



## THIS ISSUE

- Policy Launch
- 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence
- Research Launch
- Active\* Champions
- Consent Week 2025

Pictured: Members of the Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Committee with representatives from the AY2024/25 Active\*Champions. February 2025

## SHAREPOINT

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

[Available here.](#)

## CONTACTS

Niamh Kavanagh  
Sexual Violence and  
Harassment, Prevention &  
Response Manager  
[niamh.kavanagh@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:niamh.kavanagh@universityofgalway.ie)

Rebecca Connolly  
Sexual Violence and  
Harassment, Prevention &  
Response Programme  
Coordinator  
[rebecca.connolly@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:rebecca.connolly@universityofgalway.ie)

## 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:

## December 2024

- Our December 2024 committee meeting was replaced with our policy launch (11th December). See feature below.

## February 2025

- The HEA have published a synthesis report which captures the key collated findings and highlights from the most recent HEI Framework and incident data reports, which pertain to the Academic Year 2022-2023 (September 2022 – August 2023). The report has been shared with committee members for review.
- Policy and procedure implementation including raising awareness, education and training is the current focus of work of the SVHPR Team.
- Updates in line with National Framework for Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in HEIs and related actions:
  - The national framework is under review by an Expert Group.
  - Various committee members and students are invited to consultation sessions over Feb/March.
  - It is currently expected the framework will be updated before the end of the year.
- We were delighted to introduce our Active\*Champions to the committee - See feature below.
- We enjoyed a presentation and discussion with Clarissa Di Santi- See feature below.

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE | POLICY LAUNCH



Pictured L-R :  
Caitríona Gleeson  
[ATU], Laura Loftus,  
Noeline Blackwell,  
Pádraig MacNeela,  
Helen Maher, Niamh  
Kavanagh, Niamh  
Gallagher, Saleha Al  
Sabahi



Pictured L-R :  
Noeline Blackwell,  
Niamh Kavanagh,  
Helen Maher,  
Pádraig MacNeela.

On December 11th, we proudly launched our Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Policy, a major step toward building a safer, more equitable campus for all.

The event was opened by Niamh Kavanagh, Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Manager and featured a compelling keynote by Noeline Blackwell, human rights lawyer and former CEO of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. We had a thought-provoking panel discussion with Marian Shiels, (Galway Rape Crisis Centre), Daniel Lynch (Current Student and Active\*Champion) and Chloe Anderson (SU Student Welfare Officer) and finally Dr. Helen Maher officially unveiled the policy joined by policy co-owners: Josephine Hynes, Director of Human Resources; and Professor Ciara Meehan, Dean of Students at the University of Galway and the committee co-chair Professor Pádraig MacNeela.

We extend our sincere thanks to the policy development group and all contributors for their dedication and support. This informed policy shifts responsibility to the institution, demonstrating our commitment to education, resources, and ongoing support—reinforcing our dedication to safety, respect, and equity on campus and beyond.

[You can access the policy here](#)

## Policy key messages:

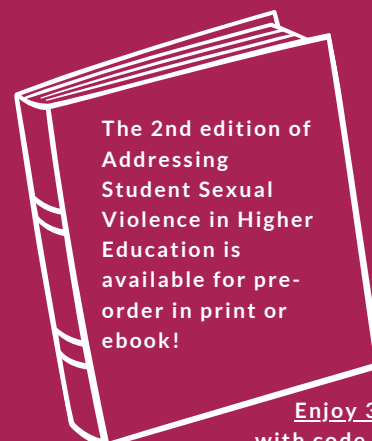
1. **Respect & Consent Matter** – Every member of the University community has the right to feel safe, valued, and respected.
2. **Sexual Violence or Sexual Harassment is Not Tolerated** – The University has a clear stance against sexual violence and harassment.
3. **Support is Available** – Confidential, professional, and non-judgmental help is accessible to anyone in need.
4. **Your Voice Matters** – There are clear, trauma-informed ways to disclose and report incidents.
5. **Prevention is Key** – Awareness, education, and positive relationships help create a safer campus.

## LESSONS LEARNED IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION - CLARISSA DISANTIS

At our February committee meeting, we were joined by Clarissa DiSantis, Education and Training Lead on the [Active\\* Consent](#) team. Clarissa is a practitioner, trainer, and leading authority on addressing gender-based violence at universities and was the first person to hold a dedicated role in this area in the United Kingdom, as the former Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Manager at Durham University. She is the co-author of [Addressing Student Sexual Violence in Higher Education](#), co-editor of [Stopping Gender-based violence in Higher Education](#).

Following the launch of our new policy, Clarissa shared insights from her experience implementing a similar policy at Durham University. She provided valuable perspectives on the responsibility of both the institution and the university community in upholding a safe environment. The discussion focused on the importance of **awareness and education**—emphasizing that understanding the policy should go beyond a tick-box exercise. There was a strong call for increased training across the university community to ensure **safety, awareness, and correct procedures**. The need for regular **policy review** was also highlighted, recognizing that environments change, and institutions must stay at the forefront to ensure best practices.

We explored how this process must be **both top-down and bottom-up**, requiring leadership support alongside grassroots advocacy. Our Active\* champions, shared how meaningful it is to see a university committed to **supporting students to support their peers**, further valuing the peer education and support structures we are fostering. A sincere thank you to Clarissa on behalf of the committee for her time and invaluable contributions.



The 2nd edition of Addressing Student Sexual Violence in Higher Education is available for pre-order in print or ebook!

[Enjoy 30% off with code EME30](#)

# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE



The University of Galway joined 15 Irish higher education institutions in the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, which ran from November 25th (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10th (Human Rights Day).

This year's theme, "Every 11 Minutes, a Woman is Killed" (#NoExcuse), highlighted the urgent need to end violence against women and girls.

Throughout the campaign, we hosted a range of impactful events, including a Library Exhibition, creative workshops, a coffee morning for Cope Galway, and a Domestic Abuse Service donation drive. Other highlights included an Active\* Consent pop up stall, and a panel discussion on violence against women in conflict zones.

The campaign concluded with key webinars, including 'The Intersection of Technology and Sexual Violence, Workshop with Lorrie Hayman', 'Building Healthy Relationships' and 'First Point of Contact Disclosure Management report launch', reinforcing our commitment to creating a safer, more informed community.

## MEET OUR ACTIVE\* CHAMPIONS



In January 2025, we welcomed our 2025 cohort of Active\* Champions. These exceptional individuals are playing a pivotal role in driving positive change on our campus. After receiving specialized training in consent and workshop facilitation, they will actively lead workshops and host informative stalls, significantly contributing to our ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of consent and awareness.

The Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response team is beyond inspired by our incredible Active\* Champions, who are working alongside us to make the University of Galway a safer, more supportive place for everyone. As they complete their Active\* Champion training with Active\* Consent, they will be fully equipped to step into their roles as peer educators and lead the way in sexual violence prevention, education, and awareness. Their dedication to fostering a culture of respect, safety, and consent is truly something to celebrate. Let's cheer them on as they prepare to shine as the leaders and changemakers our community needs!

[Learn more about the Active\\* Champions here.](#)



# RESEARCH REPORT LAUNCHES

On Tuesday, December 10th, two significant reports were launched, each addressing vital issues around consent, sexual violence, and creating safer spaces for all.

## COSHARE CONSENT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT AND EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION – NORTH-SOUTH SURVEY REPORT 2024



Pictured L-R : Dr Ngozi Anyadike-Danes, Dr Susan Lagdon, Prof. Pádraig MacNeela, Liam McBrearty, Dr Lorraine Burke

This research, a joint effort by Ulster University and the University of Galway, has established an all-island North-South HEI staff campus climate survey of consent, sexual violence, harassment and equality. This report describes the findings of COSHARE survey, conducted between October 2023 and February 2024. The goal of the survey was to describe staff experiences, knowledge, engagement, and perceptions in Higher Education institutions North and South.

Sub-group analysis of responses by staff role, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability status are beyond the scope of the overview of survey findings presented in the report. Where distinctions are highlighted in the findings section, descriptive comparisons are made of staff working in NI and ROI Higher Education institutions.

[Report available here.](#)

## FIRST POINT OF CONTACT: DISCLOSURE MANAGEMENT SKILLS TRAINING RESEARCH EVALUATION STUDY

This collaboration between Active\* Consent and Galway Rape Crisis Centre evaluated the impact of training designed to equip people with the skills to handle disclosures of sexual violence. The findings are an essential resource for those working across education and other sectors to support survivors effectively and compassionately.

First Point of Contact (FPOC) disclosure management skills training is a 12-hour psychotherapist-led training programme that prepares participants to receive disclosures of sexual violence and harassment (SVH) and to signpost to relevant supports and services.

[Report available here.](#)



Pictured L-R : Michelle Caulfield, Pádraig MacNeela, Gemma MacNally



## 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](#).

# CELEBRATING PROGRESS IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

## AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Celebrating Progress in Sexual Violence Prevention at the University of Galway

In December, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Team hosted a celebration at the University of Galway to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of our staff and student community in working towards the elimination of sexual violence within our community.

The event featured discussions on the recent report launches of FPOC and COSHARE, both of which offer critical insights into the ongoing work and challenges in addressing sexual violence.

A highlight of the event was an inspiring discussion led by Dr. Helen Maher, whose insights and leadership sparked meaningful conversations around creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all.



## UPCOMING TRAINING:

7th March Webinar

1.00-2.00pm

"Facing Reality: Addressing the Role of Pornography in the Pandemic of Violence Against Women and Girls,"

Students and Staff

[Register Here](#)



7th May

In Person Training

"Disclosure Training for those with a role in QA361"

[Register Here](#)

15th May

In Person Training

10.00am-1.00pm

"Sexual Harassment in the Workplace"

[Register Here](#)



22nd May

In Person Training

10.00am-1.00pm

"Sexual Harassment in the Workplace"

[Register Here](#)