

Tackling Sexual Violence

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Union Notes:

1. That the NUS Women's Campaign defines sexual harassment as behaviour that is "unwanted, persistent and of a sexual nature". Sexual harassment includes:
 - a. Unwanted sexual comments (including comments about your body or private life);
 - b. Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendoes and offensive gestures;
 - c. Wolf whistling, catcalling or offensive sexual noises;
 - d. Groping, pinching or smacking of your body;
 - e. Having your skirt or top lifted without consent;
 - f. Someone exposing their sexual organs to you without consent
2. A third of women students will be victims of sexual assault while on campus. Only around 15% of victims report the incident to the police and only a tiny fraction of these end in criminal convictions¹
3. Approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men are raped in England and Wales alone every year; that's roughly 11 instances of rape (of adults alone) every hour.²
4. The NUS Lad Culture Audit report revealed that there's lack of clarity around the complaints and disciplinary procedures in universities across the country.³
5. NUS Women's Campaign and Students Unions around the country have taken steps to tackle sexual misconduct between students on campus and thus there is a strong body of best practise to draw on, with regard to tackling Sexual harassment, violence and student-staff misconduct.
6. LTSU and LTU approved a joint policy concerning sexual harassment, effective from July 2014
7. The National Union of Students have carried out extensive research on the prevalence of sexual violence across campuses and the 1752 Group have begun vital work into student-staff sexual misconduct⁴

Union Believes:

1. Sexual assault is a deeply gendered issue and we should recognise the power structures that operate.
2. Considering the rates and statistics of sexual assault and harassment nationally it is not unreasonable to assume that sexual misconduct is as rife within academia as the student population.
3. Sexual assault does not just happen in student nightclubs. It happens in the classroom and in office hours as well. Sexual violence is a systemic and institutional problem which requires deep institutional solutions.
4. Evidence shows that 82% of rapes are never reported to the police and of these, only 1 in 5 results in court proceedings. For the few cases which do enter the court system, the average length of the court process is 1 year and 4 months from report to verdict – at which point many victims may no longer be studying at the university. This means in practice, the majority of victims of sexual violence would see no action taken by their university. The

¹ NUS Lad Culture Audit Report (2015)

² <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/about-sexual-violence/statistics-sexual-violence/>

³ NUS Lad Culture Audit Report (2015)

⁴ <https://1752group.com/>

quality of University reporting procedures and support services across the UK are inconsistent and inadequate.

5. That Universities need to have a clear, preventative strategy with dealing with sexual violence
6. That Universities need to fund and support services, particularly counselling, for survivors.
7. Despite the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment and the joint policy passed in 2014, students are broadly not aware of how to report an incident of harassment or assault on campus, which is a significant failure on the part of the University and Union
8. It is inadequate for students to have to refer to an obscure document to discover that the only reporting mechanism involves the utilisation of the University's Student Conduct and Discipline Code.
9. The current procedure is opaque and esoteric, which is the absolute antithesis of what is required
10. It is integral to the efficacy of any reporting procedure that it be shaped by the needs of survivors. Reporting should be simple, flexible and subject to regular reviews by students.

Union Resolves:

1. To work with the University to create a simple, easy to access central reporting system allowing survivors to report instances of sexual violence, misconduct or assault anonymously
2. To ensure that the reporting systems are designed with survivors in mind and that it is sensitive to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disabilities.
3. To carry out a report into the prevalence of sexual violence at Leeds Trinity University
4. To ensure that data gathered through a central reporting system is analysed by both the Union and University each year so that appropriate action can be taken
5. To mandate the President and Vice-President to work in conjunction with the Women's Officer to explore best practise across the sector, both within students' unions and Universities and to produce a series of recommendations for both organisations. The scope of this research should include but not be limited to: methods of data collection, reporting structures, the advertisement of zero tolerance and proposals concerning Student-Staff sexual misconduct
6. To mandate the President and Vice-President to work in conjunction with the Women's Officer to implement the proposals of their report