SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, PREVENTION & RESPONSE COMMITTEE

OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Clár Foréigean Gnéasach agus
Ciapadh, Cosc agus Freagartha
Sexual Violence and Harassment
Prevention and Response Programme

MAY 2025

Pictured: Active* Champions & SVHPR Team | Final Meeting & Celebrations in April 2025.

THIS ISSUE

- HEA Updates
- Speak Out Data + Discussion
- Update from Education Subgroup
  Workshop + Discussion
- Video project
- Review of Action Plan

SHAREPOINT

Please visit our new committee SharePoint site for meeting minutes, Terms of Reference, updates, and more information.
Available here.

CONTACTS

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SUPPORTS

A list of supports available to staff & students can be accessed here.

If you would like more information or guidance on the supports available please email Rebecca / Niamh in confidence.

MEETING UPDATES:

HEA Updates:
- The external review of the existing framework is ongoing, with an expected end date of June.
- The consultation summaries have been shared from the stakeholder meetings.
- The HEA is seeking information from HEIs regarding why they did not submit to tender for the shared entity for SVH in HEI's.

Secondary Analysis of National Surveys of Staff and Student Experiences of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish HEIs is now published to the HEA website. It can be accessed here.

Named First Points of Contact on website and a template for how to ask for help I need support - University of Galway

E- Learning – Supporting Trauma Informed Responses to Sensitive Disclosure- is now available through CANVAS.
You can self enroll here.

FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee discussed the need to revisit the SVHPR Action Plan to close out outstanding items and ensure continued alignment with the national Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive framework.

Key Actions Agreed:
- Review all 'in-progress' actions from the 2021 Action Plan and the Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment (ESVH) Framework.
- Determine which actions should continue, be concluded, or be updated.
- Combine multiple plans into a single, streamlined Action Plan.
- Ensure actions from Committee and Subgroups are captured and reviewed at each meeting.

The Action Plan, which reflects 15 framework outcomes plus additional institutional actions, is available via the SVHPR SharePoint.
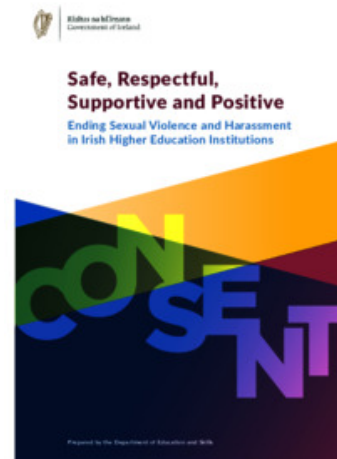
Outstanding Issues:
- Institutional Processes: No progress has been made on recording informal reports.
- Targeted Initiatives: Further action needed on Framework Action 11 regarding student active bystander training.

Institutional Culture:
There has been no engagement with the Garda Liaison. SVHPR Team to reach out again.

Action Plan Scope:
The Action Plan focuses on items that require Committee input or shared ownership, supporting strategic collaboration while aligning with national and sector-wide best practices.

Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive
Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions

NAMED FIRST POINT OF CONTACTS

Following a self-selection and thorough screening process, several FPOCs are now listed on the website under the "I Need Support" section. Additional profiles will be added once professional headshots are completed.

Promotion of the FPOC network will take place once all profiles are live. A formal launch of the SVHPR programme of work is being considered for September, coinciding with the return of students.

A template to support individuals in asking for help has also been developed.

SVHPR TEAM | VIDEO PROJECT

A video will be developed to introduce:
- the SVHPR team,
- the programme of work and principles.

A video to explain the SVHPR policy is also being explored. NK shared two sample videos that are being explored as potential templates to follow and can be accessed here: X & X

There is budget to develop something similar to the first video. If further funding is obtained, a video highlighting the SVHPR team, where the office* is located and available supports will be developed.

*However, it was noted that three is no private space available at present for the SVHPR team – RC is in a shared office and NK has no office space.

UPDATE ACTION 10 SURVEY

- In line with Action 10 of the ESVH Implementation Plan an exercise is being conducted to map existing HEI reporting mechanisms, investigation procedures and practice for staff and students.

- 2 surveys were completed and returned for 24th April

- Questions prompted some actions for us to consider, sharing 2 examples
- When a formal complaint of SVH is made to a member of staff in your institution, is there a standard written procedure in place for providing information on support and reporting options to reporting parties?
- Are specific measures in place for marginalised/vulnerable groups? e.g. disability, interpreters, vulnerable adults, sign language, neurodivergence

- Next step – Mapping responses.

EDUCATION SUBGROUP | WORKSHOP + DISCUSSION

The Education Subgroup held a workshop on April 10th, which was facilitated by Aoife Cooke, to reinvigorate the work of the subgroup. The Framework requirements were reviewed, with discussion around understanding the differences between education, training and awareness. HM presented the summary data from the workshop.

Education, Exposure, Experience.

It was agreed that a shared understanding is required and the proposed definitions are. Opportunities were also identified, including:

The first week of September was noted as an important time for inclusion of education in orientation.

It was discussed whether increased membership is needed on the subgroup.

A further meeting has been arranged.

SPEAKOUT

Speak Out is an online anonymous reporting tool available to all students and staff to disclose incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour / control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape.

The information you provide using this tool is valuable as the data collated will help inform initiatives aimed at addressing bullying, harassment and ending sexual violence and harassment at the University of Galway.

It is important to remember that as the Speak Out reporting tool is completely anonymous, there is no way of identifying or contacting any member of the university community who uses the tool.

SAFEZONE APP

The safety and wellbeing of students and staff is our top priority at the University of Galway. We have introduced a free smartphone app that promotes staff and student safety across all of our campuses.

SafeZone enables users to call for help and assistance when they need it most, giving you fast access to security whenever and wherever you are on campus, and allows the University to send notifications to users, e.g. in the event of severe weather or building closure.

SafeZone also allows you to easily check in and share your location on campus.

The app is now available to download from the App Store or Google Play.

SPEAKOUT DATA + DISCUSSION

Pictured L-R : Faye Ní Domhnaill, James McCormack, Niamh Kavanagh, John Hannon, Louise Kelly, Chloe Anderson, Rebecca Connolly

Speak Out data was shared with the SVHPR Committee in accordance with Section 37 of the Freedom of Information Act, which protects sensitive and identifiable information. As such, figures are not included here.

Some overlap was noted with findings from the 2025 Culture Survey presented at the Athena Swan Town Hall.

It was noted the Speak Out data is broader than Sexual Violence and Harassment and includes may behaviours including bullying/discrimination/harassment. Further discussion /direction is required on how to effectively deal with the data.

Concerns were raised about low confidence in reporting procedures.

Queries were made about how University of Galway compares to other HEIs.
A national Speak Out report exists, but institutional breakdowns are not fully available.
Promotion of Speak Out varies across HEIs, making comparisons difficult.

While Speak Out reports have decreased, direct reports to the SVHPR team and Dean of Students' office have increased.

Future Considerations:
- Impact of the new national Speak Out office at TCD is yet to be seen.
- Building trust in the University's procedures remains a priority.
- Tracking timeframes from report to resolution could help, though low numbers of formal SVH cases may limit usefulness.
- Recording of reporting data will be included in both the Athena Swan and SVHPR action plans.

NATIONAL SPEAKOUT REPORT 2023

The report presents highlights from an initial analysis of the aggregated data collected across 18 participating Higher Educations Institutions from October 2021 to October 2022. It provides insight into the key findings of 'Speak Out', as well as information on its inception and the next steps for the tool.

ACTIVE* CHAMPIONS
SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH | APRIL

As part of SAAM, the Active* Champions organised a stall to raise awareness and offer support to survivors. The chosen dates coincided with Study Week, so the activity was designed to be low-energy and calm, creating a safe and reflective space for students.

The central activity involved writing anonymous letters of support to survivors of sexual assault—an initiative that encourages empathy, solidarity, and healing. Students were invited to write messages at their own pace and post them into an anonymous drop box, ensuring privacy for participants.

Recognising the sensitivity of the topic, the Champions provided support bags to those who engaged with the activity. These bags included support cards, signposting information to relevant services, and other comforting items. The overall aim was to show that the student community cares and stands in solidarity with survivors, reinforcing a culture of compassion and support on campus. The SVHPR Coordinator was also present for any student who might have been experiencing distress.

Images of letters shown below are for illustrative purposes only. These examples are sourced from the internet and were not submitted.
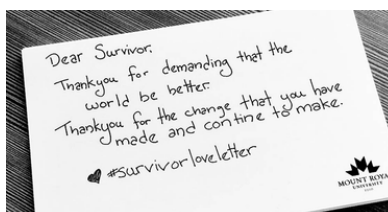
AVAILABLE TRAINING:

STAFF

New!

Staff eLearning Programme: Trauma-Informed Institution

Now available on Canvas. **START NOW**

This short module takes approximately **30 minutes** to complete.
Learning Outcomes:
- Understand what 'trauma' is and recognise common trauma responses and impacts.
- Promote and prioritise safety in interactions.
- Know best practices for responding to a disclosure.
- Apply trauma-informed principles to teaching, learning, or campus life contexts (as relevant to your role), ensuring appropriate support and avoiding re-traumatisation.
- Identify sources of help and access further information and resources.

Supporting Trauma Informed Responses to Sensitive Disclosures

Unit 1: About Trauma

Unit 2: Trauma Informed Practice

Unit 3: Trauma Sensitive Responses to Sexual Violence & Harassment

STUDENT

**Sexual Violence and Harassment:
How to Support Yourself and your Peers eLearning Module**

Now available on Consenthub.ie **START NOW**

This short module takes approximately **30 minutes** to complete.
Learning Outcomes:
- This module aims to address gaps in knowledge reported by students in that survey on issues related to consent, sexual violence and harassment.

- The module provides users with practical and introductory skills in supporting friends who disclose negative sexual experiences and how to safely intervene when faced with a developing negative situation amongst their peer groups and communities.