# Young women in Scotland feel politically disempowered amid safety fears and representation gaps



A recent report from the Young Women’s Movement has drawn attention to a troubling reality for young women in Scotland, highlighting widespread feelings of distrust and disempowerment in their political representation. This survey, which engaged 600 women aged 16 to 35, found that around 50% of respondents lack confidence in elected officials to effectively advocate for their needs or uphold their human rights.

Amidst a backdrop of political turmoil following the recent general election, where significant trust in politics has crumbled, young women's concerns have reached new heights. The report underscored that many of these women feel increasingly alienated and powerless in Scotland's governance. “Many young women do not feel empowered to affect change,” the report noted, with a staggering 58% expressing feelings of total disconnect from decision-making processes.

The frustration over Westminster's influence on Scotland's governance is palpable among respondents, who assert that this interference erodes their capacity to enact meaningful change. The report indicates that inadequate representation in political arenas exacerbates these sentiments of helplessness, raising critical questions about who is really looking out for young women in today’s political climate.

Personal safety has become a pressing concern for those surveyed. Nearly two-thirds reported carrying their keys in hand as a defensive measure while out at night, and 60% frequently share their location with friends and family, reflecting a pervasive fear that stems from inadequate governmental action on safety issues.

In light of these troubling findings, the Young Women’s Movement has urged the Scottish Government to take firmer action. Recommendations include intensified measures to combat misogyny and outdated gender stereotypes in educational environments and the urgent need for standalone legislation to address these issues. This proposed legislation has long been overdue, especially after the controversial pass of the Hate Crime and Public Order Act, which conspicuously omitted crucial protections for sex-based offences.

Jenni Snell, the chief executive of the Young Women’s Movement, remarked, “The report makes for hard reading in places, with stark but unsurprising findings showing the hardships of being a young woman in Scotland today,” particularly in relation to the failings of the current administration's handling of the criminal justice system which inadequately addresses the needs of victims of gender-based violence. She commended the young women who bravely shared their stories, showcasing resilience amidst overwhelming obstacles.

While the Scottish Government claims a commitment to gender equality, asserting that “equality for women and girls is at the heart of our vision for a fairer Scotland,” the areas of reform identified by the Young Women’s Movement call into question the effectiveness of these promises. A spokesperson highlighted a £21.6 million investment in initiatives aimed at supporting survivors of gender-based violence—yet many wonder if these efforts are sufficient or merely tokenism in the face of a serious crisis.

The report lays bare vital insights into the experiences of young women in Scotland and starkly underscores the urgent need for deep-seated legislative and societal reforms. With the rise of disillusionment toward the current government, it becomes clear that genuine, vigorous opposition voices are essential to advocate for the rights, safety, and representation of those who feel overlooked and ignored.

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

## References

* <https://plan-uk.org/press/just-15-of-uk-girls-believe-politicians-act-in-their-best-interest-reveals-a-national> - A survey by Plan International UK found that only 15% of UK girls believe politicians act in their best interest, highlighting widespread distrust among young women in political representation.
* <https://www.youngwomenscot.org/policy-consultations/young-womens-democratic-wellbeing/> - The Young Women's Movement's report emphasizes the need for meaningful consultation with young women before decisions are made, addressing feelings of alienation and disempowerment.
* <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24606493.report-calls-action-on-lack-young-women-scottish-politics/> - A report by The National highlights the under-representation of young women in Scottish politics and calls for improvements to safeguarding mechanisms to protect them from hate speech and harassment.
* <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/universitynews/confidence-is-a-barrier-for-young-women-in-politics> - Research from Glasgow Caledonian University indicates that young women are less likely to engage in politics due to a lack of confidence, contributing to feelings of disempowerment.
* <https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/media-centre/only-8-per-cent-of-young-women-believe-the-government-is-addressing-their-needs/> - A survey by Young Women's Trust reveals that only 8% of young women believe the government addresses their needs, reflecting widespread distrust and feelings of neglect.
* <https://www.engender.org.uk/news/blog/where-are-the-women-nearly-500-women-are-missing-from-key-positions-of-power-in-scotland/> - Engender's report shows that nearly 500 women are missing from key positions of power in Scotland, underscoring the systemic under-representation contributing to young women's feelings of disempowerment.
* <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25130503.poll-half-young-women-dont-trust-politicians/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data