. I also understand they must experience severe emotional distress. Allowing biological men (for whatever reason) into female spaces is forcing me to affirm the idea "they ARE a female" and support the belief that they were born in the wrong body, which I do not believe. **Christian, Female, England, 35–44**

I believe as in the bible we are born girls women or boys men and this biological fact cannot be disputed or changed, **Christian, Female, England, 55–64**

Within my faith, truth and honesty are vital components. Members of religious faith should not be expected to condone lying by for example being compelled to state that a man can become a woman or vice versa. By pretending that people can “change sex” it damages the individual more than stating the truth. **Christian, Female, England, 55–64**

The Pope has declared that God created men and women and gender identity is something created by society. I agree with this and whilst I think you can and should dress as you chose and change your name if you want to, you can't force me to lie and say you're the opposite sex.

Christian, Female, England, 45–54

Religious beliefs are very important to me and should be respected as much as any other beliefs and protected characteristics. My Christian faith is part of who I am and I should be able to live by my beliefs without harassment or prejudice from others who don't respect it.

Christian, Female, England, 35–44

Any man is a threat

Statistically, males are a threat to females. Every single female I know has a lived experience of this. Protected spaces are a moment of refuge, a place of support and they can also be a hub of community. Sexism is harder to see during this era because women have moved out of the kitchen. This doesn't mean sexism and violence have reduced, it has just made it less visible and more insidious. We need to ask ourselves why these spaces were segregated in the first place and be able to satisfy ourselves that the reason has now been resolved. I assure you, as a woman, it has not. **Female, England, 25–34**

Why trust all men? – the ones who assaulted me weren't trustworthy. How do you tell who is not going to do so? They do not have a mark on their forehead. Trust has to be earned.

Female, England, 55–64

Protect women from men! We are vulnerable to men... it's a biological fact despite all cultural conditioning. You can't stop it but you can reduce the chance of opportunistic attacks/assaults. And offering single-sex services to e.g. rape victims and to people needing care, to increase the chance that they use those services. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

If I were to use rape crisis services, I would not want a biological man anywhere near me! The fact this is allowed is appalling! Women's safety is more important than men's feelings.

Female, Scotland, 25–34

I was abused by a trans identified male. I've been abused by society for saying I was abused by a trans identified male. I would be afraid to seek help if I were sexually assaulted due to how I've been treated. **Female, 45–54**

I was sexually abused by a transvestite (as was the term then) as a teenager who harassed me for many years. It would have been impossible for me to engage in counselling alongside trans-identifying men, and I personally know two other women who have had similar experiences.

Female, England, 35–44

If I walked into a rape crisis service and there was a man, in a dress or otherwise, I would have to leave. I don't trust any men. **Female, England, 45–54**

Many women have suffered sexual assault

Almost half of the women who responded said they had experienced sexual assault in their lifetime, and that this made single-sex services important to them. Some talked about specialist domestic and sexual-violence services but many also raised this in relation to feeling comfortable in everyday separate-sex facilities.

The effect of the assault is life-long. Single-sex services give me more opportunity to live a 'normal' life. **Female, England, 55–64**

Myself and my daughter have been victims of sexual assault. Both of us know the value of having private, safe spaces away from men. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am a survivor of sexual abuse. Grooming is how it starts. Having the ability to feel safe using single sex spaces are vital and enable me to live day to day. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was raped and get very stressed in small spaces with strange men. Even a lift is scary. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Being a survivor of childhood sexual abuse has given me lifelong mental health issues around safety and trust. I need to know that I am in a female only space to be able to participate in everyday experiences. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

I can be extremely frightened by seemingly benign actions when they are carried out by male people, including having to squeeze past them in close confinement. Whilst I recognise that, for the most part, this is as a result of being assaulted previously, I cannot tell which males are a danger to me and I already restrict which shops I use to make sure I don't end up in changing facilities that are not single sex. I have previously accessed counselling and I would self exclude from further counselling unless single sex group counselling or a biologically female counsellor was available. This would be likely to hinder any future recovery. **Female, England, 45–54**

I don't think people appreciate how nervous it can make you around men when you've been assaulted. Sometimes just walking down the street hearing a male voice as he walks by on the phone can give me a fright. It would make me stop using public toilets and changing rooms if I

knew they were mixed sex. I already avoid some theatres in London like the Old Vic (that I used to go to regularly) because they made the women's toilets mixed-sex. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have anxiety attacks, due to rape, and need somewhere to feel safe in public, away from men. Men's behaviour often makes me feel uncomfortable, no matter how they present.

Female, 35–44

I have been raped twice, I have been flashed too many times to count. No man has a right to expose themselves to me, I have trauma related to male genitalia as do many women.

Female, England, 25–34

I have had men force themselves on me in public spaces with people around, and in private spaces. Some have groped and some have not taken no for an answer and assaulted me. I have been stalked and harassed. These experiences scared me and have shaped my opinions on single sex spaces. I know women will have gone through even worse than me and be so traumatized (ptsd) that having single-sex services will be vital for their recovery. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a survivor, I often struggle with knowing when I am entitled to have boundaries. I really need the law to be on my side in this matter. **Female, England, 45–54**

As a woman I have experienced a variety of experiences of unwanted sexual attention, harassment from men throughout my lifetime. This has varied in its severity and type from being 'flashed' where men have exposed their genitals in public places, lewd, sexual or abusive comments, inappropriate touching to being physically assaulted. This is a part of life as a woman or girl and we learn to 'risk-assess' situations to some degree. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was groped as a schoolgirl. I found 2 men leering at me through a partially open curtain when I was naked, 12 years old. I felt ashamed both times never told mum I'm 70 now and of all the things I've forgotten I remember these vividly and often just like PTSD. I feel embarrassed undressing in front of females let alone biological males. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Throughout my life I have been flashed, groped, and touched without consent by men. It is important to me that when I am vulnerable (undressed or partially undressed), that this is not in the presence of men. **Female, England, 35–44**

There are 4 women in my family. Me and my three daughters. Between us we have been raped, sexually assaulted, subject to a man masturbating and one as a child had a phone call from a paedophile. We have all been leered at, touched and had sexual comments made to us. It makes us permanently on guard. So when you are planning to take your knickers off or you just want for one moment to be able to relax we want spaces where we know there will be no males.

Female, England, 55–64

I am a survivor of sexual assault and abuse. I feel extremely vulnerable naked, so need to know I would not encounter males/penises. **Female, England, 45–54**

Since the age of 10 males have flashed their penises at me, cat-called me, shouted aggressively or demanded my attention in the street, groped me, stared at me. When I'm dealing with my body or engaged in activity I do not want that time to be appropriated by a male stranger, for whatever reason. Single sex spaces and activities are literally the only places where girls and women can get away from the demands on their time and attention from males, to centre males. Many people in our culture seem to think that female attention is a commodity sitting on the shelf waiting to be picked up and put down by males at a whim. **Female, England, 45–54**

Since I've been a girl I've been aware of men being lewd towards and flashing females. I've experienced unwanted sexual attention personally, including when clearly wearing a school uniform. The thought of them feeling emboldened to enter any single sex (especially confined space, alone with me or girls) is frightening. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Like most women I have experienced unwanted male attention – from surreptitious touching to blatant grabbing and times of real fear. Women need female only spaces – changing rooms in shops and swimming pools and toilets in bars etc to feel safe, occasionally to have the support of other women at times of need. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Everyday privacy

98% of the UK respondents who valued single-sex services agreed with the statement “I want to be able to change, shower and use the toilet in privacy, away from members of the opposite sex.”

More than 3,000 people wrote detailed comments on this one question, and this is just a fraction of them.



Privacy

The first reason mentioned by almost everyone was simple privacy.

It's difficult to explain because it seems like such a basic request – to be able to expect privacy, safety, dignity when one is in the vulnerable position of changing, showering, using the toilet.

Female, England, 35–44

Changing, showering and using the toilet are things that happen in private. Most people don't want to do any of those things in front of anyone, even people we know, let alone an unknown member of the opposite sex. **Female, England, 35–44**

I feel comfortable undressing in front of other women but uncomfortable doing so in front of men.

Female, England, 65 and over

Men and women should have their own spaces to shower and change. This is as equally important to men as it is women. A bit of privacy from the opposite sex is not a lot to ask for.

Female, England, 35–44

It is degrading and unsafe to expect women and girls to share spaces, where they are in a state of undress, with men. However those men identify, they are still men. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Inclusion

Many women highlighted that without ordinary single-sex facilities such as toilets and showers they would effectively be excluded from going out for entertainment, travel, education, work or exercise.

Without being able to change, shower and use the toilet away from the opposite sex it would stop me wanting to exercise, go out and try new things. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I'm a Muslim woman and the thought of sharing female only spaces with the opposite sex just further alienates me and ensures that I spend less time in public spaces. It's unfair that the idea of inclusivity centres marginalised men feelings and safety over women. **Female, England, 25–34**

I went to a cafe recently which had mixed loos and I simply couldn't use them.
Female, England, 55–64

It would be unthinkable to shower where there was a man. I would feel intimidated and would be pushed out of spaces like my local gym where the shower cubicles are frosted glass. Basically I would have my freedom of movement curtailed because my safety, dignity and privacy would be compromised. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I'm an older woman. I just wouldn't be able to go anywhere where there was the possibility of a male person using the same bathing or toilet facilities. This would mean I'd be unable to go swimming or to a gym or even out to a pub if males were allowed in the ladies. I don't want to give up these activities. It is completely unfair to expect women to give up their rights to safety and privacy. Males have facilities – let them use them. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Discomfort in mixed-sexed facilities

Many women and girls do not like sharing intimate spaces with male strangers, colleagues or classmates.

I don't like sharing a toilet with a person of the other sex even when there is more than one cubicle.
Female, England, 65 and over

I hate mixed sex loos. Standing in a mixed sex queue in a tight space makes me feel vulnerable and conspicuous. Men are not careful about their own privacy – have come across them peeing with door left open and at least once I have seen one come out of cubicle before he'd finished putting away his cock. They also leave more of a mess on the seat and the floor.
Female, Scotland, 55–64

When I go swimming at my local pool I have to shower in cubicles by men. I am very uncomfortable there as there are gaps below and above the cubicle, it makes me very anxious.

Female, England, 55–64

It's very uncomfortable to use a mixed sex toilet facility for me and for my husband. He recently felt terrible about having use a gender neutral toilet. He is a large male and is aware of how intimidating he may seem to women – he's actually a big softie, but women who don't know him would just see a large male in their loos. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I work in a male dominated field, I would absolutely hate to be using the toilets at the same time as male co-workers/my bosses etc. I feel it would cross a huge privacy barrier, the guys I work with would probably hate it too, and/or be immature behind my back depending on who they were. I would end up holding it in all day and avoid going to the toilet, as I have when shared toilets have been left dirty on site. **Female, England 35-45**

I have experienced having to use gender neutral toilets. I find these make me feel uncomfortable as there are times when I would be the only female in there. Often they have been in pubs and bars and so you are surrounded by drunk men. They often don't close the door when urinating and some of the toilets still has urinals in full view of the cubicles. This makes using the facilities very uncomfortable and I am always worried about comments or harassment from men and it puts me off going to venues that I know have gender neutral facilities. **Female, England, 35–44**

Sanctuary

Women's toilets and other single-sex facilities are seen as a place of retreat in the face of sexual intimidation.

You always feel more vulnerable as a female, in ANY public space. We live surrounded by the male gaze and we are generally physically weaker. Male judgement, attention, criticism and the threat of violence is real. But when you are semi naked or exposed you are particularly vulnerable, and you know it. In toilets and showers you need privacy and for your security and dignity.

Female, England, 55–64

Most women have had to confront sexually intimidating behaviour from men at some point in their lives, in my experience. This risk will only increase if women are forced to share intimate spaces with them. This is so obvious and it is extremely naive not to realise that this would be abused by predatory men. We should be reducing or mitigating the risk such men pose to women, surely! But instead we are having to defend why the risk should not be increased. Madness!

Female, England, 55–64

I'm a woman in my late twenties. I am exhausted already by constant unwanted sexual harassment and advances by males in all and any public spaces. Being able to walk into a space

and know there will only be other women in there, I can breathe out and get on with what I need to do – be it have a shower, change my clothes or do my female business – in peace and privacy.

Female, England, 25–34

Women and girls have always viewed ladies' toilets as being a sacrosanct place where they can feel safe, cry if they need to, and chat to other females about anything that is bothering them. The TV series Cagney and Lacey in the 1980s illustrated this very well with the two female officers feeling this was the only safe place for them to chat about their feelings. **Female, England, 45–54**

I regularly go to a ladies-only hammam spa, and I feel more comfortable knowing only women are present because I get undressed completely, I am topless when receiving my body treatments, and not wearing underwear post-treatment. I would not be comfortable with men present.

Female, England, 25–34

To be able to focus on what I need to do without needing to read the room for potential danger is extremely important to me. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Men's 'unwanted intrusions' are an everyday feature of life as a woman in a sexist society. We all incorporate routine safety strategies into our daily lives to avoid the risk of men's violence – they're so 'normalised' we often don't even notice them. With all this effort, we desperately need places where we're not giving our energies to such concerns. I've always appreciated women-only changing rooms, toilets, shower facilities for these reasons and I would not use mixed sex facilities for these reasons. Women have so little space in society, compared to men, please don't take away what we do have! **Female, England, 55–64**

I use female-only spaces as a refuge from men, at work or in public, being able to ask for help and just to take a breath in a place where I know males will not be present. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

Retreat

Many women have used women's toilets as a retreat from threatening situations or sexual harassment.

I understand the frequency of sexual assault even in everyday situations, and I appreciate the ability to escape potentially threatening situations by accessing female only spaces.

Female, England, 45–54

I was sexually assaulted by a man at a club in my late teens, my place to run was a women's bathroom – please don't take them away. **Female, England, 25–34**

I used toilets when I was a teenager to escape a man I went for a drink with ('as friends' I thought) who started to act very strange – possessive. I met some girls I knew in there and explained my situation – they accompanied me out and gave me a lift home to enable me to get away from him.

The ladies toilets were the one place he didn't feel he could follow me in a bar.

Female, England, 45–54

When women see a man in their single sex space we know immediately that he is there for nefarious reasons and we are probably the victim. We must be able to say 'No' to this without being labelled bigots or transphobes. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was assaulted in a bar. He had my bag and my phone. I managed to escape to the ladies toilets and was able to get help from there. Ladies toilets still have posters in saying if you are in trouble ask the bar staff for Angela and they will know to help you. If a male presenting person can walk into the ladies unchallenged, then victims of assault, women scared on tinder dates gone wrong etc, will have no safe spaces. **Female, England, 45–54**

My niece was followed into the ladies toilets of a nightclub by a man when she was 19, he tried to grab hold of her, luckily he was seen following her in by staff who ejected him as he should not have been in there. With self ID the risks to girls and women are increased.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

Fear

Even when nothing bad happens in a mixed-sex toilet or changing room, women are aware of the possibility of sexual harassment and male violence.

I recently went to a gig in Norwich. No female toilets only male and gender neutral. I am not someone who usually gets scared, I walk home at night by myself comfortably. But this was actually a scary experience, alone in the toilets with a drunk man. I was scared and did not use the toilets for the remainder of the gig. **Female, England, 25–34**

I think it's highly inappropriate to have mixed sex facilities. How could anyone think it's appropriate for a young adolescent girl to go into a neutral bathroom and a group of young men are in there. Absolutely shocking that anyone would think this is the future. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

When I have had to use gender neutral facilities I feel more on guard, I scan the surroundings more and check for access, exit and points of visibility. I feel more inhibited. When I was younger and went to pubs and clubs more, the female toilets were able to be a place of refuge from men if necessary. **Female, England, 35–44**

Before working in a male dominated industry and being sexually assaulted and groomed, I was all for unisex places. Then my experience made me realise that we aren't as evolved as I thought we were. A local swimming baths has a gender neutral changing space. I stopped going there, because I felt so self conscious being around men when I was changing in cubicles.

Female, England, 35–44

I stayed in a camp site in France with mixed sex showers and toilets. Apart from the horrible lack of privacy and constant fear, the walls of the cubicles were covered by the most grotesque graffiti. Including explicit diagrams. Children had to use these facilities. **Female, England, 55–64**

Men leer and it's intimidating. I've experienced years of harassment and abuse from men and need to feel safe. **Female, England, 55–64**

Over my life I have had many experiences when boys and men behaved inappropriately. This is always annoying, but sometimes this has been disturbing and frightening. I would feel vulnerable sharing these spaces. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I went to the Children Centre of my council. Even though I knew it is a safe place, I was so anxious when I used the gender neutral toilets. I was very uncomfortable even though the only other person who entered the toilets was a woman. I survived domestic violence and sexual abuse and it is unfair for me to experience this anxiety just to use the toilets. **Female, England, 45–54**

I used to work in a company that had men and women share the toilet cubicles. Knowing a man was in the next stall was intimidating and frankly creepy. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Privacy is important and feeling safe even more important. I know from my work on domestic abuse and sexual violence, that abusive men will find any opportunity they can to abuse and control women and girls. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

Recently when at the theatre I declined to use a gender neutral toilet I asked for a women's toilet. I was told that it was downstairs in the basement but that it was closed because it was felt to be unsafe in the evenings! Surely that speaks for itself. Women need safe spaces where the presence of a man can unequivocally be challenged. **Female, England, 55–64**

I feel vulnerable in places like that. These are private places with no cameras or police. If these places were open to males, I would not feel safe. **Female, England, 45–54**

The fears are justified

Some women been assaulted, flashed at or spied on in mixed-sex facilities, or by men who have accessed women's facilities.

I have been followed into a women's toilet by a man who went into the cubicle next to me. As I opened my door he stood just inside his cubicle and orgasmed over the floor looking at me. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have been a victim of voyeurism in a mixed changing village with a man taking photos of me without my consent. It meant I stopped going swimming as I was too scared of it happening again. **Female, England, 35–44**

I went to a toilet in a busy pub and the light was out when I made my way to the cubicle I heard men's voices in there abusing me. I ran out of there as quickly as I could but not before one of them got some bodily fluid on me. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was flashed at in a public toilet in a park age 16. My teenage daughter would feel extremely uncomfortable changing in front of a biological male. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a teenager, I had to use a gender neutral shower facility on holiday while camping. I had a man spy on me, masturbate and groan loudly, and follow me as I left my shower cubicle. I just won't use swimming baths, gyms, etc if they become gender neutral or if predatory men can take advantage of trans inclusive rules to self identify their way into women's private spaces.

Female, England, 45–54

I was attacked by a male in a change room as a 10 year old and would not feel safe with a male in there no matter how he presented. I have been sexually assaulted several times, flashed in toilets and peeked at in a gym shower. I don't want males anywhere near me while in a state of undress.

Female, England, 45–54

I was assaulted by a man in a swimming changing room when I was 11 years old. He was entitled to be in the mixed sex changing room. He followed me in and there wasn't another person around to help me or question why he was there. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was sexually assaulted by a male swimming pool attendant when I was a teenager and raped by my boyfriend as a 23 year old. I never want to feel vulnerable again in a space where I am changing. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was assaulted by a male co-worker, He also tried to enter the woman's toilet when women were in there. I don't want to feel threatened and scared again. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was assaulted in 9ft of water in a swimming pool at 14 whilst the lifeguard looked on. At least when it was over I could change in the women's changing rooms. I stopped swimming after that. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was attacked by a 6 foot 2 drag queen in high heels and his friend in a female toilet. They were both gay so just interested in intimidating me but can't say that helped much at the time. **Female, England, 55–64**

I've experienced sexual assault in public and flashing, on numerous occasions. However, the worst experiences were when males exposed themselves to me unexpectedly, or subtly, so I doubted myself – did they mean it? Was it a mistake? Quite frankly, the idea of letting my guard down in a safe space like a changing room, but then having subtle flashing, really doesn't appeal. I know male rates of sexual violence are similar to rates of sexual violence amongst trans women, and until that changes, I think the concerns of women must be acknowledged. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was raped as a child and also have experienced varying degrees of unwanted male attention – once in a female public toilet where I was followed and the man exposed himself. The thought of not having same sex spaces terrifies me and would stop me from going out.

Female, England, 45–54

I no longer go to the new swimming pool because the changing rooms are mixed sex. I had a man enter the neighbouring cubicle after I had gone into another one to dress after swimming. He was wanking. I reported it. Staff recognised his description but didn't ask for my name and I didn't leave my name so I don't know what happened. I doubt they called the police. I just haven't been back.

Female, England, 55–64

I was once 'groped' in a mixed-sex sauna. It was a very unpleasant experience. I would not choose to enter one again. **Female, England, 35–44**

When I was a teenager the local sports centre had a large mixed sex changing area. The incidents of spying on females by men and boys were a constant problem we had to deal with. It put me off going. I would be embarrassed encountering men in a public toilet. And teenage boys are not known for their discretion. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was in a single changing room at a swimming pool which did not have a lock. A man came in, having seen me go in. Thankfully I was able to get out quickly before he could stop me.

Female, Scotland, 65 and over

When I was a student, I lived in accommodation that was plagued by peeping toms. I know what men are like. We should not be forced into giving them sexual gratification by not having privacy for changing. **Female, England, 55–64**

When I was a child the local swimming pool introduced unisex changing rooms. Visiting with my friend (aged maybe 11), a naked man emerged from the men's showers. He soon retreated, embarrassed, and it was clearly a mistake. But too many men will abuse unisex facilities, and women and girls shouldn't have to bear the risk of that. **Female, England, 35–44**

My experiences include a man masturbating outside my girls' school, age 11. A man masturbating in a ladies public toilet, age 22, no other women in it. A man in a health club looking at me changing over from the next cubicle. A man on a campsite exposing himself.

Female, England, 65 and over

The one and only time I ever used a mixed sex "changing village" a man lay on the floor and put his head under the side of my cubicle to watch me undress. By the time I had dressed enough to alert the staff and they had called the police, he was long gone. Since then I can only use (generally older style) pools and leisure centres with separate changing or poolside changing due to PTSD type feelings. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was a victim of a man touching me inappropriately in the women's changing rooms when I was 8 years old. I didn't understand what he was doing, but I knew he shouldn't be in the women's changing rooms and that rang alarm bells for me. I was able to get away and report him. I am concerned that if we lose single-sex spaces, it will be easier for abusers to get access to vulnerable women and girls and they won't feel able to speak up about it. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have experienced men looking over loo cubicle walls, under doors and through ill-fitting changing room curtains with mixed facilities. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I was sexually assaulted in a public toilet many years ago. If I saw a male in the women's toilets, I would find it very distressing. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was raped aged 16–18 by my first boss (I had been an inexperienced virgin). I was also subjected to voyeurism. There were two toilets I could access at work, both having clear glass windows, one above the door, the other to the side of an outbuilding overlooking fields. I was horrified one day to spot this man looking over the door through the window – he was 6'3; and had stood on a wooden chest on the landing to spy on me. I also caught him spying on me in the other toilet. To think he may have done this several times, actually watched me dealing with changing sanitary pads etc. embarrassed me beyond words. I was so disturbed by this that I no longer used the toilets and went outside. I have had a real problem with toilets ever since and DO NOT WANT to share toilet spaces with men. **Female, England, 55–64**

Periods and pregnancy

Women and girls need privacy when dealing with menstruation and other aspects of female biology.

I have had my first period in a public toilet, had to go to toilets to cry, had to go to toilets when pregnant and hormonal at work and needed space. I have helped a young girl who had her first period in a public toilet. Women support one another in these spaces. **Female, England, 35–44**

I suffer from very painful periods and bleed A LOT sometimes. I do not want to be in a position of having males in a public toilet with me. I also do not want my daughters/nieces etc to have to go through that. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

My teenage daughter once got caught out without any pads or tampons. Normally there is a sense of comradeship between women and if you are caught out another woman will always help out. In an all female toilet you feel able to ask for help. My poor daughter did not feel able to ask for such help because there were men around. **Female, England, 45–54**

Once experiencing a miscarriage in work toilet and grateful for privacy. **Female, Wales, 35–44**

I had an early miscarriage away on a job a few years ago and there were only 2 portaloos available on site. Disgusting, no hot water, no bin, queue of men outside constantly. I bled for 10 days and had to rely on a local MacDonald's woman's toilet for sorting myself out on lunch breaks. It was a horrendous experience and I will forever campaign for adequate single-sex facilities for women on the jobs I now manage. **Female, Scotland, 35-4**

I have experienced excruciating and debilitating menorrhagia and endometriosis related symptoms in public bathrooms, if I thought there were people of the opposite sex in those women's spaces I know I would have found that extremely frightening. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

On two occasions I bled through my clothes as a result of extremely heavy periods. I was mortified having to clean up in the ladies. Some were a bit embarrassed too but one or two were helpful and understanding. Having to deal with this in front of males would keep me at home during periods. I have fainted in a women's toilet at a restaurant – actually unconscious – lying on the floor – how vulnerable. I have also used the women's toilets to escape uncomfortable situations. Public life for women would be very difficult if we can't be assured of single sex spaces.

Female, Northern Ireland, 45–54

Post childbirth I have more body anxiety than I used to. **Female, England, 35–44**

Periods. The crackle of the wrapper as I open the pad. Safety. When I drop my knickers inside a flimsy cubicle, I want to feel safe. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have had two miscarriages at work and single sex provision was crucial. **Female, England, 35–44**

My periods started in the toilet so did my miscarriage. Going through menopause I felt quite hot and flustered and quite often need to have a quick wash so being in a state of undress I needed to feel comfortable, safe and of course my dignity needs to be respected when I'm at my most vulnerable. **Female, England, 55–64**

I have had a miscarriage a public toilet, had to breastfeed a baby in a public toilet, had to pump my breastmilk in a public toilet. In all these cases women were supportive and helpful, as women are when it comes to issues that only affect women's bodies. A man imposing himself into those spaces at those times would have been a violation. **Female, England, 55–64**

I struggle with irregular infrequent but when they do come incredibly heavy periods. After doing my best to take care of myself I would often have to wash very bloody hands in the sinks in the communal sinks of a ladies bathroom. Whilst I would always leave both cubical and sink spotless after I'd finished I've needed to wash pants out, use liquid soap on my thighs etc. Adult women are lovely to sobbing teenage girls in a mess. Boys and men are not – girls and women are under extraordinary pressure to completely hide any and all evidence that periods are things that happen to us – extending that lack of privacy to bathrooms would have meant having to leave school feigning illness for example. **Female, England, 45–54**

Particular needs

Some respondents wrote about their own or their families' particular vulnerabilities and needs.

Not just for me but for my elderly mother and young daughter. My mother has dementia and is vulnerable. No longer being able to rely on single sex facilities (she needs to use toilets frequently) when out would cause her distress and would limit where she would feel comfortable spending time. Spending time outside her home is vital to her mental health – why should she feel unsafe and retreat indoors? **Female, Wales, 45–54**

I need to feel safe – I have had surgery after breast cancer. I feel vulnerable and unhappy to change with men. **Female, Wales, 45–54**

When you're trying to change yourself and two toddlers after swimming, you inevitably end up having to chase one of them round the changing room while you're half naked. This is never much fun, but it is frankly much more bearable in an all-female environment. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have two small children. I have at times left the toilet door open to accommodate a toddler and a pram so we all have room to use the toilet. I do not want to leave my children unattended in a public toilet facility. **Female, Wales, 35–44**

My 21 year old daughter has learning disabilities and needs to have single sex spaces to keep her safe from predatory males. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I recently had breast surgery and needed to be refitted for bra sizing. It was an incredibly personal experience that was handled sensitively by an understanding and experienced female shop assistant. I can't imagine how embarrassing and difficult it would have been with men in the same fitting area. Just hearing male voices outside the changing room was uncomfortable enough.

Female, England, 55–64

I have IBS [irritable bowel syndrome] and my daughter has epilepsy. We both value the privacy afforded in single sex toilets. I have been embarrassed by single males in shared facilities in hospitals and restaurants. I have seen a drunk man try to barge into an occupied cubicle.

Female, England, 65 and over

Once I was in a community building and was standing near the female toilets. A woman came out, who was visually impaired and she was very distressed, because she heard male voices and thought she had entered the male toilets instead. I went in and two trans-identified males were just coming out looking "sheepish" and a bit bemused, and I may add did not try to allay her concerns. I reassured her she had gone into the female toilet and it was ok for her to go back in. They disappeared quickly. This is the sort of scenario that shows how "trans inclusive" rules have negative consequences in real life situations. **Female, England, 55–64**

The conversations about changing rooms and toilets often seem to envisage males and females of similar ages, not young girls and older men. I envisage also frail elderly women being expected to undress near young men. I found town centre public toilets that for decades used to be separate sex converted to a row of cubicles for the use of either sex, a row that is downstairs, underground. The fact that a cubicle has its own wash basin is irrelevant – it is deeply unpleasant for a woman to have to use a toilet that scores of male strangers have been using. If something is deeply unpleasant for women they will self-exclude from the area, restrict the time they spend out, avoid the experience as far as they can. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I have IBD [inflammatory bowel disease] and have had some embarrassing public toilet incidents. Women treated me with understanding and sympathy. Men who followed me into single stall toilets (for one) would often make rude comments about noises/odours. It made me feel more horrible than I already did. **Female, England, 55–64**

I'm physically disabled. I require intimate care to help me with basic needs. It's embarrassing enough needing my mum seeing this. I don't like strangers seeing it. Add male bodied people? I'd become housebound because I couldn't risk going out and requiring a bathroom.

Female, Scotland, 35–44

I have had extensive bowel surgery, so I'm scarred and going to the toilet can already be embarrassing. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I have had breast cancer, 2 traumatic births and a hysterectomy. All have left me with scars, disfigurement and pelvic floor 'issues'. It would be mortifying to see a man, particularly one who has so little regard for what an actual female body has been through, while undressed.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

I have a stoma. It makes me self conscious. I prefer to use services that are for women only.

Female, Scotland, 35–44

Both my daughter, son and I have autism, it is crucial that we feel safe and know our dignity and privacy are respected or this will limit how much we can take part in society and socialising. We are especially vulnerable to suggestion and being made to feel we have to do or allows something if others say so. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Urinals and hygiene

Men can stand up to pee. Removing urinals makes toilet seats and floors unhygienic. Making toilets with urinals mixed-sex is humiliating for everyone.

Urine everywhere. **Female, England, 25–34**

I don't want to stand with my penis in my hand in the same space as women I don't know any more than they would want to share that space with me. **Male, England, 55–64**

One of the benefits of being a man is being able to walk into a male loo and use a urinal, it is ease and simplicity itself, so quick. I find it quite ridiculous that wall urinals are being taken out so that the toilet can be made unisex. I go to a lot of gigs and am of an age where I need to wee more often than when I was younger, it takes so much longer to queue because the male toilet has had the urinals ripped out and been left typically with two or three cubicles. At night time venues cubicles get used for plenty of other things which just slows everything down. It's also tremendously awkward to walk into a unisex loo and be the only bloke in there whilst a bunch of women are gathered round the mirror putting on make up and adjusting their bras – they need their privacy and I need a urinal for a quick wee. Can't believe it's 2022 and life is being made harder for people, not easier. **Male, England, 55–64**

It's not commonly discussed, but as a man I can't stand "gender neutral" toilets. Most of the time I want to go in, urinate, wash my hands, and be on my way. Men's toilets have urinals for a reason. It's grossly inefficient to have to go in, find a stall, more likely than not urinate all over everything, and then go out and wash in a crowd. **Male, England, 45–54**

Speaking as a man, I miss the urinal. I doubt very much females enjoy sitting on a urine soaked toilet seat. **Male, England, 45–54**

I was at a hospital where the toilets were unisex, a man used the toilet before I went in and when I did, the seat was covered in pee. I'm not saying all men pee on the toilet seat but some do. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

I've had to use gender neutral toilets in Costa recently and they were disgusting. The seat was up and when I put it down I still had to clean urine off it. Absolutely disgusting. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Men as well as women want privacy

Lots of men feel uncomfortable in mixed spaces as well.

As a man I would not want to put any female in the position of having to share an intimate facility with males mainly for reasons of safety, privacy and peace of mind. **Male, Scotland, 35–44**

As a man I would feel extremely uncomfortable if I had no option but to share change, shower and use toilet facilities with the opposite sex. It's a matter of dignity and comfort for all. Most importantly single sex facilities provides clear and unambiguous safeguarding boundaries. **Male, Scotland, 45–54**

I'm shy and self-conscious, **Male, Scotland, 55–64**

I am a man so, therefore, I am not subject to the same threats of danger that women face in mixed-sex facilities. I would, however, like to retain dignity in my advancing years. **Male, Scotland, 55–64**

I am a man, I wouldn't want to get changed in front of women I don't know, nor use the urinals. I wouldn't want to expose myself to them, out of respect for them and me. **Male, England, 35–44**

I am a man and it makes me very uncomfortable on women's behalf if I am in that private kind of space with them. I had to use a gender neutral loos at a comedy club a couple of months ago and it felt horrible knowing that I might be inadvertently making a female patron feel worried or nervous or like they had to pretend it was ok. **Male, England, 35–44**

I am a man, I got a sense of the discomfort felt by some women as we waited for a toilet cubicle in a small bar. I didn't feel threatened, but I got the impression that some of the women were made uneasy by my presence, and I would rather have had a male toilet facility and spared anyone any discomfort. **Male, England, 35–44**

Health and personal care

Almost all respondents felt that having single-sex privacy provided dignity in care situations. 95% agreed that: “If I or a member of my family needed intimate personal care it would be important that we could specify the sex of our caregivers.”



Choice and consent

Many people emphasised that it is a basic matter of trust, respect and the right to boundaries to be able to specify personal care from someone of the same sex.

I can barely believe this right is under threat. **Female, England, 65 and over**

If nothing else, it's truly astounding that this one is at all controversial. **Male, Wales, 25–34**

We have the right to choose and not have decisions made for us. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a female I much prefer personal care from other females. **Female, Wales, 65 and over**

We should have a voice during treatment. It is important to have trust and respect for the people who are treating you or caring for you. **Female, England, 45–54**

Although I had a male midwife at the birth of one of my children (he was fantastic), I still want to be able to have the choice. And I want other women to have that choice too.

Female, Northern Ireland, 45–54

Every single person has the right to decide who looks and who touches their body, it is the first thing I have taught my young children! It is their body, they decide who touches it – be it doctor / parent / teacher and in whatever circumstance! I teach them about consent, boundaries, bodily

autonomy. But if they then are told that they can't specify the sex of a medical practitioner or carer for intimate care – we may as well not bother teaching them how to keep themselves safe, about consent, about boundaries. **Female, England, 35–44**

I always go to a female GP or nurse for intimate examinations or tests. It's comforting to know a woman knows my body and potential uncomfortable feelings towards such examinations.

Female, Scotland, 55–64

I want to see a female GP. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I want to see not only spaces protected but the right to only female or female chaperoned health care. **Female, England, 55–64**

Hospital wards

Respondents emphasised that we are often at our most vulnerable in hospitals.

I used a women's psychiatric unit throughout my late twenties and early thirties. It was such a healing place for me. I found being around men at those times I was acutely ill to be hugely triggering and frightening for me. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have been a hospital inpatient, at a time when I was far too ill to be aware of my surroundings, let alone protect myself in any way. It was frightening. Being in a ward with other women meant it was endurable. I would have hated to have found myself in a mixed sex ward.

Female, Wales, 65 and over

My 93 year old Nana was put on a mixed sex hospital ward and couldn't understand why she had to be in her nightie and have a catheter whilst men were in the ward in beds across from her. It was heartbreaking trying to explain to her that it's the way things are now. Is there no dignity allowed at all any more? NHS and Scottish government may have no shame about this, but the rest of us do! This was a disgraceful way to treat a 93 year old woman. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I was a patient in hospital and experienced mixed wards. It was so undignified, being unwell, in my nightie, and trying to get in and out of bed while being observed by the man in the opposite bed.

Female, England, 65 and over

I spent time as an inpatient on a mixed sex psychiatric ward. I was uncomfortable at night and found it difficult to sleep as there were men wandering the ward and not many staff around. This had a direct impact on my mental health. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I once had the misfortune to be in a mixed sex ward in a hospital. I was in a bed next to a man. I had to ask for a commode as I needed the loo and was hooked up to a heart monitor. It was an awful experience, you are literally at your most scared and vulnerable and a man is in the next bed

while you are trying to defecate as quietly as possible. My mother in law was in a mixed sex ward in a geriatric hospital. A male dementia patient tried to get into bed with her, twice. She was terrified. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Intimate procedures

Women were particularly concerned about intimate care and gynaecological procedures.

If I ask for a person of the same sex as me to perform personal intimate care on me I don't think I should have to justify it. **Female, England, 45–54**

I choose a female Dr when I want to discuss my sexual and reproductive health.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

I could never have a cervical smear test from a man. I just would rather risk cancer.

Female, England, 55–64

As a middle-aged woman, it is really important to me that invasive, uncomfortable, or just potentially embarrassing examinations and procedures are performed by a fellow biological woman. **Female, England, 45–54**

I won't have a smear test or anything of that nature by a male doctor. It's just too distressing.

Female, England, 35–44

I simply could not use a service that required any intimacy if it were not single sex. I will not. Not if my life depended on it. **Female, England, 55–64**

Recent operation had bladder problem and required a catheter, fortunately I was in a side room on a mixed ward. Female nurse did the catheterisation late at night I would have been terrified by a man doing it and very embarrassed had any men in nearby beds been aware. I would have felt unsafe. **Female, England, 65 and over**

People with disabilities

Both my parents have needed intimate care towards the end of their lives both at home and then in nursing homes. It is important that as one could no longer speak and the other suffered dementia that they could be changed and washed by carers of the same sex. **Female, England, 45–54**

My parents are now in their 80s and I see their vulnerability. The idea that my mother should be forced to accept a male carer, against her wishes, appals me. **Female, England, 55–64**

My sister who passed away recently was forced to accept intimate care from a male career. She was unable to verbalise, but we discovered that he was actually sexually assaulting and

humiliating her. He still works in the care system because we have no video proof.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

A family member has dementia and finds showering in front of a stranger (or even us, her family) really quite traumatic. We should have the right to preserve her dignity in some small remaining way by not exposing her body to the male gaze. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

A male nurse cared for my mother in hospital when she was close to death and it made her uncomfortable. She didn't have the strength to ask for a female nurse. **Female, England, 55–64**

As a recent carer for a terminally ill person I feel strongly this is important for dignity.

Female, England, 65 and over

I cared for mother with dementia for 11 years. Twice in that time council sent male carers to help with personal care. Both times mum was deeply unhappy. We managed without that help thereafter. It was embarrassing and awkward for all of us. It's so obviously wrong to force elderly women to be washed and dressed by men they don't know, I despair that this is even an issue.

Female, England, 55–64

Father had a stroke and was entirely dependent on female nurses for all bodily functions. This was quite humiliating for him. In the reverse situation that it had been my mother the humiliation would be compounded by anxiety about safety. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I cared for my mother-in-law for the last six years of her life and she had a few spells in hospital. Occasionally a male nurse would come to help her wash and use the bedpan and she hated it. I had to ask for her to have care from female staff, which was grudgingly adhered to. She was vulnerable and the last thing she needed was to feel at best uncomfortable and at worst distressed. I would always ask for myself and female members of my family.

Female, Scotland, 65 and over

My 86 year old mother was forced to share a hospital ward last year with a man who persistently stared at her from the next bed. She was at her absolute lowest (difficult to hold onto your dignity when you're having a leg cut off) and felt even more vulnerable because she wasn't in a single sex ward. If I ever need hospital treatment, I don't want to go through what my mother experienced.

Female, Scotland, 55–64

Sexual-abuse survivors

Having a female healthcare professional is particularly valued by women who have been victims of sexual assault.

I have an appointment in a couple of weeks for a vaginal ultra sound. If the radiologist is a man, I will refuse to have it unless I can have a female radiologist. This shouldn't even be something I

should have to worry about. Women should have the right to choose, regardless of what their experience is. **Female, England, 45–54**

I recently had to have an internal ultrasound where a probe was inside my vagina. To me it placed me back to when I was assaulted. The medical staff were incredible and I was seen by women, the door was locked and no men could come in which is why I felt able to have the procedure despite it causing flashbacks to my assault. Same sex services allow me to access medical care.

Female, Wales, 35–44

I have experienced an intimate exam from a member of the opposite sex and found it traumatically reminiscent of the sexual assaults I've been subject to. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

As a sexual abuse survivor I believe both sexes have a right to know the sex of who is providing intimate care to them. I believe it is an infringement of my human rights and those of others not to be allowed to enquire about and ensure hospital wards are single sex. Dignity and safety are paramount. Hospitals and Care Givers should not have to interpret these guidelines. Sex is not the same as gender. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I know what it's like to have a male doctor examine my uterus and cervix, and that it makes me feel like a specimen under judgement. The emotional side-effects of having to 'brace' for examination (as a rape/physical abuse survivor) with a female doctor can be difficult enough (I no longer go for smear tests because they are so painful for a post-menopausal vagina) but when it's a man, I'm wired to fight or flight, and having to submit to examination triggers me and takes days to 'calm down' from. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Recently I had a hospital procedure and was placed in a room with a man. I was so scared that my vital signs caused concern and a nurse came to sit with me. Another time I had to have a general anaesthetic for a dental operation; for some reason I was required to be naked in a gown and when I realised male nurses were in the room touching me, I was so scared I started hyperventilating and having a nosebleed. **Female, England, 45–54**

Particular needs

Some respondents described specific situations in which single-sex care is more than usually important.

Anyone male or female deserves the right to choose the sex of the person who is providing any care and especially intimate care procedures. I also work supporting young adults who have physical and cognitive difficulties and often need intimate care. It concerns me that they may in the future be prevented from choosing the sex of the person who provides their care. My organisation is confusing sex and gender when applying the single sex exceptions in job adverts,

they continue to do this despite me pointing out their error. This is frustrating and the result of misinformation across various organisations. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a deafblind Asperger I do need help and specify that help is female. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have never been comfortable undressing in front of strangers, or people I'm not very close to. I have MS and have had to receive personal care in hospital. I would not have allowed a man to wash me in the bath or even see me naked, it would not have been an option for me.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

It is taboo in my culture to receive personal care across sexes. Especially on the female side. But we are taught not to talk about these things. So women will just refuse personal care without saying why and you will not know they needed it. At a hospital when I had operation I often refused care because it was curtains and I could hear men near. **Female, England, 35–44**

Professionals recognise the importance of choice and dignity

As a nurse I can say patients do not want intimate care from males, they just don't. They want dignity and privacy when they are vulnerable. **Female, England, 45–54**

After working in care for many years I understand and see the need for this, for both sexes.

Female, England, 45–54

As a doctor I know how important it is for women to be able to request women doctors or nurses for consultations and intimate procedures if they wish, for example gynaecological examination, smear tests, or even just discussions about deeply personal issues. Women should be able to ask for a woman professional to attend them without being labelled transphobic or bigoted. If women cannot be sure of having same sex attendants that may inhibit them from accessing health care and that could be detrimental to their health. Not all women care about the sex of their health care attendants, but enough do for that to be an important consideration in the planning and provision of services. **Female, England, 55–64**

As a midwife I can attest to the fact that women want and need female caregivers.

Female, England, 45–54

As a nurse I respect my patients and know the importance of patients being given choice about who does their personal care. **Female, England, 45–54**

As a retired GP I know how crucially important it is for people to be able to specify the sex of their caregivers. In my experience, some men are happy to have female caregivers, while all women would prefer female caregivers. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

As a retired nurse who worked nights in care homes, I know that it's not always possible to provide someone as per the wishes of the patient to do their personal care. Consent is needed and a properly considered and adapted method of providing intimate care is needed which protects the dignity of the recipient as much as possible, e.g. by using towels to cover the genital area and breasts throughout the procedure. **Female, England, 65 and over**

As a self employed carer, I can't emphasise enough the importance of being able to choose the sex of a carer when it comes to personal care. Basic dignity is at risk here, as well as health implications and re-emergence of trauma. **Female, England, 45–54**

As a social worker with many years' experience of working with older people and people with disabilities I can say that it is vital, to ensure safeguarding and dignity. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Because I have worked as a carer and I understand how vulnerable women are in these settings. **Female, Northern Ireland, 25–34**

I've been a caregiver, the elderly female I looked after would have been horrified to have been cleaned up by a male. I doubt whether she'd have allowed it, if she was able to object. The distress that would have caused her is immeasurable. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I'm a psychotherapist, and endlessly hear from female clients, their experiences re personal care, or those of their female relatives. And of course, there are endless abuse cases that we hear all the time, yet we hear so often how women are shamed and intimidated if they dare insist on female carers. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Recovering from male violence

Nearly half of female respondents to our survey said they had experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. Many women described their assault and why it has made them afraid of men. While recognising that not all men mean them harm, women cannot identify which men are dangerous.



Men are different from women. Only men can rape. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was sexually assaulted, from age 11 to 15, by a close family friend. I am still fearful of unknown men. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Like most women I have been assaulted – by a stranger, in the street, when I was in my 20s. I was initially grabbed from behind by the crotch by this man. I screamed loudly and attracted attention of passers-by. I escaped unharmed. But the frequency with which women are attacked increases my determination to make sure women are not exposed to unnecessary risks.

Female, England, 45–54

I was raped by a male who regarded himself as gender fluid and who liked to wear woman's clothes. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was sexually assault in a hotel in Kings Cross by my manager. I was only 21 didn't speak English and was alone in this country. I tried to report it to general managers and they silenced me until 3 months later, when I could speak English, and reported it officially. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was sexually assaulted as a teenager by a male doctor who was supposed to be safeguarding me when I was vulnerable. If women and girls cannot even trust the men who are supposed to be looking after us, how are we supposed to tell which men are safe and which are not?! We can't tell, so this is why we need safeguarding procedures and facilities. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was sexually assaulted by a doctor while I was in hospital with pneumonia. The idea of a doctor 'presenting' as female while actually and obviously being male is liable to bring me out in a panic attack. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

I was sexually assaulted by my GP when I was around 8 years old. This was done in the presence of a nurse and my mum under the pretence that he needed to do an internal examination on me. I remember it hurting a lot and the nurse telling me to breathe. I was EIGHT years old. He then asked my mum if I stuck anything up there. What the hell? Because he was a doctor, nobody questioned him at the time and it wasn't until years later that someone said to me about this doctor having a reputation for doing intimate examinations on young girls, that this all came back to me. He abused his position. This is commonplace of males abusing positions to get to females and I feel that women have a right to explicitly demand single-sex services without risking having males dressed as females examining them. **Female, England, 35–44**

In my first year at university I was molested by one of the university doctors.

Female, England, 55–64

Like most women I have experienced flashing, unwanted touching and on one occasion an unprovoked punch in the face from a stranger (male). I feel it is important that when I need a male free area, I should get one. **Female, England, 55–64**

My assault was my direct line manager making a pass at me when he was drunk at a Christmas party. I always felt very uncomfortable in his presence. Many years later I plucked up the courage to confront him and he denied it ever happened. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

My experiences are relatively mild compared to some women, as they mainly involved indecent exposure when I was a child and young woman. The first time it happened I was only 7, a man asked me for directions to a road I'd never heard of then exposed his penis. I felt manipulated and frightened and ran home as fast as I could. I learned a lot that day and have valued safe spaces ever since. **Female, England, 45–54**

My father was an alcoholic. One of his drinking buddies turned up at our house on a Saturday afternoon. My mother was working. They drank until my father dozed off in a stupor. This man who could have been in his 50s, followed me into the kitchen while my dad was out of it. This man sexually assaulted me in my own home. I was 14 and told no one for the shame of it. Women cannot predict when a predatory male will attack. We are vulnerable even in places where we are meant to be safe. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

The police

Many women told us that they had not reported their assault, but among those who had there was a common preference for female police officers.

After a traumatic experience I was lucky enough to speak to a female officer. Having to be questioned on the incident was humiliating, I would have struggled had I had to repeat this to a male. I felt that she could also empathise in a way that a male may not. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was interviewed by 2 male policemen after I made a complaint about an assault. I got up and left as I felt humiliated. They did nothing really wrong it was just too much to discuss what had happened with men. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

When sexually assaulted as a student many years ago 2 male police officers were sent to take my statement in my shared student flat. I found it inappropriate and embarrassing. They laughed at how I handled the situation and suggested we had some great parties in the flat! Subsequently worked with female victims of male violence. It was vital for them that they were able to access support of single-sex services. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I was sexually assaulted as a teenager; two male officers drove me around the area to look for my assailant when I was in severe distress. I did not feel able to tell them exactly what happened and they showed no empathy at all. I was eventually driven home and no further action was taken. I still cringe when I hear what are obviously male footsteps behind me. I needed to be able to talk to a woman and was not able to articulate that at the time; I felt scared and humiliated. No woman should be forced to describe a sexual assault to a male officer, however sympathetic he may be. **Female, England, 55–64**

When I was sexually assaulted by a man on the street as I walked home I was able to access single sex care, from the police officer who took my clothing for DNA testing and my statement about what had happened, to the support I received to come to terms with my assault. I would not have wanted a man or male bodied person to be involved at any of these points in the process, I felt traumatised and did not trust or want to be around men or have to talk through what happened with them. **Female, England, 35–44**

Counselling and therapy

Many women stressed how important it was to have female counsellors, female-only peer group support and women-only refuges. They said they simply would not have engaged with any of these services if they had not been confident they would be female-only.

I would not have called the rape crisis line I eventually got courage to call if I'd thought there was the slightest risk of a biological male answering the phone. That one phone call I did make was key to my ability to carry on living. **Female, England, 55–64**

If people need a reason to understand why a female sexual assault survivor does not want males in the service supporting her, they are clearly devoid of empathy and understanding. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I visited rape crisis – I would NOT have gone if men had been there – I was suicidal, this makes the situation life threatening for women and girls. **Female, England, 45–54**

As a survival of child sex abuse I accessed therapy at 16 at a specific centre for women and girls. This gave me the safe space needed to get the support and care required to start my recovery. I would not have been able to use these services, psychologically, if it wasn't a female only space. **Female, England, 35–44**

I am a survivor of sexual assaults both physical and intimidating behaviour many times. Women's groups and services are essential for safety and understanding. In addition mixed groups + choices in therapists are helpful. All can be offered. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have been raped and I want the right to determine the sex of someone who counsels or examines me. I want a woman. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I have used recovery spaces and I walked away when I found men in that space. There was a male case worker who tried to comfort me with a hug and I felt invaded abused and tried to run away from that place because I felt threatened. I was also totally unable to sleep because I could hear male voices. It took me years before I can fall asleep in place where men are, if in the beginning I had stayed somewhere female only it would have reduced trauma and helped me normalise faster. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have used women's aid and did not want to see any men there. I was scared. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I received counselling for the rape from a female trauma counsellor, through the NHS: I saw the counsellor one-to-one. I felt physically safe with her, on the most basic level, and I believe this meant that I was able to heal, because I was not 'on guard' – at the most fundamental, non-conscious, physiological level – when I was in her presence. Had a male been present in the room, I know that I would have been alert to the risk they presented me. This would have made it much harder to heal. You cannot recover from trauma in a setting where your trauma-response is being reactivated. You need to know you are in a place of complete physical safety. That means a female-only space. I believe women must have the right to access female-only support services. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Counselling services for survivors after I was raped made a huge difference to my ability to carry on with my life. I wouldn't have approached these services if I hadn't been confident I wouldn't have to talk to any men. **Female, England, 35–44**

Following sexual assault you are at your most vulnerable, your thoughts around men are not always rational. You need a safe space in order to be able to cope and process what's happened to you. Female only spaces are so important for women. **Female, England, 25–34**

How could I tell a male what another man did to me? It's hard enough to tell a female, to admit anyone to the most painful and shameful thing that happened to you. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I can't imagine having to recount my experience in front of another male. I just couldn't seek help if another male was present. **Female, England, 45–54**

I cannot imagine talking to a male person about what happened to me. It wouldn't have been possible. **Female, England, 55–64**

I would not have felt safe using the Rape Crisis centre I did if there were males there or male-bodied people there. It would have been immensely triggering. Without this help, I would not like to say where I would have been. It was essential to be being able to recover and heal.

Female, England, 25–34

I could not go to a rape crisis centre knowing there would be males there. I would have PTSD. Women heal, women are safe and part of our healing is being with our sisters. Male violence is traumatic and we need time away from men to heal. **Female, England, 45–54**

I used single-sex domestic violence services. Being in a space with no men made me feel able to relax and be open about what had happened (even though I had male friends and colleagues). No matter how decent a man is, we know the average man could easily overpower the average women and cause serious harm in minutes. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was scared to be around males, hyper vigilant, distrustful and fearful after one committed a serious sexual assault against me. I wanted therapeutic healing in a female environment so used women's resource centre and called rape crisis. I wanted to know we shared the same sex.

Female, England, 25–34

I was too scared to use any of these services, so cannot comment. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I was too scared to use one of the services but would be even more so now, knowing it's not solely for women. **Female, England, 45–54**

Peer support

Many women spoke of the value of peer-group support from other women.

After I had been beaten and assaulted by a member of the opposite sex, the sex that overwhelmingly does the raping and assaulting in this world, the absolute last thing I would have wanted to see or experience is someone of the opposite sex, the sex that does the raping and assaulting, ANYWHERE NEAR ME. I wanted, needed and DESERVED the comfort, solidarity, understanding and empathetic sisterhood of other women who have experienced the same, by men, as 97% of us HAVE. **Female, England, 35–44**

I would not have felt able to discuss what happened to me had my counsellor been male, or had there been a male in my support group. Without that support group, I would not have been able to recover. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I belong to a support group for female survivors of male sexual violence. It is important for healing, both physically and mentally, that I can share my experience with other women, away from male bodied people. Whilst I totally empathise with transwomen who have been assaulted by other males, they need to realise that their very presence, especially if male presenting/obviously male, can be triggering to women. I am all for supporting, raising awareness/funds for support services for transwomen/trans identifying males. **Female, England, 45–54**

What good is it to a trans woman, to be in a female support group after rape? The horror is physical, the aftermath is physical. We (women) might be worried we're pregnant, might *be* pregnant; we might have abnormal periods, vaginal tears and bruising; need testing for STIs, need a forensic exam. How are our experiences the same? The aftermath of being raped when you're a woman/female is uniquely female. I feel so angry about the gaslighting that's going on here.

Female, England, 35–44

In a vulnerable state I would not go to a service where I might have to focus on someone else's position rather than my own. Dealing with trans issues in this context would be emotionally debilitating. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

I sought counselling after being assaulted. Which was really helpful. If there has been a possibility of men being in my group sessions I simply wouldn't have been able to attend.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

I was assaulted at 16, the female only services gave me the confidence and time to process and heal and rebuild my confidence. **Female, England, 25–34**

As a survivor, I have accessed services for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence. during these sessions, whether one to one counselling or group sessions, I have shared very intimate details of what has been done to me by men. it is unthinkable to me to be forced to share those experiences with members of the opposite sex knowing it is men who rape women.

Female, Wales, 35–44

I would not have felt relaxed or safe to speak of my experience in the presence of a man. It is embarrassing to discuss such things, it risks offending the (innocent) man, it could be traumatic in itself. **Female, England, 55–64**

I attended the Freedom Programme and it changed my life. It was the first time I'd ever sat in a female-only space where we had permission to speak frankly about the impact of male violence. We gave each other strength and courage and the course leaders gave us the tools we needed to

move forward with our lives. I suspect the above is exactly why single-sex services are being destroyed by those who perpetuate the current socially acceptable incarnation of misogyny.

Female, England, 35–44

I attended therapy groups at two different rape crisis centres in the 1990s. It was very important to me to be in a woman only environment. I would not have used those groups if there were males present, no matter how those males identified. It was sex that mattered to me in those contexts, not gender. It would have confused me, and damaged my trust in the organisation if I was told that it was a woman only service, if there were men there claiming to be women. I was anxious and lacking in confidence then, so would probably not have challenged this. I would have self-excluded and suffered in silence, and it would have made it less likely that I would seek help again.

Female, England, 45–54

I didn't realise how much that mattered to me until I was in a female only space and felt safe enough to speak. **Female, England, 35–44**

It was extremely difficult for me to come forward as a rape victim at 14 and in fact I only sought mental health help a few years later when a very supportive partner encouraged me when I was 18. One to one counselling helped but so did the group of teenage girls I joined. I was extremely fragile, found it very very difficult to share and it would not have taken much for me to leave the group, if it hadn't been a single sex group I wouldn't have been able to open up in the same way. I'm glad I didn't because I don't think I would have recovered as well. **Female, England, 35–44**

Refuge

After experiencing domestic violence I did not want a strange biological man in my house. I had a panic attack when the plumber came round. I felt panic I cannot imagine it is ever right to allow biological males into refuges or women's prisons. **Female, England, 35–44**

After having experienced sexual violence and rape I stayed in a women's refuge. There would have been no way that I could have remained in the service if there were men in this service. It is paramount that single sex service provision is available to women and children and their safety, privacy and human rights upheld. It would have amounted to torture should I have had to share this space with men because I would have not only felt absolutely terrified but scared and on high alert. Women should not be subjected to re-trauma and re-victimisation and their rights should be upheld. **Female, England, 35–44**

I spent time living in a women's refuge and would have felt afraid and uncomfortable if any males were there. It was a very vulnerable time in my life and I felt respite for myself and my child to be in a women-only environment. **Female, England, 35–44**

In the 1990's I spent time in a women's shelter with my 6yr old daughter. My partner raped me, after 7yrs of domestic abuse. In the shelter I did not have to think about feeling safe. I withdrew from society as there were men. Sharing experiences with other women in the shelter built me back safely. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I stayed in a woman's refuge years ago and they had strict no men policy for obvious reasons. We were all vulnerable women there, mostly with children. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was in the only female hostel left in Belfast 9 years ago. I was safe. I was transferred to a mixed hostel because I didn't have other issues (addiction etc.), I had never experienced sexual or domestic abuse). While I slept a man broke into my flat (the sliding door was easily opened and the lock on my bedroom door was broken) I woke up with my t-shirt looped around my head exposing my breasts and him attempting to take my jeans off. Thankfully I was able to fight him off. I didn't tell staff because he said he would beat me up if I did. **Female, England, 35–44**

Professionals stress the need for trauma-informed services

I used to volunteer in a domestic violence refuge. Traumatized women need to know they are not sharing a space with male strangers. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I used to work as a volunteer for Women's Aid. Women fleeing from domestic abuse are particularly vulnerable and need specialist care where they feel safe. Men in those spaces increases their trauma. **Female, England, 55–64**

I am a trustee of a charity in the VAWG sector and I am current fighting to protect our single sex exceptions which are essential to the process of healing from trauma. **Female, England, 45–54**

As both a survivor myself and someone who works with survivors it is impossible to provide trauma-informed care to women who have experienced male violence if males are present. I would not access rape crisis services or a domestic violence refuge where staff or other users were male. Nor would I recommend any woman or girl access such services as including males demonstrates that they will not prioritise women's needs above men's selfish desires. The Equality Act single sex exceptions are there for a reason and there must no penalty for invoking them. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am a specialist safeguarding nurse for a large regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre and I know only too well just how important single sex spaces and choice of sex of clinician is to deeply traumatized women. Also of note, I have never cared for a male who wanted to be examined by a man, it's about who raped you not any kind of prejudice. **Female, England, 55–64**

I am a retired Detective Sergeant who worked in Sapphire units investigating rape / serious sexual assaults. I also worked extensively with domestic violence victims. Even I was not permitted to

enter female only refuges – we had to meet refuge workers off site. If I'd ever told a female victim that intact males identifying as female were present in these locations they simply would not have entered – something that is happening today. The simple act of convincing a victim to reside in a refuge was a massive achievement. Rape is a crime committed by males. Domestic violence is largely a male crime. To expect a female victim who has been violated in this most distressing and traumatising way to share any space with a male is an abject failure to consider their mental and physical welfare and any hope of recovery. ANY male presence in these spaces is a threat and just adds further trauma to their deeply traumatic experiences. Safe spaces for females should mean exactly that. FREE FROM ANY BIOLOGICAL MALE. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was a police officer who dealt with the survivors; women and girls of sexual assault. At close proximity it was very clear that the last thing these people wanted to be exposed to were men. Even to the extent that exposure to a male doctor was not an appropriate response. The fear and humiliation experienced by these women and girls was compounded and detrimental to any recovery. During the years between 1979 and 1990 we (women officers) had to fight our own organisations and social services to get services provided by women only in these situations. I am mortified we are compromising this under the banner of 'gender'. **Female, England, 55–64**

As a survivor and a former domestic abuse worker I cannot overstate enough the NEED for single sex spaces. Based on bodily sex and not identity. The way that society shapes those born female is diametrically opposed to the way it shapes those with a penis and subject to male socialisation. No matter how strongly held an identity is, it is not the same as the experience of girls and women who are soaked in female socialisation and subjugation from birth. Natal women and girls gathering together is so healing for victim/survivors of domestic and sexual assault. There is a space to confide, to share, to lose a grip on the fear that people with a penis and male socialisation engender. The instinctive recognition of male people can be triggering. A male person appeared unexpectedly in the female toilet in my last job. Despite the clothing presentation, the physical attributes were obviously male. It triggered a trauma response in me. The feeling of being trapped with a male person in a small space made me flash back to my second rape. I had a panic attack that lead to a migraine. This resulted in time off work. **Female, Wales, 35–44**

I work in domestic abuse. I facilitate weekly groups. Many times in the last 5 years, various service users (all female) have discussed their feelings in the groups around the importance of the service being single sex. All of them, bar none, have said they would self exclude out a service that allowed males to share their spaces while recovering from domestic abuse. They would feel – nervous, anxious, scared, panicked, annoyed, intimidated, frustrated, angry, sad, disappointed, frozen, speechless, worried, let down and raging. To name a few emotions discussed. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Support and friendship

After dignity and privacy, the next most common reason people gave for wanting single-sex services were for groups and associations. 89% of respondents agreed with the statement: “Women and girls, and men and boys, sometimes need to meet up in single-sex organisations and groups to share interests.”



Our bodies, our lives

From lesbianism to endometriosis to politics to books: why should women NOT have freedom of association? **Female, England, 55–64**

I work in a secondary school. Every time we survey pupils about sex education they request single-sex assemblies and lessons as this is an issue where they are most comfortable amongst single-sex peers with a teacher who matches their sex. **Female, England, 25–34**

As a middle aged women, I have accessed menopause support groups as well as social events for women. The atmosphere and feeling of openness is very different from that of normal social situations in a very positive way. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am a member of a private online IBD [*inflammatory bowel disease*] group for women. Much of the discussion revolves around periods, pregnancy, etc. There were times when women would try to get their husbands/boyfriends involved. We had to be brutal in saying no, because even one conversation would turn to be about men and their issues, and many regular contributors would be silent. **Female, England, 55–64**

I want to talk about stuff like periods, childbirth, breast feeding. The menopause. All the icky bits. With somebody who has gone through it or is going through it. Who understands.

Female, England, 35–44

As a young feminist I attended women's discussion groups and women's writing groups. Both were really important to me. It seems very wrong that younger women now are being made to share such groups to those who are male but 'identify as women.' **Female, England, 55–64**

As a breastfeeding counsellor, I have seen the difference in mother to mother support and discussion in a female only space compared to mixed. Women open up more, share more and make themselves vulnerable when not in a male presence. This enables so much support and healing and this is lost in a mixed sex space. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a former breastfeeding counsellor, men were not invited to mother-to-mother group meetings because they altered the dynamic and restricted frank sharing amongst the women present who needed a safe intimate space during this highly vulnerable time. **Female, England, 55–64**

As a mother, if I were to join any group/s relating to pregnancy, breastfeeding, maternity issues and motherhood, I would only do so on the basis that they were single sex. I would not feel able or be willing to share my experiences with the knowledge that the group had males or would allow them to join. **Female, Scotland, 25-35**

I attend a support group for women who are childless by circumstance. I would not attend if this was a mixed sex group. We discuss personal issues that only affect female people. I would be uncomfortable doing this around males. **Female, England, 45–54**

Support groups

As a survivor of an abusive relationship with a male I have found it incredibly helpful to discuss the issue with other women, many of whom have experienced the same. I would have felt uncomfortable discussing this if a male was present as even hearing a male voice discussing some subjects takes me back to difficult times. I find this a difficult topic to discuss with my brothers and father for the same reason. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I have used alcohol recovery services in the past where I was able, as a woman, to talk about things that happened to me while I was drinking. Sometimes these things were of a sexual nature. We also talked of sexual harassment due to being a woman. Such single-sex services for women in alcohol recovery spaces now have to accept men who say they are women.

Female, England, 65 and over

I volunteer in a migrant charity where I noticed migrant women often talked about things like domestic violence, Immigration issues, childbirth, abuse exploitation, reproductive health when we

were doing a women only event or activity. Women supported, shared advice and tips when they feel safe and we have even done interventions for some women because of what came out in this space. Some charities organize mixed events spaces on these issues but the level of engagement is not the same. **Female, England, 35–44**

I am in recovery from alcohol misuse and attend some women's recovery groups. These are safe spaces where women can relax without worries about predatory behaviour which can be dangerous for women in early recovery, risking relapse. They are also places for women to freely share about very personal subjects that wouldn't be appropriate (or safe) to share in mixed meetings. **Female, England, 45–54**

I run groups for Muslim women who would not be able to participate in mixed groups it would be culturally unacceptable for them and these groups are crucial for their health education and mental health and are a critical route into spreading health information through isolated communities. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I think this is especially true when people are trying to process issues of oppression or abuse related to their sex. Sometimes people need what feels like the safest possible space to explore difficult issues and experiences. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was a rape crisis volunteer in the 80s. Women wouldn't have come to us for help if they thought men were present. We also raised consciousness about sexual abuse through political action and that has helped all women and many men in the present day when it's at least more out in the open. Without women only spaces, we could not have had the discussions that led to our understanding of male violence. **Female, England, 55–64**

I work as a social worker in MH [*mental health*] and having single sex groups to do some group work is important. Both sexes may have the experience of being traumatised by the opposite sex leading them to have a fear of all members of that sex. This fear can be so intense that they would avoid a group offering treatment that they needed if it were mixed sex. **Female, England, 35–44**

I work for a refuge service, this is the bare minimum of safeguarding and care we can provide to our women. I have seen women scream on sight of a male builder in a refuge, it is totally unreasonable for a woman who has faced cycles of abuse to facilitate the needs of a man. **Female, England, 25–34**

No matter which of the single sex groups I have been involved with at some point someone has disclosed male violence whether childhood sexual abuse, rape or domestic violence. I don't believe the disclosures would have happened if the groups hadn't been single sex nor the girls/women involved been able to get personal/emotional support from others in the group and then support to get help from other specialist single-sex services. **Female, England, 55–64**

Lesbians

In the 70s I went to many women's liberation meetings, there were always men outside demanding 'the right' to come in. Lesbians also get harassment from men falsely claiming to be lesbians.

Female, England, 65 and over

As a lesbian the single sex spaces, that allowed me to meet with my women friends and lovers, was a safe space for me. There should still be single sex spaces where women aren't threatened by men in any shape or form. **Female, England, 55–64**

Coming out as a young lesbian in my late teens and early 20s (late 80s and early 90s), women/lesbian only social events, meetings, conferences, clubs, outings etc were so important. I did do some mixed lesbian and gay things, but it was the female spaces that met my need to feel comfortable, meet friends, be comfortable in my skin. **Female, England, 45–54**

Women at work

Some women highlighted women's networking and support groups at work or in their industry.

Enormously important for some support groups in predominantly male environments to be able to be for women only e.g. I formed and attended a women in management group in my workplace when I was newly promoted, which was an invaluable source of support, strength and wisdom for me in dealing with difficult issues faced by myself and other women, including sexual harassment in the workplace, and sexist stereotypes and expectations of women managers.

Female, England, 65 and over

Being in women-only societies at university or at work has made a difference to me professionally – when the training is targeted for women and addressed specific sex-based barriers – it really helps to be in a single sex environment. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am active in all-female groups in my industry (film) which is male dominated and notorious for predatory behaviour, sexism and exclusion. How am I supposed to have support and a network of women to talk candidly about our experiences if men are there. It's not possible.

Female, England, 45–54

I attended a series of events at work aiming to help solve the male dominance at higher levels. The dynamic was so different to any other work event I had attended. Everyone spoke everyone participated no one dominated. No one would talk about feelings in a mixed group – mustn't have them or you be seen as weak – women are so easily dismissed. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I run a women in business group. We all get tremendous benefit from being able to talk about things that are very specific to women. A lot of these things relate to the fact that we have been brought up as girls, went through adolescence as girls, had periods, often had children and

sometimes had the menopause. Many of us have also experienced sexism in the workplace.

Female, England, 55–64

I work in a male dominated industry and have been discriminated against on the basis of my sex.

The support of other women has been crucial for me. **Female, England, 35–44**

Social and hobby groups

A big part of my life is belonging to a women's singing group. It is sustaining, uplifting and helps me de-stress. I have formed strong bonds of trust with my fellow singers and socialising is as important as the music. We travel nationally and abroad for events such as choir festivals, sharing transport and accommodation. The dynamic would be entirely different if males were present.

Female, Wales, 55–64

At church, we have some groups that run single sex. Others are mixed, but for some people, the dynamic of an all male or all female group is vital to their participation. Whether that is for emotional intimacy, our addiction support group, parenting, marriage support etc – there is a place for single sex and we impoverish everyone by denying it. **Female, England, 35–44**

I am a member of the Women's Institute. I am so disappointed that the institute has opened membership to men and fear that the purpose of the organisation has been lost in its attempt to be "inclusive". **Female, England, 35–44**

I am part of a women's crafting group, we've been meeting for nearly 20 years. We've talked our way through childbirth, small children, teens, menopause, mental health, grandchildren and a man in the group would ruin the vibe. **Female, Northern Ireland, 45–54**

I am also part of a large online interest community which is 100% female (but is not a feminist group, it relates to a hobby). We don't all agree on everything but the sense of belonging and support from other women is incredible. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have just started a wood working class which is women only. I value this greatly – in particular the comradery we share in learning a stereotypically male pursuit. I feel no pressure to perform or to achieve a certain standard, or to learn at pace, which would be more of an issue for me in a mixed space. **Female, England, 45–54**

I sing in a women's choir. It's full of women who have a history of being embarrassed to sing, and the single-sex nature of the group enables us to build trust and a common sense of purpose and enjoyment. Most of us carry baggage about being silenced in many ways throughout our lives, and singing together as a group of women helps us overcome our fears of being heard.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

I'm a member of a Men's Shed and a boxing club setup to help men open up more for good mental health. **Male, England, 55–64**

Girl guides and other youth groups

Many women said Brownies and Girl Guides were a positive experience in their own lives, or their daughters'.

Girl guides was a safe haven for me growing up, a place away from boys and men who sexualised me. A place just to be a girl away from male judgement. **Female, England, 35–44**

Girl guides was fantastic for me as I was growing up. I loved the company of an all female troop with female leaders. I went to an all girls school with inspirational women teachers during a time of civil unrest in Northern Ireland. It was a haven for us girls and academic standards were high. Girls need strong female leadership. **Female, Northern Ireland, 55–64**

Girl Guides was a very important organisation for my daughter at a sensitive and sometimes difficult time during her teens at a mixed school. She needed and greatly benefitted from what was then a single sex group. **Female, England, 65 and over**

My son says he benefitted hugely from a boys only club in his teens as they could talk about boy's concerns, be silly about farts etc and generally be more relaxed when chatting or having serious discussions as he wasn't having to impress the girls. My daughter loved the guides and the opportunity to learn and develop a range of skills without boys telling her how to do better. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

Girl Guides was set up as it realised that girls need a space away from boys; to develop their own voices. The fact it is now open to anyone who says they are a girl is concerning. **Female, England, 45–54**

Girl guides was a fundamental part of my childhood and teen years. It was a space where I could be free and open with my friends and not have to worry about what I looked like or how I presented because there were no boys there I fancied. I could focus only on my relationships with my female friends and learning from them/the female leaders. The idea that girls won't have that dedicated space really upsets me. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

Girl guiding was wonderful for me. I was a Queens Guide. It gave me confidence in my ability as a girl. I would not have been able to take part as I did if boys were there – I was too shy. As a former Brown Owl I am horrified how they Guiding movement has put men's feelings above girls' safety and space. **Female, England. 45–54**

Mixed feelings

Some respondents highlighted mixed feelings about single-sex groups, and particularly men's groups, which may sideline women from positions of influence in society.

I agree there are times when it is useful to have a single sex group, but I can also think of examples where women have historically been excluded or sidelined into a female version of a club where the men's one is considered superior. I like that my children can attend cubs OR brownies.

Female, England, 45–54

I agree these can be important but I think they can also be really problematic at times too. I think official support should be quite limited to areas where there is evidence of disadvantage or there is something physically different between the sexes. **Female, England, 35–44**

I am OK with men meeting in single sex spaces, providing they are not used for male only decision making, on issues that impact women and girls. No idea how you legislate for this but it's an issue less applicable to female only spaces. **Female, England, 45–54**

I think this was traditionally used to exclude females (golf clubs anyone?) so I'm apprehensive about saying these are always required. But some specialist services (e.g. rape support groups) these absolutely have to be single sex to allow the participants to open up.

Female, England, 45–54

I understand the need for single sex spaces for women and girls, less so for men and boys. That is because the power imbalance favours men and boys in society. These are simply safe spaces for women and girls to strengthen confidence, resolve and energy from the constant weathering of sexism and misogyny. I reiterate my point – eradicate sexism and misogyny first, then there is space to discuss the important issues of how to integrate public and private spaces for all.

Female, England, 55–64

I think this is a complex issue. Certainly women should be able to meet together. But I am not sure that men should. I mistrust the notion of men meeting and stitching stuff up in (previously) smoke-filled rooms in 'gentlemen' clubs, for example. **Female, England, 65 and over**

In certain circumstances these groups can be divisive. But they should be allowed in law. Nobody is calling for a ban on male-only groups like the Freemasons, funnily enough it's always women's groups that are under attack. **Female, England, 35–44**

In general I think mixed sex organisations and groups are preferable and that this has been a healthy trend during the past decades, but this should not be mandatory.

Male, England, 65 and over

Sport and exercise

Recreation



I go to all-female sessions at the swimming pool. Quite non competitive and safe feeling.

Female, England, 55–64

Sports are where I learned to love what my body could do and among other girls and women who were also coming into their power. It was a place where we could match up with each other to compete but also for bonding over the experience. That gave me confidence in the rest of my life. When I did sports around boys/men there was always a bullying or putdown component that made me feel self-conscious and defeated. I took my experiences of assertiveness in sports into the rest of my life and it made all the difference in how I felt. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have shared yoga classes with men who stare constantly at one's body whilst doing the exercises. It's very off putting. I just want to do my fitness exercise in peace. It can discourage girls and women from attending. I am an older woman and I do not want to expose my body to men in changing rooms, or to look at theirs. I do not feel it's much to ask. We are, after all, only talking about facilities we have had all my life. I see no reason for them to be taken away. Sexism and harassment haven't gone nor any of the reasons for single sex facilities and sports.

Female, England, 65 and over

Until recent surgery I went to an all women running group that had a small group for post-natal women. It is a space where we can discuss challenges women face to keep running as we have children and age. Our experiences are different from men and we should be able to have our own spaces to train and talk. **Female, England, 35–44**

I attend a women's yoga group and would feel very uncomfortable exercising in confined spaces during a full yoga class next to male bodied people. **Female, England, 55–64**

I used to. Nowadays, Leisure Centres are scared to impose single sex swimming sessions. They think they have to let anyone into the gym changing rooms. Urgent clear legal advice is needed. I would not want to use a gym now, nor a swimming pool changing room. **Female, England, 35–44**

I am a cyclist and am deeply unhappy that British Cycling have devised a policy that means women only Breeze rides now include men, as do competitive events. This is grossly unfair to women. Similarly, my local leisure centre has opened up women's swimming sessions to men who "identify as women". As a result, I no longer go swimming. **Female, England, 55–64**

A walking group that I organised had a lot of women attending because many of them were concerned about walking on their own. Many were older women. They told me they would never be able to walk alone because of fear of being assaulted. Some had past experience of this. **Female, Northern Ireland, 45–54**

I prefer exercising with just women and especially when my kids were small I preferred groups with other mums. **Female, England, 35–44**

Sport for girls

I coach a junior girls football team – it is single sex to overcome the exclusion girls have traditionally faced in football – including males erodes this, and excludes girls from resources and opportunities that exist to support female inclusion. **Female, England, 45–54**

As a teacher I can see how difficult it is for the girls, for all sports. It's just not a fair test of ability if boys can join in. **Female, England, 45–54**

Girls drop out of sport in their teens too much already. Sport is about fairness and bodies, male and female bodies are not the same. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

My daughter has represented her school and competed in national schools events. This has required long periods of training, determination and dedication. For her to lose her potential place or opportunity to win due to a male competing in her category would cancel her achievements and devotion to sport. **Female, England, 45–54**

Allowing men into female sports will turn girls away from competing in the first place. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I run, as does my daughter. You can already see at junior park run how much quicker the boys are compared to the girls. I want her to be able to compete fairly and am concerned that girls will disengage from sport if boys are able to identify into their category. **Female, England, 35–44**

Fairness at every level

Why is my park run score any less important than the Olympics? I don't believe in elitism.

Female, England, 35–44

I am a rower, both on the water and indoor. I train hard and am as fit as I can be but men of a similar age who are recreational rowers can easily beat me. The last time I competed in the British indoor rowing championships I came second in my age group. (50 – 54 yrs) The first man that I would have beaten came 5th in the 65 – 69 yrs age category race. Competing to win is an important part of why I row and knowing that I would always lose would probably mean I would not bother competing. **Female, England, 45–54**

I enjoy training in a mixed environment but I enjoy competing in a level playing field where it is fair and I can judge myself against other women fairly. **Female, England, 25–34**

I swim and dive, and train with males and females – there would be no point in competing with Male Bodies it's absurd. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I am a swimmer and I'm good, had moderate success as a teenager. Elite male swimmers will always be faster than me because of the physical differences between men and women. Everyone knows this and to pretend otherwise is lying and deeply sinister. The whole world should be protesting against males in women's sport because it is disadvantaging women, destroying sporting careers and putting girls off sport. No fucking thank you!! **Female, Scotland 45–54**

Religion

A significant minority said that single-sex spaces were important to them because of their faith. 27% agreed that “As a person of religious faith, modesty and single sex-privacy are important to me.”



Modesty codes

It is a very crucial part of the Islamic religion for women to keep modesty and chastity in life – whether at home or outside of home. Having single sex spaces privacy would allow for that to be upheld. **Muslim, Female, Scotland, 55–64**

As a religious person, my beliefs are protected. My faith requires that I would NOT undress in front of males. Including men who say they are women. **Muslim, Female, England, 35–44**

Treating humans (and animals) with respect and compassion is crucial. All humans deserve respect for their modesty and single sex privacy. **Buddhist, Female, England, 65 and over**

As a woman of faith it's important to me to have single sex spaces to use for ritual ablution, fixing clothes etc. But also when I was younger I needed private spaces to breastfeed my children otherwise I couldn't leave the house. If my abusive ex-husband had known I was going out to places where there were men, he would have completely banned me from ever leaving my house at all. **Muslim, Female, England, 45–54**

I'm a Muslim woman. It's against my religion to share intimate spaces that are for women with males. By not respecting female only spaces, it further marginalises me and pushes me away from public spaces. I know a Muslim women whose husband is using this as a way for her to stay at

home. I signed us up for women only swimming lessons and he told her that it can't be guaranteed any more and forced her to stay at home. **Muslim, Female, England, 25–34**

My boyfriend doesn't get to see my body, and won't unless he becomes my husband, do you think I want any other man seeing it? Unless it's a medical emergency, I choose who sees and when. It's not for sharing with members of the general public. It's not kept under wraps because it's shameful, but because a woman's body is honourable and to be honoured (men's are too but that's not who we're talking about right now!) We are made in the image of God, to love and be loved, made for committed relationship, not to be objectified and used and gawked at.

Christian, Female, Scotland, 35–44

Please respect the fact that modesty and observing God's rules is far more important than anything. **Muslim, Female, Scotland, 35–44**

My family is Jewish – there are very clear religious laws about being female and who can touch you. This is essential; for rituals at death, during menstruation, childbirth etc.

Jewish, Female, England, 55–64

My faith teaches me that as a woman I would only share intimate parts of my body with my husband. **Christian, Female, England, 55–64**

My faith is fundamental to who I am, it has become my nature to respect my body as a Temple and treat it with respect and this involves giving it the privacy it deserves.

Sikh, Female, England, 35–44

My faith is deeply important to me and as part of that modesty is engrained in me since childhood. I am increasingly isolated in a community that does not acknowledge the needs of women who cannot or will not share what should be single sex spaces with biological males.

Christian, Female, England, 45–54

My Christian faith teaches me that my modesty is important and that nakedness is something revealed to only very few people. I feel uncomfortable being forced into situations of intimacy with strangers of the opposite sex. **Christian, Female, England, 45–54**

I am Muslim and would not undress or shower if there were males present. This would severely limit my ability to access sports and leisure facilities. Essentially it would mean there would be activities that I now could no longer participate in. We should be encouraging more women into exercise, not less participation of women from different ethnic/religious backgrounds who traditionally don't access sport as much and would effectively cut off from doing so. I have always wanted to try open water swimming in a safe environment e.g. the pools at Hampstead heath but I can never do so as these are effectively mixed sex. **Muslim, Female, England, 45–54**

My body is sacred to me and my husband. It is a total breach of my religious rights to allow another man to be able to view my naked body. **Christian, Female, England, 35–44**

I am Jewish and I do not expose myself to any other male except my husband.
Jewish, Female, England, 35–44

I am deeply religious and my modesty is an integral part of this.
Christian, Female, Wales, 65 and over

I am an observant Orthodox Jew and my faith requires women and girls to have separate sex spaces for changing, toileting and other personal body care and maintenance.
Jewish, Female, England, 65 and over

I am a Roman Catholic woman and the only male person that I share my body with is my husband.
Christian, Female, England, 35–44

Many women in my family observe the rites that do not permit them to even show their own hair to men other than immediate family. To force them into situations where they have to undress with strange men would be devastating for them. There are many Jewish rituals which exclude on the basis of sex and these should be maintained. **Jewish, Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I've been religious all my life and adhered to strict segregation when it comes to sports and health. I miss out on a lot in life as a result. Mixed spaces make my life difficult. I had to give up swimming because they got rid of women only classes. My health was impacted and I was depressed. **Muslim, Female, England, 35–44**

I'm Jewish, and there are very clear restrictions on how I interact with members of the opposite sex. **Jewish, Female, England, 65 and over**

I'm a Muslim female and completely respect modesty and single-sex privacy. I have seen it first-hand how important it is. **Muslim, Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I wear a hijab and do not want in any way shape or form want me to be a minority who cannot follow my faith, no one has a right to take that from me. **Muslim, Female, England, 35–44**

I have just returned from a Buddhist retreat where it's normal to share bedrooms with members of your own Sex – I would not attend these retreats if I had to share a room with anyone of the opposite Sex. **Buddhist, Female, England, 55–64**

I embraced Islam in my early 20s. I wear a headscarf, it helps me feel protected, no man can look at me now which works for me. If I don't want to show a hair on my head to some random man then showering n changing clothes is out of the question. **Muslim, Female, England, 35–44**

I do not wish to be coerced to break faith – all faiths afford dignity and safety to women and dignity also to men, in not infringing upon women. **Jewish, Female, England, 45–54**

Men as well as women require personal privacy

Respect for sex boundaries is an essential part of my religious experience.

Jewish, Male, England, 45–54

Islam teaches that both males and females to keep private that which The Creator of everything has commanded to be kept private. Removal of single sex spaces results in removal of existing rights to the single sex places which enable one to practice their faith.

Muslim, Male, England, 35–44

Religious rules proscribe physical contact with the opposite sex. **Buddhist, Male, England, 45–54**

My Jewish faith dictates it should be female/female and male/male spaces only.

Jewish, Male, Scotland, 35–44

Judaism is predicated on the privacy of intimate relationships and the boundaries between friendship and physical intimacy. To be obliged to infringe that is unfair and treats me in a less sensitive way than others, simply because I hold particular beliefs. **Jewish, Male, England, 55–64**

Losing single-sex services

More than 2,000 people gave detailed comments about their experience of loss of clear single-sex services and how this was affecting their quality of life. These are just a fraction of them.



Public toilets

Many people wrote about toilet blocks being changed to “gender-neutral”, and how uncomfortable this makes them feel. In particular service providers are either removing urinals (making toilet seats dirty), or putting them into “gender-neutral” spaces. Many women said they would not use gender-neutral toilets.

I keep finding women’s toilets are now gender neutral which is alarming and annoying. My daughter refuses to use them. **Female, England, 45–54**

Our Glasgow City Council owned toilets have converted the female only toilets to gender neutral. I avoid them if I can but they are the only public toilets in the area. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

A park near to where I live in Bristol has toilet facilities in a block of 3. 1 of these is male only, the other 2 are unisex. The state of them is vile. **Female, England, 45–54**

I won’t use a public toilet that is mixed sex. So I have had to hold myself because I cannot use dual sex toilets. Which is painful and difficult particularly because I have chronic health issues which affects my toilet needs. **Female, England, 55–64**

I often walk out if no women’s toilets are available. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Men standing with cubicle doors open peeing in mixed toilets – makes me not want to go to the loo. **Female, England, 45–54**

In the mixed facilities at a club, men were queue jumping to pee in the sinks as they are totally unused to queueing. **Female, England, 45–54**

The new shared toilets are usually dripped on. People who stand to wee are not always aware of how much a seat matters. **Female, England, 55–64**

Male and female toilets replaced with unisex facilities. Men lose urinals and women lose the ability to come out of the stall confident that there isn't a man 'adjusting' himself in the communal area. **Male, England, 35–44**

Toilets that are gender "neutral" i.e. unisex, are generally filthy. **Female, England, 55–64**

I went into a pub in Norwich. There was a mixed sex facility consisting of open urinals and two cubicles. The sink were inches from the urinals. **Female, England, 55–64**

At work some staff toilets have been lost – the mixed sex toilets often require you to clean up the urine which has splashed on the seat before you can use the basic facility.

Female, England, 55–64

I had my first experience of unisex toilets. I decided to try it as how bad could it be? It was terrible – I walked in on a gent weeing. Very awkward for both parties and highly inappropriate. Apparently its normal for men to not lock the cubicle door! Women's and men's norms in using toilets are completely different. **Female, England, 25–34**

I once had to use a public toilet which used to be divided into a male and female section and had been converted into one unisex toilet block. Both men and women had access to a row of individual cubicles and a row of washbasins and there was a urinal in addition. Everyone I saw there looked uncomfortable. I was much happier when I found a single-sex toilet block elsewhere in the town and I now use that one in preference. **Female, England, 45–54**

Toilet facilities at a zoo in Scotland. I walked in and a male was using a urinal which I had to walk past to get to a cubicle. It was embarrassing for both of us. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Public toilets near me were converted to gender neutral and retained the urinals so I couldn't face going into that enclosed space where a man might be stood with his penis out. Having been flashed more than once when young I really want to avoid it again. **Female, England, 45–54**

Hospitals and healthcare

Mixed-sex toilets and hospital wards were condemned by many.

The Women's toilet at a nearby hospital became gender neutral or rather, for women and anyone else who fancied it. There was a big sign up saying that if someone in the toilets made you feel awkward, you weren't to challenge them, you were to examine your prejudice and keep your nose out (I paraphrase). **Female, England, 45–54**

I was chairbound with a serious fracture and the single sex ward I was admitted to changed to mixed sex. The lavatory was at the 'male' end of the ward and it was deeply embarrassing to be wheeled to it and to be unable to lock the door out to the ward. I felt very vulnerable and very uncomfortable. **Female, Northern Ireland, 55–64**

The toilets in the local X-ray had a laminate saying gender neutral toilets sellotaped over the women sign and the men's were just left as they were. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

My local NHS mental health trust cannot keep women safe in hospital. Men are admitted to women's wards because they are trans-identified. A mental health nurse tells me that she and other colleagues put their jobs at risk if they complain. Women patients have been assaulted and feel unsafe. This is not reported to the board or the police. It really worries me that if I am ill enough to be admitted to mental hospital, my safety and security is at risk from a male patient, and if I complain I will be criticised for doing so and may suffer other consequences. I worry about my sister being admitted again. **Female, England, 55–64**

Working in a hospital where a trans-ID male was admitted to a stroke ward where elderly, cognitively impaired and religiously-observant women were housed. Nobody asked or informed the women and staff were not permitted to talk about it. **Female, England, 35–44**

Due to my PTSD and inability to use shared spaces my life is being slowly eroded and it is becoming harder for me to go out. Even the NHS facility where I attended for psychotherapy for PTSD due to rape & serious physical assault became unavailable to me as they introduced gender neutral toilets and spaces & I was too terrified and too triggered to attend. It became an unsafe space for me which was a devastating loss which was detrimental to my mental health.

Female, England, 55–64

My worst experience has been in a mixed hospital ward in Scotland where an elderly man exposed himself through the night. Not much chance of a peaceful recovery! **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

I work in mental health. When working in England, I have seen a high risk trans woman admitted to a female ward, creating risk for staff and other patients. I have also seen a very vulnerable trans man being "trialled" on a male acute ward, which is extremely risky. I now work in a forensic

mental health team. Colleagues who visit patients in prison have reported very risky decisions being made about housing trans women in women's prisons. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

Nearly a year ago now I broke my wrist and was taken by ambulance to an accident and emergency department – they did not have any single sex toilets in the department or it seems the whole hospital. I complained to the staff that it was against the law not to have single sex facilities such as toilets in the hospital. They did not respond. It meant that I had to wait 4 hours before I could go home and go to the toilet. I have had the same experience in other hospitals. Women need single sex toilets, changing facilities and single sex hospital wards. We want privacy and safety from men. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I was recently called for a routine breast examination, and the letter from the NHS specifically mentioned that the mammographer would be female. Even so, knowing that the NHS are willing to gaslight women about sex, I approached the date with great trepidation and anxiety; I very nearly didn't go and was prepared to leave if the mammographer had turned out to be male.

Female, England, 45–54

Schools

Many parents said that their child's school had changed the toilets to mixed sex, or that they are allowing trans-identifying children to use opposite-sex facilities.

My son's school has replaced the toilets with one large mixed sex toilet block. The girls often avoid going in there and some parents have reported their child getting uti [urinary tract infections].

Female, England, 35–44

My daughter's school is currently in the process of converting all facilities to mixed sex, which horrifies me. I'm currently fighting that decision and have formally requested that they retain some single sex facilities, so students can choose where they are most comfortable.

Female, England, 45–54

I'm a teacher. I see it first hand and young girls aren't happy but are scared to speak up because they are told they are transphobic. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

Boys have also felt awkward when girls adopting masculine personas use boys' toilets. It's a recipe for anxiety in both boys and girls. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

My daughter is forced to share her bathroom at school with a boy who identifies as a trans girl. She came home and asked me about the boy's penis and things that no child should have to confront at that age. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

My niece, who is in a school where the loos have been made gender neutral – except, really only the girls' loos have been made gender neutral because which girl or young woman wants to walk

past the urinals in the boys' – no longer drinks anything until the end of the school day. She is not on her own. **Female, England, 45–54**

Daughter's school (secondary) announced they are changing all the toilets to gender neutral. Daughter was horrified and said she would not go to the toilet at school. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was horrified when looking around a newly built secondary school with my daughter last year. The toilets were mixed sex, open plan onto the corridor with sinks running down the middle. Girls were to use one side, boys the other, there was also a gender neutral cubicle in the middle. I understand the thinking here but all I could think was my daughter would have to come out of a cubicle to wash her hands facing a boy (who could be 11–18, an 18 year old would look like a man to her). I thought that once she starts her periods this could be hugely embarrassing for her and that if I sent her to this school (apart from these non-private toilets the school looked great), I would send her in with wipes in her bag in case she ever got period blood on her hands. I can't believe that I feel I need to spell this out. When we talk about 'women's privacy' isn't that a euphemism for this? So we don't have to spell that out? **Female, England, 45–54**

This has had a devastating impact on many women and girls. My nieces are going to a school where the toilets are now gender neutral. They hold their wee in all day as boys are going around shaming girls, shouting out, shitter, pisser or bleeder. Some boys wait for specific girls to go to the toilet, intimidating them. **Female, England, 45–54**

My daughter's school has changed their 6th Form toilets to fully-enclosed gender neutral ones. My daughter still chooses to walk to use lower years' girls only facilities. And she has good trans friends. **Female, England, 45–54.**

My daughter has gender neutral toilets in her school. She will not use them. Every single day, without fail, she will burst through the door when she gets home and races up the stairs to use the toilet as she has had to hold it in all day. **Female, Wales, 35–44**

I work in a school that has recently built blocks of 'gender neutral' toilets. A sixth form female student told me "Unisex spaces become male spaces." She said this was due to insecurity when girls take 'a little longer' in the bathroom, boys think it is hilarious to bang on the doors etc when a girl is in there and finally the toilets become very unhygienic apparently. **Female, England, 35–44**

Sports and exercise

Many women said they were unable to access sports and exercise facilities because changing and showers had been made mixed sex, or because of “trans inclusion” policies for single-sex areas.

The changing rooms in my local gym are now classified by gender rather than sex so males identifying as women can enter. Staff do not challenge whether these individuals are genuinely transgender. My daughter no longer feels comfortable going there so has effectively been excluded from these facilities. **Female, England, 45–54**

Man in mixed sex (gender neutral) changing area was taking photographs of girls getting changed in the next cubicle by holding this phone under the gap at the bottom of the cubicle partition. **Female, England, 55–64**

Local authority leisure centre changing facilities have all become mixed sex, to the discomfort of all. My Muslim friend no longer comes swimming at the women’s session as transwomen also use the pool and changing room which is contrary to her religious beliefs. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have stopped going swimming at my leisure centre in Bridgend County because we now have a “mixed changing village”. I wrote to them to complain but was told it was helpful for families. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

My gym and swimming pool. I left and got fat. There’s nowhere I can find or afford which has single sex. This is everywhere, cafes, music venues etc. I can’t keep complaining. It’s getting too upsetting getting replies telling me I’m transphobic for asking for single sex spaces. **Female, England, 35–44**

My local swimming pool is threatening to stop the one night a week of women-only swimming and sauna, that is relied on by me and many other local women, including some very religious Jewish and Muslim women, so we would have to stop going to swim and sauna. My workplace has gender neutral toilets and changing rooms now, so I don’t do yoga or gym at work anymore and I wait to use the single disabled toilet even though I feel guilty that I shouldn’t use the disabled toilet. **Female, England, 25–34**

My local authority removed women’s night gym & exercise sessions from all council run venues, with one exception (which was then too busy to book). This was despite the fact it was always busy & had waiting lists for women to join. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

My gym at Cambridge allows self id in its women only sessions. **Female, England, 45–54**

I haven’t used the local swimming pool since the changing rooms became unisex. I also avoid public toilets as much as possible. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

The loss of women only swim sessions has stopped me from swimming. I detest mixed changing rooms. The booth style is not private. The showers are mixed. It's horrible. This is Edinburgh. There used to be several women only sessions. I used to see Muslim women and have a chat it was lovely. It felt safe. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

My council gym has mixed changing area, I went for around 3 weeks but didn't like the shared facilities. I now attend a gym that has women only changing areas. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I sea swim in a group which was set up as women only. However we are under the umbrella of a larger group who is trying to gain diversity status from Stonewall. All the groups have been told we must be inclusive and become mixed. Also groups whose names were female centric such as "bathing belles" or "mermaids" have had to change their names to tick the inclusivity box. Some of our members have stopped swimming because they are domestic abuse survivors and do not want to swim with men which is why they don't use a leisure centre. **Female, England, 35–44**

The changing areas in nearby swimming baths are now all mixed sex, with individual cubicles. I do not feel safe or comfortable there. There are no longer single sex showers. There are instead open communal showers. I no longer use the swimming pools. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was hoping to join a female cycling group – but was devastated when I found that that essentially anyone can join. **Female, 35–44**

I no longer attend the swimming pool at my leisure centre as there are no women-only changing facilities. **Female, England, 45–54**

The sports centre I attend has mixed sex changing facilities only for the swimming pool, while there are shower and changing cubicles these do not have floor to ceiling walls and one has to walk from the shower cubical to the changing cubical wearing only a towel and then fiddle about trying to get the rest of your clothes out of the lockers. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have experienced unisex changing facilities at a swimming pool. It was very uncomfortable as although there was a cubicle my daughter and I could change in when we exited a man was fully naked outside the door. The unisex toilets were daunting, I was the only female with a group of males entering afterwards, when I exited the cubicle they were all watching me and making comments. **Female, England, 45–54**

Following cancer treatment I tried to join a gym but couldn't find one near me that didn't allow males to self-identify into the women's changing and showers. I needed to exercise to try to recover my strength and fitness but felt too weak and vulnerable to risk encountering a male person when I was exposed in the changing room so I couldn't join any of the gyms. The lack of guaranteed single sex facilities deprived me of a chance to join a gym as part of my cancer recovery. **Female, England, 45–54**

One male teenager saying he self identifies as female at our canoe club and has a semi erect penis when in our female changing rooms. He has mental health issues but his social worker has not accepted the club offer of a separate changing room for him/her although there is one on offer. Women now change in the single toilet at the club or self identify for the day as non binary and use the training room! Although he/she follows us in to either room. I go to club as I can still paddle and coach from the side. **Female, England, 55–64**

I stopped going to the local leisure centre due to gender neutral changing facilities.

Female, England, 35–44

I can no longer go swimming because the changing rooms and pools are mixed sex (ladies night session cancelled) so me (a victim of SA [*sexual assault*]) and my friend (a Muslim woman) can no longer attend. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

My local council now has mixed sex changing rooms. As a result I only swim when I can go with my husband, which restricts my freedom. The behaviour of some men in the open shower area is uncomfortable to many women, as we do not wish to shower around undressed males.

Female, Wales, 45–54

My daughter no longer takes part in sports because she had to share changing room space in the local leisure centre with men and boys. We've seen unacceptable things in that shared space. She just stopped going. I don't want women and girls having to exclude themselves from facilities that should be for everyone. **Female, England, 45–54**

My local council-run gym has just been renovated, they knocked down the dividing wall between the male and female showers, so everyone has to shower together, some ladies are complaining that some men are pulling their swim trunks so low and washing their private parts in front of them. The toilets have now been made gender-neutral. It is unacceptable to force women and children to put up with this, females are the majority and for a few minorities, this government is putting us all at risk. Our human rights have been taken away and we are discriminated against.

Female, England, 65 and over

I stopped going swimming when they made ours mixed sex. Men coming out of their cubicle in their underwear to access lockers. **Female, Northern Ireland, 35–44**

Workplaces

Many women wrote how toilets at work were being converted to gender neutral. Many said that they will not use them and instead use the accessible toilet or walk to other parts of the building where female-only toilets remain.

At work we had two toilets, male and female. The male toilet was left as male only because of the urinals. The female toilet was made gender neutral. I work for an organisation where females outnumber males 3 to 1. This meant that men had access to two toilet facilities and women had to share the gender neutral toilets with men who took advantage of the new signage.

Female, England, 55–64

Some of the toilets at work have been turned gender neutral. Removing the men's and women's toilets. Nobody was consulted about this it was just done. There was always a unisex toilet there was no need to remove the toilets from men and women. **Female, England, 35–44**

Toilets at work – I and female colleagues do not wish to share toilets with men, so we go to a different floor where there are still women's toilets. **Female, England, 45–54**

Work female cubicles now mixed. Men's toilet still remains. No female only toilets now. The disabled toilet is now used more by women as a result. **Female, England, 45–54**

Whilst working at a university campus the only bathroom facilities available were gender neutral and I would go off campus to use other toilets as I felt self-conscious ,and anxious sharing with men. **Female, England, 45–54**

At my workplace the large female toilets accessible in the atrium near the canteen were converted to unisex. The male toilets remained male as they contained urinals. This effectively increased male access to toilets and reduced female access as women then stopped using the unisex toilets and used single cubicles in other parts of the building **Female, England, 45–54**

Our company built a new office and all toilets were gender neutral (Stonewall champion).Very very few females use these toilets preferring to walk further to the old toilets. **Female, England, 45–54**

I work in a large building which previously had two sets of male and female loos at each end. Without any consultation or warning, one set became 'gender neutral'. The result was that many women stopped using them. Common issues were, men coming out of the cubicles with their flies undone; the disgusting state of the loos; Muslim members of staff who couldn't adjust their headscarves in the presence of a man. It was inconvenient and a waste of time to walk to the other end of the floor, and of course those loos became more crowded. It was a small thing but it showed utter disregard for the dignity, privacy or needs of the women in my organisation.

Female, England, 55–64

Some of the women's toilets at work became "gender neutral". These toilets were mainly in the areas of the building used by clients and people attending events at my firm (a large law firm in London). This meant that I could not invite any women from outside the firm to meetings or events because there was no safe place for them to use the toilet, unless accompanied by a staff member to another floor. And who wants to put their hand up and say they need someone to take them to the loo? My firm is in a deprived area of London with lots of residents from a conservative religious background. We do a lot of outreach work with local schools, including mentoring students and inviting them into the building for "aspiration-raising" days to see how a large professional services firm works. Girls from conservative religious backgrounds would not be able to attend these events. Even if they did not mind sharing facilities, their parents would not let them come.

Female, England, 45–54

As Scottish Government workers, the vast majority of women chose to go up or downstairs to a remaining women's loo, rather than use the female loo that became neutral gender loo on our floor. This loo became, in effect, a male loo as women didn't like using it e.g. loss of privacy, smell and mess. It did not appear that men on our floor chose to go up or downstairs to male only loos – which could equally have been their choice. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

At work: gender neutral replacing male and female facilities: a corridor lined with individual lockable cubicles with shower, sink and loo inside. You had to squeeze past people to get to cubicle which felt too intimate. It also felt dangerous, someone could push you into a cubicle with them and lock the door. No one could help you or know what was happening. This sounds dramatic but women are always scanning for danger and this is what most women would be aware of. So too intimate and also too cut-off from people. **Female, England, 35–44**

Gender neutral toilets at work. Absolutely loathed it! Felt scared and used to walk to a different building to find a genuine ladies loo. It was only the ladies loos that got changed. No women ever wanted to use the gents ones because they stank! My friends who did use the loos when working on the evening shift told me they always walked up and down to check there was no other person lurking in a cubicle before they would risk going for a wee. Something they never used to do.

Female, England, 55–64

I am a teacher in a girls' school. I've stopped using the staff toilets at work now male visitors can go in. It's embarrassing for them and women staff. I use the sixth form female toilets instead.

Female, England, 45–54

I recently visited number 11 Downing Street and had to change my underwear and menstrual cup in a gender neutral facility with two men taking right outside the cubicle door. My heart was racing, I was afraid the cubicle door would be opened. **Female, England, 35–44**

My workplace introduced mixed-sex toilets in one specific block, and while visiting this caught me off guard when I came out of a cubicle to see a senior male member of management using the sinks. This made me feel incredibly uncomfortable, initially due to the shock of seeing a man in the toilets (while I was not unaware they were mixed-sex I did not give this thought before entering). There was then a second element of discomfort as this person was so senior in the organisation and held a great deal of power over me – even more so than being a man. Simply being in that position made me feel inferior and uncomfortable. There was an element to it that no matter what this person could have done or said I would never have had any way to make this known or be believed against somebody male and so senior. I thought about how this would affect me if it was a female leader in a female-only space, but I do not feel it would have had the same negative impact on my comfort and feeling of security and personal dignity, nor would I have had the double worry of what might happen to me as a woman, and professionally. I have avoided mixed-sex blocks since as this is not a situation I wish to find myself in again. **Female, England, 25–34**

Gender neutral toilets were introduced in my workplace without any staff consultation. Fortunately some single sex toilets also remained. As a man I continue to use the men's toilet, but to my knowledge no women are using the gender neutral toilets because they do not wish to encounter men. **Male, England, 55–64**

Where I work, during the lockdown, the male/female loos were converted to mixed gender. There are floor to ceiling doors, but the washing facilities are troughs outside the loos. So far, as far as I can tell, everybody is using the rooms according to their 'old' designations. If there was a consultation I didn't get it. **Female, England, 45–54**

Work toilets – I thought it would be ok, but it was hideously uncomfortable. I went elsewhere, never those toilets (row of cubicles, shared sinks). **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

At work we had a mixed toilet with 3 male and 3 female cubicles. Now one has changed to gender neutral. Despite women making up the vast majority of staff the gender neutral toilet was taken from the female provision. There was no discussion or explanation of how they came to that decision. Everyone feels uncomfortable in the mixed toilet especially visitors who comment often. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have worked in a school where suddenly and without consultation toilets became unisex. Without exception all the women trekked across campus and upstairs where there was a female only toilet. In effect our facilities were decimated. **Female, England, 65 and over**

My former place of work (housing association) has introduced gender neutral lavatories throughout, with a couple of women-only and men-only loos for people of faith who can't share facilities. While everyone in the organisation says they support this, the staff continue to stick to the facilities they used when they were sexed, so the men use the old Men's and the women use

the old Ladies. When there are visitors there can be confusion. I noticed that visitors often used to ask at reception if there were women-only or men-only facilities. I don't think many people like using mixed-sex facilities and I hear there's an increasing pressure to convert more of the mixed-sex back to single sex. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

Shopping

Changing rooms in clothes shops being changed to “gender neutral”, was highlighted by many – in particular Marks & Spencer.

I won't try clothes on in shops anymore. **Female, England, 55–64**

I stopped shopping for clothes at M&S when they changed their ladies changing rooms to gender neutral. **Female, England, 55–64**

I no longer use various changing rooms when buying clothes, in particular marks and spencer, but there are others. I tend to buy clothes on line now. This seems trivial but Marks and Spencer's stance on this matter is not acceptable. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Waitrose have a shared sex toilet facility which I used and have horrible memories since. I forgot to check that the door was locked and a guy walked in while I was using the toilet. He was as horrified as I was and ran out as quickly as possible. It is a horrible feeling having your private space invaded and I have never used this toilet since. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I have stopped trying clothes in the shops and only order on line. Recently it has become a real problem. I need to get my 13 year old daughter measured for a bra but I can't take her to John Lewis or M&S any more. I don't want her to be trying on bras next to adult males.

Female, England, 45–54

Lingerie changing rooms in Marks, previously a safe place to take my daughter to get fitted for first bras, is now potentially a place where men are. Even the possibility of this is enough to mean we will never go again, so have to guess sizes and buy online. **Female, England, 45–54**

I no longer visit some places such as shops and bars where the changing rooms or toilets are mixed sex. **Female, England, 45–54**

Marks and Spencer have gender neutral changing rooms. This is wrong. Woman and children need to feel safe in single sexed spaces. Especially when girls and women have bra fittings and they feel very vulnerable knowing men are present. This is wrong. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am very annoyed that changing rooms in clothes shops, and public toilets in cinemas etc have been made gender neutral with no consultation or consideration of women's wishes and concerns.

I now avoid these places. The reports of assault and voyeurism are not uncommon.

Female, England, 55–64

I have noticed major department stores changing their toilets and changing rooms to accommodate males who identify as female e.g. John Lewis, Marks and Spencers, River Island , Bravissimo. I have spoken to female staff who were either unaware of changes as had not been consulted or if aware felt uncomfortable but too fearful to object. Decisions made by management without asking female staff whether they are comfortable e.g. providing bra fitting service to males. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Going out to eat and drink

Many women wrote about single-sex toilets being converted to “gender neutral” and that this has made them feel uncomfortable, unsafe and unwelcome, particularly in night-time venues and where alcohol is consumed. They also highlighted that these are often venues used by people of different ages, including children and families as well as older men.

A bar in Shoreditch has many steps downstairs to their gender neutral toilets, like many toilets in the basement. I froze as a 6ft tall man was in the toilet. **Female, England, 25–34**

It was in a cafe in London. I found it very embarrassing and I felt uncomfortable. Won't go back. **Female, 65 and over**

I now have a long list of bars and restaurants I cannot use due to gender neutral loos that do not follow the floor to ceiling' enclosed space with sink rules. These facilities are not suitable for me due to being the victim of voyeurism. **Female, England, 45–54**

Local Pret had mixed sex toilets in the basement down a dark corridor. When I was washing my hands and a man suddenly appeared behind me out of a cubicle, it really frightened me. **Female, England, 55–64**

Local pub now has 1 male toilet and 1 mixed sex. I no longer visit. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

My local cafe has 2 toilets. The woman's now has a “whatever” sign. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I was in a pub on holiday where there was one toilet for males & females – I felt too vulnerable to use it so left the pub rather than put myself at risk. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

In the city where I live, many bars and clubs have replaced bathroom facilities as gender neutral bathroom cubicle corridors. It can be jarring literally running into men this way, especially where alcohol is involved, I have experienced several occasions where drunk men mistakenly tried to open a cubicle door I was using. One of my friends had to walk past an occupied toilet cubicle where a man had not closed the door before using the toilet. These incidents were not malicious,

but they were frightening. Cleanliness is also an issue, it is disgusting walking into a cubicle that a drunk male has urinated all over, and just left like that. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have only used mixed sex toilets once within a restaurant. I will never choose to do so again. Aside from the toilets being dirty, I felt uncomfortable hearing men talking whilst using the toilet. Those men are not my family or male friends who I know and trust. Why would I suddenly drop my guard and try to pretend that unknown men are safe. I would rather go home early and use my own toilet than use a mixed sex toilet. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I felt very uncomfortable using gender neutral toilets in a city bar with men present. I did not feel safe and probably won't go there again. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have had to use mixed-sex toilets on several occasions. A few times, the facilities have been far enough away from other people for me to feel distinctly unsafe at the possibility of having to share with a strange man; along with the concern that, if my reaction was found unsatisfactory, I might attract adverse attention. It has spoiled my whole time at some venues. The knowledge that someone has decided I may not have single-sex facilities without reference to the general comfort and safety of women in general means I have never returned to those venues. I have felt forced to put up with something that I and other women do not want, because of what some men want. **Female, England, 55–64**

I worked in a bar that got rid of the male toilets and just made the female unisex. I walked into a large group of men peeing, doors wide open. There were no urinals, just the toilets and the stalls from the old female toilets. I saw 3 penises that day, I couldn't use the toilet because I felt intimidated and unsafe and the disabled toilet was out of order. **Female, England, 35–44**

Recently I went into some toilets which had been replaced with gender neutral toilets with cubicles. Within this space I was stared at in a threatening and prolonged manner by a lone man. I felt frightened and angry. This would not have happened in a female only toilet. I felt furious that this is being allowed to happen in order to facilitate the needs of the very few male bodied people who wish to identify as women. It's not ok to take away our safe spaces. It opens the door for sexual assault and intimidation. This needs to stop. **Female, England, 45–54**

I no longer attend one of my previous favourite gig venues after they declared the toilets to be gender neutral. The very same venue that used to have posters up in the ladies toilets saying to 'Ask for Angela' at the bar if you feel you're being harassed by – guess what? – a man! The only time I used the venue after they brought in this abhorrent policy of course no women were using what was known as the men's toilet, but we had plenty of men using what was formerly the ladies toilet. One hadn't even bothered shutting the door to the cubicle he was waving his privates around in. I miss it being a safe space (to warn other women gig-goers what men in the vicinity to avoid)

and a place to bond with women and potentially make new friends. I would only what to be in and out of these places as quickly as possible now. **Female, England, 35–44**

Theatres and arts venues

Several people mentioned theatre and arts venues, which have been among the first and most enthusiastic to adopt “gender neutral” facilities.

At the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith. I entered the gender-neutral facilities to find that what I assumed would be a row of cubicles actually included urinals as well, and a man was busy relieving himself at one. I left and had to seek out a female-only facility on another floor (what a relief I wasn't desperate!). **Female, England, 45–54**

I absolutely HATE mixed gender toilet cubicles next to each other which have large gaps at floor level and from just above head level. I feel extremely vulnerable being half undressed and exposed knowing that a man could ‘upskirt’ me from the next cubicle. It's just disgusting. I experienced this at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, London around 2/3 years ago and I wrote to complain at the time in response to their audience satisfaction survey asking them to revert to women and men separate facilities. I refuse to go back there until they do so. **Female, England, 45–54**

Went to the toilet at a theatre, had to walk past men at urinals, everyone was totally embarrassed. **Female, England, 45–54**

I dislike gender neutral toilets. A theatre near me has had to put up a sign telling people bad behaviour won't be tolerated. I've never seen such a sign in women's toilets before. **Female, England, 45–54**

Everyman Cinema (the irony is not lost on me) moved to mixed sex loos. I visited them and a man in front of me looked back and smirked, on my way there. No way was I going in an enclosed space with him after that. I have never used that cinema again. **Female, England, 45–54**

Gender neutral toilets at the theatre. I decided to go to the nearby cafe after the show rather than deal with the embarrassment. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Toilets at the theatre. The limited number available to women are now open to men too. I used them the other week at the interval. I had to queue for far longer than usual and when I finally got in there, they were in a disgusting state with wee on the floor. I won't be returning to that theatre. **Female, England, 45–54**

It causes an unease for both sexes. In Soho Theatre I was terrified by a man who then himself felt very guilty for this, which caused a lot of stress for us both that wasn't needed or necessary. In the Lyric I witnessed two elderly ladies enter the ‘gender neutral’ urinal & had such a shock, the men

also felt terrible. I was on my period and heard a man using the toilet mutter about how disgusted he was with blood. I have never encounter this with women. **Female, England, 25–34**

My local theatre, Queens Hall in Edinburgh, has turned all the toilets into gender neutral, enclosed units with a basin in the toilet. Which should be fine, except they are disgusting because men can't help but piss on the floor, put shit on the walls and occasionally jizz on the seat. And they are up the stairs and down a corridor, so far away from the rest of the theatre. It's almost as if they had not done any research into where women get assaulted. Idiots. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Gender neutral toilets in art galleries make me unsafe for myself but also difficult when taking my elderly mother out she would be mortified if she came across a male in a toilet with her. **Female, England, 55–64**

Community facilities

Other community facilities are also becoming unwelcoming and uncomfortable because of the replacement of single-sex facilities with mixed.

My local Town Hall is being refurbished and is removing single sex toilets and replacing them with gender neutral toilets. This was decided with no consultation with any faith groups or women's groups. There was also no consultation with the Police regarding the possibility of an increase in sexual assault and crimes such as voyeurism. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

Had to take myself and my two young daughters into gender neutral toilets at Shakespeare museum. A man emerged from a cubicle. I was surprised at how unsettled and upset I felt at his presence even though he was no risk. **Female, England, 35–44**

I sometimes go to events at the JW3 Jewish community cultural centre and am appalled that the toilets are so called gender neutral. I feel extremely uncomfortable and unsafe using them. Every woman I have had conversations with about JW3 spontaneously mentions the same feelings. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I went to support my Goddaughter at a dance show. Previously single sex toilets had been made gender neutral. Men are not used to a long queue and many there were older men. They all looked incredibly uncomfortable and after a while one man said I can't do this I am going down the bottom of the field. Every other man in that queue followed him out most saying I think I will join you. The women for the most part were relieved. Because the queue had been so long one woman confided that she was already wet and would have to go home. She said if there were no men there she would have asked to go first and women would have let her as we know how difficult it can be if you need the toilet urgently. **Female, England, 55–64**

At a local authority building for youth services where we held (pre-covid) teen meets for our home educating teens, they turned one of the toilets into gender neutral. This was quite disturbing for my autistic SON who values his privacy immensely and hated that girls might walk into the toilets when he was in there. He is very disturbed by situations where he doesn't quite know what to expect and are unpredictable. **Female, England, 55–64**

National Trust, Tredegar House, Newport: The women's toilet in the courtyard of the I is now 'gender neutral'. The men's and disabled toilet remains so there's no women's loo unless you walk back to the car park. I watched women approach the gender neutral facility and the vast majority turned away without entering whether they had children with them or not. The majority of men entered but some elderly men didn't. Women, either with children or not, had to walk for at least 5 minutes to find the women's toilets. Not good enough! **Female, Wales, 65 and over**

Visiting Pendennis Castle last summer discovered they'd turned the women's lavatory into a "gender neutral" lavatory, despite it having cubicles without floor to ceiling walls or doors, and communal washing facilities. Needless to say the place stank. The nearby Men's lavatory remained single sex. I had to go to the opposite end of the very large building in order to find a clean women's lavatory. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Universities

Students, parents and staff all highlighted gender-neutral facilities at universities, making them a hostile place, particularly for young women.

The women's toilets in the University have largely become gender neutral and are used almost exclusively by young men. Women avoid them. There are no urinals and quite a lot of urine on the seats. I pity the cleaners (almost all women) too. **Female, England, 55–64**

Northampton University changed the disability toilet to a free for all mixed gender space. There is a shortage of disabled facilities, this was an appalling decision. **Female, England, 45–54**

At a university in the South East over summer 2019 they took all the signs off the women's toilets, making them "unisex" and kept them on the men's. This gives men access to all spaces and reduces women's access, which is against guidelines on provision, but also the toilets were cubicles with gaps at the top and bottom leaving women vulnerable to voyeurism. I just stopped using the facilities and dehydrated myself instead. **Female, England, 35–44**

In my students union they converted the all the bathrooms on one floor to gender-neutral or male. I was in a play and the dressing area was upstairs. The men had two bathrooms to change and use. Girls had a gender-neutral or no option. I didn't use them at all. Neither did a lot of the girls in the cast. They were unclean and they made us feel unsafe. If I see a gender neutral toilet while I'm out

I won't use it – unless it's a single lock cubicle by itself and even then in moments of desperation only. **Female, England, 25–34**

My son attends university in London and when he uses the loo, he has to travel a long distance to avoid the gender neutral loos as he feels embarrassed in there. **Female, England, 55–64**

At university many of our toilets are now gender neutral. I don't feel comfortable being in a toilet where there are men in the same space. Going to the toilet is a private matter and I don't feel comfortable exiting the cubicle to have a man beside me whilst I wash my hands. I could be assaulted in there and nobody would know. **Female, England, 45–54**

At my university the toilets were all made mixed-sex. They are rooms with floor-to-ceiling cubicles and a wash-basin in each one. However, it is still not a good experience using them. You see guys coming out of them still doing up their flies, so they haven't washed their hands and they might expose themselves in their rush. It gives men access to any cubicle where they could plant a spy camera. If the room was empty a woman could easily be pushed into a cubicle by a man and assaulted, especially in the toilets near the student bar. Sexual assault is on the rise at university campuses, and things like mixed-sex bathrooms makes it easier because it becomes normal to see both sexes walking into the same room of loos, it removes a level of safety.

Female, England, 35–44

I was hugely shocked when my daughter returned to Glasgow university and over one summer all the ladies toilets had been converted into gender neutral toilets , whilst still protecting men's toilets and disabled toilets – and cannot understand why only women have to sacrifice their private spaces. Men now use the gender neutral space without closing cubicle doors, unhygienically wee on the seats and floor and do not wash their hands as they go. This is intrusive for no reason – why can there not be a pro rata distribution of female toilets – male toilets – disabled toilets – and whoever toilets – to meet everyone's needs? **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Shared accommodation

Where I personally feel the changes most keenly is in shared accommodation. As a young woman, youth hostels provided an affordable and safe way to travel. In mixed-sex dorms, I have had some uncomfortable experiences with men not adhering to 'don't look' etiquette, which would have been difficult to deal with when I was younger. **Female, England, 45–54**

What is really annoying about YHA [*Youth Hostel Association*] is that their booking form claims to offer male and female dorms. If they were honest about that being based on self-ID then women would be able to make an informed judgement. **Female, England, 45–54**

We previously used Youth Hostels for much of our travel but their policy of allowing males in female dorms (with the possibility – but not the guarantee – of a private room if you are willing to

disclose details of your sexual trauma to the desk clerk, who does not get paid or trained to deal with it) is unacceptable. **Female, England, 45–54**

At youth hostels. Toilets/shower rooms, dormitories. Why should I not be able to go if I want single-sex spaces? **Female, England, 45–54**

I used to stay at youth hostels with family and friends when the dormitories were sex based. We no longer visit now they are gender based for safety concerns. If a father has to leave his young daughter getting changed showering and sleeping with women with male genitalia in a female dorm, while he is in a male dorm. **Female, England, 45–54**

My teenage daughter will be sharing a bedroom with a trans girl on a forthcoming school trip. While we have been offered the opportunity to veto the arrangement, in practice this is pretty much impossible: the children have agreed to the arrangement, and it is clear we would be pilloried across the school and community as transphobes. The child in question's mother has requested that the school facilitate a meeting with us so that we can 'explain why we think her child is a threat to ours'. Thankfully the school has declined. We don't think this child is a threat, but we do think it is a safeguarding disaster for the school to facilitate mixed-sex sleeping arrangements for teenagers. And none of us should be asked to make a case by case decision based on the character and sexuality of a child. The school is following a template 'Trans inclusion toolkit' which states that trans children should be in 'dormitories which match their gender identity' unless *they* choose otherwise (no mention of any other children, or how they might feel about it).

Female, Wales, 45–54

I stayed in a youth hostel. I was visiting a city abroad to see a dying friend. There was a notice up saying people could use the bathroom if they identified as women. It already didn't feel a safe hostel and I felt extremely vulnerable. I got up at 4am to shower to avoid coming across a man. It was frightening and stressful. The signs made it very clear the law allowed men to enter and I had no right to complain. I will never stay there ever again. **Female, England, 35–44**

My daughter was 16 and went to work for YHA – they had changed the dormitories to "same gender" rather than same sex so worried for a week she could be sharing with a male.

Female, England, 45–54

“Trans inclusion” in single-sex spaces

While most people complained about female-only facilities being replaced by explicitly mixed “gender neutral” facilities, others had experienced policies of “trans inclusion” which allow men to use women’s facilities, and so turn single-sex spaces into mixed-sex.



Women feel excluded and afraid

Several respondents wrote about how they have been made feel unsafe and insecure by trans-inclusion policies which mean that they cannot challenge any male using the women’s facilities.

My work allows any men into women’s toilets if they ‘identify as women’. These are men.

Female, England, 35–44

The thought of being in non-consenting vulnerable position with a male is frightening.

Female, England, 45–54

At a venue in London recently there was a sign on the bathroom door very passive aggressively telling me to accept men in our bathroom. It implied I would be hateful to confront a man in the women’s bathroom. **Female, England, 55–64**

At my local swimming pool the changing areas are now gender specific rather than sex specific. I feel vulnerable and I can’t let my daughter go with her friends without an adult.

Female, England, 45–54

I am now more wary when entering toilets as I know there could be males there. I worry for my daughter as I know there is now an increased risk of sexual assault and hidden cameras in toilets,

with the push for males to be allowed to use female facilities if they wish.

Female, Scotland, 35–44

Workplace allows self id. We now have a male using the previously female toilets. I have been told it is against the law and discrimination to stop them. **Female, England, 25–34**

Even if a space has not been designated trans inclusive, it is no longer possible to feel safe in single sex spaces because men are already entering those spaces. It only has to happen once for the concept of single sex spaces to be null and void. **Female, England, 55–64**

My local gyms allow men to self-identify into the women's changing rooms if they wish to. It's terrifying. **Female, England, 55–64**

My workplace has introduced a new policy to state that transitioning individuals (they do not define transitioning – appears to include self id) can use the single sex facility that suits their gender identity. Staff will face disciplinary action if they challenge any person who appears to be the opposite sex. **Female, England, 45–54**

I work at Bristol University and all of our female toilets and changing rooms are open to any male who identifies as a transwoman or as non-binary. So all a male has to do is claim a non-binary identity to claim access to a female changing room. If any female complains, or makes that male feel uncomfortable, then the male will have access to support from the LGBT+ support provided by the uni and the woman will be disciplined. **Female, England, 35–44**

I am too scared to now use changing rooms in clothing stores, to attend a gym due to the locker room, and even to get necessary medical check ups because trans women can identify as female women. I have sexual trauma. I have a dissociative disorder that is triggered by being in enclosed spaces or under the power of men. I do not want to be in such a situation and be called transphobic because of my trauma meaning I have to leave. And I do not want to put myself in a position where I fear being attacked or assaulted, with no chance of being helped because a male is "allowed" to be in what should be a single sex situation. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

My workplace has taken advice from Stonewall and our female toilets are now open to any trans or non-binary person. As yet we do not have any trans or non-binary employees but we would lose our female toilets if the situation changed. **Female, England, 45–54**

My office have declared that transgender people can use whichever facilities they wish, despite there being some unisex facilities. This means I can never be sure whether the women's facilities are single sex. Having experienced matters such as bleeding in pregnancy while at work, I want to know there is a single sex facility and that it means what it says. **Female, England, 35–44**

It makes me worried going into the changing rooms because I don't know who might be in there and they could cause me harm. **Female, England, 16–24**

My experience is of changing rooms with notices proclaiming 'trans women welcome'. But when were women asked whether that was actually the case? **Female, England, 65 and over**

I feel the need to check for hidden cameras and often worry that one day I'll find a man in places meant for women, and I won't be able to confront him and tell him to leave.

Female, England, 55–64

Coerced and uncomfortable inclusion

Some women shared experience of using facilities where they felt uncomfortable but unable to complain.

At work men (who identify as trans women) use the female toilets. I find this uncomfortable. Also some of the toilets have been converted to gender neutral. I can't see many benefits to this. There should be third space for trans people. I really don't see why men are so eager to get into women's toilets unless they have some kind of motive. I cannot relax if there is a man in there.

Female, England, 65 and over

My 14 year old daughter is made to change in open changing room with a boy who says he is a girl. He is on the netball team. Two boys are using the girls' toilets in her year group. They no longer have single sex spaces. **Female, England, 45–54**

Trans woman at work started using our WC and we had no choice or were able to voice our opinion. One girl was so uncomfortable she used the wc on another floor. **Female, England, 45–54**

I have had to use gender neutral toilets as well as ladies toilets which allowed transwomen, both of which made me feel very uncomfortable. I have had a lifetime of sexual harassment and assault (groping) by men therefore believe that single sex spaces are very important. I am aware that transwomen will feel uncomfortable using men's toilets, but why should the feelings of a minority matter more than those of women. Basically, we are just being told to shut up and move over.

Female, Scotland, 55–64

I felt uncomfortable and angry when I found that the women's toilets at a concert venue were converted to mixed sex. Every woman in the queue was looking the same way, we could all spot the man wearing a dress but nobody said anything. Women have been silenced. I felt angry that men could use either toilet but women could only use one because the other toilet had urinals we would have had to walk past. **Female, England, 55–64**

My work toilets have been made available to trans women without any consultation. I and other colleagues have been taken aback to hear a male voice in the next cubicle.

Female, England, 35–44

My experience of a transwoman in the changing room in my gym was that it didn't feel problematic to the women there, but it did change the atmosphere in the room. I felt women were accommodating the transwoman, who was very well known and well liked at the gym. I did worry if any women felt uncomfortable they wouldn't feel able to say anything. And I wonder if a lesser well known transwoman in the changing room would have been received comfortably. I saw other transwomen at the gym but never saw them use the female communal changing room. I wonder if they were using the family large lockable cubicles instead. **Female, England, 45–54**

A man at my workplace now identifies as a woman. He looks no different than he did before and is clearly male. He uses the ladies toilets in the office. I, and I think most women in the office, are not comfortable sharing single sex toilet facilities with a man. As far as I am aware female employees were not consulted or even informed this would happen. The "transition at work" policy, which I didn't know existed prior to this happening, says that anyone may use whichever single sex facilities they feel most comfortable with in line with their "gender identity." The policy heavily implies that anyone who complains is "transphobic" and could be subject to disciplinary proceedings, so of course no-one can say anything. I think most women are using a toilet on another floor to avoid bumping into him in there although this option isn't open to everyone e.g. those that are pregnant or have disabilities can't go up and down stairs several times a day to use a different loo. My employer is a Stonewall champion. **Female, England, 25–34**

Surprising and frightening encounters

Others have had the unpleasant experience of meeting an unknown male in a space where that was not expected.

Changing rooms – I have been frightened by burly men dressed in women's clothing stripping off in front of me and children. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I have encountered a man of about 23 wearing a swimsuit at our gym in the women's changing room. I complained to management. He was clearly a man. He was over 6 ft tall with male genitals. **Female, England, 45–54**

Yesterday, I was confronted by a man in Female toilets in a hospital. His behaviour towards me was peculiar and hostile. It shocked and distressed me. I complained to hospital security but one of the security men was quite dismissive of my very obvious and visible distress. It made me feel my very real concerns were invalid and of no worth. I am still angry and upset about it. I have complained in writing but I am really not confident about the outcome. I have no choice about which hospital I use. **Female, England, 55–64**

I didn't know *[there was a trans-inclusive policy]* until a trans identifying male came in and used the female toilet, despite the disabled toilet and men's being empty. It focused the mind somewhat to

hear loud urination coming from an obvious height. My first thought was hang on, you still have a penis? And you've presumed to decide for me that I'm OK with you, a male, with a penis, coming into my sex's facility? I don't think the organisation had made any rules about it, but he clearly decided for everyone that day. Only happened to me the once but never want it to happen again.

Female, Scotland, 35–44

Have encountered a 6 foot trans women in the female toilets. Very intimidating and upsetting for my mother who is 71 years old and had no clue that current legislation means this is now something we can expect to see more of and that we have no power to refute it.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

Hampstead Women's Pond has open showers and changing area and allows in trans identified men. I have made an objection on one occasion, only to be contradicted/gas-lighted by lifeguards: "She is not a man – she's a trans woman! She is female!" I feel very apprehensive now when I am on my way, in case I will come across men there. **Female, England, 55–64**

I don't know if it was legal or allowed by the supermarket, but at a local Morrisons store a 6ft + male was in the toilets and all the women including me were very apprehensive. I waited till I returned home before complaining because I was scared of the reaction, I live in Scotland and didn't want to be arrested. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I went for a bra fitting at Marks and Spencer in central London and the fitter was fairly obviously transgender (MtF) [*male to female*]. It made me feel very uncomfortable but I didn't know what to say without hurting their feelings or causing a scene. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was working in a children's centre and using the women's toilets when a man dressed as a woman came in. I immediately felt angry and like my space had been violated yet, at the same time, I was uncertain and unsure how to deal with it. He looked like someone who was very vulnerable, uncomfortable and mentally unwell and it didn't feel like the right thing to do to challenge him. I was the only woman in the toilets at that time but I have always remembered this incident and the conflict it caused me: between wanting to tell him to get the fuck out and not wanting to make him feel any worse about himself than he clearly did already.

Female, England, 45–54

I emerged from the toilets at Marks & Spencer's a few months ago side-by-side with a tall, muscular man in women's clothes. I found that an uncomfortable experience. It was obvious that he was a man, and he had made no serious attempt to "pass". I experienced his presence as a hostile act: he knew I knew that he was a man, and he knew I was likely to be too frightened to object or show any outward sign of discomfort. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was in Marks and Spencer changing rooms in my underwear. A man walked in carrying 3 bras and demanded the shop assistant helped him with the fitting. The whole area went silent. You

could feel the fear of the woman who had no choice due to company policy.

Female, England, 45–54

I went to a night club Ladies toilet some years ago and there was a group of men in women's clothes – I'm not sure if they were trans or in drag. I was alone and they made me feel so uncomfortable I left. I was angry with myself afterwards for not saying anything and allowing myself to feel pushed out of a supposedly female space. But it didn't feel safe to protest their presence at the time. **Female, England, 45–54**

There was a trans identifying male on the women's ward when I was hospitalised for a traumatic injury. As I was unable to move at the time it felt entirely inappropriate. **Female, England, 45–54**

A man in the toilets who stayed in the cubicle for an inordinate amount of time, he smirked at me when I pointed out that he was in a ladies toilet. He had a beard, scruffy male clothing, and claimed to be a trans woman and I "couldn't ask him to leave; it was his right". I felt very uncomfortable.

Female, England, 45–54

During a recent hospital stay there was a transwoman on the ward. They were surrounded by elderly vulnerable female patients. They all expressed their discomfort privately and felt their privacy was denied. **Female, England, 55–64**

Having worked in retail where there were a lot of transwomen using the women's changing room, I know that I am not the only woman who feels uncomfortable with that. I know some women do not like men sitting waiting in a fitting room, even where there are floor to ceiling doors. As an assistant, I was made to feel very uncomfortable and vulnerable when there was a transwoman in the fitting room. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

Have been made to feel uncomfortable in some public toilets because there were people there who were obviously male and looking for a reaction. **Female, England, 35–44**

Finding a male in the women's toilets. He was wearing 'female' clothes. He smirked at me and I did not feel safe to use the facilities. **Female, England, 55–64**

Self-exclusion

Many women wrote about self-exclusion from these facilities.

I was a regular gym goer but cancelled my membership after my gym decided to allow access on a self ID basis. I had often been in the changing rooms alone in quieter times and no longer felt safe knowing that no one would be alerted by a male entering. **Female, England, 35–44**

I have ceased to attend "women only" swimming because it allows male sexed people in.

Female, England, 45–54

I worked at a Women's centre. We ran resilience courses for women who had been victims of domestic abuse. Three trans identifying males started to come to the group. It was clear they were there just because they wanted the thrill of being in a women only space. Two of them came in dressed as men and went to toilet to change into lurid women's clothes, stockings short skirts and make up. They dominated the group and most women voted with their feet and left. We could not ask these people to leave for fear of a legal challenge. **Female, England, 45–54**

I froze my membership of the local swimming pool after a trans identifying male was in the women's changing rooms two weeks running. The second week he got changed outside the cubicles and was standing facing me when I came out of the shower. I didn't look at him but I have never gone back. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I no longer go to my local gym as they allow males into the female changing rooms.
Female, England, 55–64

Women at my current sports club (and the previous club) have been upset when males who said they were women insisted on using the female communal change/shower areas. Women stopped using their female facilities. **Female, England, 45–54**

I first experienced this in a changing room, a male was undressing, all the women in the changing room left because everyone was so uncomfortable, it was genuinely scary for everyone.
Female, England, 25–34

A person at my swimming club recently transitioned and immediately wanted to be allowed into the women's (small non-cubicked) changing rooms. Having known this person for over 20 years as a man, I and a few others requested they change elsewhere. Our club had to use a different pool one day and made separate provision for this person to change but they chose to use the ladies changing room. I wasn't there but other ladies were very uncomfortable with it (again a school changing room, no cubicles). I complained to the club. We haven't used this pool again.
Female, England, 55–64

In workplace trans-identified male was allowed to use female facilities. Female staff always had to check whether he was around before using them. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Inappropriate behaviour

A few wrote about severely negative experiences involving trans-identifying males in "women only" spaces.

My daughter when she was in her late teens was confronted by a male bodied trans woman or transvestite who insisted on lifting her skirt by the washbasins in a female-only toilets. This was at a restaurant. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I left my women's running club as a trans woman kept talking about breasts. I run in a mixed sex group now. **Female, England, 45–54**

The last time I was in a ladies changing room with my niece, a transwoman was in there who walked up to my teenaged niece, grabbed her breast and squeezed it saying "My boobies are better than yours" then kicked off calling us terfs and transphobes for objecting to 'normal girlie stuff'. My young niece and myself are NOT safe and I no longer use public changing rooms anywhere. My niece (who is autistic) was paralysed with shock because she doesn't know how to deal with men who so casually break boundaries that way and is now scared to use public changing rooms herself. **Female, England, 45–54**

There was a male (intact, fully developed) who wore his hair long and wore nail polish using the female changing rooms at the gym. He was just there because he could be. Having long hair and wearing nail polish doesn't make you a woman, especially if you still have a penis, testicles and male pattern body hair. It's an insult. On multiple occasions this man sat fully naked in the changing room and watched the other women change. Every other woman did everything they could to stay covered in a space that was once open and friendly. I no longer go to the gym and am lucky enough to be able to exercise at home. **Female, England, 35–44**

I worked at a helpline for men & women suffering DV – a male colleague decided to "identify" as a woman, and started going into the female toilets, and just sitting in a stall and listening and spying on the women, and I suspect, masturbating, so I left that job, I was very scared by him.

Female, England, 65 and over

I experienced sexually inappropriate behaviour from two trans identified males using the ladies' toilets in a Manchester pub in late 2019. It does happen. **Female, England, 45–54**

I worked in a male dominated industry and once did a role where I had team members across several locations. In the main site there wasn't a ladies toilets in the building that was open so I had to go to a unused adjacent building to use the toilet (it was not uncommon to not have a ladies toilet in every building in this industry). There was a transwoman in a related group. Every time I went to the toilet they would follow me, this was unnerving as they were over a foot taller than me and strongly built. One time they blocked the way out of the toilets whilst trying to engage me in a 'girly' conversation about make-up or similar. It was clear that they were not going to let me leave until I had played along and as we were the only two people in an otherwise deserted building I had no choice. I found this terrifying as I was very aware if they assaulted me it would be my word against theirs and no one would see anything. After this I never spent longer than a few hours at a time on this site as I did not feel safe enough to use the toilet and moved to another role when I could. Subsequently I have left another job where there was an overly attentive transwoman working because I did not want to risk being alone in the ladies toilet with them (male working

environments you don't have many women using the toilet the same time as you).

Female, England, 55–64

I went on a training day. There was a male who identified as non-binary. He had a beard. I 'misgendered' him (accidentally! This was in the days before I really knew anything about it). He was really mad about it. Later he selected me when we had to pair up for a task. He dragged me so that my face was under his crotch, he was sort of straddling, kneeling on the floor, and I was lying on my back (it was a physical course). He pinned me there. Then when I was allowed to get up I tried to laugh it off, but went to the toilets to have a minute. He followed me into the women's toilets. I then went into a cubicle, and he went into the one right next door. There were plenty to choose from. So I couldn't really get away, not even to gather myself for a minute. The rest of the course I went to the toilet a few times but could never relax enough to wee, unbelievable for me. That had never happened before. **Female, England, 25–34**

Vulnerability

Others wrote about experiences of specifically vulnerable women and girls.

As my daughter identifies as male, the world seems insane to me. She is accepted in male spaces because legally she is male. She is vulnerable. She has already been assaulted at least once.

Female, England, 55–64

My autistic daughter (13 at the time) walked into the toilet at the cinema to find a man in a dress and lipstick, and she was terrified, she ran out visibly and audibly distressed, shouting that there was a man in the toilet and that she wouldn't go in until he was gone. I ran in to see what was going on, to find the trans person in there who was huge, over 6ft and did not look anything like a woman. She proceeded to have an autistic meltdown in front of everyone in the foyer and I had no idea what to do – I just had to hold her until it was over. Afterwards I was so angry that she had been put in that position because a man thinks he has the right to go into the women's toilets. Even though I've not been in the toilet at the same time as a transgender person who thinks they are woman, I now find myself always doing a quick check to make sure there are no men in there before deciding to go to the toilet. **Female, England, 35–44**

I received abuse from a trans women for my involuntary reaction (as a survivor of male sexual violence) when seeing them in the toilet. **Female, England, 25–34**

Unfairness in sport

Although the survey wasn't specifically about participation rules in sport, a few respondents highlighted their experiences of competing against trans-identifying males.

I play football – and played against some trans players. The strength of these players makes it very unfair and potentially dangerous. During training some female players commented that they would not try to block a shot by the trans player as it was too hard. This makes a mockery of sport.

Female, England, 55–64

I regularly take part in parkrun. For every race there is first man and first woman. The first woman is always a long way behind the first man but their crossing the line is cheered and celebrated with claps and cries of “well done first lady”. If a trans identified male registered as a woman they could easily beat the women’s records and be ‘first female’ every week. This would be blatantly unfair.

Female, England, 35–44

I play single sex and mixed badminton and already play against or with trans members. It creates an unequal playing field, male born players have a different and far stronger playing style, it’s uncompetitive and as a woman it’s nigh on impossible to match that same strength of play compared to a male born player. **Female, England, 45–54**

I’m already in a situation where my women’s sports league has been infiltrated by biological males. Utterly utterly unfair. **Female, England, 45–54**

A boy being allowed to play against my daughter’s football team. It was clearly unfair and unsafe. **Female, England, 35–44**

I play Roller Derby in which male bodied players are allowed to compete in our ‘contact’ sport. **Female, England, 45–54**

Views on transition

A few women mentioned that they feel differently about trans-identifying males who have had genital surgery.

The word “trans” has shifted from transsexual who intended to have full genital surgery (the original very small demographic intended by the GRA 2004), to absolutely anyone who wishes to adopt an identity without any transition whatsoever. This includes part-time cross dressers who wears women’s clothes for the purposes of sexual arousal. Clearly this will also include male sexual offenders. **Female, England, 45–54**

As far as I am concerned, anyone with genitals and a penis is a man and should not be allowed into female sex only spaces, especially with regards changing and showering facilities. Men who are transitioning to women should remain in male only spaces until they are fully transformed and have lost the male sex (although, I confess to be personally against that kind of barbarism.)

Female, England, 65 and over

A man who is still bodily a man should not be allowed in female only areas – no matter how he identifies – he still has a penis. **Female, England, 65 and over**

It is a dangerous and confusing line between people who have legally and surgically transitioned and those who decided recently to wear a dress. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am in no way transphobic but have serious issue with self-identification of gender. I have no problem with transgender women who been through reassignment surgery but see the real danger of predator men abusing the lax approach to self-identification to target women.

Female, England, 55–64

Ultimately, I don't think people with penises should be allowed to access spaces for people without penises. Thus trans women who have fully transitioned should be welcomed into women only spaces. **Female, England, 55–64**

“Trans inclusion” in services for abused women

A key area of concern for many women was services for women who have suffered domestic or sexual violence becoming mixed sex, or being “trans inclusive”. Those who work in these sectors wrote about the pressure to adopt “trans inclusive” policies.



I worked in a women’s refuge for women fleeing male sexual, physical and emotional violence. These women were some of the most vulnerable in society. The charity (feminist DV charity) changed policy so that we had to consider trans women victims of abuse coming to the refuge. This could include male-bodied people being admitted to a small intimate refuge where women had been raped by men and believed they were finally in a safe space. **Female, England, 55–64**

Domestic violence support group. Without going into too much detail, losing my DV support group was traumatising. I immediately felt exposed and afraid. With respect, my entire body was aware the male posing as a female WAS a male. Male bodies can be scary in spaces where women are relaying vulnerable events like abuse. Hearing a male voice. I couldn’t open up. I left the group. **Female, England, 35–44**

In my city, the rape crisis service offers ‘women only’ support groups and services which are actually mixed sex. All of their services are open to “self-identifying women”. This is also true of the local women’s centre. **Female, England, 45–54**

I work with migrant women, most of whom have no interest in or understanding of transgenderism. They just want safe, supportive services and for them, that means female-only spaces. These women are engaged in transactional sex to get food and housing. Most are survivors of sexual violence. A genuinely female only space is a respite from the world they live in,

and it worries me that these women are being told to accept males into these spaces. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

I work in a women's therapy service. Trans women frighten many clients due to their history of physical and sexual abuse from men. **Female, England, 45–54**

I managed a high-support hostel for vulnerable adults suffering homelessness due to substance/alcohol abuse and/or serious mental health issues. I arranged for one area of the hostel to be female only as most of the female residents had been victims of serious sexual/domestic violence and were being intimidated/pestered for sex etc. and felt vulnerable in the main hostel. A trans women asked to also be housed in this area and so after consulting with the other women it was agreed to let them in. This trans women insisted upon walking around naked which alarmed and upset the other women so I moved them back into the main hostel. She made an official complaint to the council (our funding body) and I was told to close down the women's area and make it mixed sex again. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was unable to access 'by women for women' support locally when needed a few years ago as it included trans identified males. The female manager of one of the 2 services I was referred to by police told me she would not employ any staff who did not believe men are women if they say so. This excluded me and other women like me. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I was referred to Brighton Survivors by a psychiatrist who told me it was a female only service, I felt he lied to me when I had no choice but to share the waiting room with a large man in a wig, this stopped me from using the support groups, knowing I would never feel comfortable opening up in front of a man, this has hindered my recovery and I still suffer and feel isolated five years later, I now also lack trust for psychiatric services when once I would turn to them.

Female, England, 45–54

I stayed in an abusive situation until it was resolved in another way because there are no single-sex services left in my county. **Female, England, 45–54**

I would now never approach Rape Crisis Scotland in the event of being sexually assaulted because of their position on not providing single-sex services. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Not only am I a survivor but I have worked with survivors in a Rape Crisis Centre, I remember having to walk around the centre with women to prove there were no men there it was hard to watch these women in such distress and not believe there were no men until they could see it with their own eyes. The same would happen when women called, we had to promise them no men would be around and they would ask lots of questions and ask for proof before coming for their first appointment, to hear women so distressed was hard, I worked at Rape Crisis over 20 years ago and this memory has stayed with me. I worked in women only services at a time when you did not have to explain why this was needed, I don't understand what has changed, the impact of rape

has not changed, women mostly being the victims of rape has not changed, so how can these women and their needs just be pushed aside when for years it was considered best practice.

Female, England, 45–54

This really upsets me. I am a current service user of my local rape crisis service. They are providing specialist support to me while I am going through the criminal justice process. I don't feel comfortable with males in my rape crisis service and even though I haven't seen one in the service I am scared I might. **Female, England, 45–54**

Triggers and flashbacks go beyond appearances. And mostly everyone innately knows what sex someone is. It truly disgusts me any individual, organisation or institution would even consider placing someone in a distressing or uncomfortable position after experiencing trauma. The trans gender person or trans sexual person's feelings are irrelevant within these circumstances.

Female, Scotland, 35–44

I appreciated visiting my local women's centre after sexual assault. However I stopped going there after a male person with stubble appeared in the centre claiming womanhood. The whole dynamic felt changed. Like there was an elephant in the room. I felt unable in my vulnerable state at the time to object. So I just didn't go back there. **Female, England, 45–54**

I self-exclude from my local rape crisis service as the women's groups welcome any males who identify as women. In practice the women's groups are centred around trans women and female rape survivors are expected to make sure any males feel especially welcome, comfortable, validated and included. This doesn't help me and my recovery so I don't go. There are no single sex alternatives. **Female, England, 35–44**

When I was raped I never told anyone. But it is utter madness to think it's ok to have a Trans Woman help out at a DV or rape Centre. The Trans Woman may have the best intentions and all the training but the biological fact of being a man simply renders them, unfortunately, unsuitable for such a role. What is more important – to protect the possible hurt feelings of the Trans Woman or to support the custom of sexual abuse? It would be a heinous dereliction of duty to women to allow this. **Female, England, 45–54**

Why are my feelings, my experiences less valid than a man who wants to dress like a woman? As a survivor my trauma is being invalidated and I am told to reframe my bias by male people wearing women's clothes. I have to accept that because he says so a man is a woman. How can people not see how utterly cruel and harmful this is to all women. **Female, Wales, 45–54**

More recently Victim support announced anyone who doesn't refer to male abusers as women if they say they are women is an abuser – this is vile and misogynistic, and means female victims of abuse, especially by Tims [*trans-identifying males*], can't access help. Even the courts are biased – if men say they are women, the entire court joins in their male sexual fetish and gaslighting of

victims and makes an even more hostile environment for female victims of these males.

Female, England, 45–54

Why on earth would any woman want to share details of her rape with penis havers who are clearly getting off on rape fantasy? That's just insane. **Female, England, 45–54**

Trans-identifying men working in women's services

My local rape crisis centre (Edinburgh) is run by a man and so feel anxious and upset for any woman who will need to use such a service. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I would not go to a rape crisis centre headed up by a man, who lied about his sex to get a woman-only position, who tells rape victims that they're 'bigots' and need to "reframe their trauma" if women rape victims legally request a female person to counsel them. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

A major problem survivors of sexual trauma like myself face in Scotland we can no longer access a Women's specialist services like rape crisis in Edinburgh for the CEO is a full intact Male without a gender certificate that Self Identifies as a woman. I am appalled that survivors like myself read that the CEO said "Sexual violence happens to bigoted people as well. And so, you know, it is not a discerning crime. But these spaces are also for you. But if you bring unacceptable beliefs that are discriminatory in nature, we will begin to work with you on your journey of recovery from trauma. But please also expect to be challenged on your prejudices." This is terrifying for women like myself, the last person I wanted to see or talk to was a man when this happened to me. It's completely despicable to think that if I ask for a female only councillor, carer or nurse not only am I being classed as a bigot but in Scotland there is a very real chance I could be charged with a hate crime. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre is run by a man who has made outrageous statements about washing Women's history from the service. Women have self-excluded from this service because they are not guaranteed a female counsellor. This single-sex service is a huge loss to the Women of Scotland. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Loss of funding and pressure to be trans-inclusive

Being involved in women only services I know it is becoming more and more difficult to get funding for these, with increasing pressure to provide a service for men and others (trans people) as well. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Our local domestic abuse Centre was threatened with a loss of funding if they didn't accept trans women. As a survivor this excluded me from my own services. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

Women's refuge locally threatened with a cut in funds if they didn't admit men pretending to be women. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

Our local, hugely respected, women's domestic abuse service lost council funding last year. They are continuing but greatly reduced. Lost the contract to giant, non-specialist, gender neutral orgs. Service locally from those orgs is substandard and understaffed. **Female, England, 45–54**

My local rape survivors service offers specialist LGBT groups, a men's group but the women's service is open to all who 'identify as women'. Women who have been raped have no dedicated single sex service. **Female, England, 45–54**

The women's abuse support services said they had to include males who identify as women in their services as it is a requirement of council funding. For me at the time it was devastating and both the police and the GP were shocked as my attacker was a trans identified male – they hadn't realised the new women's services were mixed sex. **Female, England, 45–54**

Working in a large LGBT organisation, I can say that services exclusively for women do not exist. There is one women's programme officer employee, compared to 20+ Trans programme employees (unsure how many work in the new gender clinic being delivered by this organisation). The women's programme is "inclusive" to all who identify as women all OR some of the time. There is little to no impact on the Men's programmes for some reason. Sexual health teams focus exclusively on men and trans women, despite bisexual women also being one of the most at risk groups. There are numerous groups/events exclusively for trans masc or fem, but nothing exclusive for non-trans. **Female, England, 35–44**

Many women's organisations being required by commissioners to include trans women in their services including women's refuge. I was CEO of the largest women's centre in the UK for 15 years between 1994 and 2009 and it was unheard of then. I remember the management committee taking a vote during that period on whether or not to allow trans-sexual males to use our services and the decision was a resounding 'no'. The women's centre was run by women for women. **Female, England, 55–64**

As an employee of a domestic abuse service I have had to accept that we have to include trans identified males into our female only service in order to get funding and accreditation. Refusal would result in our service closing down, despite our region having one of the highest rates of domestic abuse in England and Wales. **Female, England, 45–54**

Our local refuge lost funding because they provided women only services. This was a devastating blow for women who depended on them. **Female, England, 65 and over**

A women's shelter in Brighton had its £5.1 million council funding removed because it is a women-only service. It is fact that over 90% of abuse cases are against women, which means Brighton council have now placed threatened and vulnerable people in real danger. **Female, England, 55–64**

The loss of funding for Brighton's RISE services for survivors of domestic violence was catastrophic, at a time when domestic violence of all kinds has been on the rise because of lockdown. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I worked in a refuge for women who were homeless and victims of DV. In order to continue to receive funding, the service was forced to become mixed sex. **Female, England, 55–64**

I started work on a board for Women's Aid just as this Self ID was all coming to light and have had to leave as I cannot stand to see the stress of the women trying to run a service and have to go against what they believe just to make sure not to lose funding. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I worked in a Women's Centre for 25yrs and eventually funding was withdrawn because it was not deemed inclusive. The funding went to a Centre that included men. Women from South Wales lost a successful, vital, well established service that cannot be found anywhere. **Female, Wales, 55–64**

The amazing domestic violence service in my city lost its funding for not offering services for men (they were already trans-inclusive). **Female, England, 55–64**

Rape crisis centres and women's refuges have often lost funding because they don't include trans identified men. I worked in a women's refuge for 23 years and lost my job because I argued against men in refuges. **Female, England, 65 and over**

We have lost our local domestic violence survivor service. Objections from "trans inclusive" groups were given as a reason by the Council, though the service in question did offer support to all victims anyway and I have no idea whether any of the "trans inclusive groups" actually included anybody that identified as "trans". **Female, England, 55–64**

I work in a women's refuge and we would be under pressure to include trans females. We "play the game" to ensure this wouldn't happen but would never openly admit to funders. **Female, England, 55–64**

Hostility towards women who object

I haven't been able to access support from Rape Crisis Centre in Scotland due to its misogynistic attitude towards women who want female only therapists and spaces. It's been a deeply disturbing experience. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

Local women's aid member hounded out of position because of gender critical views and warned that domestic abuse services had to include transwomen or they would lose funding.

Female, Scotland, 55–64

I work in women's services and have watched single sex bastions collapse into trans rights places. I no longer feel safe using them. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Destroying single-sex groups and associations

As well as single-sex services and facilities, many people wrote about the loss of single-sex groups and associations.



Lesbians

Lesbians have been at the sharp end of pressures to include trans-identifying males in their groups, venues and love lives. Many say the impact has been devastating to the ability of lesbians to meet and to support each other.

Practically every lesbian website, dating site, event (I can only think of 1 that hasn't AfterEllen) is forcing lesbians to accept penis as a lesbian organ. The first result on Google for 'am I a lesbian' is health line's 'centring lesbians around vaginas is trans exclusionary'. At a lesbian night my friend was sexually harassed by a straight male bouncer in 'gender neutral' toilets. The toilets used to be women's, but the males stayed men only. The number of lesbians/gay women using this space declined rapidly & when I last visited a few years ago, this night was mostly gay men. Most lesbian bars walk on eggshells as they must take somebody's gender at their word. At a lesbian event I was groped by a male person, they had allowed in due to becoming more 'inclusive'. Being a lesbian I am often followed by males asking for threesomes. Every woman experiences sexual harassment. I just want peace of mind. It isn't safe. Women are already terrorised by male sexual violence. It is at epidemic levels. I am dysphoric myself. **Female, England, 25–34**

As a homosexual female, I've found groups for women like myself have been taken over by trans identified males who then divert any and all conversations to being centred around trans issues, trans identity and often conversations demanding you validate "women with penises". Also, a

dating app I had used in the past that was just for lesbian or bisexual women looking to match with other women has been opened up to include trans identified men (and also men who are not trans identified but use the lax guidelines around who can use the app to enter the space). I have received homophobic abuse and accusations of being a TERF or bigot because I turned down a trans identified man. I no longer use the app as it's no longer for the benefit of lesbians.

Female, England, 25–34

I attended an event supposedly for Lesbians, i.e. women only, but there were multiple men there who made me feel very uncomfortable, who made sexual comments and were very vocal about the fact that we should sleep with them to avoid being transphobic. It was supposed to be a safe, fun environment for me to meet other lesbians, but I have never gone back because the men allowed to be there were sexually aggressive and intimidating. **Female, Scotland, 16–24**

I used to go to women only groups and lesbian only groups for my social life but now I daren't go because I am too scared to go. I feel threatened and harassed by men saying they are women. I have nothing in common with these aggressive people. **Female, England, 45–54**

Lesbian groups and dating sites are full of men demanding women date them and treat them as women. **Female, Wales, 65 and over**

Lesbian spaces are almost totally gone, we have to some extent gone underground, in private arrangements to gather together which leaves many of us more isolated because we are less visible to each other. **Female, England, 65 and over**

A lesbian group I was a member of now has a man (who calls himself a lesbian) in it. I'm no longer in the group. Do any female-only lesbian groups still exist? **Female, England, 65 and over**

I am a lesbian and I have been made to feel unwelcome at the LGBT+ centre because I want to be in a female-only environment. I have had to arrive home desperate for the toilet rather than use a gender-neutral one. **Female, England, 55–64**

Lesbian groups and events I've been involved with over the years have all turned into "trans inclusive" groups. So most of the lesbians just stopped going and we don't have groups or events. We try to meet in private, but getting the word out is difficult so we're meeting less and less. Instead of having fun lesbian events, now they're all men and women, straight and gay, but very few lesbians. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a gay woman I appreciate being able to meet up with other lesbians at single sex nights and single sex trips. My partner of 20 years and I no longer attend these lesbian nights out or trips away as these club nights and trips believe they have to be inclusive of trans identifying males. We now self-exclude. Why do females have to include males in their spaces and vice versa when there

are many clubs and organised trips that are inclusive of the opposite sex?

Female, Scotland, 55–64

I have been removed from lesbian groups for saying that a male who identifies as a woman and lesbian (the latter, same sex attracted not same gender attracted) is not a lesbian. Lesbian venues and events are no longer same sex because they've been called transphobic. As a lesbian – I feel VERY UNSAFE. **Female, England, 55–64**

I used to love the Lesbian groups that I attended and the events – now men attend which has altered the atmosphere and I do not feel welcome anymore in these spaces which is a great tragedy. I do not know of any local meet ups now that are purely woman only.

Female, England, 45–54

Being able to meet to share experiences and support in women only and lesbian only groups has been vital for my emotional well-being, e.g. at university, as a young lesbian and a lesbian mother. Being in such groups is still really important to me but they are now informal groups (e.g. book group) built on friendships made through feminist and lesbian organisations and networks in the 70s, 80s and 90s. These organisations and networks are no longer there in Manchester so it must be really hard for lesbians now. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I am so upset that as a lesbian I now have nowhere to go. I want to be proud as I was and feel safe to discuss what is important. The one group I did attend has now allowed those who identify as a woman into our space. This changes the dynamic and the group is now compromising what it can and cannot talk about to not cause offence. To receive retaliation for just asserting you are a woman or a gay woman is a new kind of sexism and homophobia which this over acceptance without question has caused. I feel more alone than ever as I see women of all sexualities vilified for being proud of who they are. As a lesbian, I am now being told I have to accept trans lesbians as potential partners. I will most certainly not as there is no such thing. Why target lesbians? Why not request this from bisexuals? Compromising on single sex spaces needs to stop. We need this space to be ourselves and feel comfortable. **Female, England, 35–44**

I belong to a couple of lesbian only groups and we have to meet in secret in order to remain single sex and keep males who identify as lesbians out of the spaces. A lesbian only group is the only space I feel I can relax fully as I know I am unlikely to encounter homophobia or misogyny, too likely in other groups, including 'LGBT' spaces. Single sex groups are where we can share our experiences and learn from one another, gain support and feel we are not alone. We are safe to explore; allow ourselves to be vulnerable in a different way to when members of the opposite sex are present. Plenty of research tells us that males dominate 'air time' in mixed spaces, which actually comprise most of our daily lives. It is important that if women say they need single sex spaces, we are listened to and respected. If it is important to us, that should be enough.

Female, England, 45–54

Gay men

Fewer gay men responded to the survey but some said they are also experiencing incursion into their spaces.

Gay male dating apps now have trans identified females on them and if you say you aren't interested for that reason, you're banned. Gay saunas are now admitting women which can result in effective rape as in some circumstances you would not be giving informed consent. There are no lesbian spaces any more as they all became "queer spaces" to admit the trans identified heterosexual men who were claiming to be lesbian. **Male, England, 45–54**

Gay men's spaces are now open to women who identify as men, or anyone who identifies as. I am a survivor of child abuse and adult rape and have found men's groups very important to regaining some trust in men and mutual support amongst men can be very healing. **Male, Wales, 55–64**

Workplace groups

Several women wrote about workplace groups set up to support and empower women professionally becoming inclusive of trans-identifying males, and hostile to anyone who disagrees with this.

Women's networking group (workplace) being changed to be inclusive of anyone. **Female, England, 45–54**

The menopause group at work has let trans identified men join. Women complained and were told to be kind. **Female, England, 45–54**

My place of work is forcing the use of pronouns. A trans woman (only by announcement) has been allowed to join a female only meet-up. So it is no longer female only. **Female, England, 45–54**

A very vocal alpha male colleague who announced he was going to transition was given full access to our female communal changing room quite early in the process. At this point I realised I had lost all rights to 'object'. This opened my eyes to what has been happening for years, and policies that have been written in line with Stonewall guidance in a stealth manner so the silent majority have no idea what rights they have lost. I joined the Women's staff network to voice my concerns and said for women to take an interest in the Trust's (NHS) Transgender Policy. This was immediately followed by a message from the EDI lead with a photo of my trans colleague and line manager stood behind a rainbow flag. I took this as personal intimidation, and made me realise the women's network was being monitored and policed by the EDI lead, a man. I left the women's network. **Female, England, 45–54**

I work in a heavily male dominated academic field. We have historically had many campaigns, opportunities, and support groups to encourage and help women to engage in the field. These are

now almost exclusively open to “those who identify as women”. Not only am I not comfortable in participating now, but I feel as a senior woman who is expected to step up as a role model (and has a long track record in doing so) that I will be scrutinised if I draw back or object. Having seen the treatment of other female academics who have been harassed or worse for expressing views I share, I feel very exposed and vulnerable. **Female, England, 45–54**

As a woman in a male-dominated field, I am seeing groups and initiatives intended to address that imbalance changing from female-only to basically “anyone who doesn’t identify as a straight cis male” which firstly subtly reinforces the idea that said males are “normal” and everyone else is “other” secondly means there is no space to focus on the specific needs of the different groups lumped under “other” especially where some groups have louder voices than others, and thirdly reduces overall resources to “other” groups by lumping everyone into one pot.

Female, England, 45–54

At work we use Yammer. Early on in the set up there was a women’s equality network group set up. However a man pushed to have it changed to gender equality and women’s network. He won. I learnt about this after the event. The yammer group includes men “so they can learn about experiences to help with wives and girlfriends” (I am not their wife or girlfriend. If they want to learn ask their wife or girlfriend.) There are no women only groups. Our trans policy was written by a trans person. I think it’s flawed. It states to the trans person that “of course you must use the toilet that makes you most comfortable”. I have failed to find the impact assessment.

Female, Wales, 45–54

I belong to an LGB group for medical professionals (GLADD-UK) that has become LGBT (fair enough, we are all stigmatised minorities in the medical profession). But the young white gay men who have always dominated the organisation in numbers and influence, despite paying lip service to sexism/ equality with lesbians & bi women, decided that we cannot meet as a Women’s Group socially or have Women’s events without promising transwomen would be allowed in. It even got called the ‘non-men’ group. They have no understanding whatsoever of female/ women’s issues or microaggressions, or the Bad Science underlying transgender medicine. It feels like a slap in the face that LB women can’t meet (with transmen/ NB females). **Female, England, 55–64**

My work union says women are not allowed to organise politically in any way in the interests of women without including any men (who identify as women). It prohibits women’s meetings and discussions if men (who identify as women) are excluded. Women’s workplace Network is open to men. I am part of a number of covert women’s groups concerned with women’s rights. The fact they are covert says it all. **Female, Northern Ireland, 55–64**

Women's groups

Others wrote about women's artistic, social, political groups, festivals, events and awards becoming open to trans-identifying males.

Women's centre I once used, gone. Two women's bookshops in London, sadly gone. Women's refuges from domestic violence, refused funding if they stuck out for single-sex services. Feminist Library, trans inclusive, refuses to accommodate women-only groups that might once have met there. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I work in a university and there is an alarming trend in universities across the UK of single sex interest or support groups being replaced by unisex or disappearing entirely. Female staff or students who attempt to meet to discuss sex-specific issues such as male violence against women are often publicly vilified, harassed or driven out of the university altogether. Many female students and academics now study or work in an atmosphere of fear. This is particularly shocking given the current epidemic of sexual violence against female students, by male students. Universities say they are concerned about sexual assault and harassment, but by refusing to acknowledge that most assaults are committed by men, against women, they make it impossible to address the issue – a culture change is needed, in which the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls are acknowledged. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

There used to be women's bars, discos, clubs and festivals etc. And women's centres. Now there are almost none which don't include trans identified males. And any which remain are criticised or attacked. This means lots of women are missing out on having the experience and support of women only space – so they don't know what they're missing. **Female, England, 55–64**

I am unable to attend some activities such as at the Glasgow Women's Library because it allows men now. These single sex female groups were wonderful because we wrote autobiographical essays and read them to each other, it would feel a violation if a male person was present as they are now allowed. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I am a great reader and I'm interested in writing and write myself. I am saddened and angered by how the Women's Prize for Fiction is now open to anyone who 'identifies as a woman'. I subscribe to the women's writing magazine 'Mslexia' and now all their competitions are open to men who identify as women. This trend is seen across all the arts (and other fields) thereby greatly reducing the openings and opportunities for women. It is ironic that these women-only prizes and opportunities came into existence because women are so under-represented in the arts and now women are being expected to step aside. It is also forcing us all into adherence with transgender ideology, which is not based in reality. So the loss of single sex facilities is much more than the forcing of women and girls to share their safe spaces. Women's oppression, which is very real, is being denied. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I have some connection to the arts and creative ventures, and it has become almost taboo in this field to have anything exclusively for women; events, funding, awards etc are predominantly now for anyone who “identifies” as a women, with trans and “non-binary” people prioritised, as though women have now achieved advanced rights and need to step aside. Any challenge to this comes with the risk of being outcast as a “bigot” or worse. **Female, England, 35–44**

Women’s groups in universities allowing, no actively encouraging, males to join.

Female, England, 55–64

I was in the Green Party until the Green Party Women’s Group voted a man in as a co-chair. He immediately shut down the online women’s discussion area, because he didn’t like the content. I have yet to experience men entering what were previously female spaces to further the interests of the women in them. In my experience it is used as a way to undermine the interests of the women previously there. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Women’s Institute is important to me. We occasionally have speakers on delicate matters. I think our members would be intimidated from participating if male-bodied people were allowed in those sessions. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I was a member of the WI. This was an important group to me that supported me through the birth of my children, and the end of my marriage. The support I received was entirely from the female nature of the space and the innate understanding that exists between women. Now men who identify as women are allowed membership – almost all conversation is now about the difficulties experienced by men who believe themselves to be women. A group that once has over 100 members now has 30. The support network is gone. Men’s voices carry furthest and are heard first. **Female, England, 45–54**

A couple of years ago, I was asked by an academic friend who was running a travelling exhibition of old Women’s Lib posters to help set up a discussion about the Women’s Lib movement in my town. As her university rules stated that the topics for discussion must not offend any transwomen present (maternity, menstruation, etc), I felt I could not comply with this restriction on women’s free speech and my part of this event did not go ahead. She was later threatened with disciplinary action for chairing such a discussion in another town, when a transwoman present took offence at a comment about menstruation. **Female, England, 65 and over**

A local women’s social group in my area has been taken over by a man in a dress and makeup claiming to be a woman. He spends every session speaking over the women, steering the talk to gay and trans subjects, whilst dressed in stereotypical clothes to show that he was ‘a woman’. It was quite the performance. It ended the group for me. **Female, England, 55–64**

Support groups

Our local women's drug rehabilitation group is now 'inclusive' i.e. allows men who say they are women to join. One man (who says he is a woman) has definitely joined. So now it is no longer single-sex. **Female, England, 55–64**

Many women's 12 step recovery meetings are now mixed sex. Profoundly vulnerable and traumatized women are excluding themselves. **Female, England, 45–54**

Once a trans identified male came to the women survivors art group. It was the quietest art group ever – I felt like the silence was their 'compliance' to having to have a male body in the space of what was normally a chatty jokey group (safe together group). He was wearing absolute pornified clothing, high heels, fishnet tights, a miniskirt and camisole, lots of make up while the women were in leggings, fleeces and trainers. I thought that was an interesting demonstration of what he thought a woman is. **Female, England, 35–44**

I was a member of a local menopause help group but discontinued using the service when trans women were allowed to attend. Aside from the fact that trans women don't experience menopause because they're male, I did not want to discuss personal matters relating to how menopause has impacted my physical relationship with my husband, my emotional state, physical changes in the presence of males. Why would they even want to attend? **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

My counsellor suggested I go to local women's support groups; when I asked if they were for adult human females only, I was informed that they were "inclusive" and open to anyone. I do not feel that I would be able to discuss the personal experiences that have led me to a nervous breakdown with men present. I am not the only woman I know that has felt unable to utilise women's support groups owing to their inclusion of men. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was recently referred to a local sexual support group, only to find that there was one group that was mixed, as it was a 'gay' group. Also that the 'women's group' was open to Transgender people. I.e Men... This is not acceptable in my opinion. **Female, England, 55–64**

Online groups

Online menopause group of all places! Stifled genuine sharing of experiences and normal conversation. Became ridiculous. Most women left. **Female, England, 55–64**

I was in an online Facebook breastfeeding support group that changed to allow males in if they identified as female. Before that it was a strictly female private group. It was an intimate group, people shared photos of themselves breastfeeding, of their anatomy to ask for advice. I didn't feel safe or comfortable in the group any longer so I left what had previously been a great source of

support at a difficult time. Breastfeeding rates are low enough without undermining support groups in this way. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

At this point it is basically impossible to find single sex online groups for women. Even if people would like them, the minute a group is deemed not “inclusive” of biological men, it is subject to vicious and persistent harassment, malicious reporting, etc. People who stay in the group risk being branded “bigots”. Most group owners, even if they would like to keep a group female-only, are forced to choose between letting males in or not having the group at all. Most choose the first one. I personally know someone who manages a large lesbian group and is forced to admit biological males, even though no one in the group is really interested in them and it makes no sense to have them. Really the only way to have a female-only group is to keep it low-key and underground and only invite trusted people. It’s surreal. **Female, England, 25–34**

Last year, on a community Facebook group, a member posted that they would like to start a women’s late evening dog walking group as the nights were drawing in and she felt nervous taking her dog out alone. Despite disclosing the reason for the single sex preference was due to trauma from a very recent stalking and assault she was hounded from the group and accused of being transphobic by an inordinately large number of people. We had to take things ‘underground’ and set up a private group on Messenger to support her so no one else would find out about it. The evening dog walking group exists but our group of 20 plus females don’t speak of it publicly.

Female, Scotland, 45–54

Girl guiding

Many parents and guide leaders wrote about girl guiding including boys who identify as girls and male adults who identify as women

Girl Guides. Please return it to single sex. Many young teen girls of my daughter’s acquaintance that I know are not comfortable at all with the prospect of washing and sleeping in close proximity to either natal male Guides nor trans women Girl Guide leaders. They don’t feel able to express it publicly, such is the taboo of being labelled (erroneously) ‘transphobic’, if they articulate their preference to remain single sex, but they vote silently with their feet and just don’t join up to Girl Guides any more. **Female, England, 45–54**

I can’t tell how, as a Girlguiding Leader, the move from single sex to mixed sex has hurt and disappointed me. It was GG that first told me ‘This Girl Can’ whatever she wants to do. Woman and girls need spaces away from boys/men; a place away from the male gaze and expectations, a space they can be themselves. GG’s redefinition of women/girls (without widespread consultation) is heartbreaking. It used to be a space that empowered girls, how it tells girls they are nothing more than feelings in a boy’s head. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

I now have some real concerns about my daughter going to guide camp this year. I am only sending my children to guiding activities with their own group. **Female, England, 35–44**

Girl guides is a particular concern to me. My daughter enjoys being part of girl guiding and some of the decisions around allowing men and boys into the organisation on the basis of gender identify rather than sex is very concerning to me. There is not sufficient safeguarding in place to manage this effectively. **Female, England, 35–44**

As a child, I was in both The Brownies and The Guides. Sometimes we went away together for holidays and I always felt comfortable with the female supervisors. I would not be happy for any male person to supervise a group of girls on either holidays or in any other activity of the organisation. It would be potentially unsafe. I am now a Brownie leader. All my experience with Girlguiding UK have shown me how valuable such single-sex organisations can be. There is something incredibly powerful and valuable in girls being able to meet and try new things without the presence of men and boys. (And I also believe strongly that boys should also be able to join single-sex organisations). At the moment, I stay on as a Brownie leader by focusing on the girls in my care. I haven't spoken out publicly about their inclusion of males and I feel deeply uncomfortable with it. At some point, I know that I will be asked to work with males in my unit or my local area, and that will probably be the point where I have to stop volunteering. It makes me so sad to think of a generation of girls losing out on the opportunity to be Brownies and guides, all because GGUK don't have the courage to say what we all know – that girls are female children. **Female, England, 35–44**

What is currently going on in Girl guiding is a concern for me. Current policy states anyone who identifies as female (child or adult) can become a member. Leaders are not allowed to inform parents if a male is identifying as a female is attending overnight camps. Massive safeguarding concern for me, and I believe leaders who have challenged this have been expelled from the organisation. **Female, England, 35–44**

Girl guides used to be single sex. I understand their policy now is to allow anyone who identifies as a girl/woman in. They will not treat them any differently, ignoring any and all safeguarding concerns. I cannot allow my girls to go on any trips with them as they refuse to keep biological males separate in tents etc. **Female, England, 35–44**

I'm a scout leader. Recently the local woods facility we own has had all the three toilet blocks declared unisex. Nothing has changed about them other than the sign on the door. Even some males said the block with the urinals made the girls uncomfortable, but the commissioner said we as leaders had to police who went in at what times! So now we have to hang round by the toilets and decide who is what gender if we want to use the toilets in single sex time slots. There was no need since there were 3 blocks, there could have been two single sex and a real unisex block, but now I am unlikely to book the facility or volunteer there. **Female, England, 45–54**

Creating a hostile environment for women



Women feel hurt, angry and ignored

Many women wrote not only about the practical consequences of the loss of single-sex amenities, but also about how this makes them feel.

Losing female only facilities makes me feel like I don't matter, and that my privacy and dignity is no longer important to society. I find the toilets now smell, and feel unsafe, but nobody seems to care.

Female, England, 45–54

Why do we even have to explain this?! What is wrong with these people that need us to fight for our right to feel safe?!!! **Female, England, 35–44**

I am unhappy about it. I am not anti trans but I feel strongly that women should have safe, female only toilets and changing spaces. **Female, England, 45–54**

That there has been no thinking, discussion or understanding of the impact and potentially unintended consequences of these decisions is extremely sad and depressing. Why are women so unimportant? I support trans rights but not at the expense of the safety and rights of women.

Female, England, 35–44

I feel immense anger at raped or abused women not allowed any private healing space away from men. It is as if they are being punished for being victims. To call a rapist she is a travesty of justice adding to the victim's trauma. **Female, England, 55–64**

It's absolutely abysmal to be watching this happen and to be demonised, and see other women being demonised for not rolling over and just accepting it. We are seeing the biggest rollback of

women's rights for many many years. I know women opting out of using facilities because they are now mixed sex, I've spoken to women running charities who hate this but daren't speak out because their services will lose funding and it is all placing women at increased risk of male violence. It's intolerable. **Female, England, 25–34**

I just want to withdraw completely. I feel this is the beginning of my being edged out of public life to a certain degree. Some women – I suspect wealthy and healthy – may think they are happy with single sex spaces being compromised. If their situation changes they may change their minds.

Female, England, 55–64

My access to the public sphere is continually being eroded. I have fewer shops/cafes that I can go to as women only toilet facilities are being lost and subsequently the amount of time I can be away from home is severely curtailed. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Making female toilets unisex signals to me, as a woman, that my position in society is invalid, not important. That the inescapable biological functions I need to perform in toilets (menstruation, miscarriage etc) are secondary to the feelings of men who want to be women. Women are already massively under catered for when it comes to toilet provision and so to turn women's toilets into unisex is an insult. **Female, England, 35–44**

It gives the message that females are not important. Most sexual crimes are committed by males against females. We females have many untold stories of sexual assault. I don't want males in single sex facilities. I believe most men would prefer single sex facilities also.

Female, Northern Ireland, 55–64

Toilets. It makes me furious. So tired of some women saying, 'Well I don't mind'. Single sex provision isn't for 'those who don't mind' to give away on behalf of those that do.

Female, England, 45–54

Makes me feel angry women are around 51% of population why can't we have services which are safe and meet our needs? **Female, England, 65 and over**

I am appalled at the lack of sensitivity and concern by those who think that it is Ok to ignore an understandable fear based in fact. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I am furious and frightened in equal measure. **Female, England, 55–64**

It is a retrograde step. The achievements that benefitted women and our lack of access to public sphere is being rolled back. **Female, England, 55–64**

I grew up in the 80s and there were still quite a lot of sexist attitudes about but honestly it has never felt like women and girls have been so dismissed, undervalued and disregarded as we are now. **Female, England, 45–54**

The loss of single sex facilities disappears women. It is a fundamental erosion of their personhood and leaves them voiceless. **Female, England, no age given**

I feel like I am in a gaslighting abusive relationship with ScotGov, Womens Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland, the Police, the NHS and any other organisation that supposedly considers and cares for women and their rights. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

It makes me furious. Especially when it is brushed aside as “inclusive”. It is not. It excludes me and many others. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

It is genuinely frightening and disempowering to have single sex spaces removed on the basis of an unscientific, culturally tone deaf and ideologically driven phenomenon. As a woman it makes me feel like a second class citizen, and as if my privacy, dignity and safety are less important than that of an extreme minority, within an extreme minority (whose tactics are intimidation, gaslighting and institutional capture). There is no clear or logical definition of what this minority is (terminology, concept etc), and no public consensus of a way forward. This has all happened by stealth and ‘no debate’ tactics. **Female, England, 45–54**

It takes women’s rights away. It says women are not worth listening to. **Female, England, 45–54**

This makes me feel like women are totally disregarded in this society. I’m so angry and worried. **Female, England, 45–54**

I do not feel that women and children’s safety has been considered as a priority. **Female, England, 65 and over**

These were hard fought for rights to protect and support women and girls based on a history of misogyny and abuse. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I feel attacked for being a woman, disenfranchised from my own biological reality seeing hateful & contemptuous public messaging referring to me by my body parts or biological functions as if I am some sub class of human. With the advent of rainbow & pronoun badges I am now afraid to approach anyone who bears one as I see them as a declaration of hate against my sex. I no longer do things like take my child to places where I might be forced to expose them to unsafe facilities or go to them myself. **Female, England, 45–54**

I am so angry and disgusted that women trying to set boundaries is being treated as bigoted. I was especially hurt by Mridul Wadhwa’s comments that bigoted beliefs will be “challenged” if going to a rape crisis centre and that the years of supporting women needs to be “washed and cleaned”. It is so utterly offensive for women to go through the trauma of rape and sexual violence to not be able to seek help without fear of judgement. I already deal with so much guilt and shame, how dare someone say I’m bigoted for needing space away from the male sex after what was done to me. My body knows, my mind knows. I am not going to deny my material reality to validate the feelings

of others. I no longer feel that rape crisis welcomes women to seek desperately needed help in a safe place and is not fit for purpose. **Female, Scotland, 25–34**

I work in a university that has been heavily influenced by Stonewall and has ignored many views of staff and students about single sex spaces. It is really distressing to be treated as bigoted for not agreeing with the new ideology. I worry about women from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Many must be avoiding certain venues. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

No consultation

Many respondents told us that that changes had been made without consultation, or that objections had been ignored.

It is alarming how little thought and debate is given to the topic. It seems as if a quiet unspoken rule was passed that meant that people suddenly had to embrace the idea of gender neutral everything is best and anyone who questions this is to be shut down and ridiculed as being old fashioned or a prude. Councils suddenly announced that new school builds would automatically be planned with gender neutral toilets without even asking students or parents what they thought. Imagine that... no consultation with the actual service users!! Just a slam dunk decision... we have decided what is best for you because it's all the rage now. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

Also my company brought in a trans policy which allows trans identified males into the women's toilets and (I think) the changing room. The policy implies strongly that anyone who disagrees with this policy will be in trouble. I don't remember any consultation of the women about whether they were ok with this. The company is – of course – a Stonewall Champion. I feel so cross about this! **Male, England, 35–44**

My workplace has opened up the showers and toilets to anyone who claims to feel like that gender. There were no risk assessments and nobody was asked if they were concerned. It was not advertised and people would only find out if they read the trans policy. **Female, England, 55–64**

I had an email to say that the women's public toilets in the woods where I walk in London were going to be open to anyone who identifies as a woman – they're run by the City of London. There was a consultation of sorts and I objected but I found out that most of the objections were ignored. I'm sorry to say I burst into tears when I read the first email as walking in these woods are my exercise and key to my wellbeing. Even then I'm making sure I'm within shouting distance of other women! I haven't used the public toilet since. I go to a cafe instead so the facility's gone for me. **Female, England, 55–64**

My place of work is attempting to introduce a gender identity pledge allowing trans people to use whichever toilets and changing facilities they feel comfortable in. No equality impact assessment has been carried out, no thought has been given to the comfort, privacy and dignity of other staff

members. There are also a lot of female Muslim staff. No consideration is being given to the other 8 protected characteristics. They seem oblivious to them. **Female, England, 55–64**

Speaking up

Some people wrote about complaining or campaigning for single sex spaces to be retained (sometimes successfully).

Locally women campaigned against male and female toilets being replaced with gender neutral by the City Council and were berated for being “transphobic”. Their campaign was condemned as being about “hate”. **Female, England, 65 and over**

I work in a very large office with a large volume of toilets. They were all to be changed to gender neutral. I campaigned and raised awareness as to why this would exclude many women. We have enough toilets to have some as single sex and some gender neutral. We were successful and have retained some single sex facilities. But many employees spoke out not understanding what the fuss was about. These were men and the comments were belittling and ignorant.

Female, England, 35–44

A local secondary school I was viewing has mixed sex toilets – that don’t meet the building’s regulations act on toilets in schools – and a lgbt+ policy that allows any child into any toilet or changing room they identify with, and offers to conceal this from the parents. I asked how the safeguard girls within this arrangement. I was told by the inclusion officer that nothing bad happens here. I told them that Ofsted tells schools to act as if it could happen here and that the school is already named on Everyone’s Invited. The inclusion officer had no idea what I was talking about and couldn’t give an answer. **Female, England, 35–44**

One successful response to this was at a festival which consulted its audience. The end result was a number of individual facilities that can be used by either sex, but the multiple cubicle facilities were kept single sex. This was an excellent result as it allowed everyone to use the facilities appropriately without any awkwardness. **Female, England, 45–54**

My daughter’s school reduced the number of single sex toilets for girls from 16 to 5. The rest were made gender neutral without consultation and without undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment. When I complained to the governors that this was a breach of the Equality Act they refused to act on the Independent Investigator’s advice to seek a legal opinion and then refused to make a ruling on my complaint because they weren’t sufficiently qualified to do so. When I escalated to the EHRC they refused to intervene and suggested I take the school to court myself. **Female, England, 45–54**

My govt department has been building/occupying brand new buildings. In the first one of these to open, all toilets were “gender neutral”. It wasn’t until people (mainly women, many Muslim)

complained that we were able to get single sex facilities back, with some unisex toilets remaining. It was as though no consideration had been given to it whatsoever. It was utterly bizarre.

Female, England, 35–44

Our daughter's special school changed their same sex intimate care policy to a "cross gender one" to support the diversity in the staff workforce. It took a lawyer to get the policy changed back to being same sex. The thought that the Equality Act might one day include self ID worries me hugely – this would be a disaster for learning disabled girls & women. The Equality Act (as it stands) recognises their vulnerability & their rights to same sex intimate care, but these girls & women do not know this & cannot ask for or declare this right themselves because they have no mental capacity and are often non-verbal. Even now, it is often merely stated as a "preference".

Female, England, 45–54

My son's school changed the toilets to mixed sex without consulting parents. After complaints they rectified it and have a small number of mixed sex toilets and male and female back in place. There was absolutely no need to try and change all the toilets to mixed sex other than to push gender ideology in the school. **Female, England, 35–44**

The men and women signs on the toilet doors at my workplace were removed. I was told that everyone could use both facilities. That it was making the facilities fit for the 21st century. The toilets were for more than one person with cubicles with gaps at the top and bottom and the rooms were not lockable from the inside. It took me two months to persuade the management they had acted in error and illegally. The signs were put back eventually.

Female, England, 65 and over

I have complained in art galleries and performance spaces about 'gender neutral' toilets. Mostly they stink. It is unnerving to share small spaces with unknown men. Usual response is "you are not the first person to complain". **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

At work we recently moved to a new building. The toilets then 'became' gender neutral. I was opposed to this and requested separate female toilets. I was told that they had to be this way in case anyone was going to go through a gender reassignment. I had to explain, quite strongly, that this was discrimination against women as we are entitled to single sex facilities. Eventually common sense ensued and a female only toilet was granted. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

My previous employer made the toilets gender neutral. Many women, for religious, modesty, or other reasons avoided using the toilets at all, or would go in groups. The toilets had to be segregated after approx a year due to complaints from both sexes. **Female, England, 45–54**

The locker room of my central London gym put up a signing saying 'use the locker room that you feel comfortable in'. After more than one man entered the women's locker room and the staff

would take no action – I started getting changed in the men’s. Men complained. I was told not to return. **Female, England, 55–64**

Silenced, ignored and afraid

Others wrote about reasons why they don’t feel able to complain.

Makes me angry and upset. I have no voice. If I complain I could be ostracised and my standing at work jeopardised. **Female, England, 45–54**

I was not consulted, and I felt intimidated by the “equality and diversity” group to the extent that I felt unsafe speaking up about this. **Female, England, 45–54**

Any employee unhappy with opposite sex colleagues sharing the facilities, will get a chat with their manager and be told to find alternative facilities. **Female, Scotland, 35–44**

I can’t say anything or I will lose my job. **Female, England, 55–64**

I am trying to get up the emotional energy to make a complaint and ensure they follow the law, but I was hit with a disciplinary complaint about my transphobia last time I was vocal about these things. I am a coward; I’m not sure I can manage to go through this again. **Female, England, 55–64**

Compelled speech at work means I must refer to sex offenders as women. It is abhorrent to me but I must be silent for fear of losing my job. These men want to be in women’s spaces. I consider them to be dangerous to children and women and it frightens me that at some point men like them will be granted access whenever they wish. **Female, England, 45–54**

I experienced [*a transwoman using women’s facilities*] in a work setting and this was uncomfortable for me (not able to change etc. if the trans women was sharing the same space). However, overall I did not ‘fear’ this person and did like them. Collectively the female staff did not make any complaints – we would just make sure we would avoid the facilities she used (so essentially they had their own!). **Female, England, 55–64**

The toilets in my workplace (higher education) have a policy where people can choose ‘whichever they feel most comfortable in’ effectively making them all mixed sex spaces. I think this might be illegal but I am unable to challenge it in my position as the institution is heavily influenced by the students union which champion the rights of trans identified students over those of any other group including women and those with religious beliefs. **Female, England, 35–44**

Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh where I have been a regular attender for many years now has toilets that are open to how people ‘identify’ rather than biology. Called phobic by a bartender when I questioned this. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

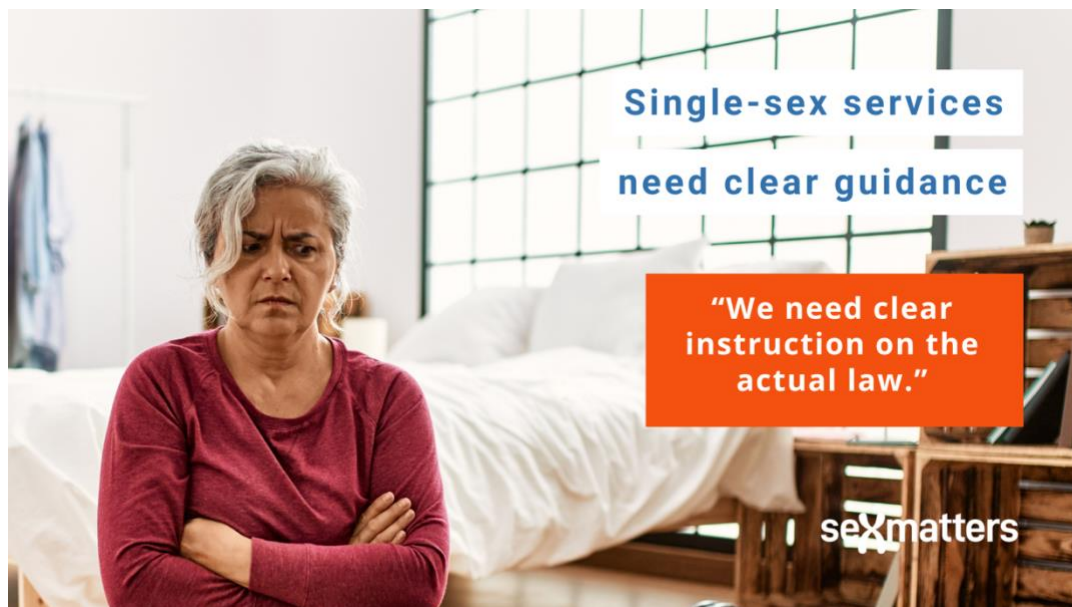
I work for a large NHS organisation that pays to be influenced by Stonewall. I anonymously submitted a question to a panel of senior managers who were presenting a webinar on values, but moderators refused to allow my question as it was against the organisation's values. The question was about whether our women's toilets are single sex. I did not use any offensive language – they purely objected to the question and responded privately to say our organisation is trans-inclusive and people can use facilities that match their gender identity. Having moderators gatekeeping questions meant that senior managers never even received the question and I would have to waive anonymity to use other channels, which I am afraid to do. In a large organisation such as ours, the statistical likelihood of there being a male sexual predator amongst colleagues is high and there is little security policing visitors. Anyone could enter the ladies' and no-one would question it for fear of being branded transphobic. **Female, England, 35–44**

Not only losing access to Survivor Network but being monstered BY them for speaking up for other rape survivors with female specific rape trauma. **Female, England, 55–64**

I work for a chain that has mixed sex fitting rooms but doesn't announce this to customers. However if a customer knows and objects, it is them who have to be removed.
Female, England, 55–64

Messages to the EHRC

95% of respondents agreed with the statement “The EHRC, the UK’s official equality watchdog, should provide guidance for service providers to help them follow the law.”



1,723 people wrote individual messages to the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission). This survey was undertaken before the EHRC released its new (non-statutory) guidance on single-sex services, so these are not specific comments on the guidance.

Provide clarity

The absence of unambiguous guidance from EHRC on this issue has created tensions and confusion. Despite sex being a protected characteristic, agencies conduct their business as though self ID was the law of the land and do not clarify when exceptions can be made to permit female only provision. I worked in the NHS and witnessed frequently the erosion of women’s rights because of poor understanding of the law coupled with nervousness from managers about causing offence. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

So many organisations seem confused about the law around single-sex spaces. This is putting women and children in danger and infringing on their rights. Organisations desperately need clarity on this issue. **Female, England, 35–44**

Service providers need reassurance that it is legal to provide and enforce single-sex services. Many have been poorly advised in recent years. **Female, England, 35–44**

A lot of service providers would be delighted to have standard guidance provided which is based on best practice and is legally compliant. It is cost effective and sets a baseline with their competitors which improves the service for customers. **Female, England, 55–64**

This is a confusing minefield, and most service providers don't have the resources to properly understand it. At the moment, I feel women are losing out because providers are afraid to get it wrong. Everyone needs to know, clearly, where they stand. **Female, England, 25–34**

This guidance is so overdue. A vacuum where it should have been has been filled by lobby groups pushing their own political agendas. We need clear instruction on the actual law.

Female, England, 35–44

This guidance is badly needed. Without it, lobby groups have been effectively rewriting the law to fit their view of what they think it should be rather than what it is. This has resulted in a grave loss of single-sex services for women and girls, single sex hospital wards and bays, single sex prisons, single sex sports teams and facilities and a loss of data collected based on sex.

The EHRC must listen to all voices and provide balanced guidance. Agencies depending upon voluntary sector funding and local authority commissioning are nervous of attracting criticism by lobbying groups. The EHRC must issue clear guidance to them and local authority commissioners so one group does not set the agenda and ignore other views. **Female, England, 55–64**

It is vital the EHRC is there to provide clear guidance about the law for government departments, law makers, private companies, councils, the NHS and those responsible for the world we live in.

Female, England, 45–54

We need clear and proper guidance to help organisations large and small stand up to the effective blackmail being carried out by the transactivists accusing them of transphobia and threatening to harm their business if they maintain single-sex services. I fully support trans people being given the services they require but that can't be at the expense of women being given the services they require. **Female, England, 45–54**

Since the law is not being interpreted correctly by service providers at the moment, the EHRC should give clear unambiguous guidance. **Female, England, 55–64**

Please clarify the law and reassure employers and service providers that single-sex services are perfectly legal, reasonable and necessary. No one has the right to insert themselves into services not meant for them – as a woman I wouldn't dream of demanding access to a testicular cancer support group. Please stand up for women, who are being vilified and silenced, and for girls, who are being conditioned into "making way" for males. **Female, England, 35–44**

Needs to be very clear what is meant by sex. Needs however to be workable so that the myth of 'genital checks' does not have traction. **Female, England, 55–64**

Explain the law

It is vitally important that the organisation provides guidance about the actual law and not what Stonewall wishes people to believe is the law. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

Women's rights are human rights and it's the law to provide single sex spaces for women/girls. The EHRC should follow the law and encourage organisations/universities to follow it as well. **Female, England, 25–34**

They have a duty to ensure the actual law is interpreted fully and correctly. They need to collect plentiful and accurate evidence of where the law is not being followed and they need to explain this loudly and publicly so that the public know what is and is not happening. They need to stand up robustly and confidently for the rights of all who are covered by the equality act. **Female, England, 65 and over**

We live in a democracy. Our laws are made democratically – or should be. Lobby groups such as Stonewall should only be one of many groups making representations. Not the only one. Good on the EHRC for seeking to uphold the law and uphold and balance all rights. **Female, England, 55–64**

This is the organisation from which other organisations should be taking their advice – not from powerful lobby groups who ignore what the law actually says and make up their own 'best practice'. **Female, England, 55–64**

Provide calm, independent leadership

We need independent, sensible oversight of life changing political policies. **Female, England, 45–54**

The issues which have arisen as a consequence of failure to enforce the Equality Act 2010 cannot be swept under the carpet. This issue cannot be resolved on Twitter, on marches and protests, nor by bullying women into submission! The whole purpose of the EHRC is to address areas where the rights of one group clash with those of another. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic not gender identity. Sex is a protected characteristic not gender. Organisations who behave as though the law protects gender identity must be held to account and prevented from doing this. The EHRC are taking positive action and I hope they will continue to do their job properly and assure Women's rights are protected as the law states and produce policy to ensure this with regard to single sex provision and spaces. **Female, England, 55–64**

There needs to be a voice of reason in all this that respects facts and accepts science. We are a secular nation – people are free to believe what they wish including that sex doesn't exist or that men can be women – this isn't about telling people what to believe. The issue is that we shouldn't

be allowing those with these or any other anti-science, anti-reality belief to make the law and rules that apply to society as a whole. **Female, England, 45–54**

The whole “culture war” has become ridiculous. Expert voices are being drowned out. There’s nothing but conflict. EHRC are the grown-ups in the room at the moment, and we need them to keep doing what they’re doing. Public policy needs to be evidence-based. If EHRC can be transparent about their evidence base, and the evidence base is credible and balanced, I think it will make their job a lot easier and will instil trust – even among those who don’t agree with all their decisions. **Female, England, 35–44**

Recognise women’s vulnerability

I want it to base its guidance on ****why**** the law has picked out sex as something that matters, not just the fact that it has. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Women’s rights are human rights. Women and especially girls are among the most vulnerable members of society and our rights to single sex spaces should be respected.

Female, England, 35–44

Women need their rights protecting and it seems that only the EHRC care enough to fight for them or at least get our voices heard. **Female, England, 55–64**

Women have been second-class citizens for too long. **Female, England, 55–64**

The law is being eroded by the trans lobby who claim to be the only victims on the world. The EHRC needs to stand up for women who are universally oppressed. The research is there on women’s oppression – about CSA, CSE, about DV, FGM, rape, porn, prostitution – and on attacks on women’s bodies and it’s just being ignored. **Female, England, 65 and over**

Recognise and balance competing rights

There are 9 protected characteristics. They should all be respected. **Female, England, 45–54**

The new chair is listening to ALL those who have a protected characteristic, which is a refreshing change, after a few years where the EHRC appeared to have a hierarchy, with sex at the bottom, and ‘gender reassignment’ (far too vague a term) at the top. Hardly surprising that the previous chair was from Stonewall. Equality feels like oppression when you are used to privilege.

Female, England, 55–64

The job of the EHRC should be to consider the equality and rights of all of those within protected characteristic groups, particularly where those rights clash. Over the last few years, that has not happened. Trans rights have been privileged over those of women, older people and children, those with a religious faith and people with a disability. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

Women need you. You should not be beholden to lobby groups who expect you to do their bidding. Women are always bottom of the pile. Please help us. Thank you for finally showing signs of doing so. Rights are pie. They do compete and we need a grown-up organisation to consider the needs of all affected groups. **Female, England, 35–44**

Where there is an apparent conflict of rights (as in this case) there should be open and robust discussion about how this can be best resolved. **Female, England, 45–54**

Be active, talk to people, gather the evidence and recommend same sex spaces for biological women and men. **Female, England, 55–64**

They need to represent all the protected characteristics, consulting with all groups, not just Stonewall and trans lobby groups. **Female, England, 45–54**

We cannot allow the rights of one group to erode the rights of another. **Female, Scotland, 45–54**

No “case by case”

Employees should never have to make that call themselves. Policies must be clear and well signposted so all customers know and staff can refer to policies with confidence. We have to stop shying away from this issue! **Female, England, 45–54**

Clear guidance needed, not on a case by case basis. EHRC to make sure that providers include sex in their policies and not miss it out or use ‘gender’ instead. **Female, England, 35–44**

Guidance needs to be practical and not let policing access to services fall to the case by case judgement of front-line staff. It’s unfair on staff as they will bear the brunt of objections, and is unfair on service users who will not know whether a service is available. **Female, England, 45–54**

There is so much freestyling going on in this area and people are unsure of their legal responsibilities. Your guidance is needed. **Female, England, 45–54**

The idea that a justification must be outlined in order to create a single sex space has created a situation where organisations feel they need to run the gauntlet of special interest groups in order to limit access to the space to female people. We have seen, historically, that when push comes to shove, woman’s interests are the first to be sacrificed. The requirement to provide a justification means that woman’s interests will always be vulnerable to pressure groups.

Female, England, 45–54

Sex seems to have morphed into gender in so many areas by stealth. I would like to see a total ban on males entering female only spaces. None of this case by case malarkey. The EHRC needs to be firm. I saw the House of Lords voted against the amendment to make single sex wards single sex. It’s unbelievable! I want clear, unequivocal messaging and I want them to stand firm against what

will no doubt be a horrendous backlash from the TRAs [trans rights activists].

Female, Scotland, 55–64

Dispel misinformation

Without clearly worded guidance organisations will continue to be influenced by the deliberate misinformation produced by organisations such as Stonewall. **Male, England, 45–54**

With so much dis-information around service providers need to realise that there are laws protecting single sex spaces. The EHRC can provide this guidance so that providers can't say they were not aware of the law. There should be a body to oversee this and to ensure that the guidance is being adhered to. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

The EHRC should also create their own diversity training programme to be used in workplaces, teacher-training courses, professional bodies, etc. This space has been left open and filled up by a range of lobby groups using it to change the law rather than instruct on the actual law, so an EHRC-approved and created course can be the answer to this, and it should be compulsory for all workplaces. It will inform on the 9 characteristics and how to make them all balanced in each workplace. They don't have to deliver the courses, just create them. It would be an actual certificated course and free of charge. **Female, England, 35–44**

With even police forces issuing guidance which is wrong about the protected characteristics it's clear that the EHRC needs to be more proactive in dispelling the misinformation from the likes of Stonewall and their satellite lobbying groups in the rest of the UK. **Female, Northern Ireland, 45–54**

Emphasise single-sex requirements

You must make it clear to every service provider that single-sex is not just legal, but preferable when it comes to safeguarding. You must insist they consider their female service users and understand our needs before making changes that see the loss of our spaces. You must make it clear that they are protected BY THE LAW if they provide single-sex services, and that "blanket policies" are allowable. **Female, England, 45–54**

We really need strong guidance from the EHRC that single-sex spaces should be permitted. Beyond this, the EHRC need to specify that single-sex spaces should be legally required in all public services. This is important because currently funding is being taken away from single-sex services and vulnerable people are being harmed. The EHRC simply permitting single-sex spaces is not enough. Single-sex spaces need to be legally mandated in all public services. Such a declaration would restore equity to funding opportunities for these single-sex services.

Male, England, 25–34

There are already laws that state the rules for single-sex services but nobody enforces them. This is a disgrace as women are expected to fight these injustices by judicial reviews at court which are then needed to be funded by crowd funding which could all be eliminated if only the EHRC properly stated existing laws and were backed up by the Government and Police Services.

Female, England, 65 and over

The EHRC should be helping to ensure that the Equality Act is correctly applied. Where known misrepresentations have occurred which have meant a loss in single sex spaces, and the shrinking of Women's worlds, they should speak out to clarify the position so that public bodies and private businesses can confidently and correctly apply the single sex exceptions.

Female, England, 45–54

The EHRC should be actively encouraging service providers to provide single sex provision otherwise they are failing in their duty to protect the sex class of women from discrimination and putting them at risk of harm. **Female, England, 35–44**

The EHRC needs to tell service providers (schools, leisure centres, shops etc) that girls and women matter. Our privacy matters. They should make it clear they are not breaking the law by supporting single sex spaces, and shouldn't leave it down to the individual business to make a judgement as most will be terrified of being pursued and sued by trans activists. **Female, England, 45–54**

The EHRC needs to right the wrongs of the past in relation to advice given to organisations by corrupt lobby groups. It needs to reiterate that single sex provision is essential for women and girls and that mixed facilities are detrimental for women and girls. The EHRC needs to be very clear that biological men are not and can never be female and that sex matters. It needs to underline that men can also reasonably request single sex provision away from females and that transmen are not biological men. Organisations which have given themselves over completely to gender nonsense are no longer fit for purpose. Stonewall, Amnesty, Girlguides and the like have all dishonoured themselves and disgraced their history. It is time for them to be consigned to history and for new organisations which respect and uphold the law and encourage debate and engagement to take their place. EHRC needs to lead the way if it has any hope of representing the protected characteristics fairly and helping us to build a respectful, safe and inspiring society for all. **Female, England, 45–54**

Take up legal cases

It's outrageous that women like me have had to pay to support legal action to enforce our existing legal rights. Our public services have the time and the expertise to give guidance and support on matters of public services and they should be using their power to help the groups recognised in law as needing help or specific provision. I'm horrified to see to what extent they were persuaded to work against the best interests of women, among other interested parties, and hope that they

can now, under new leadership, be much more balanced and neutral in applying the law and performing their duties. **Female, England, 55–64**

I would go further. EHRC should take up the legal challenge. It is so unfair that ordinary women are having to fund legal challenges while Scottish Government or Scottish Government funded organisations have access to unlimited public funds. **Female, Scotland, 65 and over**

There need to be consequences for discriminating against women that don't rely on each individual case being funded to go through the courts – most women don't have the money, time or public profile to be able to push for their legal rights, and so are mostly just doing without. It's impacting our ability to participate in public life, having a negative effect on accessing basic healthcare and education. **Female, England, 45–54**

Counter the vilification and bullying

Who else is standing against the erosion of rights to free speech, being able to rightly express your belief in biology and scientific fact, to demand the right to be safe, have privacy? Very, very few others. Free speech is being suppressed and expressing your views gets you vilified as a bigot. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

We need someone with a backbone to speak out for women against these bullies. **Female, England, no age given**

They need to uphold the law, especially the exemption for single-sex services and not bow down to misogynistic bullying. **Female, England, 25–34**

The EHRC needs to do more to safeguard women's rights, and also stamp out this idea that anyone who wants to protect single-sex spaces is 'transphobic'. **Female, England, 45–54**

The EHRC needs to continue working to win back women's trust after spending several years prioritising and advocating for groups which privilege men. **Female, England, 35–44**

Without it the law is being misinterpreted. Also, people speaking out with concerns are being called bigots and transphobic so someone with authority needs to clarify the law. **Female, Wales, 35–44**

Provide guidance to schools

They need to step in NOW! These ludicrous, damaging policies are being introduced and this dangerous ideology is becoming normalised in schools. Our girls are being brainwashed into giving up their rights and putting their personal safety at risk. If nothing is done this WILL become a future human rights travesty. The current laws are being twisted and repurposed to serve a tiny

proportion of society, while the rights, comfort and safety of 51% of the population are being completely ignored. This is insanity! **Female, England, 45–54**

Many organisations have introduced self-ID and in doing so have failed to uphold their duties with regards to providing single-sex spaces for women and girls in certain situations. The matter of school toilets is a case in point: it would be very helpful for you to remind all organisations of their duties in terms of protecting the sex-based rights of women and girls, and of the situations where sex-based exclusion will be appropriate. Please also remind them WHY this matters (!).

Female, Scotland, 45–54

The guidance for schools must be informed by safeguarding. It needs to be made clear to schools and the public at large that inclusion, diversity, equality must never ever be allowed to undermine safeguarding. All children have a right to be kept safe. No child or their parent should be able to opt them out of safeguarding. **Female, England, 35–44**

Please I beg you – help by getting gender ideology out of schools. Make it clear that no one can really change sex. Make it clear to young girls that being female will impact their lives and single-sex services are their right. Make it clear that it is their right to speak up and bullying is unacceptable. Deal with the authoritarian intimidation of young girls forcing them into compliance.

Female, England, 45–54

The EHRC need to reverse the false advice Stonewall have spread throughout schools and institutions across the UK. As far as I am concerned, Stonewall are now an anti women organisation – and they don't believe that Females deserve their own spaces for safety and dignity. I shall never forgive the LGBT community for facilitating this war against women.

Female, Wales, 45–54

There is widespread misunderstanding of the Equality Act 2010 in school settings, and what the implications of it should be for school policies. Clear, explicit guidance on single sex spaces is very much needed. Also teaching materials to counter the inaccurate resources peddled by unregulated external providers like Stonewall and No Outsiders are crucial. **Female, England, 45–54**

Be brave

They have been so “brave” in a world of cancel culture, and coercive attempts to drown out the voices of many women, in pointing out that the rule of law needs to be respected. We should not have to use the word “brave” but unfortunately our voices are being screamed at, threatened and cancelled with truly worrying regularity. **Female, England, 35–44**

They have been late in coming forward but I pray they hold their nerve and uphold single-sex services. **Female, England, 45–54**

The fact that the EHRC has taken a position and the groups that don't like that position are trying to undermine the body itself is terrifying and also demonstrable of the power and entitlement of this group. **Female, England, 35–44**

It's sickening to hear that Stonewall and other associated groups have now made a complaint to the UN to ask for this recognition to be withdrawn, because EHRC is now considering whether or not trans rights conflict with women's rights. **Female, England, 65 and over**

The EHRC needs to carry out its role objectively and analytically, without being bullied or intimidated by activists distorting the truth. **Female, England, 55–64**

The EHRC have been subjected to abuse which highlights even more how needed they are now. **Female, England, 65 and over**

The current nonsense about the EHRC being a failing organisation is disingenuous at best and outright lies at worst. **Female, Scotland, 55–64**

I'm pleased they've made their recent move. The backlash was inevitable but hopefully it will expose the division between trans and women's rights. Everyone deserves the dignity of their rights upheld by law, but not the right to take others'. **Female, England, 35–44**

Dissenting voices

While the survey was designed to collect perspectives from people who value single-sex services, a few respondents took the opportunity to tell us why they didn't matter to them.

It has created a more professional no-nonsense workplace. **Female, Wales, 45–54**

I have no problem with gender neutral public facilities. **Female, England, 45–54**

It did not impact on my life at all, because I do not care whether some women are trans. Because I don't ask people about their genitals in the bathroom so how would I know. Pretty much all single sex spaces in the UK are trans inclusive and have been for a long time, nothing has changed.

Female, England, 25–34

I don't see it as a loss, but as a more inclusive environment. **Male, England, 35–44**

I found it fine. It resulted in an inclusive space with no queues and I did not experience any predatory men there. **Female, England, 45–54**

It made the toilets at work much better. Changed to fully private cubicles with sinks inside instead of spaces with public sink areas. **Female, England, 35–44**

The conversion of single sex toilets to gender neutral in my workplace has been transformative, in a positive way. Old stalls have been replaced with individual lockable cubicles, each with its own hand dryer and sink. This has been excellent for emptying my menstrual cup and cleaning it without embarrassment or worries about hygiene. Men must now queue as long as woman during busy periods. Gender neutral facilities have done wonders for gender equality and comfort for me personally where I work. I encourage you all to think about the way gender neutral services can in fact actually benefit cisgender women like me. **Female, England, 25–34**

Gender Neutral changing and bathroom facilities are unfairly vilified by people who have likely never used one. Do you seriously think people are out there using toilets with no stalls or cubicles? No. The gender neutral facilities I have used have all been private and far safer than any gender segregated space I've used. As a femme person it is not safe for me to use men's facilities, and I don't use women's because of people like you who make these stupid surveys. So instead if I want to go to the gym, I get changed at home. I avoid going to the toilet in public unless absolutely necessary, and on more than one of those occasions, when I've used men's toilets, I've been assaulted. I have never had that problem when using ladies' bathrooms, which I have only ever used when accompanied by a cisgender female friend. I use the bathroom to pee, and nothing more. The idea that I'm invading the privacy of other women just for existing is deeply offensive. Also, by your flawed logic that equates gender and sex, trans men and transmasculine people would be forced to use female facilities, leading to you still having men in the ladies' toilets. And women in the men's. **Female, England, 16–24**

It's a fantastic idea, let's get rid of the prudish nature we have here in the UK.

Female, England, 55–64

I'm absolutely in favour of those changes, which have made life much, much easier for me as the mother of a young son. I'm not really aware of any spaces allowing trans men/women in than ten or fifteen years ago, but I think that it's a good thing to allow both trans- and cisgender people to share spaces. **Female, England, 45–54**

Trans women are women, trans men are men. Gender non-conforming people are valid.

Female, Scotland, 55–64

Men should not be in women's facilities you're right – but if you're insinuating that trans women are men and should be excluded on that basis you're being transphobic. Trans women are women and therefore are fine to be in women's spaces just as trans men are men and are fine to be in men's spaces with cis men. **Female, England 25–34**

Trans inclusive services are good as trans-woman affected by women's issues need to be included. **Female, England, 25–34**

And by human rights I would absolutely include the right of transgender women to access female services and to use the facilities that correspond to their identified gender.

Female, England, 45–54

[Single-sex services are closing] Because of the attacks on these services by transphobes and fascists like yourselves also the diversion of funds that could be donated to these services but instead have to be spent defending women and girls from the misogyny you promote.

Female, England, 35–44

[The EHRC] are unfit for purpose and bend too easily to the lies of fascists and misogynists like yourselves. **Female, England, 35–44**

The EHRC should provide the guidance which ensures businesses remain trans inclusive and that they therefore do not violate indirect discrimination in the Equality Act. **Female, England, 16–24**

The EHRC SHOULD provide guidance that is in keeping with the law. That guidance would be trans inclusive as is UK, EU and UN law. If the EHRC is intent on recommending trans exclusive advice it is in breach of the law and should rightly be stripped of its standing. **England, 25–34**

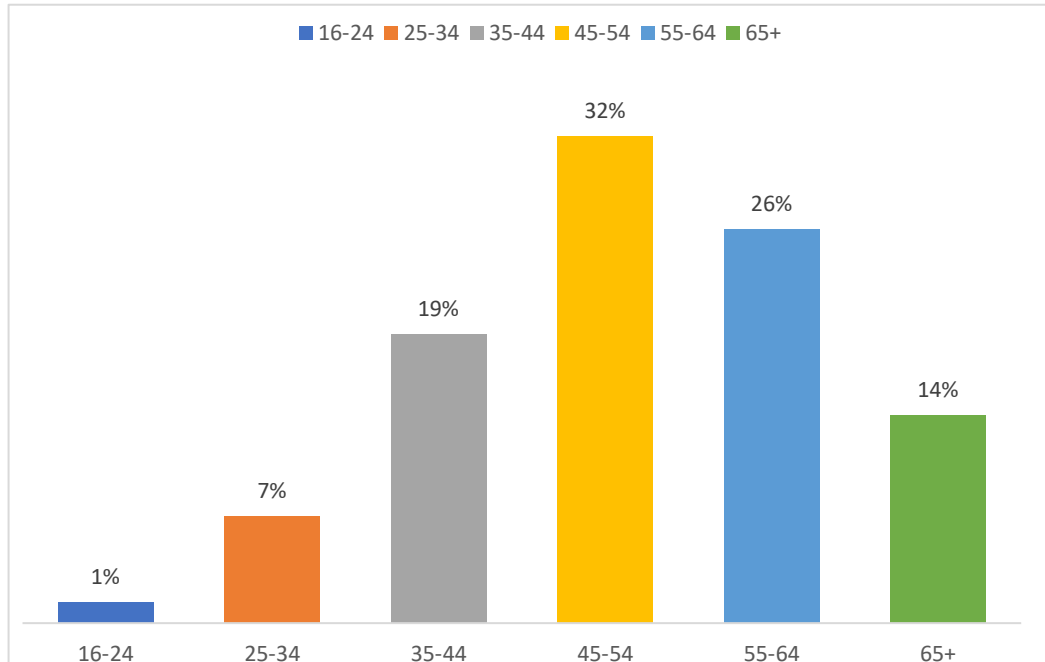
The EHRC should issue guidance to businesses and service providers to ensure they are complying with the equality and gender recognition act in not barring trans and gender non-conforming people from places that match their legal or adopted sex or gender; and to make it clear that discriminating against trans people by attempting to bar them from toilets or changing rooms is illegal and in breach of equalities legislation. Clear guidance should be issued to tackle

the rampant discrimination and harassment trans and GNC people face in accessing basic services. **Female, England, 25–34**

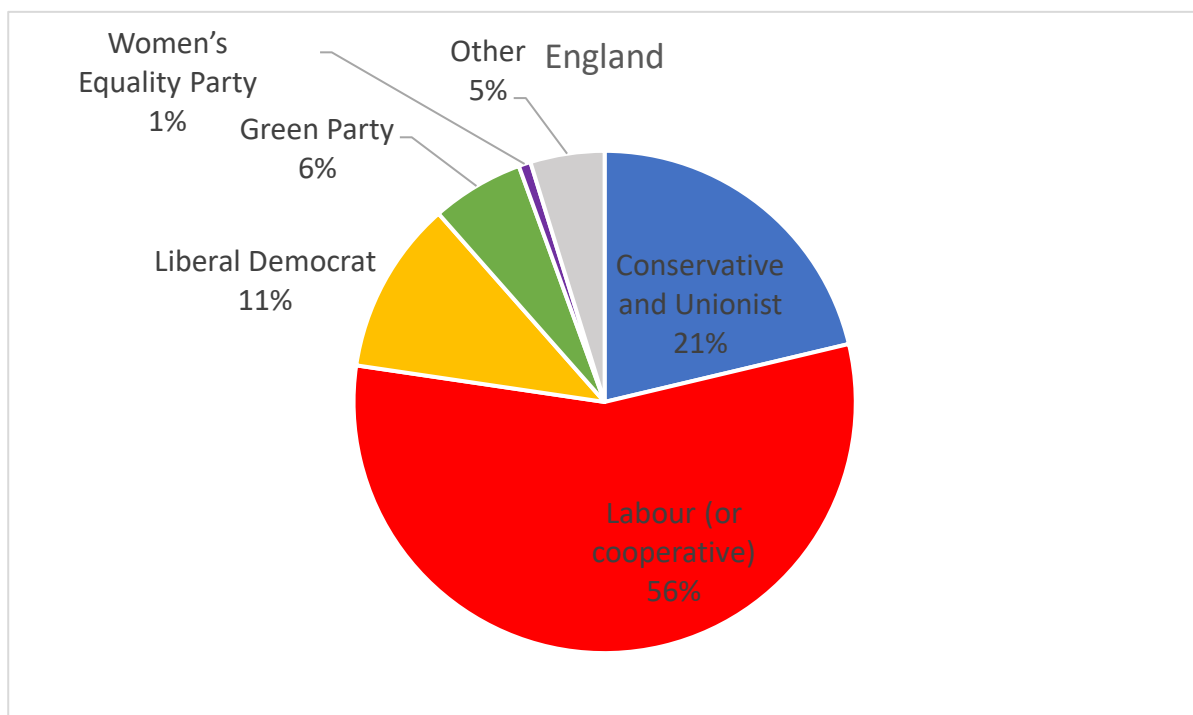
The EHRC is clearly not fit for purpose after years of Tories, particularly Liz Truss stacking the board with transphobes and misogynists. Cry more TERFs. **Female, England, 16–24**

Analysis of respondents

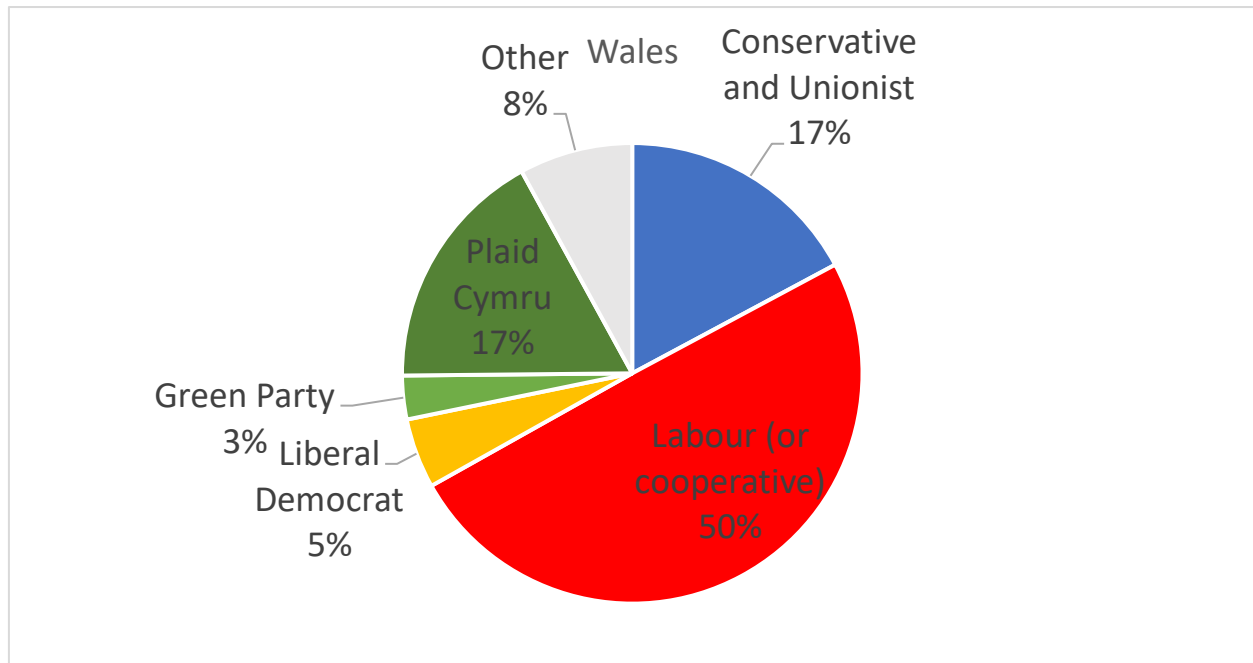
Respondents covered the full age range but were commonly over 35. 90% of respondents were female.



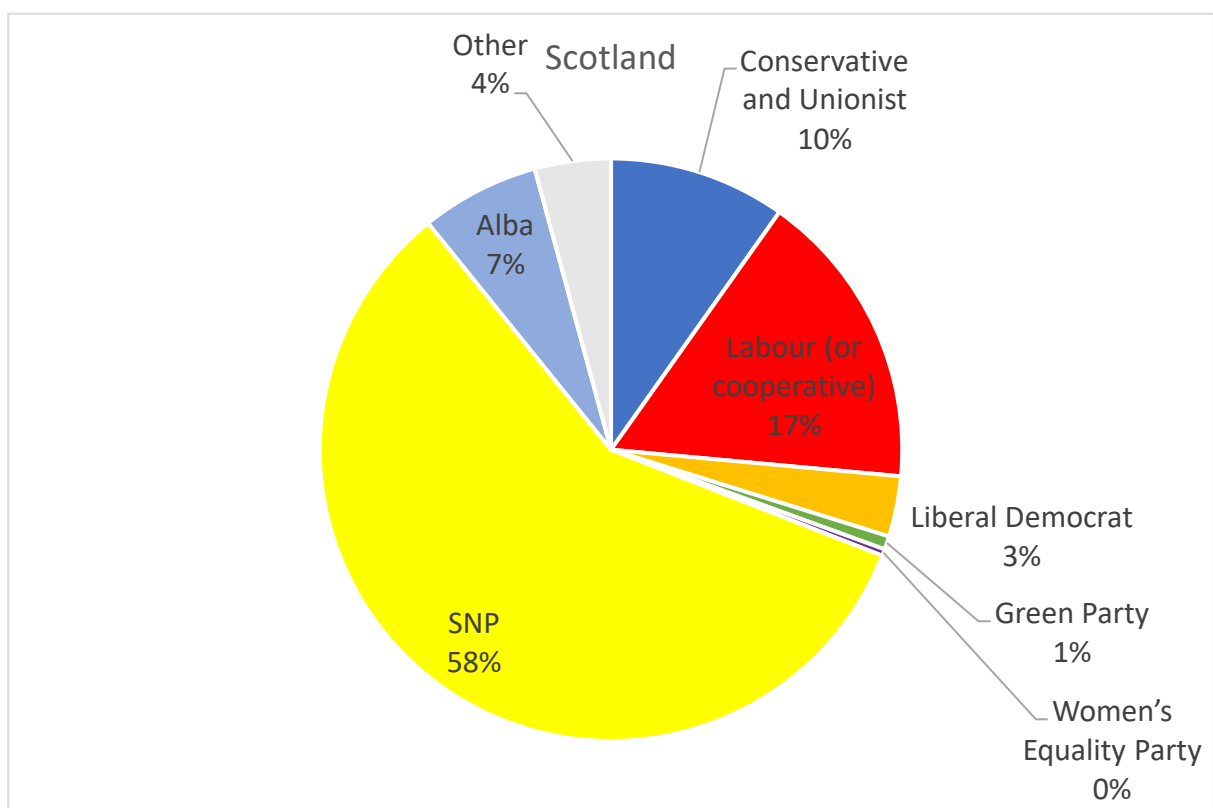
Of those who voted, in England most said they supported the Labour Party, followed by the Conservatives.



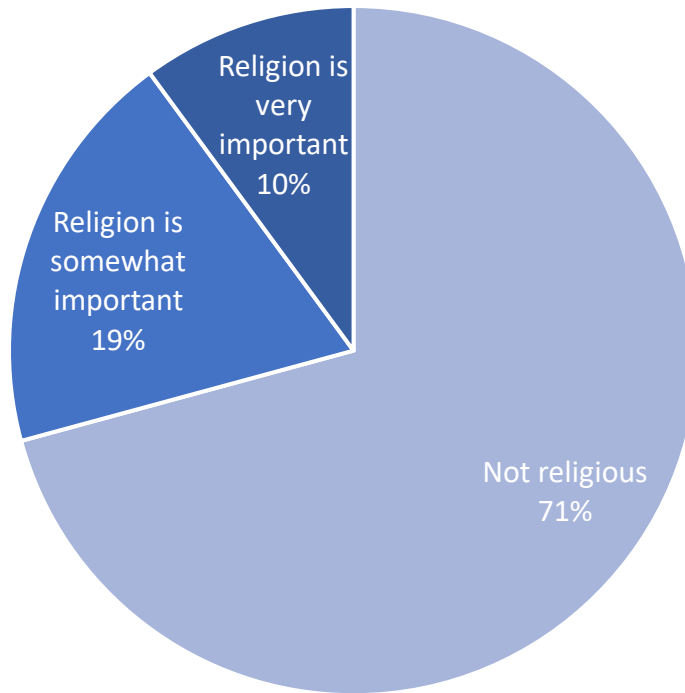
Labour was also the most strongly represented party for respondents in Wales.



For respondents in Scotland, the SNP had the most support, followed by Labour.



71% of respondents said they were not religious or that religion was not important to them. 10% said their religion was very important to them and 19% said it was somewhat important to them.



Annex 1: Other research

Our research provides rich qualitative data: thousands of individual perspectives about the impact of the loss of single-sex services, from those who value them. It confirms what representative surveys also show: that many people value separate facilities for women and men, and expect them to be provided on the basis of sex, not gender identity.

For example, a YouGov poll on 27th January 2022¹ showed that 52% of people wanted separate toilets for men and women, and 35% of people wanted gender-neutral toilets in addition to separate toilets for men and women.

Only 7% wanted gender-neutral only. 45% of people say they generally feel uncomfortable using a gender-neutral toilet in a public place.

A recent survey by More in Common² found that while 43% of people were willing to agree with the statement that “A transgender woman is a woman”, only 29% thought that someone who identifies as a transgender woman should be allowed to use women’s toilets, and only 19% thought they should be allowed to compete in women’s sports.

Research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission³ showed that 95% of women using women’s services preferred to receive them from a female-only organisation. A survey by the sexual violence counselling organisation Aurora New Dawn of 629 of their service users⁴ found that 100% of them wanted to retain single-sex peer support groups and 95% of female victims prefer a female member of staff for one-to-one counselling.

¹ YouGov (2022). [Support for separate toilets for men and women, and gender neutral toilets in public spaces.](#)

² More in Common (2022). [Britons and Gender Identity: Navigating Common Ground and Division.](#)

³ Hirst, A. and Rinne, S. (2012). [The Impact of Changes in Commissioning of Women-only Services. Equality and Human Rights Commission.](#)

⁴ Aurora New Dawn (2022) [By and for women.](#)

Annex 2: The survey questions

1. I want to be able to change, shower and use the toilet in privacy, away from members of the opposite sex
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
2. I want the girls in my family to be able to wash and change with privacy
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
3. As a survivor of sexual assault, it is important to me to have single-sex services
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
4. I play sport and single-sex sports teams and competitions are important for fairness and safety
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
5. If I or a member of my family needed intimate personal care it would be important that we could specify the sex of our caregivers
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
6. As a person of religious faith, modesty and single sex-privacy are important to me
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
7. Women and girls, and men and boys, sometimes need to meet up in single-sex organisations and groups to share interests
Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable
8. Tell us about losing single-sex services: Which of these have you experienced?
Male and female facilities being replaced by gender neutral
Female facilities only being converted to gender neutral
"Trans inclusive" rules allowing males into female spaces (or vice versa)
Women's services losing funding
9. Where are you most concerned about losing single-sex services? (tick 3)
At work
In schools/colleges/universities

In sports facilities

In the night-time economy (pubs, clubs, entertainment venues)

Hospital wards

Public toilets

Women's specialist services

10. The EHRC, the UK's official equality watchdog, should provide guidance for service providers to help them follow the law

Agree strongly / Agree somewhat / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree somewhat / Strongly disagree / Not applicable

11. Sex

Female / Male

12. Location

England / Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland / Outside the UK

13. Age

16–24 / 25–34 / 35–44 / 45–54 / 55–64 / 65 and over

14. Are you a parent?

Yes / No

15. Do you have a disability?

Yes / No

16. How important is religion to you?

Very important / Somewhat important / Not important/not religious

17. Did you vote in the last UK general election (December 2019)?

Yes / No / Prefer not to say / Not applicable or not in the UK

18. Are you a member or have you been a member in the past 5 years of a UK political party?

Yes / No / Prefer not to say / Not applicable or not in the UK

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