# Rising incidents of “bumping men” spark growing fear among women in London



# The Rising Fear of 'Bumping Men': A Disturbing Trend in London

In recent weeks, a distressing trend reminiscent of certain incidents in Japan has alarmingly emerged in London. Reports of men forcefully shoving themselves into unsuspecting women in public spaces have left many feeling unsafe during their daily commutes and leisurely strolls. This disturbing behaviour, dubbed 'butsukari otoko,' or 'bumping man,' appears to stem from a mix of misogyny and a warped sense of dominance, leading to a growing climate of fear among women across the city.

Many women have taken to social media to share their harrowing experiences. One notable account comes from Ayla Mellek, a 20-year-old influencer who, while walking with a friend along Mile End Canal in East London, was unexpectedly body slammed by a man. Describing the incident as akin to being thrust with "so much force" that she landed face down on the ground, Ayla shared her shock in a TikTok video, encouraging others to be vigilant. "Please, if you're in London, you need to be so careful," she urged her followers.

This type of aggression is not isolated. Other women have similarly reported alarming encounters, including being chased and punched while navigating the city's transport system. One woman, after attending a concert, detailed how a man followed her for several blocks, prompting her to flee on a bike. She lamented the escalating threat to women's safety in public spaces, stating, “It's not safe for women anymore... it's very scary.”

The phenomenon of 'butsukari otoko' is not new. It first gained notoriety in Japan after videos surfaced showing men at crowded train stations purposefully colliding with women. The origin of this practice lies in a troubling mindset where women are viewed as obstacles to be dominated rather than fellow commuters or individuals deserving of respect. In one notorious incident, a man known as the 'Shinjuku Station Tackle Man' was filmed shoving multiple women without consequence, highlighting a disturbing attitude that trivialises the physical and emotional safety of women.

The implications of this behaviour extend beyond individual incidents. Research indicates that women are significantly more likely than men to feel unsafe on urban public transport. A study by Imperial College London found that women are 10% more likely to report discomfort while using public transport, signalling a substantial gender gap in feelings of safety. Furthermore, the British Transport Police revealed in a survey that over a third of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their commutes. Alarmingly, many witnesses to these incidents choose not to report them, perpetuating a cycle of silence and disregard for women's safety.

This growing trend coincides with rising awareness and initiatives aimed at addressing sexual harassment on public transport. Transport for London has implemented campaigns promoting zero tolerance for such behaviour, alongside training for staff to improve responses to incidents. However, the effectiveness of these measures remains in question. Sally Wynter, a businesswoman who experienced a violent attack on a London tube, has publicly questioned the reliability of the transport network's emergency help points after waiting 30 minutes for assistance following her assault.

The ramifications of these incidents are profound, influencing women's daily behaviours and decision-making. Many find themselves adopting precautionary measures out of necessity—choosing seats closer to drivers, travelling in groups, or avoiding poorly lit areas. This adaptation to living in fear rather than feeling empowered underscores the urgent need for systemic changes in how public transport systems address safety concerns and protect their passengers.

As the phenomenon of 'butsukari otoko' spreads its roots into the UK, the conversation around women's safety in public spaces must be amplified. Social media creators and activists highlight the need for a collective response to confront and diminish this pattern of behaviour. “This needs to be taken seriously,” one TikTok creator implored, noting the responsibility of both the public and law enforcement to act against such incidents.

The stories shared by those affected resonate deeply, revealing the vulnerability and distress many women endure in spaces where they should feel secure. As more individuals come forward, we are reminded that the fight for safety and respect in public domains is an ongoing struggle, one that necessitates the attention and action of authorities, transport networks, and society as a whole.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687701/women-london-butsukari-otoko-shove-japan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2025/01/31/language/bumping-crowds-train-japan/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687701/women-london-butsukari-otoko-shove-japan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.btp.police.uk/news/btp/news/england/over-a-third-of-women-have-been-sexually-harassed-on-their-commute-to-work/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/196474/women-10-more-likely-than-report/), [[3]](https://www.btp.police.uk/news/btp/news/england/over-a-third-of-women-have-been-sexually-harassed-on-their-commute-to-work/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687701/women-london-butsukari-otoko-shove-japan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/safety-public-transport)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/womens-and-girls-views-and-experiences-of-personal-safety-when-using-public-transport/mitigating-measures-the-strategies-women-and-girls-employ-to-feel-safe), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/sexual-harassment-train-tube-btp-british-transport-police-tube-british-experiences-b1121214.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687701/women-london-butsukari-otoko-shove-japan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/196474/women-10-more-likely-than-report/> - A study by Imperial College London found that women are 10% more likely than men to feel unsafe on urban public transport. Analyzing data from 28 cities, the research revealed that women are more likely to report feeling unsafe on metro trains and buses, highlighting a significant gender gap in perceptions of safety. The study emphasizes the need for urban transport companies to address these concerns to improve women's experiences and reduce the safety gap.
3. <https://www.btp.police.uk/news/btp/news/england/over-a-third-of-women-have-been-sexually-harassed-on-their-commute-to-work/> - A survey commissioned by the British Transport Police indicates that over a third of women have experienced sexual harassment or offences while commuting by train or tube. Despite this, only 18% of witnesses report such incidents to the police. The findings underscore the prevalence of sexual harassment during peak travel times and the importance of bystander intervention and reporting to enhance safety on public transport.
4. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/womens-and-girls-views-and-experiences-of-personal-safety-when-using-public-transport/mitigating-measures-the-strategies-women-and-girls-employ-to-feel-safe> - Research by Transport Scotland explores the strategies women and girls use to feel safe on public transport. Findings include choosing seats near drivers or in busy carriages, avoiding poorly lit areas, and traveling in groups. These behaviors reflect a normalization of safety precautions among women, highlighting the need for systemic changes to address safety concerns and reduce the burden of self-imposed precautions.
5. <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/safety-public-transport> - Transport for London (TfL) has implemented measures to combat sexual harassment, including a zero-tolerance campaign and staff training. The campaign aims to challenge inappropriate behavior and empower bystanders to intervene. Additionally, TfL is rolling out sexual harassment training to frontline staff to improve responses to reports and support customers, emphasizing the importance of a safe environment for all passengers.
6. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2025/01/31/language/bumping-crowds-train-japan/> - The Japan Times discusses the phenomenon of 'butsukari otoko' (bumping man) in Japan, where men intentionally shove or body slam women in crowded spaces. This behavior has been increasingly reported in train stations and public areas, leading to public concern and discussions about personal space and harassment in Japan's densely populated environments.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/sexual-harassment-train-tube-btp-british-transport-police-tube-british-experiences-b1121214.html> - An Evening Standard article reports that more than a third of British women who travel by train or tube have experienced sexual harassment during their commute. The report highlights that most incidents occur during the evening rush hour when trains are crowded. Despite the prevalence of such behavior, only one in five witnesses report it to the police, underscoring the need for increased awareness and reporting to improve safety on public transport.