



For children and
equality for girls

Research Opportunity – Black and minoritised girls’ experiences of public sexual harassment

Terms of Reference

About Plan International UK

Plan International UK is a global children’s charity. We strive to advance children’s rights and equality for girls all over the world. As an independent development and humanitarian charity, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children, so that children can realise their rights.

At Plan International UK we believe that girls’ rights are universal, but across the UK as well as internationally, girls’ rights are threatened by poverty, gender inequality, violence, unfair policies and ingrained discriminatory attitudes.

About the opportunity

Plan International UK (PIUK) is seeking experienced researchers to carry out qualitative Black and minoritised girls’ experiences of public sexual harassment (PSH).

By Black and minoritised girls we mean girls who identify as mixed race, Black, African, Caribbean, Black British girls, Asian and Asian British.

This Terms of Reference outlines the scope the research, the deliverables, what we are looking for in a researcher, budget and timeline and how to apply.

Plan International UK is committed to being an inclusive organisation and we encourage applications from those who wish to work with us from all backgrounds. **Due to the nature of this work, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from Black and minoritised women.**

Background

PIUK’s work with young women and girls has highlighted how gender-based violence and girls’ safety are persistent and widespread problems.

In our [State of Girls’ Rights Report in 2016](#) and [2020](#), girls have spoken out about how persistent and relentless PSH is. We have produced a number of in-depth research reports into public sexual harassment, including our report [‘Street Harassment, It’s Not OK’](#) (2018) and, most recently, our report [‘What works to End Public Sexual Harassment’](#) (2020).

Our latest report highlights how PSH impacts on different groups of girls in unique ways. We found that mixed race girls, Black, African, Caribbean and Black British girls aged 12-21 are all more likely to have experienced any form of public sexual harassment in their lifetime compared to white girls. 88% of mixed-race girls and 82% of Black, African, Caribbean and Black British girls who participated in our research reported that they have experienced public sexual harassment. We found mixed race girls are the most likely to have experienced the types of PSH which are or could be illegal (such as unwanted touching or being filmed or photographed without consent). We also found that 92% of disabled girls and young women and 90% of lesbian, gay and bisexual girls and young women have experienced PSH. We understand that girls and young women can experience multiple and intersecting forms of sexual harassment and abuse.

When it comes to reporting PSH, our survey found that:

- Black, African, Caribbean and Black British respondents are the most likely to have reported any incident to the police (35%), followed by 28% of mixed-race respondents, 25% of white respondents, 25% of respondents who selected 'other' and 20% of Asian and Asian British respondents.
- Black, African, Caribbean and Black British girls who reported an incident are the most likely to be told by the police that it couldn't be dealt with as it wasn't a crime (33%).
- Mixed race girls who did report an incident are significantly more likely to have had their case taken forward as a crime but had it later dropped or unresolved (44%), compared to 29% of Black girls, 29% of White girls, and 27% of Asian and Asian British girls.
- Black, African, Caribbean and Black British girls are the least likely to say they would report to the police if all forms of PSH were made a crime. Just over a third (33%) would report to the police compared to 36% who say they would report to a friend/family member (36%).

These findings highlight the disproportionate impact PSH has on girls of colour, particularly Black and mixed-race girls. They also paint a complicated picture when it comes to reporting: whilst Black, African, Caribbean and Black British respondents are the most likely to have reported any incident to the police, they are also least likely to say they would report it if all forms of PSH were made a crime. Further research is needed to fully understand why Black and minoritised girls responded in this way as well as the unique ways PSH is experienced.

Research aims and scope

The aim of this research is to build on the findings in the report 'What works to End Public Sexual Harassment' and develop a stronger understanding of Black and minoritised girls' experiences of PSH. We want to understand the unique ways girls of different ethnicities are affected by PSH, the solutions they want to tackle it, and the extent to which this differs to white girls. The research will be used to inform Plan's work on public sexual harassment and our anti-racist commitment to promote and amplify the voices of Black and minoritised young women and girls in our work.

Proposed areas for the research to explore includes:

- 1. What are the unique ways Black and minoritised girls experience PSH?**
 - How do race and gender intersect in how PSH is experienced by Black and minoritised girls?
 - How does PSH intersect with other identity characteristics of Black and minoritised girls? (age, sexuality, gender identity, disability, religion)?
 - To what extent do girls feel that they are the target of PSH because of their race or other actual or perceived identities?

- What are the unique impacts of PSH on Black and minoritised girls?
- 2. What are Black and minoritised girls' views on, and experiences of, reporting PSH to the police?**
- How do Black and minoritised girls feel about reporting PSH to the police?
 - What concerns, if any, do Black and minoritised girls have, about reporting to the police?
 - If Black and minoritised girls have reported to the police, what was their experience?
 - What do girls expect from the police if they did want to report PSH that they had experienced?
 - If Black and minoritised girls don't want to report to the police, who would they go to report and why?
- 3. What are the 'solutions' Black and minoritised girls want to see?**
- How do Black and minoritised girls feel about criminalising all forms of PSH? What are the reasons for their response?
 - What other solutions do Black and minoritised girls want to see to address PSH?
- 4. What are the unique ways PSH is experienced by Black and minoritised girls compared to white girls?**
- In what ways do the findings from research areas one, two and three differ from the experiences of white girls? For example:
 - How do the experiences and impact of PSH differ between Black and minoritised girls and white girls?
 - Are views on, and experiences of, reporting to the police different between Black and minoritised girls and white girls?
 - Are the preferred solutions for tackling PSH different between Black and minoritised girls and white girls?

Methodology

We would like the research to be conducted using qualitative research methods - such as a mixture of focus groups and in-depth interviews. We would like to explore with prospective applicants how focus groups and interviews could be carried out to best answer the research questions above.

Research Ethics

Plan International is committed to adhering to and implementing ethical standards in monitoring, evaluation and research (MER) initiatives. This research must ensure that the well-being, dignity, rights and safety of children, young people and other participants in MER initiatives are respected and protected and that ethical and safeguarding standards and practices are applied throughout the whole research project. Particular attention needs to be made to safeguarding the young women and girls involved in this research due to the sensitive issues being explored.

Deliverables

We would expect the following deliverables:

- Topic guides for depth interviews/ focus groups- as appropriate
- Full transcripts from work with girls and young women

- Research report or expert briefing paper with analysis of findings.

Researcher profile

We are looking for researchers with a strong qualitative research background who have experience of conducting focus groups and depth interviews with children and young people. The researcher should have experience of handling conversations about sensitive topics that could be traumatic or triggering for participants. We would also like the researcher to have experience of working on violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the intersectional dimensions of VAWG.

It would also be desirable if the researcher had:

- Experience of working with Black and minoritised young women and girls;
- Experience of working with charitable organisations.

Timeline and budget

Budget: The allocated budget for this work is up to £10,000 inclusive of VAT. Payments will be made by BACS upon submission of an invoice.

Proposed Timeframe: Work to take place w/c 17th January 2022, with completion w/c 21st March 2022.

Deadline for applications: 9am on the 10th January 2022

Interview date: 12th January 2022

Application process

PIUK welcomes a response to these Terms of Reference with a CV and a short proposal on the approach to carrying out this research and why. The proposal should include information on:

- The methodological approach
- Total number of girls and young women who would be involved in the research and the make-up of the sample broken down by ethnicity (ideally we are looking at engaging at least 30-50 young women and girls).
- How the researcher would address ethical and safeguarding risks
- Any other information that would help to explain your approach to carrying out the research.

Please include examples of any previous work that helps to show how you meet the researcher profile outlined above.

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Responses should be sent to **sally.thomas@plan-uk.org** by **9am on the 10th January 2022.**