

# DÁIL ÉIREANN

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## AN COMHCHOISTE UM IOMPAR AGUS CUMARSÁID

## JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

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*Dé Céadaoin, 9 Márta 2022*

*Wednesday, 9 March 2022*

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Tháinig an Comhchoiste le chéile ag 1.30 p.m.

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The Joint Committee met at 1.30 p.m.

Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair / Members present:

Teachtaí Dála / Deputies	Seanadóirí / Senators
Joe Carey,	Lynn Boylan,
Cathal Crowe,	Jerry Buttimer,
Steven Matthews,	Gerard P. Craughwell,
Darren O'Rourke,	Gerry Horkan.
Ruairí Ó Murchú.	

Teachta / Deputy Kieran O'Donnell sa Chathaoir / in the Chair.

## **Business of Joint Committee**

**Chairman:** No apologies have been received. I propose we go into private session to deal with some housekeeping issues. Is that agreed? Agreed.

*The joint committee went into private session at 1.32 p.m. and resumed in public session at 1.52 p.m.*

## **Travelling in a Woman's Shoes Report: Discussion**

**Chairman:** The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report. On behalf of the committee, I welcome representatives from Transport Infrastructure Ireland, TII, Ms Rachel Cahill, head of the chief executive office, and Ms Eimear Fox, TII landscape architect. I welcome representatives from Technological University Dublin, Dr. Maria Chiara Leva of the environmental health and sustainability institute, and Dr. Sarah Rock of the school of transport engineering, environment and planning. They are all most welcome. This is a very important report and we are delighted to be able to facilitate public discourse on it.

I will read a note on privilege. All witnesses are reminded of the long-standing parliamentary practice that they should not criticise or make charges against any person or entity by name or in such a way as to make him, her or it identifiable or otherwise engage in speech that might be regarded as damaging to the good name of the person or entity. Therefore, if their statements are potentially defamatory in relation to an identifiable person or entity, they will be directed to discontinue their remarks. It is imperative they comply with any such direction.

For witnesses attending remotely outside the Leinster House complex, there are some limitations to parliamentary privilege. As such, they may not benefit from the same level of immunity from legal proceedings as a witness physically present does. Witnesses participating in this committee session from a jurisdiction outside the State are advised that they should also be mindful the domestic law and how it may apply to the evidence they give.

Members are reminded of the long-standing parliamentary practice to the effect that they should not comment on, criticise or make charges against a person outside the Houses of the Oireachtas or an official either by name or in such a way as to make him or her identifiable. I remind members of the constitutional requirement that they must be physically present within the confines of the Leinster House complex to participate in public meetings. I will not permit members to participate where they are not adhering to this constitutional requirement. Therefore, any member who attempts to participate from outside the precincts will be asked to leave the meeting. In this regard, I ask members partaking via MS Teams that, prior to making their contribution to the meeting, they confirm they are on the grounds of the Leinster House campus. If attending in the committee room, all are asked to exercise personal responsibility in protecting themselves and others from the risk of contracting Covid-19.

I call Ms Cahill to make her opening statement.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I am head of TII's chief executive office and I am joined by my colleague, Mr. Eimear Fox, TII landscape architect. I thank the committee for inviting me here today to discuss TII's Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report.

As the committee will be aware, TII's purpose is to provide sustainable transport infrastructure and services, delivering a better quality of life, supporting economic growth and respecting the environment. TII's vision is to ensure this infrastructure is safe and resilient, delivering better accessibility and sustainable mobility for all. The transition to sustainable transport modes will require extensive new infrastructure and efforts to change travel behaviours. Key to achieving this change is understanding travel behaviours and ways to influence the modal shift from private cars to more sustainable forms of transport. I believe TII's Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report is an innovative and very important piece of work in this regard, not only in terms of TII's transport infrastructure projects, for example, Luas Finglas and MetroLink, but also for the wider transport sector and for all of society.

I would like to take a minute to provide some context around how this report came to life. There were three contributory factors which coincided in 2019. First, I became involved in TII's sustainable mobility work stream in 2018 and, as part of this, I attended the 2019 International Transport Forum summit in Leipzig. This included a session on gender bias in transport and explained how, historically, transport has not been designed with the needs of women in mind. The research presented that day had a powerful impact on me. Second, the Government launched its 2019 climate action plan, which gave a strong mandate to all public sector bodies to step up and act decisively in the area of decarbonisation with a big focus on promoting and influencing the modal shift away from private cars to more sustainable forms of transport. Third, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform launched its 2019 innovation programme promoting innovation across the public sector.

These three factors culminated in me commissioning this innovative study regarding women's travel needs in Ireland to inform and influence future sustainable transport policy and design. The study got under way in late 2019 and it resulted in the publication of the Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report in 2020.

Transport is often seen as gender neutral, providing benefit to all equally. However, a growing body of international research highlights that this is not the case. Women and men have different mobility realities. Women tend to have more complex patterns of mobility characterised by trip chaining and caregiving responsibilities. Understanding and supporting women's travel needs will help Ireland's transition to sustainable modes of transport.

As the first study to investigate the needs and travel behaviours of women in Ireland, our research gave fresh, new insights. Some 84% of women in families take on the sole or primary responsibility for childcare and 30% of women provide primary care for another adult. Dropping off and collecting children or family members is women's primary reason for travel, while men's is work. For women in Ireland, safety is their top travel concern. Some 55% avoid public transport at night, 36% feel unsafe walking locally at night, and 34% have avoided travelling altogether because of feelings of insecurity. A single incident often has a lasting impact on their sense of safety and daily choices. A total of 95% of women consider the car a necessity outside Dublin. Some reasons for this relate to transport infrastructure, caregiving responsibilities and personal safety concerns. Travelling in a Woman's Shoes presents five key design challenges and the research conducted as part of the study, especially the research into the everyday lived experiences of women obtained through one-to-one interviews and travelling with them as they went about their daily business, produced rich insights that developed into potential and pos-

sible pathways to address these challenges.

As for how TII is applying the findings from *Travelling in a Woman's Shoes*, this is really the start of a journey. In 2021, we developed and published a gender checklist for TII's public transport projects and are now applying this to projects such as Luas Finglas and Metro-Link. This document, which is available to view on our publications website, asks a number of thought-provoking questions and provides guidance in many areas, including collecting gender-disaggregated data; incorporating social sustainability and gender equality objectives in documentation, from procurement through to design and operation; co-designing projects with women and consulting diverse voices for more inclusive transport; and designing for gender equality, such as step-free travel, toilet facilities, holding rails for children, comfortable seating, lighting, signage, child-friendly spaces and shelter. We have also recently tendered for additional research regarding women and cycling and are sponsoring a school project that examines independent travel for young people and children.

When I started this project, one of the key objectives was to bring this topic to the table, to educate and to build awareness. Since publication, we have connected with many stakeholders, on both a national and international level. In my view, this committee is the table to have this conversation. It sends a strong and powerful message to all involved in policy, planning and design, not just in transport but throughout society.

I thank the committee for inviting me here. My colleague Ms Fox and I will endeavour to answer any questions that members may have.

**Chairman:** I thank Ms Cahill and invite Dr. Leva to make her opening statement.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** I thank the Chairman and members for inviting TU Dublin to contribute to the meeting. I am joined by my colleague Dr. Sarah Rock, a lecturer in urban design and transport planning.

I will present some findings from our research in the area of inclusion and transport, including a recent EU-funded research project, Diamond, which is aimed at uncovering factors affecting women as users of public transport and as employees in the transport sector. This research project complements many of the findings of the *Travelling in a Women's Shoes* report. As part of the Diamond project, we surveyed and interviewed rail and light-rail users, as well as non-users, to find out why they do not use public transport in three cities: Dublin, Barcelona and Warsaw. We also interviewed employees. The research project is rooted in the principle of equity of opportunity for all and transport's role in facilitating equality of access to key life chances and daily needs. Inequity of access traditionally impacts disproportionately on women, particularly in the areas of safety and time poverty, a term used to indicate how individuals with caring responsibilities perceive their time constraints resulting from paid and unpaid work. Our research focused on three key areas that impact on women's engagement with public transport; namely, capacity to address basic mobility needs, accessibility in terms of physical access but also monetary access, and safety and security.

A key finding of the study is that people who experience any form of discrimination are likely to experience lower satisfaction in all aspects related to fairness of service provision, while for female users, feeling safe at any time of the day is a key variable for user satisfaction alongside connectivity to the destination, value for money and timely information provision. Put simply, this means that the more welcome a female feels within the transport system and the more satisfied she feels with the service, the more likely it is that she will continue to use

public transport. Equally, the converse is true. If she does not feel welcome, safe and secure, she will change to another form of transport if she has the means to do so. We found that safety and security is a particular issue for women in low-income groupings and those belonging to an ethnic minority. These are also the groups that rely most heavily on public transport. We found that travelling with dependants often pushes females to select a different mode of transport, mainly the private car.

Women's mobility needs and patterns are diverse and complex, depending on their age, socioeconomic status and caregiving roles, and this heterogeneity is not often looked at with clarity in our national surveys. Furthermore, most of the women interviewed confirmed that their sense of safety and security is often enhanced by clarity on norms regarding harassment and non-admitted behaviours and their sanctions; the presence of someone who can be considered a go-to person for help and assistance and who has the authority to intervene if needed; and clean, well-lit CCTV-supervised areas around stations and stops that provide a secure sense of place, meaning the urban design of the area should ensure that the environment around stations is not a lonely place but a welcoming place with eyes on the street and the presence of enough other people to increase the perception of safety and security. This is true for users of public transport but also for workers, given that the risk of violence and sexual harassment for female drivers and passengers remains a significant factor, with the result that women tend to avoid working in certain front-line jobs and at night. Not only does this mean women lose out on some job opportunities but it also limits the recruitment pool for transport agencies.

To return to the fundamental role of having access to basic mobility services, the collection and further disaggregation of data to include different socio-demographic characteristics for users and non-users is relevant in highlighting subgroups experiencing specific barriers or those in need of different types of facilitators. In a report of the International Transport Forum, it was highlighted that almost 40% of public transport journeys throughout the world are mobility-of-care journeys. These include visits to health centres, escorting dependants and journeys for shopping or other errands. Women constitute 80% of people in charge of mobility of care and most of these women use sustainable modes of transport, such as walking or public transport. Despite this, public transport networks and levels of service are typically focused on commuting to and from work, but these routes are often not the easiest routes for mobility of care. Mobility of care usually consists of more frequent, local and shorter trips and is irregular in time and space, given it involves travelling not only from residential areas to the city centre. Therefore, future transport planning needs to take into account mobility-of-care journeys. The proposed BusConnects orbital bus routes and the removal of fare penalties for transfers are welcome in this regard, and we recommend the greater prioritisation of delivery of these orbital routes with high levels of bus priority, in addition to the current rolling-out of the spine routes. It is equally important to include more women in decision-making jobs, planning and transport service delivery, including front-line services and maintenance services. EU and UK research has shown that transport has the lowest representation of women within the public sector, at between 6% and 7%, and that women account for just 15% of personnel in most decision-making bodies and advisory boards.

Men's and women's transport needs are different. Understanding these differences will be fundamental to providing more equitable and sustainable mobility services. Women rely on public transport more than men do but many will reject it, as we have seen more recently in Ireland, if the system does not understand and meet their needs.

**Chairman:** I thank Dr. Leva.

**Deputy Cathal Crowe:** I welcome our guests and thank them for attending and for their very informative opening statements. In particular, I welcome Dr. Leva, whom I have known for a long time. I am great buddies with her husband from my college days. It is great to see her here on screen in the Houses of the Oireachtas.

In reference to public transport, she stated “many will reject it, as we have seen more recently in Ireland, if the system does not understand and meet their needs.” That was a powerful closing remark in her statement. The past few weeks have been an eye-opener in this country. There was the awful and harrowing murder of Ashling Murphy, which sparked a national debate about where it is safe for women to go. What was an eye-opener for me and many other males who serve in the Houses of the Oireachtas is that while men can take for granted that places are safe, it is not the same for women because they experience the public realm in a very different way. There are many places in which men might feel safe while women would not. It was telling and insightful to hear from Dr. Leva’s opening statement that public transport is an example of that. Public transport may not be a safe place for far too many women in our country. That is awful and the committee needs to focus on it.

I use the train, as does the Chairman. We are frequent users of the train to get from our constituencies to the Dáil. I wish to put a few points to Dr. Leva. The Irish rail service has conductors and ticket inspectors. I have seen problems on board trains. Only five or six weeks ago, I was on train when a guy stood up and told everyone he had a knife. Nothing could be done about that. We all had to sit in silence. The chatter, fun and joy on the train all ended and for the final 40 minutes of our journey, there was total silence in that carriage. We did not know how serious this guy was and if he was going to carry out his threats. It was not until the train pulled in at the platform at Limerick station that members of the Garda put him on the ground and arrested him. Does Dr. Leva believe we should have a dedicated transport police or at least legislative provisions that give more power to the people patrolling our trains? Does she believe we need a text service so that when someone is silently suffering on a train beside a violent or unruly passenger there is a way to quietly notify authorities of what he or she is experiencing? Does she believe that when catering resumes on trains, which I believe will happen next week, alcohol should not be served? We have all been on trains going to all-Ireland finals, and perhaps the Chairman has been to more such games than I have as a Clare man. It is fun to sit with a few friends, have a few beers and celebrate on the way home. However, there are also people who get very messy on trains. Such people are coming down the carriage and sitting across from a family or mother travelling with her kids, which makes the journey miserable for them. Does Dr. Leva believe we might need travel police and a text service to make train travel safer? Has she views on alcohol being served on trains?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** I like some of the suggestions that have been made. In Italy, a specific branch of the police force, the Polizia Ferroviaria, is designed to patrol public transport, especially on trains because those journeys are longer. If something goes wrong, it can go horribly wrong before anyone can jump onto the carriage and solve the issue. There are ticket controllers. We have discussed the issue of women working in transport. We had the privilege to interview some of those women and learned that they perceive themselves as unable to intervene for two reasons. First, even if those women had the courage, strength and capacity to prevail over an offender, they may be in danger of being sued by that offender. Those women do not have the power to intervene in such cases. We must make clear what it is they can do. They can eject a disruptive passenger, as is the case on aeroplanes, with the assistance of police forces. They are not to engage in a power battle. It is unsafe to do so. It is not recommended and it is not a part of their duty.



**Deputy Cathal Crowe:** The doctor, of course, brings an Italian perspective, which is interesting. I have travelled around Europe and seen people providing security on trains. They are robustly clothed in stab-proof vests. They have a real authority and the trains feels safer as a result. Does Ms Cahill have an opinion on these matters? Should alcohol be served on trains? Is the day of the bag of cans being brought onto the Heuston Station platform and drunk on the train to Limerick or Cork over? It can be fun but it can also be very messy. It invariably leads to trouble as the journey moves passed its halfway point and the alcohol intake increases.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Is the Deputy asking for my view on whether alcohol should be allowed on trains?

**Deputy Cathal Crowe:** Yes.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** That is the question. Goodness me. To be honest, I do not really have a view on that matter. Safety is one of the main concerns for women when they are choosing their primary mode of transport. I heard the Deputy describe the situation he and his fellow passengers faced on the train. That was an unfortunate incident. Transport police is an option that could be looked at and considered, along with many other options. In the Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report, we were looking at a more holistic approach rather than seeking a single solution to address all issues. We set out some design challenges in the report. It takes a more holistic view, including the design of systems, place-making, education and training. The training of staff, whether staff on trains or customer service staff, would include gender sensitivity training and instruction on how to respond to an incident. A plethora of solutions are outlined in the report.

**Deputy Cathal Crowe:** I appreciate the reply. There is a lot in the report and I will finish with a question about design because I know that is important but I want to home in on the safety aspects. I love the train. I take it three or four times a week to get from Clare to Dublin. I love it, but I have also seen some hairy episodes, examples of illegal, criminal and thuggish behaviour. People who should be able to enjoy their journeys cannot do so because of how some others conduct themselves on the train. I do not have strong views on the serving of alcohol on trains but events of recent months have probably strengthened my views in that regard.

I note that Ms Fox is on the design end of things. I will ask her a broad question about parking in railway stations and, indeed, in the entire public realm. The policy guidance in Ireland on parking spaces is that they should be approximately 2.5 m wide and 4.75 m long. Parking spaces in Ireland tend to be tighter and shorter than in most other European countries and north America. I have six-, five- and three-year-old children so we are moving out of the time when we need mother-and-baby or mother-and-toddler parking spaces. We will be parking in the general body of car parks. It is nigh on impossible to get children out of a car parking space without obliterating the side of the next car. I have often seen parents dropping off their kids before reversing into a space. God help anyone who parked at the front or rear of Leinster House this morning. You would want to be a very skinny person or you would want to get out of the car and roll it back into the space, *à la* Mr. Bean. Does Ms Fox agree that parking spaces are too tight and too short? Should the guidance change to bring Ireland more in line with other countries?

**Ms Eimear Fox:** There is guidance for two categories of car parking. The first is for assisted and disabled car parking spaces, accessible spaces, which are obviously more generous and tend to be undersized. There is specific guidance for that. In terms of general car parking spaces, the focus for most transport agencies is to reduce the dependence on cars. Where car

parking is provided and where there are children or elderly occupants, having space beside the car to get out is a real issue. Our standards for design guidance are aligned with European standards, though not necessarily with American standards, where cars are larger. Rather than making spaces bigger, we should focus on making cars smaller so they take up less space on the road.

**Deputy Cathal Crowe:** I thank Ms Fox for her reply. She has been very honest. I hope she will change her position on that. TII carries a fair degree of clout. National policy trickles down from the organisation all the way to local authorities. The days of the Ford Fiesta or Renault Clio reversing into a space and a family of five getting out of it are, unfortunately, gone. Because of stipulations from the Garda and road traffic policy regarding seats for children in the rear of cars, many families now have people carriers. Disabled members of our population have blue badges and designated spaces. There are parent and toddler designated spaces. However, that probably accounts for less than 10% of overall spaces in any car park in Ireland one can think of. As to the general body of parking spaces, it is impossible for most families to get in and out, get the children into the car and strap them in, and to throw the school bags and the shopping bags in. TII needs to have a position that is more reflective of where cars are at in 2022. We do not all have public transport on our front doorstep, therefore, the local car park is so important to us for being able to get to the school, the shop or wherever. I would love if TII would undertake a new body of work. I know I have thrown this suggestion as a curveball today but could the TII do a new body of work to see if those parking spaces meet the needs of mums, dads and families? I think it needs to be reviewed.

**Chairman:** Obviously, in the long term there should be smaller cars but in the short term there are issues in terms of the size of spaces.

**Senator Gerry Horkan:** I thank both groups for their opening statements, which I read last night and listened to now. The 90-page report, *Travelling in a Woman's Shoes*, is a very sombre report in terms of anyone interested in decarbonisation or trying to get people into public transport or active travel. It shows how far, if you will pardon the pun, a journey we have to go on in terms of getting people from where they are to where planners and others, such as climate activists, would like us to be, and probably where many people themselves would like to be. They would like to be able to use active travel better. Unfortunately, today is not the best example of a day one might try to do it. There is an enormous challenge in moving away from the private car for the everyday short journey, but we need to have as few reasons to not choose public transport as is possible and to have as many reasons one would use public transport, including factors such as reliability of service and frequency. I believe reliability is more important than frequency. It is very well having frequency of service, but what if that frequency is not reliable? People will put up with a service if they know it is on the hour, but it has to be on the hour. It cannot be every second hour because every second bus goes missing.

We probably should have had this meeting yesterday on International Women's Day with so many women here, but one day out is not too bad. As to this transport committee, and I know every committee is somewhat self-selecting, there are 14 members on this committee and 13 of us are men. I was chair of a transportation strategic policy committee in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and a water and waste strategic policy committee that tended to have many men councillors on them. One found that the arts committee, the library committee, the cultural committee, the housing committee had many more women councillors. I believe there were 21 men and 19 women councillors in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, so we were not short of women. It was just that, for whatever reason, men ended up doing heavy engineering and



transport, and women chose other committees rather than the transport sector. I totally get it. What has been said resonates with me; there is an absence. It is not that everything is different. Men and women have many ideas in common but if 85% or 90% of the people in room are men, they will not see everything from a woman's perspective, no matter how many reports we read. I have read the 90-page report. I speed-read through it, but I picked up on much of its content and it is very sobering. I congratulate TII. I always think of the TII as being the National Roads Authority, but obviously the Rail Procurement Agency, the metro and the Luas and so on, come within that. I congratulate TII on the fact that it is looking at how women travel generally but particularly in public transport. I also support what it is doing in terms of cycling. I know there was a recent report about girls travelling to school and the uniform is a barrier. Wearing skirts is not the easiest way to cycle compared to being able to wear trousers. All this research is very valuable and I commend the TII on doing it.

If witnesses of both groups became the Minister for Transport tomorrow morning, what would be the first three or four things they would do to try to improve the situation? Deputy Crowe referred to car parking, which I will not focus too much on because I am trying to stick to travelling in terms of public transport and cycling. What would the witnesses do if they became the Minister of Transport tomorrow morning? Obviously, security, lighting and passive surveillance are a part of it, but I am here to listen to the experts rather than give them a long speech.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I might start and then pass to my colleagues. That is a good perspective and lens to ask us. For me, even acknowledging that transport design is not gender neutral and that women and men have different mobility realities and understanding why that is the case would be key. Acknowledging that and building that awareness and championing it at a senior level and having real leadership and commitment around that fact is key. It might sound a bit woolly and soft, but without that kind of championing and advocacy, we will not get anywhere in terms of designing and delivering sustainable transport modes.

The Senator mentioned the gender balance on this and other committees. For us in TII, we are an engineering organisation so we would have more males, perhaps, than females. It is about looking at education and our young people and children, and what is influencing them. An interesting nugget that came from our report, one that I was very interested in, was the role of families in Irish transport and how travel perceptions and behaviours are formed from a very young age. There is a lot of research ongoing. There is the Technological University Dublin Diamond project and, obviously, we connected early on in both our projects. I am aware of the work that project is doing as well. Something uniquely Irish that came through in our research was the frequency with which the role of the family came up in our interviews. We conducted 21 interviews with women, spending two hours with each woman, and joined them as they went about their daily travels. Family came up in every single interview. The research team that worked on my project said that this was quite unique for Ireland. It is about designing for families and communities not just for individuals. That brings a system design approach to the whole transport ecosystem, not just looking at individual bits and hoping that it will all work at the end of the day. That is my tuppence worth. If I were the Minister for Transport tomorrow, that is what I would bring to the table from the get-go.

**Senator Gerry Horkan:** I thank Ms Cahill for bringing this report to the table - it contains very valuable information - but what would she do if she were given a pot of cash in the morning to allocate resources to make the situation better, to make public transport and active travel generally more attractive for women? I read some of the stories. Making children more independent so that they are confident to cycle to school would mean mothers - I accept that it can be

fathers too - would not have to go to the school and take up an hour or two of their day getting there, picking children up and bringing them home. We all know the difference in traffic levels between when schools are open and closed. It is apparent absolutely everywhere, in urban and rural areas. By all means the first step is to bring it to the table and have the discussion and we have had the report and the recommendations, but if Ms Cahill were given resources in the morning, what would she like to do first?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** For me it is about communities, as I said. I would invest in co-creation of design and getting that diverse voice and hearing the needs of the different people in that local community or town or wherever it may be. This issue is wider than transport. Again, it is not just-----

**Senator Gerry Horkan:** It is the whole planning of cities. It is about schools close to houses, hospitals, churches and shopping.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Absolutely. It is all of that. It is that 15-minute or 20-minute city from first mile to last mile. Safety is the biggest concern, as we mentioned, but it is not just on the transport itself. It is not just safety on a train or bus, it is also about safety walking to and from the bus. That first mile to it and the last mile from it. All that has to be taken into consideration to see what that looks like. It is all those factors and that is what we mean by that holistic approach. I will hand over to my colleagues.

**Senator Gerry Horkan:** Perhaps Dr. Rock could come in.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** We are all quite excited about the prospect of being the Minister for Transport tomorrow morning.

**Senator Gerry Horkan:** We would all like to do that, including some of us on the committee. It is not as likely for Dr. Rock as it is for me.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** I agree with everything Ms Cahill said. I would do small, practical things next. This comes back to what the Senator said about representation. One would be to recruit more diversity in the transport sector. There may not be as many female civil engineers or transport planners coming through the system but we can value interdisciplinary approaches. As an example of a multidisciplinary approach to design, Ms Fox is a landscape architect. We will then start to see much greater representation. It will bring on board the different voices from different backgrounds. We should be flexible with recruitment, allow part-time work and job-sharing in the public sector and continue online working, all of which would make a significant difference.

Active and sustainable travel funding needs to give greater recognition to the important of sense of place. Safety comes up as the biggest factor in how women choose to travel, especially if they have the means to choose other ways. An important factor is whether a place is attractive. It relates to urban design quality. Do women feel that other people are around and that if they get off the train at night, there will be shops beside them and people coming and going, or will they get off at a lonely station in a lonely place? Even if they survive their journey on the train at night, they might get off and be equally unsafe in that final mile. We need to recognise and value that sense of place. That can happen through more diverse recruitment.

The first thing I would do at a local level is to change our Sydney co-ordinated adaptive traffic system, SCATS. I would increase the amount of time for pedestrians to cross the road. We currently give six seconds, if people are really lucky, for them to get across most roads. After

that, there is an amber flashing man that frightens the life out of every mother and child, and every other person who has to cross the road.

**Chairman:** Dr. Rock has an election manifesto and plenty of work to do when she gets in as Minister for Transport. Time constraints mean we have to move on. I thank Senator Horkan.

**Senator Gerry Horkan:** I thank the witnesses. If there is a second round, I might try to come back in.

**Chairman:** Senator Horkan is a seasoned professional. We could learn a thing or two from him.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** I commend everybody involved in today's presentation and the research undertaken. It was startling to go through the report from beginning to end. Two things struck me at the beginning. One was the piece by Dora. She spoke about the car being a happy place and about laughter. Karen said that she would support measures to have fewer cars on the road. We must bring those two points together. How can we make transport gender neutral? None of us should travel on a train, the DART or a bus and be worried or frightened if it is a dark or badly lit place. Deputy Alan Farrell previously made a point about his experience on the DART. How can we make public transport gender neutral? Does the committee have a role, in tandem with the Government, in ensuring the 17 goals in the report are completed?

This is the first report of its kind and it is important. We need to work on safety and security, not just on those matters raised by Deputy Cathal Crowe but because of the overarching experience. The figures are startling. People might say that the percentage of women who feel insecure or unsafe is not that high, but it is, since 1% is too high, never mind 35% or 45% of people not wishing to use public transport after dark. That is just not good enough. If I put myself in the shoes of my sister or nieces, I would not be happy with this report.

**Chairman:** Who does Senator Buttimer want to direct the questions to?

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** I do not mind. We can start with whoever wants to speak. This is about getting answers to help us progress and make our public transport better.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** There is so much there that it is difficult to give specific answers. In the conclusions of our report, we set out five design challenges. The Senator asked all the questions at that same time. The challenges are how sustainable transport modes can compete with cars, how we can understand that the family unit influences sustainable mobility choices, how transport can be safe and feel safe for women, how transport can consider the diverse needs and contexts of all women and how we can accelerate sustainable behavioural change. For each of those challenges, we have set out lessons learned from our interviews and general policy pathways. They speak to the four main areas that need to be addressed, which are safety, accessibility, reliability, and comfort and convenience. The Senator spoke about reliability. Both men and women need a reliable transport system, but the impact for women is more significant if trains or buses do not come because of the care-giving roles they have and the mobility of care. Safety, reliability, accessibility and comfort and convenience need to be considered and addressed if we are to compete with the car.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** I was struck by the concept of starting early and ending by forming new habits. Linked to that is the matter of reliability and being child-friendly. We have a journey to take to cause this modal shift. This report is a breath of fresh air. I hope it is a wake-up call for public transport and local authorities that are not cognisant of the barrier,

impediment and lack of safety in the provision of public lighting or planning around our train stations or bus stations.

**Chairman:** We might direct the observation to the other witnesses.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** We should never forget to go back to basics. There is a problem with connectivity to destinations. The country has a two-speed reality. One is in availability. The connectivity in urban counties is not available in rural and suburban counties. Even within urban counties, we have had more than one interview where we heard that the problem with public transport was one of connectivity. Our connectivity is designed to lead us to the city centre and then from there to another point of interest. Mobility around the local area is not so good. We also studied sustainable modes of transport in rural areas. We have examples from the European research in and around Barcelona in the suburbs and not the city centre. In the suburban areas, it is becoming more and popular for families to have adopted, or to be considering adopting, carpooling with a little van. You do not need a bus because the demand is much lower. Little vans can be shared by different people, some of whom are elderly and some of whom are not necessarily able to use a car. These are solutions we should look into because our service provision in rural and suburban areas is not up to par yet and we should take that into account. We need to go back to basics.

Going back to the security problem, what I showed as an example from the Italian police is also true in other countries. For instance, myself and Dr. Rock were discussing how there are night coaches in Australia, so there is at least part of the train where this is realised. I must comment on how well the Luas is doing. I feel safe on the Luas thanks to the security that is deployed. It is heavily deployed for the purpose of ensuring everyone pays their fare and there are no disruptive passengers or-----

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** I have a question on the basis of that last comment, if I may. It is linked to the whole area of public transport and safety. I refer to a dedicated transport policing corps. Is that a big issue? Is it something we should pursue or is it just a one-off thing that is a kind of sound bite?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** There is more than one way of skinning the cat in this respect. Luas has successfully implemented a solution that addressed the need. The rail services have not quite done so.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** Okay, but-----

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** Putting the burden on the ticket controller is not the right answer-----

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** Yes.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** -----and is not effective for the purpose we are discussing and what is being mandated.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** In the context of the intercity or commuter rail from commuter towns around Dublin, Cork, Galway or Waterford, I am looking for another debate on a different day on whether there is a need for dedicated public transport security, as opposed to what we have currently, which is hit or miss with the Garda and Iarnród Éireann. Should we look at a different type of resourcing model and policing model? That may be a question for another day.

**Chairman:** That is a very good question. I will allow it. Would any of our guests like to comment on it? I think Ms Fox wishes to come in.

**Ms Eimear Fox:** A couple of comments were made on the safety element. The more activity you can get around transport options, the more eyes on the street and the more connectivity, then the more self-policing these areas can be. On the Luas, certainly I am working very closely on Luas Finglas. We are looking to get as much connectivity between different modes such as cycle networks and bus interchanges so we do not have a situation where you are standing on your own for half an hour if the bus is late. That is maybe outside one project but is looking at those connectivities. That means we then have a focus for transport and we can design that in the context of the public realm and of security. That interconnectivity also really ties into the patterns we know about of how women move. They might have a number of shorter journeys and it allows those inter-transport mode connections to be much more easily done. Again, where there are connections we need to ensure there are no ramps, steps or barriers to movement between them. Having that activity is one way we can look to address the security issues.

**Chairman:** Does Dr. Rock wish to add something?

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** It is just a small point. I agree with Ms Fox. It is a combination of that sort of passive self-policing, so to speak. I have not personally researched it but there is definitely a study that is worth looking at on different models. There are so many places around the world that have different forms of security, be it transport police like with Transport for London or a night guard like on the trains in Sydney. It is worth exploring what other models are out there and critically, how women feel under these different models. That would be a welcome project to undertake. Bear in mind the answer may not simply be a dedicated transport police. It may be something else but it would certainly be worth doing that study.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** Dr. Rock's last point is something we should start from. It need not necessarily be prescribed from the beginning that it should be a dedicated force.

**Chairman:** Yes.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** That is a very important point. I want to finish on the process as a whole. In Ms Cahill's contribution she speaks about this being the start of a journey. I hate using the phrase "corporate buy-in" but how are we on the buy-in from TII, Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann, Luas, the metro or whatever? I asked a question about how we can ensure we are never back here again having the types of figures in the report presented to us today. How do we ensure the starting point, which is today or was the publication of the report last year, results in a better experience, checks and balances and outcomes being more positive? I thank our guests for being here. I hope, Chairman, we will come back to this on a regular basis-----

**Chairman:** Absolutely.

**Senator Jerry Buttimer:** -----because it is an important matter that transcends the Departments of Justice, Health and Education. There is a myriad of issues we can address as part of our approach to this particular matter.

**Chairman:** To add to that, I ask Ms Cahill what the buy-in has been from the Department of Transport. Of the bodies involved, the obvious one is the Department of Transport. She might give us an indication of what the interaction has been, what the follow-up was and what progress has been made.



**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Certainly. To answer the final question first, we met the Department of Transport as we were publishing our report in July 2020. It was hugely supportive, engaged, open and receptive. As with everything we are hearing today, it was delighted to have this innovative piece of research with the final report along with it. When our new Secretary General Ken Spratt joined, he asked for a meeting. We met him and presented the report and findings. He was hugely supportive. The one question he asked was what could he do in his role as Secretary General of the Department to be the champion and ensure all the agencies under his aegis hear about this and actually start to embed the findings and the ethos. That was a really fantastic message to hear. I guess the proof is in the pudding. The Department's sustainable mobility policy is due to be published at the end of this month as it is the end of the first quarter of 2022. I believe Travelling in a Woman's Shoes, or applying a gender lens to transport infrastructure projects, is included in that policy. I was involved in early drafts of the policy but I cannot say I have seen the latest draft. I expect to see this gender lens and topic being part of that sustainable mobility policy. I do not think we could ask for any greater supports from the Department. It has been with us all the way through.

On TII leadership and the reception of the report, again we could not have asked for anything better. TII commissioned the report but it is not just a TII report, or I should say it is not just for TII. It is also not just for transport and as the Senator mentioned a few moments ago it is also for the Departments with responsibility for justice, housing, community and education. It is across the whole of society. It is important, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, that we have senior leadership, senior commitment and senior champions - both male and female. It is not just the females. We also need male advocacy and male champions. I have to say in TII we have that across the board.

**Chairman:** Great.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Ms Fox and I work across different teams with different colleagues - again both male and female. There is huge support and engagement. I will let Ms Fox talk now in terms of-----

**Chairman:** I am conscious of time.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** -----the design of Luas Finglas and MetroLink. I will hand over to her and perhaps she can talk about the work on the gender checklist because that is an important piece of work as well.

**Chairman:** I ask Ms Fox to be brief as I have a number of members yet to come in. I am conscious of time and the need to be fair to each member.

**Ms Eimear Fox:** I will briefly say that-----

**Chairman:** We have a female member coming next so it is even more important.

**Ms Eimear Fox:** -----one of the issues that was brought up was how we assess whether this has been effectively done in the projects and is not just a report. The gender checklist that followed on from the report is a practical way for us to implement it. We are working within TII to make sure we proactively apply this in a meaningful way within the design teams and the project management so that it will be evident on the ground. It takes all of the organisation to work for all levels.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** I have three specific questions for the guests today. I commend

them on the report. There is nothing in it a woman using public transport would not have experienced. I recommend that some of the committee members read Caroline Criado-Perez's book *Invisible Women* because it is not just transport. It is the whole of society that is affected by the fact we do not have women at the decision-making table, they are not part of the consultation process and we do not collect the gender-aggregated data. Criado-Perez also refers to the phenomenon of trip chaining, which is in the report, and the importance of designing transport to facilitate women who, unfortunately, carry out most of the caring activities in society. With the census coming up, is it a missed opportunity that we have not tried to collect those data? As far as I know, the census asks how people get from work, school or childcare but it misses out all of those other trips that are taken, in particular by caregivers. We heard Ms Fox talking about the gender checklist. What, in the opinion of all the guests, are the biggest gaps in the data in making sure the services are fit for purpose?

I noticed, again probably without surprise, that fewer women compared with men favoured more security guards on transport. What they preferred instead was good infrastructure, proper public lighting, proper access to and from, and, if making connections, there are no delays, which means the importance of real-time travel information. It was a very interesting point and I am glad Ms Fox pushed back a bit from what Deputy Cathal Crowe was saying earlier about no alcohol on the train. It is about making the facility safe, not banning alcohol or not having police on it.

The third question is about cycling and infrastructure for cycling. I did an interview with the *Business Post* talking about my experience as someone who lives slightly further out and cycling to work, trying to do the right thing in terms of reducing carbon emissions. From where I am in Clondalkin, the most direct and probably safest route from a cycling perspective is the Grand Canal, but that is not safe from a female perspective and you are not going to cycle along the Grand Canal because there are gangs along it, and you are especially not going to do so if you work shifts or work unpredictable hours. Perhaps the guests would talk about that and the importance of that cycling infrastructure. The report stated that cycling is considered least safe by women and least child-friendly, and women are more likely to cycle for recreation rather than for commuting. While we are seeing many greenways being developed around the country, which are great in terms of a service and for tourism, we need to have commuting routes, not just in our cities but outside of our cities. Perhaps the guests might comment on that as well.

**Chairman:** We will start with Dr. Chiara Leva, then go to Ms Cahill, followed by Dr. Rock and then Ms Fox. The witnesses might deal with the totality of the questions put by Senator Boylan.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** There were many aspects to the questions. One of the first points the Senator made was about going back to basics, so the first needs to be addressed are safety and security, which are key, but prior to these is the connectivity to the point of interest. The connectivity to the point of interest as pointed out is the mobility of care for many women and the time poverty experience. Trip chaining is another aspect of time poverty for many women as users and it means they have no influence. We are often talking about the same people in two different roles.

In regard to the first aspect of connectivity, connectivity in terms of public transport is urban and rural. The urban is being addressed. We have seen many good things happening in Ireland, especially in Dublin in that respect in terms of the initiative on which we commented, which is the orbital route being created. That will address some of the issues. For the rural areas I am not aware of any submission or any study deployed in that sense.

Going to the other aspect of cycling, as I said in our study cycling, especially bike sharing, was not effectively used in the mobility of care. That is an issue that depends on the infrastructure but also depends on the need. This is something that we need to know and face. The use of cycling for going to work is being addressed in Ireland. I can see there are changes being made. Should they change the level of uptake in the levels we currently see? I know this is something that needs to be studied. The disaggregation of car use is key. We have a very efficient and very good Central Statistics Office in this country and produces a report every quarter that is very informative. The question is potentially the data are there and whether they are being used to identify a particular group of users. The other aspect is, we need to investigate the non-users as well as the users to identify what the needs and barriers are. This is what we tried to do in our study of three cities, with good results. I suggest the same, if I were the Minister for Transport. One of the things I would do is try to understand better the different profiles. As I said there are often undercurrents. We have ethnic minorities which are hit harder by problems related to monetary accessibility of the service and experience of discrimination on the public services.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** I will talk about two points on cycling infrastructure and the data piece. In regard to cycling infrastructure and how it is used or not used by women and the whole idea about safety, it is very much down to how a country designs its infrastructure. Currently in Ireland, for example, our infrastructure has been largely designed around commuting or fast commuting, so some of it is about competing on the road rather than being safe. I will clarify what I mean by segregated cycling facilities. Senator Boylan mentioned segregation on a greenway or along a canal. That is not the sort of segregation I am particularly talking about. I am talking about a segregation in an urban context where you still feel safe.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** I might not have been clear. What I meant was not segregation as such. Segregated cycleways are part of commuting, but we are seeing many greenways. The greenway along the Grand Canal is not a safe commuting route. I do not mean segregation as in gender or such a thing.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** I know the Senator did not mean that. I just want to explain what I mean by segregation. Women absolutely want safety in our cycling infrastructure, and that is the key factor. That means we largely do not want to share the carriageway with fast-moving vehicles. That is the key factor. We need to design infrastructure that is separate but not so separate that people are left in underpasses or overpasses, or down in places where there are not eyes from the street. That relationship between urban design and cycle planning is key.

Cycling in Ireland does not currently make up a great percentage of the mobility of care journeys but it does in other countries. For example, in Denmark more women than men cycle, more women with children cycle and more woman across all income groups and age groups cycle. it is a very different circumstance from Ireland because there is a massive difference in the design of infrastructure.

The Senator also asked about data. For my sins, I was an enumerator in the most recent census of population. Because I was so dedicated to the cause, I wanted to know what it was really like to collect census data. There is a balance that must be struck in the level of detail one can get from a census questionnaire. To get to the level we need, we would have to do a different type of survey. That is where our national household travel surveys must come into play. We are never going to get the level of data we need from a census which looks at many things. Instead we need to focus on 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 participants and focus then on a detailed household travel survey. That is what I would recommend. I have not seen the new census questions yet and look forward to reading them. I understand there are more questions

around travel. There must be a limit to what we can get from that sort of census of population.

**Chairman:** I thank Ms Rock. I call Ms Fox, who might also cover for her colleague, Ms Cahill, whose link appears to have dropped. Ms Fox might cover the TII side as well.

**Ms Eimear Fox:** That is no problem. The Senator brought up a couple of relevant points. I am working at the project level and looking at where we can apply the design principles in a practical way. In terms of cycle infrastructure, one of the issues we are coming across is that where there are rigid technical standards for infrastructure, we need to be able to adapt them to the particular locations and contexts in which we are working. For example, if steep topography is involved, that can be a barrier to women and children. Another barrier is if the cycle paths are too narrow and there is no spot for someone to get off a bike and regroup with his or her child. Having a more adaptable infrastructure that is not so engineer-led and takes into account the local context is important. For example, we are looking to do that with Luas Finglas. We are providing spots for people to rest and where people can go off the cycle track. If someone is cycling along the Royal Canal and feels a particular area is a bit dodgy, there should be an option to go off the cycle track and take an alternative route. We do not need to follow the commuter model that caters for people travelling from A to B, especially in a neighbourhood and local context.

There are many levels of data collection from a census level to a city level. Where we are applying data to the Luas Finglas project, we are finding that the data collection for the project level hardly even covers pedestrians, never mind the gender of pedestrians or how people use spaces. There is a focus on the vehicular element of data collection. If I could change anything, it would be to prioritise collecting data on pedestrians and how women use space in the local context and on the streets on which the infrastructure is provided. That would bring focus to the design team. There needs to be that level of data collection. It needs to come from both ends, if you like.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** I appreciate those responses. I will probably follow up with our guests afterwards if they do not mind to tease out some of those points.

**Chairman:** Ms Cahill has had a power cut. We hope she will be able to rejoin us. I call Deputy Ó Murchú.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** I thank our guests. Many points have been made on the co-creation of design, which is absolutely necessary for safety and security. I get the idea that passive surveillance is a major game changer rather than using other security measures. There was some conversation earlier about antisocial behaviour, perhaps as a result of people misusing alcohol and drugs. That probably requires a wider discussion because it impacts on all of us. That is probably for another day. A much more complicated answer to those issues is required.

I will ask about wider issues relating to those from a lower socio-economic space, particularly ethnic minorities. Dr. Leva made the strong point that 40% of public transport journeys relate to care giving. I was previously told that a major design problem is how we deal with mothers with buggies. I am not great at multitasking. I can imagine that if I was left alone with a buggy and a couple of kids who were running every which way, it would end in disaster. I would probably end up in a Garda station. That is a different kettle of fish. I would like to get into those design issues.

We have spoken about young women and cycling. Are issues in that regard related to fac-

tors other than the design of the infrastructure? We know, for example, that girls tend to opt out of sport at an earlier age. We all go through teenage years and get notions. Embarrassment is an issue. I imagine there are greater issues for females. It would be better for me to listen to our guests rather than rabbiting on so I will stop now.

**Ms Eimear Fox:** There was a lot in the Deputy's contribution. The design of the physical environment around our cycle paths and public transport is important so that people can safely drive a pram with shopping on one side of it and a toddler on the other. We must have the space to facilitate that kind of movement, which is different from the movement of an individual who is commuting. That is vital. It is one of the areas at which we are looking. Small details are important. For example, if a bench is installed, there must be space beside it for a pram to be parked while a person is waiting for public transport.

The Deputy also asked about cycling. Part of the study showed that if we can encourage young children to cycle from an early age and they get that independence, those patterns can be set. It is important that we look at short journeys when children go from home to school or from school to the local football pitch. We must make those short journeys as safe as possible for children because that will establish a pattern.

How boys and girls use cycle paths is interesting. One of the things we are looking to find out from the survey data we are collecting for Luas Finglas is whether girls move together as a group. Do we need to have certain areas with wider cycle paths coming up to schools so that people can cycle two or three abreast? The separation element is also critical for very young children. All of those physical elements can help encourage those kinds of movements and that is the aim of our design process.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** The Deputy asked an important question about socio-economic groupings and ethnic minorities. That is an area on which Dr. Leva has done considerable research. In case we run out of time, I would like to prioritise Dr. Leva's research in that area and I can come back in at the end if there is time.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** As we said at the start, the Central Statistics Office issued a report on equality, discrimination and inclusion. The report focused on many different aspects, mainly in the workplace, but public transport was mentioned as an area of interest. This issue has an impact on many aspects of life, such as accessibility. Monetary accessibility is not the same for everyone. When we talk about accessibility, we often think of the structural aspect. In Warsaw, we worked with people working in public transport who went out and audited their own public transport system, with amazing results. Their engagement led to an increase in awareness. I would recommend that for everybody. We all use public transport, or most of us do, but auditing is a different story. That would impact the perception of the priority area and I would recommend that to the committee.

It is important that we acknowledge that the segregation of data has the capacity to show pockets of very vulnerable subgroups in terms of accessibility problems. I am not talking about the visibility issues, which still need to be tackled with regard to basic things like prams and wheelchair users. In the context of an ageing population, the mobility of care is more and more important in caring for the elderly, as well as young children. Time poverty is being stuck in between. There are issues around physical accessibility and monetary accessibility. Members of an ethnic minority might not have the choice of any other modes of transport and it is very important that they get fair access to the one that is available to them.



We have a very good system for senior citizens. Believe it or not, in our survey, the senior citizens were the most satisfied age group in the population. However, younger people were less satisfied, like those between the ages of 35 and 45, as were women in an ethnic minority. There are a variety of reasons for that. Most of them have experienced discrimination on public transport. Most have security concerns and value for money concerns. Some of them have connectivity concerns about the point-to-point travel service they are provided with. Once we get the data, we have to be ready to discover that equality and equity are not quite there yet.

**Chairman:** Ms Cahill has rejoined us. The power has been restored.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Apologies. We have not had a power cut in two years of working from home and it decided to play up this afternoon. I have managed to get back in. It must be the weather or something.

**Chairman:** We will put it down to circumstances.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I am afraid I missed some of the questions.

**Chairman:** I will let Senator Boylan back in to repeat her questions for Ms Cahill.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** Welcome back. My question related to the importance of collecting gender-specific data and women being part of the consultation and design process. The other witnesses spoke about the collection of data. I had flagged the census but they said there were other surveying methods we could use. I understand the NTA does a household survey every five years. In Scotland there is an annual survey. I take the point that the census is probably not the most appropriate form to collect the data, but are we collecting data regularly enough? Are we collecting the right data? Ms Cahill spoke about security and how women care more about the design of the infrastructure, the connectivity, the public realm and lighting rather than favouring more security necessarily. They want well-designed public infrastructure.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** One of the findings from our report is that women are not in favour of increased security or increased transport police. That took us a bit by surprise. However, on delving into that, we realised that it comes back to the social norms formed in early childhood, teenage years and young adult years. Women largely take on the responsibility for their own safety and feeling secure in a given situation and, because of that, increased presence of security staff on trains was not the answer. That is why women were not as strongly in favour of that as the men who answered that question. Women largely take on that responsibility themselves, whether by carefully choosing their route home or taking measures such as holding keys in their hand, wearing headphones, only wearing one earphone, pretending to speak to someone on the phone as they walk home, wearing flat shoes or having flat shoes in their bag at all times. In the ethnographic research, some of the interviewees used language around having to run or having to get away. This is the language the people themselves were using, which is very powerful to play back when producing a report like *Travelling in a Woman's Shoes*. I do not know if that answers the question. I may have wandered off a little but it is an important finding from the report. That is why women are looking for a more holistic solution, such as lighting or not having overhanging bushes or trees, looking at the first mile and last mile, gender-sensitive training or roster training for people in the transport sector. We need all those things added together. That co-creation piece is also important. All together, solutions will begin to appear.

On the data, because we do not have gender-segregated data, it is very difficult to get under the bonnet and pinpoint exactly what is needed or what the solutions are. The starting point is

getting the data. That sounds easy but it is not. As Ms Fox mentioned when talking about Luas Finglas, getting those data requires changing the form to include gender. Even doing that was an achievement as it challenged the norms and the ways things have been done over the years. That is where we are. We are starting. Have I answered the question?

**Chairman:** It is amazing that the data are not there and have not been collected to date. That is amazing and shocking.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** This is why every member should read Caroline Criado Perez's book.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** There are two things about that book-----

**Chairman:** Before Ms Cahill goes on to the book, I want to know more about collecting those qualitative data. Senator Boylan mentioned the NTA collecting data. Was it the NTA or TII doing that?

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** I think it is the NTA that does it every five years.

**Chairman:** What is the most appropriate way of doing that? Dr. Rock made a very interesting point that the census may not be the best way of getting those real qualitative data. What should happen now? Structurally and practically, what type of survey should be set up? What is the best way to get those data in order to make informed decisions on transport?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I do not necessarily think the surveys need to change. It is more about adding an extra field on the surveys to collect the gender disaggregated data. It is about not just having a default person, a default commuter, or a default person who drives, be it a man or a woman. It would seek a more granular detail. That is really what is required. The household survey is every five years. I really cannot speak to that survey itself but I note it is a very impactful and powerful survey. As to whether or not it should be done more often, I really cannot speak to that. That survey is used for many reasons, including transport modelling and across large areas of our transport ecosystem. As a start, it would be helpful to acknowledge that the data needs to be more granular and to introduce more gender disaggregated data, not necessarily to change the whole form itself. That is my view. Perhaps others who are here today are closer to that actual survey.

**Chairman:** Would Senator Boylan wish to make further comment?

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** No, that is fine.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** The witnesses have dealt with some of my supplementary questions around the data. I had also gone into that idea about the co-creation of design, but there have been answers on that.

On the issue of passive surveillance, there was a significant answer around my question of the particular issues affecting those in the lower socioeconomic bracket and those from ethnic minorities.

There was reference to the whole issue of cycling and girls making a determination not to do it. There was an answer to that question with the idea of building up to short journeys earlier. A lot more people might be looking to do that given the circumstances we are currently in.

I spoke about design earlier, but it is also about the design of access. It is not just about

the issue of men and women. It is also to do with people who have a disability. The point was made earlier about the need for more time to be allowed at pedestrian crossings. It just happens that this issue was brought to me this week by a constituent who is in a wheelchair. He can get halfway across a road to a stop but may not be able to make to the next part. It makes what is already a difficult journey a lot more difficult. How does the design take into account such difficulties, including for a mother with a pram and a couple of children? This would seem to be to me to be a nightmare of the situation to navigate. I believe that I have covered everything here, including three questions I never asked in the first place.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I am not sure of the specific question. I apologise, there was a lot in there. Is there a specific question?

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** It was more a synopsis of what I had asked and the supplementary questions I had intended to ask.

**Chairman:** Ms Cahill has probably already covered everything that Deputy Ó Murchú had asked. Dr. Chiara Leva wishes to make a contribution.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** The latest national survey was in 2019, and we do it every three years. That may be a big time lag considering how quickly things have changed. The Central Statistics Office is very well catered to provide the data that we need. I can tell the committee that there is some very useful information from the national travel survey. It is possible to build on what they already have.

**Chairman:** Who conducts that survey?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** The report on the national travel survey on the use of public transport can be accessed through the Central Statistics Office, CSO.

**Chairman:** Is the survey completed by the CSO?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** Yes, it is completed by the CSO. It is possible to build on that. An extract, for example, says that lack of service is one of the main reasons given for not using bus services more frequently. For the reference day, the respondents were asked the reasons why they did not use bus services more frequently:

Respondents were asked reasons why they do not use bus services more frequently. Over one fifth (22.3%) stated that there was no service nearby, while 17.5% cited that there was no service to where they wanted to go. Over one in seven (15.4%) cited that it was inconvenient...Too expensive was an issue cited most by persons aged 18 to 24 years, by 9.1% of males and 8.6% of females in this age group.

We have the capacity to examine that level of engagement.

**Chairman:** When is that report due to be completed again?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** It is due, because it is done every three years, from what I see. It is important that we make a contribution to that.

**Chairman:** That is something the committee can follow up on. Perhaps Senator Boylan would do a bit of work on it and come back to us. We can follow up on it.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** There is the CSO survey and also the National Transport Authority survey, which is the household travel survey.

**Chairman:** That is the NTA survey.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** That is the 2012 to 2019 survey, which is the one with the greatest potential for us to get the level of disaggregated travel behaviour data. Certainly, I believe there is a lot more potential we could get out of that survey. It is every five years. There is a huge amount of work that goes into any survey. If anyone is listening from the National transport authority might be horrified to hear me say that I would like to see more level of detail. I would like to see the data open and disaggregated for researchers and others to use.

**Chairman:** Can I suggest that Dr. Chiara Leva and Dr. Rock would come back to the committee with a note. It appears that there are two surveys, the National Transport Authority survey and the travel survey from the CSO. When are these due? This is something we can follow up on. Clearly, one survey is pending and I am not sure about the other one. The committee can do some work around that.

**Deputy Darren O'Rourke:** I thank the witnesses. I have been listening in to the contributions in the office here. I want to pick up on one issue, which my colleague also raised, on the piece about the family roles. It is the second point in the research. The witnesses pointed towards policy opportunities such as enabling children's independent mobility, designing child friendly public transport and adjoining public space, and the promotion of car-free travel at weekends to establish new habits. Will the witnesses speak about the research in that area and the evidence that is coming back? It strikes me that this is a very important consideration. Will witnesses tease out some of those ideas? What is meant by the design of child friendly public transport? Is this a physical feature or is it, as Deputy Ó Murchú has said, about facilitating buggies and so on?

With regard to enabling children's independent mobility, are there good examples internationally where this is done? I do not have to look beyond my own home to appreciate the logistics of managing small children and everything that goes with that. Parents often use the throwaway remark of being the "kids' taxi" when running them around locally. There seems to be a lot of travelling with children that pulls towards the use of the private car. Are there good practices that we could point towards and learn from?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I will start and then I will ask my colleague Ms Fox to join in the response, particularly around the design and what it looks like in practice.

Independent travel for young people and children is really part of this conversation and this narrative, given the role of family and the importance of it. Consider cycling for instance, and children cycling to school. Much is said about safe cycling, segregated cycling and safety for children, which is all important. The NTA does fantastic work on safe cycling to schools. The #andshecycle campaign is for schoolgirls in particular. It interviews them about challenges and barriers for them when cycling to school. It is powerful and impactful. It is two minutes long and I recommend that everyone looks at it. As we mentioned earlier, the school uniform and allowing girls to wear trousers is part of the conversation.

Children travelling on public transport is easier in the cities than in more rural areas. My children are both in secondary school. We are lucky enough to live near the DART so they travel on it. Many schoolchildren use buses in the city. It is much more difficult in rural areas. Cars are required in many cases. Cycling could come into play if the children or parents feel safe.

Before I hand over to Ms Fox, an interesting thing to come out of our research was the

promotion of more sustainable forms of transport because of climate change. Children come home to their families and talk about climate change. They raise the travel behaviours in their households and how that contributes to climate change or not. The research showed that the children are key to everything. They learn in schools, come home, chat with their parents and their parents say that they are right. That is an important aspect, which goes back to education of kids in schools. Does Ms Fox want to refer to family-friendly design and what she is doing with regard to the Luas to Finglas and MetroLink?

**Ms Eimear Fox:** The average three-year-old is about 95 cm tall. We need to design for ourselves, people in wheelchairs and also to think about how children experience an environment. That can include traffic crossings where there are exhaust emissions. We maybe need sheltered areas directly beside junctions where children can wait to cross. We need to think about segregation so that when children get to the age of independence, parents are happy to let them go ahead because there is either planted segregation or physical segregation that keeps the modes of travel safe. The thinking of that design type means that we see the public realm in a different way. One can begin to see how seating can be adapted or how a group of rocks beside a junction can be a way for kids to explore their environment. It means they are more interested in taking that journey again, since there are elements that animate their journey, which we might not see as adults. Small design elements like that can make children want to do active travel. As Ms Cahill said, it is followed by the school. Much green school data is coming out, which really encourages kids. We need to make it safe, fun and sheltered for them. We need to design not just around points A and B but also the journey. Children's lives would be enhanced by active travel.

**Deputy Darren O'Rourke:** Dr. Rock also indicated to speak. It is regrettable that our starting point is where it is. We have a long way to go and much to do. I have a question about sociocultural behaviour barriers. I am aware of #andshcycles and know advocates in that area. They are great. At the minute, they are not representative of broader society. We need people to show leadership. There is a lack of cultural acceptance for girls cycling. Can more be done about that? What immediate things do we need to do, such as showing leadership?

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** I had my hand raised to address a previous point. I might answer a slightly different question, if I can. With regard to bringing sustainable mobility into the mainstream, we are bombarded nightly with television advertisements telling us how beautiful, fantastic and luxurious it is to drive a car. All our status, communications and marketing are about that. Besides the fact that much of our infrastructure does not cater for the needs of women, all the messages that we currently receive tell us that this is what we should aspire to do. There is a communications and marketing issue. We have to make sure that we design the infrastructure to meet people's needs. We also need to let people know about the status that goes with it and that it is good to use these methods of transport. They can cater for people's needs and they can travel in comfort.

I want to address independent mobility for children, which is important for many reasons. It frees up women from mobility of care duties. It is important for children's development. At present, about 60% of primary school children are driven to school. The Deputy asked if other places do it differently. We often talk about our Nordic neighbours. In Finland and Norway, the number of primary school children driven to school is in the 20% range. The rest independently travel to school. In Norway, it is part of the culture to tell children at the age of seven that it is time for them to walk to school. This is only suitable in urban environments. It would probably be a shock to many of us who have a seven-year-old to tell them to go to school alone. That is



because they have a programme relating to safe routes to school. The local neighbourhood has child-friendly street design, with traffic cameras, with low levels of through traffic, low speeds, wide footpaths, parks that connect spaces, and child-friendly cycling infrastructure. That facilitates independent mobility.

In Ireland, we have a new safe routes to school programme under Green-Schools, which is a really good start. There is much new funding in this area. We are moving in a positive direction, but independent mobility is important and deserves further discussion.

**Deputy Darren O'Rourke:** I thank the witnesses.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I welcome the witnesses and thank them for their submissions. I read the report some time ago and thought it was excellent. That is why I sought this meeting. I am conscious that we are the Joint Committee on Transport and Communications and that we shadow the Department of Transport. We are entering an era of unprecedented investment into public transport, active transport, public places and the public realm. I am conscious that a majority of this committee are male. I commend the Chair on the timing of this meeting.

**Chairman:** It is not for want of trying. As Chairman I have tried to get more female membership. We are delighted Senator Boylan came on. As I said, I had to insist. It makes a huge difference. I would like more females on the committee but they are decisions made by others.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** Who is the Chairman proposing to kick off the committee? I could probably draw up a list myself. I would probably be top of it as well.

**Chairman:** Go ahead Deputy Matthews.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Gender balance on committees like this is something we must be conscious of, especially when we are in an era of such substantial public investment in public transport. We need to get it right and we know from the past we have not got transport or planning right. We have a good opportunity to do it now.

I will go straight to the report. I have a number of questions and will direct them to various witnesses. There is a startling figure of 95% of women who consider the car a necessity outside Dublin. I ask Dr. Leva if that is a European norm or if it is very peculiar to Ireland. Is it a result of our dispersed settlement patterns and the difficulty of having viable public transport because of those dispersed settlement patterns?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** I thank the Deputy. For this it is back to basics. Ms Cahill can comment on the rationale for the figures in the Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report. The Deputy said it. There are two speeds. The availability of transport in the Dublin area in the urban and some of the suburban areas is there. When we move to a more rural context and even different town contexts, the realities are staggeringly different. Even independent mobility becomes something feasible in the context where you have the community for it and becomes a totally different reality in a rural area where your house might be six miles away from the school. Most of them have buses and vans but that is the reality we are facing. Do we cater for all the needs of the country? The CSO survey asks why we travel. When we say "we", who is this "we"? How many different communities are we incorporating in this "we"? Is it "we" in the country, "we" in Dublin, "we" in Dún Laoghaire? It is a different set of needs. It is a different "we".

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Yes. Do Ms Cahill or Dr. Rock have a view on that?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I will jump in quickly then pass over. The 95% outside of Dublin is to do with the availability of public transport in more rural areas. It is to do with the caregiving responsibilities women mostly take on in families and is also to do with their personal safety and security. It is those three reasons. With the lack of public infrastructure in some areas the car is deemed a necessity.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Would it be a European norm that outside the capital city 95% of women would consider a car to be a necessity or are we an outlier in that?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I cannot say whether we are an outlier in that. Our urban and rural divide and our dispersed settlements are perhaps unique but I cannot say. Maybe Dr. Rock or Dr. Leva have a view on that.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** I do not know the answer to that either. Within an urban environment we are an outlier. In a rural one I would not be sure of that.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Okay. It is an incredible figure. It jumps off the page at me straight away.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** Yes.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I wonder how we address car dependency and the climate issues associated with a figure like that.

I will move on. The research on women and cycling was talked about and I am delighted to see more research coming from this. We have really damaged children's independence in the way we have designed our streets and in that car dependency again. We have also put this huge stressful requirement on parents to drive their children everywhere because we have made streets dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and people who wish to walk. It is about the dominance of cars again. On the research being done on women and cycling, the Road Safety Authority, RSA, was in with us last week and the representatives talked about their strategy at the moment. They have a 50-point plan. Do our guests think the gender lens is being applied to that plan? Is it applied to, say, a review of a national cycle manual and is it being applied to looking again at the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DMURS, as well because these all feed into each other? Is the gender lens being applied sufficiently? Are the learnings from this TII report being taken into those three main strategies?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I can speak only from TII's perspective and what we are doing. The gender lens we developed was for TII public transport projects but it is equally relevant to all transport infrastructure, including cycling and active travel. On the national cycling network plan, TII is developing that so gender and the gender lens is part of that in addition to looking at international best practice and what is happening elsewhere, our research with women and cycling will certainly feed into that national cycling network plan.

On the Government's road safety strategy I really cannot say. Obviously we are very involved in the development of that strategy in areas where TII can take the lead and we have a number of lead actions in that strategy. As to whether a gender lens is applied I am afraid I just cannot answer that.

On the Department and the DMURS, there is a huge engagement and collaboration between the Department, the NTA and TII on the co-ordination and the integration of cycling manuals, DMURS or TII's standards. I guess because this is part of the wider topic of sustainable mobil-

ity and the Department's sustainable mobility policy, which is due to be published at the end of this month, I would expect to see more reference to the gender lens in this area also.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I thank Ms Cahill. I might direct the question to Ms Fox as well in her role as a landscape architect. Let us consider the local authorities. It might sound like I am having a go at engineers here. Engineers are great. They are great at building things and getting the technical compliance and the functionality of something. However, I wonder if we have enough urban designers, transport planners, architects and landscape architects at the implementation level such that we design this infrastructure so it suits all. It would not just be gender-based but based on age demographics as well. We should ensure it is completely inclusive. What would Ms Fox's thoughts be on that?

**Ms Eimear Fox:** I 100% agree. The multidisciplinary approach to all infrastructure projects is critical because as the Deputy says, the engineers have one set of skills and landscape architects have another. There is a role for drainage engineers in looking at nature-based solutions and sustainable urban drainage systems, SUDS. I have very much been involved with DMURS. The principle of DMURS is we look at a street and how that space is reallocated. At the moment, so many of our streets are so dominated by the carriageway, which is often extra-wide and dominated by car-parking. At that principal concept stage of looking at a streetscape to reallocate space we need to have gender and children's issues involved right at that initial stage as space is being reallocated. Space can be multifunctional as well so it does not have to be just a transport element or just a landscape element or a SUDS element. They can all be joined together. All of these threads, including community, transport, water management and biodiversity can all be incorporated but there needs to be that vision at the project level which has all these voices. That is a gap in certainly some of the larger authorities like those Dublin, Cork and Limerick that have that expertise at the local level. Other authorities do not have that level of expertise and it is critical we have that thinking because it is about having more minds involved, whether they are male or female or engineers or landscape architects. Even at the initial stages, the more views we have, the better the project will be. That multifunctional element of streetscape is critical, which the design manual for urban roads and streets, DMURS, pushes.

**Dr. Sarah Rock:** Ms Fox said almost everything I wanted to say, so I will try not to reiterate much. With regard to the design of our urban roads and streets, the most important aspect is what is called the user hierarchy. That puts pedestrians first, and more women walk than men. Thereafter, there are cyclists, then public sector users, and more women also use public transport than men. The other users of transport follow after that. That user hierarchy is critical, but it has not translated down comprehensively to the local authority level because it involves difficult choices. Even something like giving additional time at the traffic lights, as I mentioned, might sound as though it is not a big deal but it involves reshifting priorities and saying it is okay for those who drive to have to wait a little longer to allow pedestrians to cross the street. That resistance is where this issue is coming to a head, so it is about standing up to that resistance and ensuring those difficult choices will be made.

The point about multidisciplinary is critical and we have seen that issue in our recent advertisement campaign regarding active travel posts at a local authority level. Many of the advertisements have focused on one profession and, in some ways, we are putting ourselves back in that position of forgetting we need to have diversity of voices. There are very few urban designers in Ireland - I trained abroad - but it also involves landscape architects, community engagement and communications. When it comes to urban design, that multidisciplinary is critical to understanding how to design an environment, a street and a public realm that feels

safe. There are many elements to safety and security but one of them relates to how to design a space in order that it will feel welcoming to people, and an understanding of behavioural science comes into that. One of the most important steps we can take is to ensure that every local authority that advertises for these active travel posts will be open to a multidisciplinary approach to the people it employs. Local authorities have to get more women in these posts and that can be from other-----

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I thank Dr. Rock but I must allow time for Dr. Leva to respond.

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** I might return to a point the Deputy made earlier. It is important we do not sideline things that, potentially, we do not know about. I mentioned earlier the areas around Barcelona. In the suburban borderline rural area, there are flexible, on-demand public transport services. Although, normally, renting a car is not seen as a form of public transport, in that town it can be used to collect smaller pockets of people. There are other European projects that are working in this area and there is an Interreg fund with a policy brief relating to the possibility of designing flexible and feasible on-demand transport solutions for rural areas, and that is definitely worth considering.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** In the international context, unattended stations and driver-only-operated transport systems developed as cost rationalisations by public transport companies to reduce the wages bill. Are they the norm throughout European rail and train systems, railway stations and light-rail systems, or are they starting to reverse that trend because of the benefits of doing so? More people might be attracted onto public transport if they feel safer, perhaps because it is not just a driver-operated system but there is the presence of somebody in a hi-vis jacket, even if it is just because of the perception of that. Is a reversal of that trend taking place?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** As the Deputy mentioned, the trend is towards an autonomous system that does not need a supervisor to be present. In the interviews we conducted with some of the users, the perception was that there should be a go-to person, which does not mean a security officer but could instead mean a central presence with a sense of place who is connected with other human beings. In an autonomous system, there is an absence of human beings. It still has an impact on how we perceive that system to be, such as safe or unsafe or trustworthy or untrustworthy, from the perspective of a user. The trend, however, is towards autonomy.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Have drivers been redeployed to attend stations or what is the trend? Are the stations unattended also? The transport mode is unattended and autonomous and the stations are vacant as well. Is that the trend throughout Europe?

**Dr. Maria Chiara Leva:** They are centralised, which does mean they are completely unattended. The supervision is still there, but the way in which it is organised can vary. The staff might not be localised in one particular station or location but they are nonetheless present and, in theory, supervising through CCTV and other forms of access. They can see people at the station and speak to them remotely. An air traffic controller can remotely control an airport in Norway, 1,000 km away from the airport, and still have a totally clear view of the runway. This technology is deployed also in day-to-day forms of transport. It does not mean that there is no one there. Rather, the modality of the interaction with someone is mediated through technology. The sense of presence can also be represented in different forms and we have to explore those forms.

There is also the issue of getting help. We heard from many people that there should be a

facility to send a text message. This is very effective. If you can send a text message and someone comes at the next station, that will be a very powerful message. If you send a text message and nothing happens until the end of the journey, that is also a very powerful message, but in the wrong direction from what we want.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I thank Dr. Leva.

**Chairman:** This has been a very productive session and most of the areas I wished to cover have been covered. The executive summary of the Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report outlines a couple of stark statistics. A total of 36% of women feel unsafe walking in their local area at night, compared with 13% of men, a threefold difference. One in three women has been subject to physical harassment in public and, obviously, we are aware of the terrible tragedy of the Ashling Murphy case not long ago. Six in ten women, or almost two thirds of them, do not feel safe taking the bus, while 47% will choose a longer route to walk if they perceive it to be safer. I am a father of young adult daughters and I saw their reaction to the Ashling Murphy murder and tragedy. There is evidence in the report to show there is serious work to be done in respect of women's safety in the context of every level of transport, be that walking, cycling or public transport.

What is the action plan to implement what our guests have highlighted empirically in their report and in light of the various surveys Senator Boylan highlighted? What is the action plan and timeframe for this so we as a committee can assist TII in that regard? From the findings of the report, what surprised and shocked Ms Cahill as a woman herself? She might deal with those. We have the report and those statistics are the ones I have highlighted because they give it to me in very concrete terms and are from various reports. What of the action plan and where does she see the conduit for said plan? Has TII put down any timeframes for actions? What from the survey carried out in the Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report shocked and surprised her the most?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** I will start with the last piece and work backwards. What surprised me most was good and bad in combination. It was the role of families. I know I have spoken about that here but I was surprised to see that came out so strongly. I am thinking of the lived experience of the women we interviewed and how they spoke about their families. I think especially of women perhaps with special needs and the levels they went to to ensure independent travel for their children as they grew into adulthood. It was that family role and perceptions being formed from a very young age.

In our report, the joy and freedom public transport gives women came out very strongly as well. We are talking about the main challenges, barriers and issues women have to incorporate into their daily decision-making, with safety being one of the big concerns, but many women spoke of the joy, freedom and independence public transport gave them and it is important we call that out. Look at some of the language our interviewees used. They talked about how the Luas glides over O'Connell Bridge and the peace that brought them as they looked down the river Liffey. That is fantastic. Some of the women in Cork talked about socialising with their pals and how they enjoyed being on the top deck of a bus and the view and beauty-----

**Chairman:** Did Ms Cahill interview any women from Limerick or north Tipperary?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** We did not. We only did Dublin and Cork but I am sure there the teenagers in Limerick would have some very attractive routes as well.



**Chairman:** Yes.

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Obviously the safety piece is really strong and the Chairman asked about my perspective as a woman. For me personally, with some of the things I did without even thinking, the survey made me think I was not the only one. That might have been having a key in my hand or flat shoes in my bag or whatever the case may be. I realised this is what women do and it is not just me and that perception of feeling safe or unsafe. Hearing that over and over again or-----

*(Interruptions).*

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** -----that come out in such powerful ways, that surprised me. Ireland is not unusual in this regard. This is global. In all the international research and global trends we looked at safety was number 1 across the board so it is not just Ireland. That surprised me.

The last aspect is the mobility of care, which Dr. Leva mentioned. It had a huge impact on me, as did the fact it kind of goes under the radar, particularly that mobility of care and the challenges and complexities that brings.

*(Interruptions).*

**Chairman:** What about an action plan?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Have I frozen? Can you hear me?

**Chairman:** We can. What about the action plan?

**Ms Rachel Cahill:** Yes. On some of the statistics, there is that 36% travelling at night and that is where the first mile-last mile comes into play. It is not just feeling safe on or off public transport, it is more...

*(Interruptions).*

**Chairman:** All right. I ask the other guests what priority or single action they would like to see implemented with immediate effect. Are they all frozen? I am not sure what that means with respect to concluding the meeting. I expect we will have to.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I have a suggestion. I do not know if our witnesses can hear but I refer to the CSO survey and the NTA survey. They are the experts and we should try to engage them to see what others should be included in another survey.

**Chairman:** We had asked them to come back so maybe the clerk to the committee might follow up on precisely what they would like-----

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** That was Senator Boylan's suggestion.

**Chairman:** ----because we must we have the empirical evidence. I am stunned it is not there. Maybe I am showing a bit of-----

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** The Chairman will have to read the book. It will not just be Deputy O'Rourke.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Will the Senator give us a synopsis of the book?

**Chairman:** What is the name of the book?

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** It even comes down to the seat belts in a car.

**Chairman:** What is the name of the book?

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** It is *Invisible Women*.

**Chairman:** Who wrote it?

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** I just grew up thinking seat belts were uncomfortable but they are uncomfortable for women because the test dummies are male.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** Yes.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Yes.

**Chairman:** This is obviously not an Irish book.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** No, it is an English book but it is-----

**Chairman:** Is it a recent book?

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** -----international data. It was released a few years ago. Even medications do not take gender specifics into account.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** Is the Chairman calling this to a close? I must go.

**Chairman:** Okay. I will conclude.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** Apologies but on Deputy Matthews' points on car ownership and Ireland being an outlier, Dr. Brian Caulfield of TCD has done much work on that. The problem for Ireland is the fact of our development, the way we have designed the country and the ribbon development. We have an issue of forced car ownership. It might be useful to get him in.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** We should get proposals specific to that.

**Chairman:** Dublin is a huge centre of population and Limerick is big as well but compared with other countries we do not have that critical mass.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** There is a bang for buck you get from a huge city.

**Chairman:** It is just an observation anyway.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** Yes, but Dr. Caulfield addresses that point.

**Chairman:** What was also interesting here is women were not looking for the heavy-----

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** Gang.

**Chairman:** -----burly security man in the corner. They were not looking for that whereas men do.

**Senator Lynn Boylan:** Sarah Everard was murdered by a policeman.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** We are still in public session.

**Chairman:** Are we? All right.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** I ask we engage with the CSO and NTA surveys to see what information should go into those surveys to get the data we need.

**Chairman:** I suggest the clerk write to the respective witnesses to follow up on that specific item.

**Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú:** Then it can come from them to the organisations.

**Chairman:** There are also the two reports.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** There is one other question we could ask them as well. I wonder if the mobility of care journeys could be broken down to show what is the primary such journey. I would like to know how they break down those journeys.

**Chairman:** Will the Deputy explain that?

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** They describe mobility of care journeys as the journeys women are making to bring the children to school or wherever.

**Chairman:** Yes.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** That relates to the adaptability and functionality of public transport.

**Chairman:** I do not know if they have those data but we can ask for them.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** That is reported in the Diamond survey.

**Chairman:** However that is not specific in relation to the report before us.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** No, but it would be interesting to know because if we are going to adapt public transport we need to know what the primary mobility of care journeys are, for the adaptability of it.

**Chairman:** Okay. For me, the real kernel of it is to ask them what questions they would like to see-----

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** In that survey.

**Chairman:** We can then follow up with the CSO and NTA. If there are other items members would like included in our communications back to the witnesses we can do that as well. The substantive aspect is the empirical body of data.

**Deputy Steven Matthews:** Yes. I thank the Chairman.

**Chairman:** I thank all who attended the meeting. The technical issues have been recurring today so apologies for that. I thank Rachel Cahill, head of the chief executive office at TII, Eimear Fox, TII landscape architect and the representatives from TUD, Dr. Maria Chiara Leva of the environmental health and sustainability institute and Dr. Sarah Rock of the school of transport engineering, environment and planning. It was a very illuminating session structured around the report Travelling in a Woman's Shoes. We will follow up on it with the respective

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witnesses. I apologise again for the ICT problems here.

The joint committee adjourned at 4.09 p.m. until 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 March 2022.